STUDIES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Practices

An International Perspective

Fabio Dovigo (Ed.)

SensePublishers

Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Practices

STUDIES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Volume 33

Scope

This series addresses the many different forms of exclusion that occur in schooling across a range of international contexts and considers strategies for increasing the inclusion and success of all students. In many school jurisdictions the most reliable predictors of educational failure include poverty, Aboriginality and disability. Traditionally schools have not been pressed to deal with exclusion and failure. Failing students were blamed for their lack of attainment and were either placed in segregated educational settings or encouraged to leave and enter the unskilled labour market. The crisis in the labor market and the call by parents for the inclusion of their children in their neighborhood school has made visible the failure of schools to include all children.

Drawing from a range of researchers and educators from around the world, Studies in Inclusive Education will demonstrate the ways in which schools contribute to the failure of different student identities on the basis of gender, race, language, sexuality, disability, socio-economic status and geographic isolation. This series differs from existing work in inclusive education by expanding the focus from a narrow consideration of what has been traditionally referred to as special educational needs to understand school failure and exclusion in all its forms. Moreover, the series will consider exclusion and inclusion across all sectors of education: early years, elementary and secondary schooling, and higher education.

Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Practices

An International Perspective

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SENSE PUBLISHERS
ROTTERDAM/BOSTON/TAIPEI

A C.I.P. record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN: 978-94-6300-855-6 (paperback)
ISBN: 978-94-6300-856-3 (hardback)
ISBN: 978-94-6300-857-0 (e-book)

Published by: Sense Publishers,
P.O. Box 21858,
3001 AW Rotterdam,
The Netherlands
https://www.sensepublishers.com/

Printed on acid-free paper

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INTRODUCTION

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In the last thirty years, inclusive education has emerged as a central topic for instructional systems engaged in confronting the issues of inequality and injustice that arise from the exclusion of students deemed not suited to fully accessing and participating in education. Indeed, during this time teachers and researchers have become increasingly aware of the many challenges that implementing inclusive education involves, not only in terms of ethical questions, but also at a practical level, as inclusion has proved to be a complex construct, covering a wide range of phenomena. On the one hand, we are very far from reaching the goal of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, as proposed by UNESCO, as data show that as of 2013, 124 million children and young adolescents were still out of school (UNESCO, 2015a; UNESCO, 2015b). On the other hand, this is not an occurrence that only affects so-called developing countries: in spite of the amount of resources spent annually on education, many affluent and developed nations are still dealing with severe rates of early school leaving, while a large proportion of students have only limited or no access to mainstream schools.

This tendency has recently strengthened concern about the return on investment from instruction, as education is now considered a major lever for economic performance, not only for individuals, but also at the national level. As a consequence, instead of focusing on getting a real understanding of educational issues schools are actually dealing with, measuring students' performance has currently become a self-supporting and pervasive activity which further increases anxiety about educational attainment and pushes governments to adopt measures that often worsen the situation even further (Ball, 2003; Nelson Espeland & Sauder, 2016). Competition fuelled by international ranking of schools systems is nowadays accepted as the panacea for improving educational organizations, according to the myth of learning accountability based on standard curricula. However, forcing education to comply with a pumped-up model of the economy – which is currently showing all the negative effects of this pressure, by the way – not only emphasizes the limitations of conventional teaching in the face of the new scenario created by post-industrial society, but also prevents schools from valuing diversity as a primary resource to foster learning and participation.

Instead of promoting inclusion as an effort to develop quality education for all by appreciating and building on differences, diversity has been framed essentially as an expression of personal maladjustment. Accordingly, schools generally try to fix the problem through arranging a set of separate provisions for each individual child, so as to help him/her catch up with the other "normal" students. Until recently, this perspective largely shaped the way disabled children were managed within educational settings. However, extensive criticism of these practices has already been put forward since the 1980s, especially from the area of disability studies (Davis, 2013). Consequently, even though what inclusive education implies is still a controversial subject, there has been a considerable expansion towards an enlargement of its aim and scope from the focus on assisting children with disabilities to the goal of "increasing the participation and broad educational achievements of *all* groups of learners who have historically been marginalized" (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006). This entails a shift from the provision of extra help to some supposedly defective students to the development and dissemination of hidden resources normally available in the educational environment, inside and outside of school, to promote education for all children.

In this sense, encouraging inclusion implies questioning the traditional dynamics of separation that characterize most school relationships: special learners are taken away from mainstream students the same way that special teachers are disconnected from mainstream teachers, often already starting in teacher education courses. Accordingly, the divide so created makes it difficult to develop a shared language and find solutions to problems that, quite often, fall into that wide area not clearly defined by the normal/special dichotomy, as in the case of ethnic minority students or early school leavers. However, even when we accept that inclusive education is not confined to the specific group of disabled students, but also comprises learners who suffer from discrimination because of age, gender, socioeconomic conditions, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, level of attainment and so on, it is difficult to overcome the inclination to classify children according to these categories, which imply that individuals can be identified with, and therefore equated to, their deficits. Consequently, the process of categorization implicitly reaffirms the gulf between special and mainstream education, further extending the number of students who are deemed unfit to attend regular classrooms. The notion of special educational needs is a good example of such a nebulous label that situates the problem within the child, thereby preventing us from acknowledging and tackling real school issues that are prevalently external and act as barriers to learning and participation. Focusing attention on looking for the "needs" of individual students diverts from getting the whole picture about how national and local policies, school organisation and culture, teaching approaches and curricula, have a deep impact on the level of educational inclusion.

Therefore, in order to reduce barriers to learning and participation we need to reconsider the way special education deals not only with the traditional groups of disabled or abnormal children, but also with the new "special" students regarded

as problematic because of their economic, social or cultural capital. Special needs interventions addressing so-called challenging pupils have usually been justified by adopting a technical vocabulary which would disguise them as objective, self-evident procedures. Nevertheless, the panoply of diagnostic tools employed by special education to screen and treat children in terms of clinical cases proved to be at least ineffective, if not harmful, when used to manage learners' diversity.

Briefly, special education cannot see the forest for the trees, thereby encouraging the spread of new and subtle forms of exclusion in schools. This situation accounts for the common observation that inclusive education is a complex undertaking, as many obstacles stand in the way of change. As soon as we succeed in tackling exclusion in some specific area, inclusion seems to move away as new barriers are created and new questions arise. Far from discouraging efforts towards educational justice, this should be assumed to be a reminder that exclusionary pressures in school and more generally in society are multifaceted and protean. Consequently, we need to work on preventing exclusion as well as on fighting it, knowing that any step forward in the right direction is not just a little addition to a never-ending task, but also a small change which can have large, systemic effects on the entire educational organization. To attain this goal, the rise of diversity in schools has to be seen not as an issue to be brought under control through increased standardization, but as a resource that helps us cope with the complex society we live in.

LINKING INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTS AND GOOD PRACTICES

This book aims to take stock of the above-mentioned topics by both offering an overview of the current situation of inclusive education in six countries (Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, the UK, and the USA), and analysing five cases of good practices of inclusion related to different subjects and school levels. Even though the meaning and purpose attributed to inclusive education vary according to the national contexts (and also within them), nowadays concern about inclusion is a common thread which contributes to significantly shaping the educational policies and curricula of many countries. We are aware that international reviews, especially those addressed at achieving strict comparisons of educational structures, often tend to offer a simplistic view that reduces the complexity of school policies and practices to a handful of alleged key factors, usually underestimating both the role played by local environments and cultures, and the variety of differences normally existing within the same national context. So, through their accounts, the contributions on the one hand provide an analysis of what opportunities and critical points each country is dealing with in promoting inclusive education nowadays, and on the other offer some useful lessons that emerge from practices related to the implementation of inclusion in schools. In doing this, we tried to avoid both the risk of presenting each country as a whole and compact entity, and to presume that good practices can be transferred directly from one educational environment to another with no consideration for the role played by different contexts.

Moreover, it is not only the meaning of concepts and terms commonly used with reference to inclusive education that vary according to the sites' features, but we should also delve into the way students and their families interpret them, paying special attention to the voices of groups that are usually unheard through favouring inclusion as a participative process. In our view, providing support for inclusion means listening to each student's opinions and aspirations as an effort to improve the way schools respond to diversity. Seeking equality in educational settings does not necessarily lead to homogenisation: on the contrary, participation of all children is essential in order to value difference, as the unique contribution that any learner can be enabled to give to the school communities starting from his/her perspective and capabilities. Everyone in schools and communities is not only asked to identify barriers to learning and participation and collaborate to reduce or eliminate them, but also invited to actively commit to the endeavour of transforming school cultures, policies and practices, so benefitting from and building on differences as an opportunity for valuing everyone equally. In this sense, diversity cannot just be respected or tolerated, but should be adopted as a systematic approach to improving the school environment. In turn, this entails that there is not one general model of inclusion, but several strategies that, prompted by specific circumstances, lead to different change paths and results. As we noted, inclusion is not the umpteenth technical procedure we apply to improve measurable school outcomes. It involves starting an extended conversation with children, families, staff, and governors about the ways schools could be improved on the basis of ethical assumptions shared by stakeholders.

Developing a dialogue about values allows schools to translate them into practices founded on respect for diversity, thereby enhancing teaching and learning strategies, helping reform curricula, and fostering new educational relationships with the whole community. This process not only reinforces the shift from individualization to personalization of children's learning, but also emphasizes the active role learners play – both singularly, as a group, or as the whole class – in establishing and furthering the priorities for school development. Discussion on what a school should undertake as a step towards inclusion often supports participants in generating forms of creative thinking, which encourages people to challenge unfair conventions and behaviours and inspire innovative educational problem-solving. This is especially the case when we pay attention to ensuring a degree of diversity in the debate, looking for different opinions and practices that arise from a variety of educational settings, helping us question patterns normally taken for granted. This way, group discussion can boost effective teamwork in schools as the main way to promote inclusive projects based on trust and extended participation. Accordingly, inclusive change cannot be pursued without going beyond classroom walls, if we want the efforts towards equity would not to be confined to isolated initiatives, but to become a stable feature of the educational organization.

Moreover, beyond being articulated in different ways, values such as equity, justice, participation, or respect for diversity are also subject to constant evolution

over time. This contributes to characterizing inclusive education as an ongoing process rather than a final, permanent condition, even though envisioning inclusion as a destination plays an important role in sustaining and orienting efforts in the right direction. For this reason, we need to cultivate a transformative perspective on inclusion as a shared enterprise that aims to enhance learning and participation for all through the creation of a sense of mutual interdependence fostered by collaboration. This enterprise involves building fruitful, durable relationships between schools and their communities, as a way of promoting diversity and inclusion as pivotal elements for a democratic society.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

As we anticipated, in the first part the book provides an overview of the current situation in inclusive education in six countries, whereas the second part is devoted to the analysis of five cases of good practices of inclusion in different educational settings.

In Chapter 1, Tony Booth outlines a story about inclusion and exclusion in education in the UK, offering a glimpse of what an exploration of inclusion and exclusion involves when we move away from a narrow notion concerned only with education and the participation of particular groups. Elaborating on the "Index for Inclusion", the chapter links inclusion to the idea of the common comprehensive community school for all, and discusses the role of a framework of inclusive values in sustaining the possibility for such a policy in the face of opposing pressures.

Chapter 2, by Beth A. Ferri and Christy Ashby, examines the impact of recent US standards-based neoliberal educational reforms on students with disabilities, and on inclusion. Although such reforms promise increased school district accountability for students with disabilities, they have actually intensified existing inequalities, including increased drop-out rates, and intensified exclusion and segregation of students with disabilities. The chapter endorses an ever more expansive notion of inclusion, watchful of the dictates of market-based reforms on the most vulnerable students.

Chapter 3 provides an overview from Fabio Dovigo of the evolution of the Italian school system in the face of the recent shift from the traditional mainstream model established in the 1970s with the abolition of special schools to the recent introduction of new categories such as learning disabilities and special educational needs. The chapter analyses how such a change is posing new challenges for school policies and practices, emphasizing the need to review the conceptual framework assumed by special pedagogy so as to develop a more comprehensive view of inclusive education.

Then in Chapter 4 Kari Nes discusses how inclusion in education is understood and practiced in Norway, in particular where special education is concerned, and what the present challenges are. The chapter examines how on the Norwegian school and classroom levels inclusive practices that support learning and participation for

all exist, as well as exclusionary tendencies, questioning why Norway is currently mentioned among those countries where public education is increasingly challenged because of an endemic failure to provide adequate learning opportunities for all children.

In Chapter 5 Barbara Brokamp describes the specific form of support that both educational institutions and municipalities in Germany require if they seek to have inclusion guide their further development. The account clarifies how developments in schools and the realisation of inclusive values are embedded in municipal, social policy and global contexts, highlighting the endemic conflicts that Germany still endures in terms of educational standards or the way the education system has developed.

Building on experiences from interventions in schools, in Chapter 6 Mara Westling Allodi analyses ideologies and socio-cultural values that have influenced – both overtly and subtly – the educational organisation in the Swedish school system, in ways that may thwart the traditionally agreed-upon humanistic values of fairness and virtue that are however in a way still supposed to be in force. These forces that influence the learning environments of schools and classrooms therefore may counteract the efforts to build developmentally healthy and effective learning environments.

Part 2 opens with the contribution of Pasquale Andreozzi and Anna Pietrocarlo, which aims to investigate the evolution of inclusive education through the analysis of qualitative data collected from a number of schools in Northern Italy. The chapter shows that inclusive practices in Italy are quite fragmented, as they are tied to the individual initiative of teachers in schools. Consequently, inclusive projects are often short-lived due to the high turnover of teachers, as well as the lack of personnel with full-time contracts.

In Chapter 8, Clara Favella illustrates how good practices based on the implementation of creative art-based projects can help develop inclusive education by fostering intercultural sensitivity in schools. Even though projects based on art and creation are now popular as educational practices, we still lack a systematic analysis of the quality and the outcomes they achieve. This research aims to contribute to filling this gap, showing how art projects aimed at children aged 10 to 14 contribute to enhancing schools' sensitivity towards cultural differences.

In Chapter 9, Fabio Dovigo and Vincenza Rocco depict how inquiry-based teaching methods, promoted on a European level as procedures for the renewal of science teaching, may further inclusive projects focused on science education in primary and secondary schools. The chapter shows how inclusive evaluation plays a key role in helping inquiry-based teaching methods boost both teachers' motivation and students' interest and achievement in science education, as well as increase participation for all learners in education for sustainability.

Chapter 10 provides an account from Fabio Dovigo and Francesca Gasparini about the work childcare services carry out to foster inclusive relationships with families of children 0–3 years old. The chapter highlights how building spaces for

everyday conversation with parents is crucial to promoting active participation by supporting, collaborating, and partnering with caregivers. It also delves into the teachers' professional development, required by the introduction of new forms of counselling, such as those described in the chapter.

Finally, in Chapter 11 Emanuela Zappella examines the factors that influence the transition from school to work and facilitate inclusion of disabled people in the workplace. The analysis shows that accommodations are a crucial element, as they allow the construction of balanced relationships leading to satisfactory arrangements both from the point of view of the worker and the company. Training is also vital for providing useful tools for addressing the construction of an inclusive environment that embraces all the employees and their relationship with the disabled worker.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to thank Kerstin Mierke for the valuable guidance she provided throughout the book's writing process.

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PART 1

THE STATE OF THE ART OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SIX COUNTRIES

TONY BOOTH

1. PROMOTING EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LED BY INCLUSIVE VALUES IN ENGLAND

Experiences with the Index for Inclusion

INTRODUCTION

How should a story about inclusion and exclusion in education in the UK start?

I have to remind readers of the differences between the four 'countries' of the UK – England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Each country has separate histories and legislative frameworks for education. However this should not distract us from recognizing the diversity within each country and the influence on education of local politics, cultures and histories. Even with unifying national pressures it may be possible for two schools at opposite ends of the same street to have more in common with schools at opposite ends of Europe than they do with each other.

Stories of inclusion and exclusion express differences of belief, values and perspective. When academics swap accounts of education in their countries they sometimes tell an official version close to that promoted by their government. In this way an academic life on the international circuit can seem part of a country's diplomatic service. My approach to educational development contrasts with an official perspective largely under the influence of neoliberal values. I wish to see education developed in accordance with inclusive values, a project that is summarised in the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011, 2016).

Communication about inclusion cannot get far without a definition of inclusion and its connection with exclusion, even though this is often omitted in articles and academic discussions. So I after suggesting how a story of inclusion and exclusion in England might start, so setting a broad context, I define the concept for education. I focus on inclusion in education as a process of developing the common school for all, underpinned by the process of putting inclusive values into action. I indicate the way the Index for Inclusion, designed to be part of this process, has been used to support schools. I conclude by stressing that the framework of ideas summarized within the Index for Inclusion is necessarily in a continual state of development.

STARTING A STORY FROM ENGLAND

A personal perspective, or story, on inclusion and exclusion in England might start like this…

F. Dovigo (Ed.), Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Practices, 3–20.

Inclusion and exclusion in any country are shaped by its cultures and histories. In England, the largest country in the UK, many are still coming to terms with the loss of a colonial empire in the middle of the 20th Century which was founded on early industrialization supported by military conquest and slavery. Echoes of a powerful monarchy still fly in the flags of its distant Commonwealth outposts in St. Helena, Australia and New Zealand. The so-called British *national* anthem calls on a deity to save a single person, the monarch. So democracy, an essential element of inclusion, is a work in need of progress in the UK.

To compensate for its loss of status as the preeminent world power, many treasure an attachment to the United States, which though itself in decline remains the largest global economic and military power. Governments in Britain like to think that they have a special relationship with the US ("two countries divided by a common language"[1]). The UK news and popular culture disproportionately reflect what happens thousands of miles away in the US rather than a few miles away in mainland Europe. Though England is a little over twenty miles from the coast of France, swimming distance for the intrepid, and part of Europe, people commonly behave as if it was a similar distance from the coast of New England in the US. So, for these people, the US becomes 'us' and the rest of Europe is seen as 'them', ripe for exclusion.

In 2016, in a bid to hedge his geopolitical bets, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer signed an agreement with China for them to build nuclear power stations in the UK.[2] This is a wonderful expression of the way the winds of power are blowing and of a lack of concern in reality with national sovereignty when it comes to trade and finance. This was shortly before a referendum was to be held on continued membership of the EU, primarily, it seemed, because of pressures to increase the security of borders against foreign bodies, claimed to be an assertion of sovereignty.

Following the conflagration in Syria which policies of successive UK governments helped to bring about, Lebanon had taken a million refugees, Turkey, 1.8 million, Jordan 600,000, Germany had agreed to take 800,000 and the UK, 20,000 over five years.[3]

Though people in the UK have marched in tens of thousands, to say 'Refugees are Welcome Here', their government and its supporters effectively trumpet their lack of compassion. Yet if you try to stop compassion towards the suffering of people beyond the country's borders then may be matched by a lack of compassion within the country. This is the situation in modern Britain, a country where the austerity response to the economic crash of 2008 has fallen disproportionately on the poorest. Incomes have fallen substantially for the poor but have risen for the richest 1%. Bonuses have been preserved for the bankers whose recklessness and misplaced quick-rich algorithms helped to foster the crash.[4] There is a rise in the use of food banks and a decrease in benefits to disabled people based on the rapid assessments by a private company, incentivized to reduce public expenditure. Suicides amongst vulnerable people are on the increase… (Barr et al., 2015).

DEFINING 'INCLUSION'

My story of inclusion in England provides some of the elements of the complexity of the concept. I have been arguing for several decades against the dominance and lack of rationality of a *narrow* approach to inclusion in education primarily concerned with the desegregation and mainstream participation of children and young people categorized as having special educational needs or viewed as having disabilities. Despite its expression of commitment to a wider view, this book also encourages that link. In the presence of a presumed predominant view it takes only a few references in a text to confirm readers in the perspective they brought with them. These are "discourse markers", often found at a text's beginning and end.

The continued popularity of the narrow view of inclusion implies that there are powerful interests sustaining it or that my arguments are not well known or are poorly constructed. There is a formidable array of structures associated with the notion of 'special educational needs' to do with legislation, training courses, academic departments and professional jobs. These all perpetuate the delusion that educational difficulties can be resolved through categorization and intervention in the lives of children and young people rather than in schools, their teaching and learning activities and the relationships within them. Further the individualism of this approach attaches well to, and derives power from the neoliberal ideology currently controlling the direction of global educational development. This is very hard to contest. For ideology encloses us like a self-sealing bubble. We may think that it can be burst by the sharp point of our rationality but subsequently find that we have made only a tiny, temporary and rapidly closing hole.

In recent years I have tried a different tack in opposing the dominant view. I see it as only one of several advocacies for the increased participation in education of a particular group or section of the population vulnerable to exclusionary pressures. I call this inclusion A. So divisions and discrimination in education related to disability are matched by parallel concerns with gender, class, ethnicity, religion and citizenship – which includes issues of migration, refugees and asylum. I have avoided the term ethnic or religious minority since the history of South Africa and several countries in the Middle East tells us that exclusion is an abuse of power rather than majority. There is then, a series of inclusions A: A1, A2, A3… Without an awareness of shared rights to participation of all groups, advocacy for one group can be in competition with others for public attention and finance . I have urged people concerned with advocacy of the interests of particular groups in education to raise their gaze from children to engage too, with access to, and participation in, education of adults, including through employment.

When people want inclusion to be simplified to a concern with the access to and participation in the mainstream of children categorized as having special educational needs they may collapse complex identities and experiences inside this single term. So the exclusion attributed to the deficit of a disabled child may arise from discrimination towards their gender or ethnicity. The term 'special educational

needs' operates as a 'vacuum cleaner concept' sucking up educational difficulties that have arisen through barriers in the curriculum, relationships, or gender and ethnic discriminations, into an individual deficit bag. In this way the language of 'special educational needs' contributes to the scandal of discrimination towards Roma children particularly, but not only, within Eastern Europe (O'nions, 2010). When I questioned the continued separation from the mainstream into special schools of large numbers of Roma children at a meeting at the ministry in the Czech republic, I was told that parents of non-Roma children were not ready to accept 'vermin' in their schools. My stomach churns as I repeat this, knowing how close it is to the classification as 'cockroaches'[5] of Tutsis, in radio broadcasts, before the genocidal massacres in Rwanda in 1994. A celebrity columnist for the Sun newspaper in the UK referred to migrants using the same word[6] and yet she was invited as a keynote speaker at a British University despite student protest.[7] That year, 1994, associated with one of the most horrific illustrations of exclusion in history, is given special significance by the supporters of 'inclusion A1' as the year of the 'Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education' as marking a major step forward on the road to inclusion (Kiuppis & Hausstatter, 2014). The parochialism of discussions of inclusion from this narrow perspective might also be indicated by the fact that 1994 was the year that Nelson Mandela became the first Black president of South Africa.

I contrast the narrowness of inclusions A with inclusion B. Inclusion B in education is about the participation, wellbeing and identity of everybody, adults and children. It is contrasted with exclusion and in making this link with its opposite it becomes a rounded concept with which we can engage in productive thought. It has three essential elements. It is concerned with increasing the participation and reducing the exclusion of individuals in the mainstream of life within and beyond education. This puts together inclusions A in their various forms with an added concern for all, both adults and children. The idea that it is about increasing participation of all, ties inclusion to the development of a participative democracy.

But in order to encourage the participation of individuals and groups we have to create systems and settings that are welcoming, anti-discriminatory and have cultures, policies and practices that reinforce their capacity to respond to the diversity of children and adults in ways that value them equally. This means avoiding any hierarchy of value amongst children and adults and generally implies the avoidance of separate tracks that reinforce such hierarchies.

Yet, most importantly inclusion arises as we put inclusive values into action. If we are to go beyond supporting inclusion as a fashion or career move we have to do it because it connects to our fundamental values. The advocacies of inclusions A cannot be successfully sustained without the wider developments of inclusion B, in settings and systems and their underpinning by inclusive values.

CREATING THE COMMON SCHOOL FOR ALL

Creating responsive settings and systems in education in ways that involve everyone equally, involves linking schools with their surrounding communities. In England this means seeing inclusion as about the promotion and development of 'comprehensive community education'. This is the movement to create a common secondary school for all, arising in the middle of the last century to replace the tripartite, selective education, dividing the mass of children at aged eleven for one of three schools based on attainment and measured 'intelligence'.

I have extended the ideas of 'non-selective', 'comprehensive' education and the 'common school' to apply to preschool, school and post-school education. In most countries selection is asserted in higher education through a hierarchy of educational opportunities. The Index for Inclusion from its first edition was connected to the work undertaken by myself and colleagues, Patricia Potts and Will Swann over twenty years at the Open University, from 1979 to 1999. We set out to transform approaches to educational difficulty by linking them to the conception, practice and development of the 'common school for all'.

The idea of comprehensive education can be linked to 'popular education' designed to serve the interests of the mass of people rather than powerful elites. The grammar schools were seen as the apex of the tripartite hierarchy and had the same status within the minds of many as the Gymnasium in Germany. However, the elite private schools (confusingly called public schools), remained above the grammar schools, dominating places at elite universities. Private schools take 7% of the population yet their students make up the majority of high status positions in English public life (Kirby for the Sutton Trust, 2016). Once the right to establish private schools was seen as enshrined within human rights law, private schools became politically untouchable.

The comprehensive secondary school became the majority system, by the middle of the 1980s. This ended the domination of primary schools by this decisive judgment of the value of children at age eleven. Yet, selective education remained a bone of contention between the major political parties until Tony Blair led the 'New Labour Party' to abandon its distinctiveness from the Conservatives in education and health and much else. While subsequent governments did not increase the numbers of grammar schools, they effectively reintroduced selection through a competitive system of national testing and inspection designed to recreate hierarchies between and within schools. They also progressively curtailed democratic control over education by reducing the power of local administrations. However in 2016, grammar schools were beginning to subvert legislation preventing an increase in their numbers, by setting up what they called 'annexes', even though these were located many miles away and served entirely different communities.[8]

The following two examples epitomize the extremes of competition and internal division characterizing some schools. Crown Woods College in South London is organised as three mini-schools for learners divided by their perceived top middle and low "ability". The children wear different uniforms and have different lunch and break times (Yarker & Benn, 2011). In the school where my granddaughter started at aged eleven, she had to take a verbal reasoning test and was then allocated to one of four groups for each of her subjects, based on expectations for her achievements in The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) at age sixteen. These examinations are graded from A* (added as a grade above A to signal particular success) to F. Only grades A* to C are seen as of value to the schools. My granddaughter was allocated to one of four groups for each subject *called*, A*-A, A*-B, A-C and C. The last of these must really mean 'F' or 'Fail' and therefore of little worth to the school or society since otherwise the children would be included in the A-C group. Both these examples indicate practices that are abusive to children.

DIVISIONS OF FAITH

Faith based schools are also a major barrier to the development of the 'school for all'. About a third of all schools in England are founded on an appeal to families of a particular faith and funded mainly by the state. The majority of these schools are Anglican, the branch of Christianity founded by King Henry the Eighth because he was unhappy with the refusal of the Pope to grant him a divorce from his wife Catherine. The monarch remains in England as the head of this church with bishops having a right to participate and vote in the unelected upper tier of parliament, the House of Lords. The next most common group are Catholic schools primarily founded originally because in 19th century Britain, Catholics were excluded from attending schools for the State religion. There are smaller numbers of other Christian foundation, Islamic, Hindu, Sikh and Jewish religious schools. Their religious designation means that, whatever the protestations made by some, they are not established to serve all within their surrounding communities and can contribute to community division. In our research project in the early 2000s we studied two schools on the same street in an area with a very high number of people of Bangladeshi heritage. A Catholic school had no Muslim pupils while 100 metres away a so-called non-denominational community primary school had 99% Muslim pupils. The Muslim children frequently crossed the street in order to avoid passing directly in front of the Catholic school and church on their way to school (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2005).

The way in which faith schools perpetuate community divisions is best illustrated in the UK in the school system in Northern Ireland where the very great majority of schools remain as either Catholic or Protestant, eighteen years after the agreement that was meant to end violent community conflict. In the 1980s, special schools made up the majority of non-denominational or so called 'integrated' schools in Northern Ireland. This was not an outbreak of inter-community peace, for the discriminatory

nature of the label of 'special educational needs' had obscured differences in identity deemed almost sacred for children without the label.

While the existence of faith schools prevents the development of comprehensive community schools, they involve particular discriminations in employment of teachers and other staff. For example, it is impossible for an atheist to gain a senior position in a faith school, but someone of faith has no barrier to becoming a head teacher in a community school. There remains some in-built bias towards the Church of England in the system as whole, which further discriminates against atheists. Every school has to include a daily act of Christian worship. The Secretary of State for Education, declared in 2015 that schools had an obligation to teach that Britain is 'mainly Christian' and need not mention atheism in the religious education curriculum (The Telegraph, December 27th 2015).[9] She refused to accept a high court ruling that such an omission was unlawful since it breached a duty to 'to take care that information or knowledge included in the curriculum is conveyed in a pluralistic manner' (Regina (Fox and others) *v* Secretary of State for Education).[10] She also contested and ignored the findings of a two-year 'Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life' (Woolf Institute, 2015), that only a sizeable minority of people in the UK (40%) say they are Christians and therefore it cannot be regarded as 'a Christian country' whatever that means. So the education system is designed to make Christians more at home than those from other religions other than Christianity and especially devalues those with no religion.

THE MULTIPLICATION OF DIVISION

From the early 1980s onwards, governments have further undermined the idea of education under the control of communities. They have persisted in the curtailing the power to affect education of democratically elected local representatives, teacher unions and the teaching profession. This rise of the central control of education and health increased as government contracted in other areas. Thus state manufacturing, prisons, transport, energy, and other utilities including water were sold off to private companies. As government found they had decreasing opportunities to measure and parade their successes they focused more closely on ensuring that improvements in education and health would be seen as due to their interventions. This resulted in reorganizations at each change of government. The dislodging of local control over education is best represented by the rapid growth of schools, directly funded from the central government and outside local authority influence, called Academies, and the smaller growth of 'free schools' usually run on authoritarian lines and set up without regard to the needs for additional school places in an area. These are seen as cousins to the charter schools of the US and the free school experiment in Sweden, respectively.

While the private sector in 2016 remains relatively small, perhaps the most divisive change involved the introduction into education, from the 1990s onwards of the 'quasi-market' in which the test, examination and inspection results are

publicized as the basis for parental school choice. Though England may provide a particularly extreme example, elements of this approach has been spread around the globe under the cloak of neoliberalism.

VALUES TO THE RESCUE?

Faced with pressures pushing education systems away from the development of school for all in their surrounding communities those who oppose these trends need a powerful counterforce. I have been influenced for all my academic career by the words of an Italian political novelist and activist, Ignazio Silone:

> The distinction between theories and values is not sufficiently recognized, but it is fundamental. On a group of theories one can found a school [of thought]; but on a group of values one can found a culture, a civilization, a new way of living together…. (Silone, 1950: 119)

Silone it turned out later was a dubious figure, acting as a police informer for the Mussolini regime within the communist party (Biocca & Canali, 2000). Nevertheless the understanding I took from his words, that educational and social development are ethical enterprises remains valid. Values are a necessary bridge between the results of educational research or policy discussions and the actions we decide to take in education. But more fundamentally many educational concepts such as 'development', 'improvement', 'quality', 'good practice', inclusion, cannot be given meaning without connecting them to a set of values. One person's good practice may be another person's educational nightmare.

Yet, the role of values in responsible action has been downplayed in the last thirty-five years. This is encapsulated by the title of Alasdair McIntyre's 1981 book: 'After Virtue', presaging the rise of 'managerialism' as the dominant style of British public sector organisations, in which active values or "virtues" appear neutralised through the goal of "efficiency". For the philosopher Michael Sandal, moral arguments in ever larger areas of life, have been driven out by the spread of market thinking. They are like a muscle that has wasted from disuse but can be strengthened again with exercise (Sandal, 2009: 11–12).

Michael Sandal underestimates the extent to which others see the goal of efficiency and the reign of the market as an expression of virtue and I make this clear below in contrasting inclusive and excluding values. But he is right in suggesting that if we want our actions to be informed by the values we wish to own rather than be values we claim to reject, then we need to work on the connection between values and actions. I call this the acquisition of values literacy.

My view of values as necessarily connected to actions contrasts with a view of values as impressive words to be flourished rhetorically. This might be seen in the espousal of British values by the UK government. Schools in England are required to promote four values as fundamentally British and to integrate them into their teaching. These are said to be 'democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty,

and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs' (DfE, 2014: 5). This promotion of British values is meant to help to counter Islamic 'extremism' and is part of the Government's 2011 'prevent' strategy. This singular view of 'extremism' excludes the fundamentalism of the market favoured by the government itself. The four British values headings and their detailed implications for action are left undefined. It is hard to say they are particularly British or are assiduously pursued by government. For example, 'respect for the rule of law' implies that access to legal representation and the outcome of court hearings are unrelated to wealth yet the legal aid that gives poor and vulnerable people a chance to fight injustice through the courts has been cut.[11] One might also consider how respect for the law is encouraged by a selective, 'national curriculum', which does not apply to Academies or Free Schools.

VALUES IN THE INDEX FOR INCLUSION

I have always seen my academic work as starting from a commitment to values or principles. When I first started writing seriously, I saw two principles as framing my direction: 'a comprehensive principle' and a connected 'principle of equality of value' of all. I worried away at these ideas over the years and gradually extended them into a framework of values, through innumerable dialogues with teachers and students in many countries. I wanted to create a values framework with sufficient complexity for the activities it was required to guide.

I display the sixteen headings for inclusive values on a three dimensional figure or dodecahedron as shown in Figure 1. The headings are not themselves values but become values as their meanings are elaborated and the implications for action are understood (see Figure 1). They are discussed in detail in the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011, 2016).

The framework can be seen as a values universe, an answer to the question: 'how should we live together?' This age old philosophical question took the form in past eras of: 'how should a rich man live?' But I give it the form: how should we live together on this planet – an interconnected 'us' – 'animals, trees, rocks and air? In justifying the origins of this framework I have drawn encouragement from Kant's injunction 'Sapere Aude', commonly translated as 'dare to know' – 'dare to know what you know'. Kant's words come from Horace who compared an individual who postpones the "hour of right living" to someone waiting for a river to run dry before he will cross — "yet on it flows, and on it will flow, rolling its flood forever." Horace's advice is to stop hesitating: sapere aude, incipe – 'Dare to be wise: begin!' So I have come to trust that the process of piecing together my values framework through processes of reading, reflection, dialogue and 'experimental trials' with teachers, children, families and their schools yields an important way for conceiving and promoting development.

In the most recent edition of the Index (2016) a universe of inclusive values is contrasted with one of excluding values (see Figure 2) which might also be called

'neoliberal'. Neo-liberal values dominate thinking about education and are always liable to subvert and take over from more inclusive values. In this way a concern with *equality* can give way to a concern with *hierarchy*, *rights* to *opportunity*, *participation* to *consumption*, *community* to *in-group*, *respect for diversity* to *monoculture*, *sustainability* to *exploitation*, *trust* to *surveillance*, *honesty* to *image*, *courage* to *compliance*, *non-violence* to *coercion*, *compassion* to *self-interest*, *hope* to *determinism*, *love* to *authority*, *joy* to *reward/punishment*, *beauty* to *efficiency* and *wisdom* to *power*.

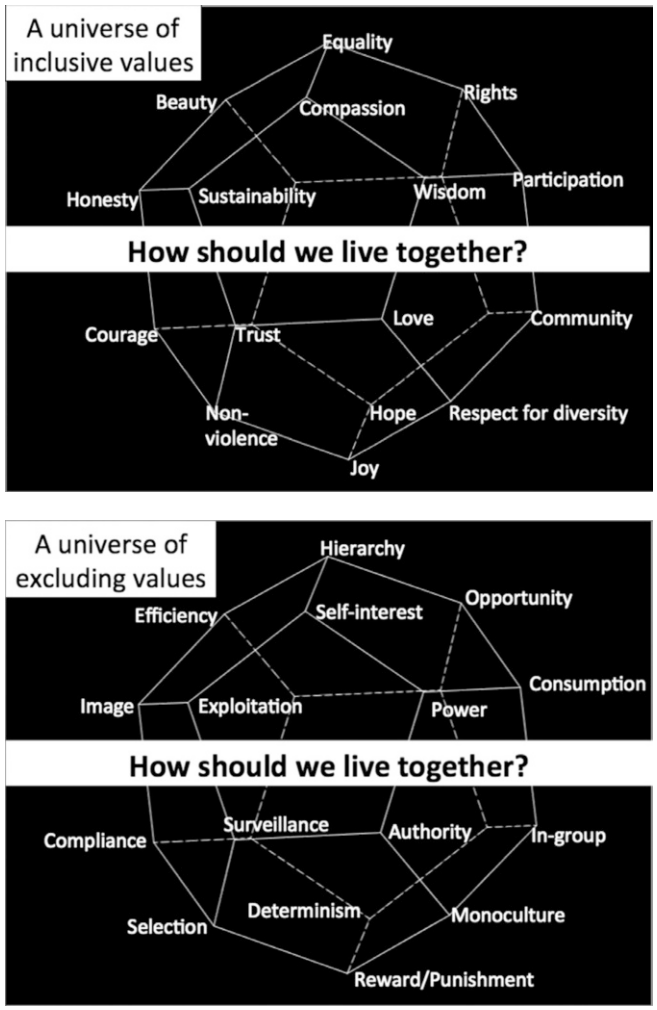

Figure 1 and 2. Inclusive and excluding values provide an answer to the same question

Contrasting inclusive with excluding values helps to get past a trap of regarding values as universal as suggested within other UK approaches to values-led educational development such as 'living values' (Farrer, 2000; Hawkes, 2003) or the approach promoted by Common Cause, (Holmes et al., 2011). It is clear that different people value very different ways of life. While neither inclusive nor excluding values are universally held both are universalisable; meaning that in theory all peoples could choose to live by them. The 'neo-liberal' project extending market fundamentalism into all areas of our lives embraces a framework of excluding values and creates pressures for it to be adopted universally. A life-project to encourage the spread of inclusive values within education and society can be seen keeping alive the flame for an alternative way; a reminder that another world is possible

VALUES AS IMPERATIVES

I see some values as having the status of imperatives. I follow Theodore Adorno in his insistence that education must strive to reduce the possibility of another Auschwitz – the worst possible outcome of a failure of respect for diversity and avoidance of violence. But I also include as an imperative, the expression of our inter-generational responsibility to pass a planet to the next generation in which people, other animals and plants can continue to flourish. Human deployed global warming is a real threat to the survival of life in the near future. Even so, it is only the most compelling of the many dramatic dangers of environmental degradation we humans have created. Faced with the changes to their lives that action demands, many retreat into denial. This has becomes a major hurdle we have to clear in order to encourage mass action on climate change (Marshall, 2014).

In his later writings Felix Guattari, incorporated the ecological imperative into what he called 'ecosophy' (Guattari, 2000). For Guattari as later for Naomi Klein the reality of global warming 'changes everything' (Klein, 2014). As he argued "ecology questions the whole of subjectivity and capitalistic power formations". Connecting ecology to subjectivity, provides a change of minds, no longer seen as separate from our bodies but part of the same nature which provides the source of our health and our life.

One of the far-reaching ways in which connecting people to nature challenges the exclusionary bedrock of capitalism is in the ownership of land conferred as a 'right to own property' in article 17 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The illusory nature of such a right was challenged during a visit of inspectors in Preshire during a Forest School session where children learn co-operative survival skills and an appreciation of nature. A class group was in an ancient Norfolk woodland – Lion Wood – when the school Inspector asked the children: 'who owns the wood?' Perhaps he expected the name of the local landowner but a child replied: "nobody owns the wood – the trees and the animals own the wood."

In the 18th Century, Rousseau expressed no less eloquently and rather more extensively, the absurdity of land ownership:

> The first person who, having enclosed a plot of land, took it into his head to say this is mine and found people simple enough to believe him was the true founder of civil society. What crimes, wars, murders, what miseries and horrors would the human race have been spared, had some one pulled up the stakes or filled in the ditch and cried out to his fellow men: "Do not listen to this imposter. You are lost if you forget that the fruits of the earth belong to all and the earth to no one!" (Rousseau, 1754: 109)

The 'academies' that I mentioned earlier are managed by sponsors and trustees as well as governors and are commonly arranged in 'chains' or 'multiple academy trusts'. The growth of Academies and free schools has seen a major shift in the ownership of land towards both central government and the trusts and away from local democratic ownership. With the giving of powers to corporations to contest public ownership under previous trade agreements and particularly under the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiated between the US and the EU, this transfer of ownership makes the British school system and its lands, ripe for further privatization. The temptation for the government to balance its books by selling off land worth billions of pounds may prove irresistible. This will be a new enclosure of public land or 'commons' as happens with shopping malls in English cities, diminishing local community use and ownership. It will rival the great enclosures of agricultural land from the 14th to the 18th century. It will be even more difficult to keep alive the ideas and cultures of 'common schools for all' within a privatized system.

I am not expecting an end to the delusion of land 'ownership' any time soon but have provided a brief exploration of the far-reaching implications of ecological sensitivity as an illustration of where a serious engagement with values can lead us. Deep engagement with values always leads to action.

I recognise that the process of reflecting on a values framework and values headings is unfinished. I am currently dwelling on the value of *interconnectedness* as a seventeenth heading in my framework. It contrasts with the excluding values headings of '*separation*' or '*specialisation*', or '*isolation*'.

THE INDEX IN USE

The index suggests how values, pedagogical principles and imperatives can be connected to the detail of all aspects of school life, in classrooms, staffrooms, kitchens, playgrounds, buildings and displays and in relationships amongst and between adults and children and with their surrounding communities. Since the third edition published in 2011 this has included an outline curriculum to support schools to adapt what they teach so that it better reflects the lives of children and adults involved in and around schools. The Index was also expanded for the third edition so that schools could connect into a single strategy all principled approaches to their development to do with citizenship, global interconnections, environmental

sustainability, outdoor learning, anti-discrimination, peace and democratic education. In the fourth edition there is explicit discussion of the way the Index can support schools to respond to the pressures from inspection and accountability regimes in a way consistent with inclusive values. Where people broadly ascribe to the values framework of the index they use its values, seventy indicators and two thousand questions to stimulate their own ideas for the collaborative development of their settings (Booth & Ainscow, 2016).

The Index is a summary of ideas for stimulating reflection and action to promote the development of the common school for all. Since 2000 it has been used by thousands of schools in almost fifty countries. As for other texts, there is no correct way of reading and using it. Use varies from action on a single idea from one of its questions to the full integration into school development processes, expanded to include all levels and categories of staff as well as parents, governors, children and young people. Some work with earlier editions in England was summarized in Rustemier and Booth (2005).

From 2011 onwards one English County adopted the third edition of Index as part of its approach to school development. Despite our efforts to demonstrate otherwise, it was seen by some in the local authority as a distraction from the outcomes focused approach of the local authority. The authority was under threat from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) to rapidly increase national test results or face being taken over by a private company. I have called this county Pre-Shire, to reflect both the 'pressure' under which the authority was working and as a contrast with a second county in which work started in early 2016 where the introduction of work with the Index has strong support from the senior leaders in the authority. We are calling that county 'Post-Shire'. In this section I provide examples of work with the Index in 'Pre-Shire'.

WORKING WITH PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

People commonly suggest that it is 'more difficult' to work with the Index in secondary (11–16/18 years) than primary schools (4–11 years). There is no doubt that we have more examples of in-depth work with the Index in the latter than the former. There is an issue to do with the size of a school and the organisation required to involve the whole school community in such work in a large school that may be spread across departments, perhaps in several buildings. We need a concerted effort to further develop a process for working with the Index in secondary schools, which addresses the barriers that are encountered. There is an issue in all school about how we work with a shared text, given that there may be only one or two hard copies available, even though schools also receive a Portable Document Format (pdf) version.

However we did have some successes with secondary schools in Pre-Shire. The deputy head of a large secondary school quickly became an enthusiast for the Index:

> ‘It’s a brilliant project and a brilliant tool; it’s changed the way I think about leadership and the school.’

She had reflected on why parents did not come into school. As a geography teacher herself, she thought she would try inviting parents to attend model geography lessons specially put on for them after school so they could see the kinds of things their children were learning. 80 parents wanted to come and she put on 3 lessons so they all could attend|. This idea is not to be found in the Index directly so I asked her why she attributed this work to reading the Index. She replied: “the Index made me think I could dare to invite parents to these lessons.”

She mentioned that she say the Index as countering T.S. Elliott’s vision of hell as representing utter disconnection in his introduction to Dante’s Inferno:

> He said “hell is a place where nothing connects to nothing”...whereas in the Index, everything connects to everything...My master plan is to weave it in seamlessly into the school. When Ofsted visited they said that we had many good lessons but few outstanding lessons, only 6%, and there were questions about literacy standards and the active participation of children in lessons. So I’ve decided that we are going to concentrate on using section C2 [the section on orchestrating learning] right across the school. Orchestrating learning is our core purpose. If we do what’s in here I think we can get it up to 40%. I want them to move from thinking about teaching to facilitating learning. That’s a big cultural shift. For the children it means asking them what you have learnt today, not what have you been taught. I actually want to do it all, but I need to create a focus for them to work it out. People will buy into it.
>
> We now have a half-termly training session involving teachers, students, parents and governors. The task at the first meeting was to look at what makes an outstanding lesson. We spent two hours locked in the drama studio. It was brilliant.

CONNECTING THE INDEX TO PRESSURES FROM OFSTED

In the last example the teacher felt she had to integrate the official outcomes focused approach to development with the improvements to the conditions for teaching and learning fostered by the Index. This was a feature of many of the examples of successful work with the Index. In an infant and nursery school the head teacher reported on the priority to increase attendance set for the school following an inspection:

> We are an area of considerable deprivation and difficulty. One of our difficulties was around attendance. We had very low attendance here: around 82% across the whole school year. The government want us to get up to 95%. We came across the Index for Inclusion and we looked at all the questions around barriers to good attendance and chose three or four areas that we could really tackle.

One question in particular provoked particular discussion. It asks: 'are children who have been absent given a genuinely warm greeting on their return?' The teachers acknowledged that they sometimes greeted children who they did not think had legitimate reasons to be absent with sarcastic comments such as 'oh, I see you have a nice new pair of shoes' or 'did you have a good holiday?'.

> It made us question our own practice, think about the things we are currently doing in school and ways that we could do a bit better. We acted on the dialogue we had around those questions by drawing up an action plan. We were able to put a lot of things in place over the course the year to the extent that that the attendance went from that really low base and we are now hitting the 95% mark. And that's made a big difference to us. I am not saying that the Index made us do everything differently but it made us think about things differently and made us put in place things that we might not have considered doing before. So that was a good experience and now with other school improvement projects we tend to go to the Index first and ask if there is an area we can use to start our thinking.

PUTTING THE INDEX AT THE HEART OF SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

Turner Infant School started their engagement with the Index by setting up a new school development team to broaden consultation. They added governors, parents and children to the senior teachers who had previously been involved. But after a child asked 'what do we do while the adults are talking' they revised their approach to including the views of these young children. Parents filled in questionnaires and were involved in focus groups. The comments of parents and children on behaviour, bullying and playground use, led to substantial change. An early action was to divide the playground into zones with different activities and to increase adult supervision, something the children had particularly requested. They built these consultations into annual routines with the focus groups with parents run by other parents. This marked a significant point in the developing trust between teachers and parents in the school.

The school integrated the Index into what they needed to do to obtain 'the Rights Respecting Schools' award.[12] They talked with parents and governors when they were leaving the school at a point of openness and reflection to provide fresh insights on what they could improve. There was a move to use staff expertise more resourcefully after the head told his staff: 'you don't blow your own trumpets enough'. So staff invited others to come and see learning activities they felt to be particularly successful.

One member of staff led on environmental issues; improving a community garden, recycling food waste from classrooms and kitchens prompted by the indicator on waste (B1.13) which also led to a discussion of package free lunches and many children adopting them.

After a mass of disparate activities, the Index has now become integrated into the School Improvement Plan. There is a column in the plan for the contribution of the Index to meeting any particular priority so 'it forces people who are responsible for that area of the plan to actually look at the Index and use it'. The Index has helped to knit together the improvement of the school. As the head commented: 'It has to work because it shares our values'.

ENGAGING WITH THE DETAIL TO TAKE CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT

At Gregory White Junior School, a senior teacher and teaching assistant led the Index work. They started with staff agreeing to look at Indicator C2.9, 'Staff plan, teach and review together', and particularly at two of the questions d) and e): 'Do teachers plan activities so they make use of each others' knowledge and skills?', and 'Do teachers use collaborative teaching as an opportunity for learning from each other?' This prompted the teacher to share her strength in ICT with a colleague who was a PE specialist by teaching each other's classes. Colleagues soon began to work in a similar way 'drawing on each other's strengths'. The questions in the Index were particularly appealing:

> One of the most useful things with this resource, as opposed to any other we've worked with, is everything is a question. Just the fact that it's written as a question makes you properly consider it.

The Index questions were also helping 'a core group of governors to get much better at challenging' and in turn the questions were helping teachers to support what they said was happening with evidence.

They had started to use the Index to support the environmental focus of the school. Staff had already made great use of the schools' extensive grounds, transforming the playground with fitness machines, developing the adjourning green space with an orchard, wild area, mud kitchen, massive story chair and a theatre. Indicator: 'A1.7 The school is a model of democratic citizenship' prompted them to link activities in the environment with citizenship and parent participation. The staff had been discussing question l) 'Do children engage in jobs which contribute to the development of the school?'

> It isn't an obvious eco-link but everyone looking after your environment that has to be about citizenship. And then we looked down the list of jobs and immediately there's composting, cooking of food, tree planting, there are lots of things in there… Or in question b) under that indicator –'Do staff, children and families deliberately create a culture of participation and collaboration?' I think we've got much better at engaging parents but predominantly that's mums, so maybe doing stuff in the garden, practical outdoor stuff, maybe that's where we can get our dads in and involved…

But the biggest contribution of the Index was in helping them to take control of their own development:

> We've had to make a conscious choice over the last few years to stop being told what to do and to start looking at what we think works for our children and where we want to go. Interestingly at the point where we started to develop for ourselves and looked at the Index and at other schools, that's when we stopped being Satisfactory and became Good. We're moving rapidly towards doing outstanding things. The Index has really helped us to do that thinking for ourselves.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter I have offered a glimpse of what an exploration of inclusion and exclusion involves when we move away from a narrow notion concerned only with education and the participation of particular groups. I offered one version of the start of a story of inclusion and exclusion in England. The history of inclusion and exclusion is as old as, or older than, humanity, linking perhaps beyond human history to ecological compatibilities and incompatibilities. I have tried again to provide a convincing argument for a broad view. I have linked inclusion to the idea of the common school, or comprehensive community school for all, and discussed the role of a framework of inclusive values in sustaining the possibility for such a policy in the face of opposing pressures. I indicated the way an engagement with the value of sustainability challenges taken for granted understandings of the way our societies operate.

Supporting the development of the common school as well as challenging assumptions in education and society are the tasks that I set out to fulfill in writing the Index for Inclusion. I have provided examples, from Pre-shire of the way schools are able to use the Index for Inclusion to promote inclusive ways of thinking and acting despite pressures to act otherwise. While this happened in Pre-shire in difficult circumstances it remains to be seen of the greater support offered by the authority in Post-Shire will be able to better modify the UK government's neoliberal educational policies.

NOTES

1. Quote 31, Page 638, the fourth edition Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, attributed to George Bernard Shaw, though he was probably paraphrasing Oscar Wilde from 'The Canterville Ghost 1887): 'We have really everything in common with America nowadays except, of course, language'.
2. BBC news September 2015 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-somerset-34306997
3. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/02/refugees-welcome-uk-germany-compare-migration
4. http://www.neweconomics.org/press/entry/rising-inequality-risks-another-financial-crisis-new-study, https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/cs-true-cost-austerity-inequality-uk-120913-en.pdf

[5] http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/may/16/congo.rwanda
[6] http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/apr/24/katie-hopkins-cockroach-migrants-denounced-united-nations-human-rights-commissioner
[7] http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/katie-hopkins-brunel-university-students-stage-mass-walk-out-at-debate-as-columnist-speaks-a6749456.html
[8] http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/nov/10/grammar-school-annexe-kent-academies
[9] http://bit.ly/22uNw3u
[10] http://bit.ly/1Q0MgPW
[11] http://ind.pn/1oMfd8D
[12] http://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/

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BETH A. FERRI AND CHRISTY ASHBY

2. U.S. INCLUSION IN THE ERA OF NEOLIBERAL EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we examine a range of recent U.S. standards-based neoliberal educational reforms and their impact on students with disabilities, particularly in relation to inclusion. Although U.S. accountability measures included within standards-based reform (SBR) are generally credited with increased school district accountability for students with disabilities in terms of their achievement, in many ways these policies have also intensified existing inequalities, including increased drop out rates and intensified segregation of students with disabilities. Based on neoliberal mindset in which the autonomous individual is responsible for his/her own success or failure, these reforms gloss over systemic factors, such as poverty, discrimination, and inequality that produce and maintain school failure in the first place. Moreover, neoliberal educational agendas, because of their fantasy of standardization and their incessant focus on testing regimes, do not align well with human diversity and difference that are essential to the maintenance of inclusive schools. If we are to remain vigilant about maintaining our commitments to inclusive practice in the face of such reforms, we must be wary of the continued "pull" of sorting and segregation, embrace an ever more expansive notion of inclusion, and be watchful of the dictates of market-based reforms on our most marginalized students.

THE STATE OF INCLUSION: THE U.S. CONTEXT

Despite its decades-long history of commitment to educating students with disabilities, groundbreaking legislative assurances, and numerous court cases demonstrating a clear preference for educating students with disabilities alongside same age peers, inclusive education still proves elusive for many students with disabilities in the U.S. Even the definition of inclusion in the U.S., which is defined as placement in general education classroom for greater than 80 percent of the school day, allows for, and one could argue encourages, a certain degree of segregation. However, the U.S. definition does quantify just how much exclusion can be tolerated, while still claiming that a student is included, something that countries such as Italy, for instance, do not stipulate, and perhaps should (Giangreco, Doyle, & Suter, 2012).

Recent figures show that 62 percent of students with disabilities nationwide, across all disability categories, are included in the U.S., meaning these students

F. Dovigo (Ed.), Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Practices, 21–31.

have access to the general education setting for more than 80 percent of the day (United Stated Department of Education, 2015). The number of students included has increased from 52 percent ten years ago, but the percentage of students who are included in the U.S. varies widely by state. For instance, Alabama includes 84 percent of its students, whereas Hawaii only includes 37 percent of its students. It appears that inclusion in the U.S. has as much to do with geography as with many other factors. When the overall percentage is disaggregated by disability label, the results are even more grim. Nationally, only 17 percent of students who are labeled as having intellectual disabilities and only 13 percent of students who are labeled with multiple disabilities are included more than 80 percent of the day (United Stated Department of Education, 2015).

Thus, despite provisions within the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) and given a longstanding reputation as promoting inclusion, access, and equity for students with disabilities, schools in the U.S. tend to be less inclusive than one might expect. Moreover, as researchers have documented, inclusion in the U.S. context is not so much a universal right, but a privilege that is afforded unevenly based on perceived severity of disability (Smith, 2010), as well as by race and ethnicity (Fierros & Conroy, 2002). In fact, students of color in U.S. schools tend to be more segregated than their white peers, even when they share the same disability label. Moreover, a recent study by Schmidt, Burroughs, Zoido, and Houang (2015), showed that schooling often exacerbates, rather than ameliorates, social inequalities between wealthy and poor students. They found significant disparities in terms of both achievement and opportunity to learn between students of different economic backgrounds, even though the percentage of students who are included has increased over time (Waitoller & King Thorius, 2015). In recent years, the U.S. has instituted a host of standards-based reforms that have brought significant changes to the ways that schools operate for all students. In the next section of this chapter, we highlight several of these reforms and discuss the impact of these reforms on students with disabilities and inclusion.

INCLUSION IN THE CONTEXT OF STANDARDS-BASED REFORM

Schools and teachers in the U.S. have been the subject of much attention in recent years. Under standards-based reform (SBR) schools are under increased scrutiny and mandated to raise the achievement of all public school students, while closing achievement gaps between historically underperforming students and their peers.[1] These reforms include a nationwide set of curricular standards called the Common Core, state mandated standardized tests, school- and district-based accountability and reporting measures disaggregated by disability classification, as well as race and ethnicity, and teacher and principal evaluations, all reflecting a larger neoliberal, "market-based" model of educational reform. As with all neoliberal reforms, the focus of these mandates and legislative changes is the improvement of the individual—whether it is the individual student, teacher or school. Rather than

addressing systematic and structural barriers to success for students, these reforms presume a level playing field where all children and schools could be successful with the appropriate set of tools, assessments and adequate application of effort. Furthermore, a tremendous amount of surveillance, accountability and top down control is built into these systems, further reducing teacher agency, autonomy, and creative problem solving.

A significant shift included in these new reforms has been an increased focus on students with disabilities, who are now mandated to participate in statewide assessments, although students with the most significant disabilities are still permitted to take alternate assessments (typically one or two percent of the school population). The impact of SBR on students with disabilities have been mixed—increasing access to general education curriculum and raising expectations on the one hand, while increasing drop out rates and limiting post-secondary options for those students who cannot pass high stakes tests required to receive a diploma on the other (Bacon, Rood, & Ferri, 2016). In the next section we highlight several of these key reform efforts that have significantly altered the landscape of education for all students and teachers, with disproportionate impact on students already at risk for marginalization and segregation.

STANDARDS BASED REFORM EFFORTS

In 2001, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) set a goal that by 2014, all students would meet proficiency standards on State assessments in reading, mathematics and science and publicly report test results, with scores aggregated for specific student subgroups, including low-income students, students with disabilities, English language learners, and major racial and ethnic groups. Schools must report their progress annually (AYP) and are held accountable for student performance. Schools that do not perform experience a range of sanctions, from mandatory improvement plans to government oversight to closure. One of the hallmarks of this legislation was the expectation that *all students*, including many heretofore excluded from assessment protocols, would be expected to meet grade level standards in core content areas. For many students with disabilities, this led to increased access to curriculum and grade level instruction. However, as we will outline later in this chapter, those heightened expectations also left many students behind and created a context for new types of exclusion to emerge.

Arriving on the heels of NCLB, Race to the Top is a competitive grant program from the Obama administration designed to encourage *and reward* States that enact particular reforms that result in improved student outcomes, including graduation rates, student achievement, and narrowing achievement gaps between groups of students. The focus of this initiative was the recognition of schools demonstrating success increasing student performance and identifying those schools not meeting the mark. The goal was to reward innovation in educational reform and school improvement.

Another SBM effort that has had tremendous impact on access to curriculum is the development and implementation of common nationwide standards. Common Core is a set of benchmarked curricular standards in mathematics and language arts/literacy designed to ensure that all students graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge necessary to be "college and career ready." The intention was to regularize and raise content and curriculum across all states such that students in Florida could expect a similar education as students growing up in South Dakota. Connected to these new curricular standards were standardized materials, assessments, and even pacing guides to ensure consistency and reliability of educational delivery. These standards have been especially controversial in the U.S. because they were rolled out very quickly and often tied to student and teacher evaluation systems. In other words results from these standardized assessments were included in teacher evaluation systems in many states, making student success in the new regimes foundational to determinations of teacher efficacy.

Prioritized Curriculum

Some schools have responded to the dictates of standards-based reforms by creating a new track of self-contained "prioritized curriculum"[2] (PC) classes designed to provide access to standards-based general education curriculum at a modified pace. These classes function assegregated classrooms in which classroom teachers narrow the curriculum students are exposed to by focusing on what they see as the most important aspects of the curriculum. Thus, instead of differentiating instruction in the classroom or within a lesson, schools simply create separate classes or spaces for this more targeted curriculum. Typically, these PC classes are populated exclusively by students with disabilities and are taught by special education teachers. This development is especially troubling, as it seems to justify exclusion from general education classrooms, teachers and peers in the name of access to curriculum (Bacon, Rood, & Ferri, 2016).

Building on New Child Left Behind and the Race to the Top, SBR reformers emphasized the importance of tracking teacher effectiveness in hopes of improving student performance. New teacher accountability systems, referred to as Value Added Assessment models, meant that teachers in the U.S. are increasingly held accountable for the success and or failure of their students. For each teacher, a composite score reflecting evidence of student growth (as measured by standardized test scores) and teacher observations is used to determine a rating of ineffective, developing, effective or highly effective.

The impetus behind value added teacher evaluations is that even one year of an ineffective teacher can have long lasting implications, particularly for low performing students (Rivers & Sander, 2002) and further that low performing and low SES schools are least likely to have effective teachers (Peskey & Haycock, 2006). The goal was to attempt to identify the positive (or negative) impact of a teacher's instruction on students' growth. These growth or "value-added" models

were designed to acknowledge that not all students start at the same place and yet still need to demonstrate positive growth over time. However, these growth models are not designed for students who many not be able to reach the academic targets, even with reasonable supports. Moreover, value added approaches also lead to increased sorting of students and teachers as individual scores are attached to specific teachers. It is easy to see how these policies can serve as a deterrent to collaboration and flexible groupings, as well as teacher unwillingness to work with students who may hurt their overall ratings.

School Choice

Built into the intense focus on assessment of students, schools, and now teachers is the ability to rank order schools from high performing to low performing schools. The proliferation of Charter schools, which are publically-funded independent schools that operate outside many of the dictates of public schools, have intensified the competition between schools. As Dudley-Marling and Baker (2012) report, however, "students with disabilities, especially students with more severe disabilities, are significantly underserved by charter schools. Moreover, many charters enroll few, if any, students with disabilities" (p. 17). Thus, the rhetoric of choice obscures the racial, ethnic, class, or able-bodied privilege that mediates the choices one is able to excercise.

Evidence-Based Practice

One of the tenets of those promoting standards-based reforms is that educators have not paid sufficient attention to "what works" in education as determined by rigorous and high quality research. Evidence-based practice (EBP) requires that schools, particularly those that are not able to document adequate student progress, select exclusively from among instructional programs and interventions that have proven through large scale randomized clinical trial that they are effective. Once selected, EBP demands that teachers implement instructional programs with fidelity.[3] A core assumption of EBP is that if a particular instructional program is deemed effective in a large clinical trial, then it must be effective for all learners. By narrowing what counts as evidence, schools are increasingly pressured to choose commercial, highly scripted instructional materials, further reducing teacher decision-making and creative problem solving. When the focus of instruction is simply to adhere to a commercial program with fidelity, teachers are not encouraged to use their professional expertise to determine *why* a particular student is or isn't learning. As Ferri (2015) writes,

> If I were a struggling reader, would it matter to me that a practice has the gold seal of being evidence based? I would argue that finding a strategy or approach that works for me matters infinitely more than knowing a strategy works for

> a large randomized group of students, who are likely not representative of my own unique learning strengths and difficulties, my classroom, school, culture, or community. Thus, EBP may be a good place to start in selecting among various approaches, but so too must we consider the learner as embodying a unique confluence of strengths, needs, learning preferences, and interests, and use this information to inform our instructional decision-making for each learner. As the popular meme attests, if a student does not learn the way I teach, I must find a way to teach the way the student learns. (p. 11)

EBP has also eclipsed promising inclusive practices such as differentiated instruction and universal design for learning, which recognize the importance of being responsive to individual learning differences. The problem of EPB is further exacerbated when you consider that there are no approaches or strategies in the "What Works Clearinghouse" to support the education of students with autism or intellectual disabilities (United States Department of Education).

Response to Intervention

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a tiered system of intervention designed to target more intensive instruction to students who are not performing to the level of their peers. RTI aims to ensure that students are provided with targeted evidence-based instruction before they fall too far behind and are referred to special education. The model is designed to ensure that student difficulties are not the result of lack of exposure to quality instruction (meaning EBP). Unfortunately, the model often leads to pull out instruction, conflating the intensity of instruction or intervention with particular settings or instructional configurations. Thus a common way to distinguish between tiers of intervention is to define Tier 1 as the general classroom, Tier 2 as small group instruction, and Tier 3 as one-on-one instruction. At each level, the student is more likely to be pulled out of class to receive instruction. Ultimately, the goal of RTI remains to eventually confirm or deny a disability label—to determine if the student is under performing because they simply haven't been exposed to quality instruction or because they have a disability. Moreover, RTI often expands pull out instruction to a wider range of students. Thus, RTI fails to disrupt deficit model thinking—the onus is placed on the student to respond to EBP or be referred to special education.

Putting it all Together

Taken together, all of these reforms represent a deep structural shift in education, one that poses considerable concerns to inclusive education at the same time they reflect many of the problematic assumptions of traditional special education practice. Neoliberal reforms shift attention away from an expectation that teachers use their expertise to accommodate difference and instead, hyper focus on standardization and

accountability. For students, their value rests solely on their ability to approximate age-based norms for achievement. Students who cannot keep up with an increasingly rigorous curricular standards in classrooms that are under increased pressure to raise test scores risk a host of exclusions—from increased pull out instruction (even for non-labeled students), to newly formed low tracked classes, to eventual referral to special education. As Dudley-Marling and Burns (2015: 18) write, the context of the free-market, neoliberal shift in education with its emphasis on test scores, students with disabilities are perceived to have "less value than students who raise test scores and cost less to educate. Charters, vouchers systems, and other free market initiatives represent a serious long-term threat to inclusive practices".

Recent reform efforts have funneled large sums of money into the curriculum and assessment industry. Schools are now seen as lucrative markets, rather than a public good, and schools have ceded control of curriculum, assessments, as well as teacher certification exams to commercial publishers. These are challenging times to try to try to promote inclusion of all students in general education—how do we promote and welcome difference in an era that is marked by standardization and performance? Learning from the U.S. context, what has been the effect of these reforms on students with disabilities and their schooling experiences?

IMPACT OF REFORMS ON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

It could be said that as a result of standards-based reforms, schools in the U.S. were mandated for the first time ever to take full responsibility for students with disabilities and their achievement. Increasing accountability required schools and classroom teachers to take seriously the achievement of all students, which meant that students with disabilities would be held to higher expectations than they ever had been previously. No longer could general education ignore students with disabilities or their learning. Moreover, those advocating for increased inclusion now had a powerful argument for ensuring that all students with disabilities had full access to the general education classroom as well as grade level curriculum. As many argued, "How can schools hold students with disabilities accountable to grade level curriculum if they are excluded from classrooms where that curriculum is being taught?" Although concerned about the underlying premise of these mandates, many were cautiously optimistic that reforms would strengthen U.S. commitments to inclusion. Yet, the past 15 years have not demonstrated much benefit to these reforms. In fact, the findings are quite troubling. SBR has been linked to increased dropout rates for students with disabilities (Cole, 2006), lower graduation rates overall (Gaumer-Erickson, Kleinhammer-Tramill, & Thurlow, 2007), and graduation gaps between students with and without disabilities (Moore, 2012).

Early on, Albritten, Mainzer and Zeigler (2004), expressed concerns that including students with disabilities in accountability measures would result in students becoming scapegoats for school accountability problems. In a system built on free market competition, students who fall outside the norm become positioned

as liabilities, problems to manage. Students who are perceived to be at risk of failure pose a threat to the success of the whole and must, therefore, be pushed out of the ranks of those who "count." Sadly, schools have indeed responded to this "problem of difference" (Douglas, 1966; Garland Thomson, 1997) by finding new ways to exclude students by expanding the number of students taking alternative assessments, tacitly encouraging some of the more difficult to teach students to drop out, and creating new forms of segregated classes for students with disabilities.

Because power finds a way to recirculate itself, schools simply found a way to separate access to high quality curriculum from access to general education classrooms. Be it through renewed efforts to group students homogeneously in order to directly target skills identified as lacking through universal assessment tools, pull-out instruction in tiered RTI models, or the promulgation of so-called PC classrooms, the challenge is clear. For many students who are most vulnerable to exclusion and marginalization, these reforms promote access, but only through exclusion. They fail to question the structures of general education classrooms and schools that helped create such disparities and instead create new spaces to address old problems. Despite over a decade of so-called reforms to education, deficit thinking within education remains intact. In an attempt to have all, or at least most students (as we will discuss below), meet more rigorous standards, schools have responded to differences between students by fashioning new ways to sort out those who disrupt the status quo. The problem of difference continues to be located in the non-conforming individuals, not in rigid, inflexible assessment and accountability regimes.

Equally disturbing is the way that these Standards Based Reforms continue to ignore students considered to have more complex or significant disabilities. While NCLB mandated inclusion of students with disabilities in assessment measures and school rankings, a concession was made that allowed schools to provide alternative assessments to one to two percent of its students. This typically included a portfolio evaluation that did not need to be tied to grade level standards. Students who opt for an alternative assessment would not, however, receive a high school diploma. In New York State, for example, at the end of their K-12 academic careers, students completing an alternate assessment qualify for a Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential, a certificate (rather than a diploma) that does not merit inclusion in federal accountability measures. Students receiving these reduced credentials have many post-secondary options closed to them because they do not have a diploma. This exception presumes the exclusion of students with significant disabilities and provides a legitimatized way for schools to remove the problem of students who pose the greatest threat to accountability mandates.

We would argue that in many ways SBR policies have not diminished, but instead, intensified existing inequalities, with very little positive impact on student achievement. Based on a larger neoliberal agenda, SBR glosses over systemic factors, by individualizing difference and masking inequality. Further, market driven reforms advance a one-size-fits-all response that fails to account for the

diversity of students in our classrooms. Of course, it is no surprise to those of us in disability-related fields that neoliberal educational agendas, because of their fantasy of standardization and an incessant focus on testing regimes would not align well with human diversity and difference.

CONCLUSION

As scholars and educators deeply committed to educational equity, inclusion, and disability studies, an ongoing concern we have regarding the neoliberal turn in U.S. education, which has ushered in an ever-expanding set of standards-based reforms, is how to maintain (and even expand) our commitments to inclusive education for all students. In this conclusion, we draw on disability studies in education as a critical resource for helping us to transform schools that "work" for *all* students, while honoring and celebrating difference, diversity, and disability.

First, we believe that it is essential that we understand that schools are places where increased diversity calls for an expanded and intersectional vision for inclusion—or what we might call Inclusion 2.0.Taking its cues from international policies (e.g. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Salamanca Statement), Inclusion 2.0 recognizes and seeks to address all of the ways that students are marginalized in schools (whether that marginalization is the result of poverty, ethnicity or race, gender non-conformity, sexuality, or linguistic diversity). Joining forces with other critical and multicultural educators, Inclusion 2.0 remains vigilant about any attempt to exclude students based on a perceived difference from dominant group norms. Instead, differences are viewed as productive and enriching—and necessary for creating classrooms that reflect the fullness of humanity and a diverse world.

Second, we are reminded of the film, *Field of Dreams* where an Iowa farmer decides to build a baseball field in the middle of his cornfield. The iconic line from the film, which motivates him to disregard all of his skeptics, is "If you build it, they will come." A lesson we take away from the film is: If you build segregated spaces in schools, you will fill them—often with the students who have the least social capital. We must, therefore, be wary of designating spaces that are exclusive to students with disabilities regardless of intent because once these spaces are created, they become self-perpetuating—over populated with students who cannot or will not assimilate into rigid norms of classroom performance. Instead, we must resist the impulse to remove and segregate students. We must see that exclusionary structures allow general education to maintain a false sense of homogeneity.

Third, despite the narrowing constraints placed on education, we need to keep "widening the circle" (Sapon-Shevin, 2007) and remain ever more vigilant about the "pull" of segregation and the dictates of the market on students most likely to be excluded. Following a disability studies model, we should shift the object of remediation from the bodies, minds, and behaviors of non-normative students to inaccessible, unwelcoming, and inflexible classrooms and school contexts. Moreover,

if we take seriously the benefits of diversity, we cannot then require that students comply to one-size-fits all instructional models or rigid and exclusionary notions of normalcy (Ashby, 2010; Ferri & Connor, 2005; Hehir, 2005). Long plagued by low expectations, many students with disabilities have been able to demonstrate that they can keep up with increased expectations, but others have not. Rather than turn students into commodities where their worth is based on their ability to meet standards and normative conceptualizations of performance, we should refocus on expanding opportunities and access for all learners, while not excluding any students on the basis of his/her ability or performance.

Fourth, as inclusive educators, we have long argued that special education is a set of services, rather than a place. In doing so, we stressed that disability related supports and services could be provided regardless of the setting. Yet, in making this argument we inadvertently reinforced the idea that inclusion could be achieved simply by placing students with disabilities in the general education classroom, without requiring necessary changes to the structures of that space. In other words, we have inadvertently focused on inclusion as a place (the general education classroom). In the U.S. we also add a temporal dimension by quantifying the percentage of time (80 percent) a child spends in a general education classroom as defining an inclusive placement. A disability studies framework can help us shift the focus to how to acknowledge how rigid and exclusionary school structures and practices fail an increasing number of students, refocusing our attention to policies and practices that transform classroom structures and practices that expand access, promote equity, and welcome diversity and difference.

Finally, we must continue to expand teacher expertise and accountability to all learners. A teacher evaluation system that promotes conformity rather than innovation and inclusion seems destined to fail in the context of ever more diverse schools and classrooms. Working collaboratively to meet the needs of all learners in inclusive classrooms requires that we train teachers to be flexible and responsive to a range of student learning needs—not a fictionalized normative student. This will likely require a merging of general education and special education, changes to teacher preparation programs (Ashby, 2012), an elimination of stigmatizing labels, and the fostering of practices that involve collaborative and creative problem solving and a shared responsibility for all learners.

NOTES

[1] Of course, if schools raise test scores for all students, they may still have achievement gaps between their highest and lowest performing students. As Brantlinger (2004) and Gallagher (2010) astutely pointed out, there is no such thing as "catching up" when it comes to a standardized test, because standardized measures, which are by definition made to conform to a so-called "normal" distribution, require that some children must fail. All students cannot be average or above average and still conform to a standardized test (because they are normed to conform to a bell curve distribution), so some schools (and some students) will always be "failing" as measured by standardized tests.

[2] These classes are sometimes referred to by other names (e.g. "Focused Curriculum" classes), depending on the state, but they all have a similar purpose of modifying or reducing content of the curriculum that students with disabilities are exposed to. Generally, the content is narrowed explicitly to align with standardized tests.

[3] In many ways the focus on teacher fidelity is paradoxical to value-added teacher assessments. Under EBP, the teacher is only to deliver instruction with fidelity—thereby reducing the teacher as a confounding variable and placing more importance on the instructional program itself. In other words, the instructional program is the key variable in EBP. Yet, in value added teacher evaluation systems, it is the teacher that is seen as having the most impact on student achievement. If I am a teacher under these systems, do I follow the script of a commercial program or do I use my professional expertise—how do I decide whether to be a dependent or independent variable?

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3. LINKING THEORY TO PRACTICE IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

TWO KINDS OF DISCOURSE

Today, two important kinds of discourse colonize most talk about school and education, concurring to provide analysis, explanations, watchwords, and directions for practice. Surprisingly, neither shows an interest in listening to the voice of pedagogy, which is supposed to be native to the educational field. Pedagogy actually seems to be confined to a sort of "reservation", essentially benevolently tolerated, provided it focuses on folkloric activities and avoids intruding on the exploitation of new pastures.

The first discourse refers to the economic sphere, especially to the neoconservative wave which in the last few decades has largely permeated most social and educational politics. For a long time, it has been thought that the push towards globalization would prevail against the traditional boundaries of local cultures and politics, prompting new forms of interpretation and management of economic questions, so as to reduce large disparities and produce more wealth and wellbeing for all. On the contrary, we have seen the rise of a sort of neoliberal monolithic culture, which also pervades education in the name of a reductionist approach. This approach is surely not able to solve the complex issues of today, but offers in return a comfortable feeling of being in control, thanks to a handful of simplistic watchwords (Burbules & Torres, 2003; Artiles, 2003). Instead of engaging in strengthening the requisite variety implied by educational activities, neoliberal ideology suggests reviving a one-dimensional interpretation of school based on individualism, competition, the talent myth, social Darwinism, labelling, and so on (Ball, 2010b; Gandin, 2006).

The fairytale of a "knowledge society" – to which we all supposedly currently belong – provided a vague, and therefore flexible framework for implementing that programme. As well as recently witnessing how finance has attempted to dominate the economy through the promise of quick and easy money for all, a scenario was depicted where achieving immaterial and highly specialized skills would get rid of vocational training addressed at developing low-profile, vanishing manual jobs. As we know, this hasn't happened. In the end, a few people became richer, while many were impoverished; "dirty jobs" have not disappeared, as what has actually increased is the gap between students attending premier and bush league schools, along with the fear of staying unemployed regardless (Tomlinson, 2013). Nevertheless, these undeniable failures don't trouble the economic discourse on education, which in

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fact continues to revamp simple recipes: success can be guaranteed by attending the "right" schools, which will ensure students to get good marks also at the next school level, and so on.

In short, after decades of the "free choice" mythology and the "free market" school we are still waiting to see the actual benefits of the prevailing economic discourse on education. Conversely, the damage is evident: whoever bet on the neoliberal model increasingly falls in the school league tables drawn up every year by the OECD – ironically, another economic organization (Meyer & Benavot, 2013). Certainly, in this scenario what is growing is the number of students who turn out to be "unfit" for school, and consequently exposed to rising levels of marginalisation and exclusion. They are precisely the subject of the second discourse, which we will now examine.

FUNCTIONAL DISCRIMINATION

The neoliberal school is designed to create disadvantage, marginalisation, and student drop-outs, that is to produce "production scraps". Where quality is forced into ranking schemes, mediocrity is so essential that it must be carefully nurtured. The notion of standard, brought into the schools through the sponsorship of the national Departments of Education, serves exactly this purpose. A standard is used for defining what is non-standard, as without deviant cases the notion itself is worthless. For example we can say that a school is good only by comparing it to other schools that are fair or poor. But when every school declares itself good, one will consequently claim to be excellent, i.e. better than the others (Slee, 2001, 2014).

If the production of "educational scraps" is mandatory to ensure this kind of ranking, then we need to find someone who can create them. This is where the psycho-medical discourse comes into play. A long tradition dating back to the first decades of last century has reinforced the idea that human beings can be discriminated against on the basis of some specific traits. While in the 1800s these traits were identified with certain physical features such as brain size or skin colour, more recently they have been seen as being situated inside the person (Gould, 1996; Richardson & Powell, 2011). Therefore, assuming that elements such as "intelligence" or "reading aptitude" lie within the individual, freed psychometrics from the obligation of proving their existence, thereby allowing a new group of professionals to directly measure and classify people on the basis of these hypothetical factors. Diagnoses and tests were developed to strengthen the status of scientific credibility of these activities through the design of more and more extended and detailed classification instruments. This way, new pathologies have been created, which in turn have contributed to triggering in schools the search for "non-standard" students as subjects in need of psycho-medical treatment. In spite of this procedure having been overtly criticized, the current edition of the widespread Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders shows an even stronger inclination to describe disadvantaged students in terms of arbitrary syndromes such as "Borderline Intellectual Functioning" or

"Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder" (APA, 2013; Frances, 2013). This could actually outline a new eugenic trend that aims to identify the "less fit" students, separate them from the "healthy" part of the school population – whose career must not be interfered with – and benevolently redirect them towards more appropriate educational (and later working) activities (Thomas, 2012; Cassata, 2006).

Professionals working on these procedures of deviant identification and treatment surround themselves with a technical aura, which is essential to the development of such a process of forced medicalization (Conrad, 2007; Morel, 2014). The same process is responsible for the unleashing of unlikely "epidemics" of autism or ADHD, which prove to be concentrated in specific geographical areas, a clear outcome of contamination due essentially to diagnostic hyper-activism (Batstra et al., 2012; Gnaulati, 2013). This impressive spread of disablement practices emphasizes the current expansion of the psycho-medical discourse towards new areas of intervention by pursuing a twofold objective: on the one hand, to guarantee the constant growth of the already huge professional sector working on the treatment of people who don't fit the criteria defined by the neoliberal school: on the other, to provide the labour market with the appropriate amount of candidates for "dirty jobs" which the so-called knowledge society increasingly needs.

THE LABELLING FACTORY

The combination of neoliberal and psycho-medical discourses has offered specific motivation, as well as technical vocabulary, to the labelling of deviant subjects as a practice that is increasingly entrenched in schools too. The model for supporting disabled children has been implemented in a progressive way, at first with the wider group of students with learning difficulties (which in the meantime have become learning "disabilities"), then with the almost limitless class of pupils with "special educational needs". As is well known, it is not possible to achieve a clear diagnosis for many disabilities. Nevertheless, the diagnosis remains pivotal in getting additional resources and the same model has been extended to learning difficulties by requiring a medical certificate (Slee & Allan, 2001; Thomas & Loxley, 2007). It is still unclear what will happen in Italy regarding the SEN policies just issued. However, we can surely expect that a sort of medical certificate will be entailed here too.

The growing number of specialized interventions aimed at identifying and treating atypical students has led to the creation of what has been called "the SEN industry", a business sector jointly pushed by administrators, families, teachers, and professionals who, for different reasons, view this intervention as an attractive solution (Tomlinson, 2012). Administrators see the labelling of students "with problems", as well as sending them individually to care services, as an easy way to show they care, while at the same time avoiding having to tackle the structural reasons at the heart of these issues. For their part, families like labels as they allow them not to feel guilty (as disadvantage is socially perceived as a form of personal negligence) and get additional resources to support the child. Teachers, in

turn consider labels a simple way of delegating supporting teachers to take care of "difficult" students, giving them more time to pursue ordinary activities with the rest of the class. Finally, consultants see labelling as a large and lucrative area for expanding professional intervention.

This race to attach in an indiscriminate way a broadening number of labels seems to gradually reduce room for reflecting about their real meaning and impact. It is worth noting that in those countries that first adopted the notion of "special educational needs", the usefulness of this label has been called into question even by those who initially were its strongest supporters (Warnock, 1982). After all, it is not a coincidence that Finland, which steadily holds the highest positions in the famous OECD school league tables, has always managed without using labels like SEN (Graham & Jahnukainen, 2011). We can actually only apply the term "special" to one student if we believe that a "normal" student does exist, compared to whom the special student has some kind of deficit. However, as a matter of fact the use itself of the word "special" is the main reason for the deficit. When we accept that people can be described in binary terms – black/white, native/foreigner, normal/special – we compel others and ourselves into an exclusionary logic. On the contrary, the logic of inclusion is a mindset which welcomes and values difference (Deleuze, 1994). Moreover, the stress about needs is similarly feeble (Hart, 1996). Students not only have needs, but also desires and plans for their lives in and out of school. These elements are strictly interconnected, and hence excluding the planning dimension inevitably leads to overlooking the students' abilities to make the changes they want for their lives. Needs are met, while projects are achieved. Needs lead to interventions *on* the students, while projects lead to interventions *with* the students.

Instead of attaching meaningless labels such as SEN to our students, it would be worth re-instating the concept of disadvantage, which is far more flexible and gradual, and not referring to some ill-conceived internal condition of the child. Disadvantage is not being dyslexic, or not being a native speaker, or having Down syndrome, but living in an environment where you constantly need to conform and modify your sense of identity in order to feel adequate and fully accepted. Modifying the context, eliminating barriers to learning and participation, means welcoming diversity as an educational value.

WHAT KIND OF INCLUSION?

The significance of inclusive practices as a central topic for education is substantiated by the growing attention that it is receiving in international research today. It is worth noting that even the OECD – the aforementioned economic organization which currently exercises strong influence worldwide also on educational development lines – is including it as an essential keyword in the editorial launch of the most recent Education at a Glance report (OECD, 2014). However, the debate about inclusive education has been developing at a slower pace in the past, especially because there is no single, unambiguous definition of what inclusion means, as the range

of chapters in this volume also confirms (Ainscow et al., 2006; Armstrong et al., 2011). Even at the risk of oversimplifying, we can identify two main approaches to inclusive education, related to the ideas of specialty and community, respectively. The former assumes as a starting point for inclusion the educational work on disability developed over the years in schools, taking it as an intervention model able to deal with the emerging issue of learning difficulties and, more recently, SEN. In other words, the approach adopted with disabled students is expanded in order to identify learning difficulties and special needs, providing appropriate resources and support tools. On the contrary, the community approach assumes full participation of all stakeholders as well as the effort to remove participation and learning barriers as essential cornerstones of school development. Rather than providing the single student with tools to adapt to the context, the same context is transformed, making it richer and more flexible, so it can welcome and value all forms of students' diversity (Booth & Ainscow, 2011).

The two approaches significantly differ both conceptually and practically. Even when it advocates for more room for the educational discourse, the special proposal tends to see the student as an isolated individual, and through the framework of specific categories (dyslexia, behaviour disorder, language inadequacy…) which inevitably focus on deficit and assume the clinical gaze as a starting point for intervention aimed at integration. The community proposal acknowledges that barriers are connected to disability or learning difficulties, but also to socio-economic conditions, cultural and linguistic background, gender and, more generally, vulnerable situations to which everyone can be exposed during the many transitions the educational path requires. Therefore, it refrains from labelling students and prefers to draw upon all available resources inside and outside of school to improve spaces, curricula, cooperation, so everyone can be satisfied with the educational experience.

As we have noted, as it aims to expand its intervention into the area of students with learning difficulties and so-called SEN, the special approach risks worsening the ongoing process of medicalization of a growing part of the scholastic population by labelling children with reference to an unreal notion of normalcy. If we were to adopt such a method, we can suppose that in every class the number of "not normal" students – because labelled as disabled, with learning difficulties, or SEN – could easily reach 20–30% of the total. Common sense should suggest that we cannot consider one fourth of our classes (actually one fourth of future generations) abnormal. It is far better to revise our idea of normalcy and class, especially because research shows that students who receive these labels are mainly from families which are disadvantaged in economic, social, or cultural terms (Artiles & Trent, 1994; Ferri & Connor, 2005). Insisting on "technical" investments in the single student not only misinterprets such a disadvantage, framing it as a personal deficiency of the child in cognitive or behavioural terms, but also allocates the investment of limited resources in the wrong direction, favouring indiscriminate provisions instead of promoting school capabilities to differentiate interventions according to students' diversity and community resources.

THE ITALIAN CONTEXT

In Italy we witnessed a major change in the circumstances when, at the end of the Seventies, disabled students began to attend mainstream schools. What initially might have seemed like a gamble turned out to be a big achievement, especially because everyone, disabled or not, learned that disability is a shared and meaningful part of everyone's life experience (Booth, 1982; D'Alessio, 2011; Giangreco et al., 2012; Kanter, Damiani, & Ferri, 2014). Later, with the extension of compulsory schooling, an increasing number of disabled children began attending upper secondary schools. So, even though the accommodation process is far from being completely achieved today, we can state that this broadening largely contributed to further strengthening the idea that persons with a disability are first of all persons. This is the reason why it has been argued that the Italian way of accommodating disabled children ("integrazione") already owned several of the guiding principles of what, at an international level, is regarded as inclusion (Canevaro & De Anna, 2010).

However, shortly after the law ratified the abolition of special schools in Italy and pupils were admitted to desegregated educational environments, inclusion started to be seen as a *fait accompli* instead of a continuous struggle to improve school democracy and to fight every form of exclusion. The bottom-up process prompted by the shared value of schooling as a community endeavour, which gave stimulus to the reformist agenda, was gradually replaced by top-down procedures that shifted the focus to new definitions of what "special" means (where special always has a negative connotation). The centralized administration that traditionally presides over school organization in Italy, through the Ministry of Education, took on this work of re-categorisation. As long as children had been physically separated in different buildings, the pressure regarding specifying their condition using medical terms was quite low. Like in other countries, prior to reform many disabled children were simply not sent to school, as other disadvantaged and "unfit" pupils were assigned to special schools on the basis of nebulous diagnoses such as being "feeble-minded" or "retarded". However, since children started attending the same mainstream schools, the need to differentiate between normal and special students suddenly became compelling. On the one hand, the proliferation of more refined diagnoses seemed to provide a straightforward, technical answer to the urge to develop educational responses for those puzzling newcomers who didn't fit into the required curriculum. On the other hand, the "*integrazione*" process emphasized the actual limitations of schools in terms of teachers' co-presence, assisted devices, transportation and so on, therefore inevitably calling for more provisions. The central administration interpreted this request not as a claim to overall empowerment of schools, but as extra help to be given to the individual child, provided that s/he was formally declared disabled and as long as s/he attended classes. Consequently, through the conjunction of clinical diagnosis and bureaucratic paperwork, the physical separation abolished by law has been reformulated within the school in terms of less visible barriers

that still endorse the division between normal and special students as an assumed, "natural" fact.

Moreover, the Italian educational system is notoriously affected by a form of organizational dissociation. Even though in recent years schools' claims for greater autonomy have been recognised, at least formally, the central administration still conceives of itself and acts as a kind of ship's commander, who directly pilots the vessel's speed and direction via the big control panel made up of circulars and decrees sent daily to schools. However, this image is essentially flawed. The Ministry of Education actually manages two core components of the system, teacher recruitment and salaries (with the latter using up almost the entire budget allocated by the government). Nevertheless, it is very far from ruling the entire life of schools, as the official rhetoric would imply. Orders given from the cockpit about school organization and educational content are formally taken, but not carried out. Except for staff hiring and economic provisions, intermediate coordination bodies do not have effective influence on what really happens in schools. There are some historical and political reasons for that. During the Fascist era, an oppressive surveillance structure was imposed on every aspect of educational life. After this structure was dismantled and a very soft regulation and inspection scheme was reinstated that was more compatible with the resurgent localism strongly rooted in the history of the country. Since this trend has even strengthened over time, the Italian school system can currently be defined as a hyper-loosely coupled organization (Weick, 1976; Weick & Orton, 1990) in which the fragmentation naturally embedded in educational organizations is further intensified by the weakness of intermediate levels of coordination. As a result, the ministry's politics, deprived of implementation policies, are commonly separate from school practices. The central administration usually tries to bridge this gap by piling up new rounds of directives, producing even more policies that go unheeded. For example, several years ago the conservative government increased the minimum and maximum number of children per class, simultaneously decreasing the number of teachers by hindering the replacement of retired personnel. By exploiting the centralized staff hiring procedure, that move succeeded in *de facto* cancelling teachers' co-presence and creating the so called "henhouse classes", with thirty to forty children lumped together in small spaces. Around the same time, the same government set the maximum quota of foreign students per class at 30%. However, this time implementing this decision required that each school actively comply with the injunction, which implied that children from some neighbourhoods would have to travel for miles every day (at their own expense) to attend "ethnically balanced" classes. Nearly all Italian schools actually ignored this nonsensical measure, but none were inspected or punished for this. Briefly, the government has resources but limited room to transform them into effective drivers, whereas schools have nominal autonomy but inadequate resources, which dramatically diminishes their ability to improve educational activities.

This huge divide between central and local, resources and fulfilment, formal decisions and actual praxis, provides an explanation for the heterogeneity of

inclusive practices that researchers have observed in Italian schools (Anastasiou, Kauffman, & Di Nuovo, 2015; Begeny & Martens, 2007; Ferri, 2008, Gaingreco, Doyle, & Suter, 2012; Giangreco & Doyle, 2012). Depending on the local customs, essentially shaped by head teachers' orientation and teachers' preferences, we find mainstream and support teachers cooperating to develop a full range of activities aimed at the whole class, or conversely a strict division of labour between the support and mainstream teacher, where the former is almost exclusively looking after the disabled student, while the latter is working with the rest of the class. In large schools, it is even quite common to see both arrangements in adjoining classrooms. The situation is worsened by the ambiguity of the law, which states that support teachers should work with the entire class, while binding their actual hiring to the enrolment of a disabled child. Thus, on the one hand parents who went through the painful medical and bureaucratic procedure required for declaring their child disabled in order to get educational support are understandably upset when it is revealed that the support teacher will work "with all children". On the other hand, the law's equivocal formulation allows mainstream teachers to actually "get rid of" the disabled child, delegating all educational interventions to the support teachers. This way, they are able to deliver the normal curriculum to the rest of the students. Moreover, pre-service training tracks for special and mainstream teachers are currently separate in Italy. This contributes to reinforcing, rather than reducing, the gulf between school professionals and, consequently, students (Acedo et al., 2008; Young, 2008; EADSNE, 2010). It is not surprising that, caught in the middle, many support teachers feel professionally frustrated and consequently leave as soon as possible for a permanent post as a regular classroom teacher (Devecchi et al., 2012).

As we noted, interpretation of inclusive settings differs widely among schools, and sometimes even among classes in the same school. Several attempts have been made in the past to reduce this inconsistency, as it severely hinders the ability of schools to provide fair and equal educational opportunities to all students. The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health – ICF (WHO, 2001) – has been widely promoted by the Italian Ministry of Education as a tool offering objective descriptions and common ground to different professionals involved in educational planning for special children. Similarly, the law requires that every year teachers prepare an individualized educational plan (IEP), which describes educational interventions designed for each disabled student. This plan should ensure that the child not only has proper care at school, but also attains specific educational goals. However, neither the ICF nor individual plans have been able to reduce the many discrepancies affecting the level and quality of educational provisions provided by different schools. The efforts towards the creation of a common professional framework failed for two reasons, essentially: while in the ICF psychological and, particularly, physiological orientation largely prevail over the social dimension, in IEP education is regularly confused with technical and remedial training. Nevertheless, the main problem is that these approaches emphasize standardization of practices as a way of automatically ensuring educational achievement. From this

paradoxical perspective, the most successful interventions should be context-free and teacher-proof (Ashby, 2012; Weiston-Serdan & Giarmoleo, 2014). Conversely, schools need to create coordination and alignment of inclusive projects not through the pursuit of standards, but by preserving, valuing, and putting diversity in connection. Inclusion does not work like designing desk height or planning fire drills, which are based on guidelines based on the "average" student or class. Instead of concentrating on individual students, asking them to adapt to standards, inclusion seeks personalization through developing bonds with others.

Even in a system apparently free from discrimination, as Italian schools appear to be since special schools were abolished years ago, this focus on the individual, detached child gives rise to more subtle forms of exclusion. Mechanisms of "spatialization" (Armstrong, 2003; D'Alessio, 2012) within the school are permanently at work. Even though regulations in force never mention separate spaces or state that children can be placed outside regular classrooms, most schools have "special rooms" where educational activities with disabled children are commonly managed. Beyond that, separation between "normal" and "less than normal" students is repeatedly reaffirmed through a range of peripheralization strategies usually employed with diverse children. As we have said, the pupil may attend class just for short periods, spending most of his/her time outside of the classroom with the support teacher or teaching assistant ("exile strategy"). Or s/he stays in class most of the time, but usually working on different topics and tasks than his/her classmates, so that only physical space is actually shared ("condominium strategy"). Otherwise, s/he takes part in shared activities, but his/her contribution is essentially irrelevant, marginal or occasional in terms of the achievement of the planned class activities ("walk on strategy").

Even though spending time outside the classroom should not be demonised, especially when related to projects involving groups of students with mixed abilities, we think that sending a child away because s/he would "interfere" with the fulfilment of a (hypothetical) regular program is highly questionable. Recent research sheds light on the reasons why pulling students out of their general education classroom remains a common practice in Italy too (Ianes, Demo, & Zambotti, 2013). First of all, frontal teaching methods are still the most widely used approach for class work among Italian teachers. Active methods such as inquiry- based or cooperative learning, discussion groups, peer tutoring and so on are not widespread. Furthermore, they are often considered "time consuming", as the provision of educational content is generally planned according to a very tight schedule. In addition, especially in secondary schools, a preference for lecturing is emphasized by the strict ("silo style") separation between subjects that teachers still prefer, even though the literature shows that massive doses of traditional lecturing are less effective for learning than active methods (Prince, 2004; Freeman et al., 2014). Moreover, lectures also require a very special setting made of prolonged silence and attention that must be paid, which require a high level of self-control in students. As a consequence, any unintended noise can easily become a disturbance, which disrupts the atmosphere. In such

an environment, a large proportion of pupils is unable to cope with the protracted immobility required of them. Consequently, the more classes are based on lectures, the more some children are sent to attend alternative activities, often even before the lesson starts. Although we agree with scholars who emphasise the importance of adopting a wide range of teaching methods, especially related to strategies such as learning by doing and learning from peers, we believe that the push out phenomenon that is widespread in Italian schools can be overcome only if teachers become more familiar with those strategies and start valuing the effectiveness of active learning methods. This in turn implies a deep change in teachers' mind-sets concerning the role of the curriculum in school. One of the central tenets of inclusive education is that rather than forcing students to fit into existing educational programs, the curriculum has to be adapted to become accessible to all students. As long as only children are required to be flexible in order to adjust to a rigid curriculum or assessment, expanding teaching methods is not enough to avoid the push out effect and achieve inclusion. We need to decide what matters as a core value in school in order to develop coherent educational policies, where micro-exclusion produced by educational programs that expel children from classes are banned.

NEW CHALLENGES FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ITALY

In light of the above, the evolution of the Italian school system, internationally regarded as a good example of inclusive policies, highlights that the abolition of special schools does not automatically mean that all pupils are actually included in mainstream education. As we have commented, covert forms of marginalization of diverse students are still at work within schools, and aim to reinstate the distinction between normal and special students as an objective fact. From this point of view disability, as a form of diversity clearly defined by medical diagnosis, is more easily accepted on the basis of the compassionate attitude that is so deeply rooted in Italian culture. Disabled children are welcome in mainstream schools because they are underdogs by definition. They are side-lined but tolerated. Conversely, a large number of children apparently unable to cope with school requirements are increasingly classified as having learning difficulties, or categorised according to the nebulous label of "special educational needs", which is increasingly stuck on children. On the one hand, the labelling procedure further expands, as we noted, the business of so-called technical interventions. On the other, it legitimizes the shift from micro to macro-exclusion, from tolerance to expulsion. Data show that Italy currently still has one of the highest rates of early school leavers in Europe: in secondary education, one student in five cannot complete his/her course of studies, whereas in upper secondary school one in four does not get the diploma. Compared to the European trend, in the last ten years the situation has remained unaltered, as Italy still has the largest percentage of early school leavers after Spain, Portugal, Malta, and the Republic of Macedonia.

Early school leaving is generally explained as the outcome of educational disengagement, which refers to a condition of low attainment and underachievement, as well as to a reduced sense of belonging to school and poor relationships between teachers and students (Balfanz, Herzog, & Mac Iver, 2007; Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Gibbs & Poskitt, 2010; Lumby, &; Montalvo, Mansfield, & Miller, 2007; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009; Ross, 2009; Stephenson, 2007; Willms, 2003). Furthermore, research emphasizes that early school leaving is also associated with the likelihood of becoming unemployed and, more precisely, falling into the NEET (not in employment, education or training) category, which in Italy totals more than two million people aged between 15 and 29 (OECD, 2010, 2014). Given the number of young people involved, this phenomenon can be described as a national emergency for Italy. However, early school leaving is not fully acknowledged by the school system, as it is usually regarded as a sociological more than educational, problem. Early school leaving is generally referred to as the social, economic, cultural, and psychological situation of children, therefore focusing on family background, risk factors or mental ability as components that enable us to predict whether individual students are likely to reach or fail to attain their educational goals. Because of the lack of pedagogical analysis, schools are assumed as a matter of fact, that is, as a neutral and self-explaining institution that children just need to deal with. Consequently, of the two variables forming the learning equation – school and students – such studies commonly consider only the latter as the element that needs to change and adapt. Far less attention has been devoted to the active role schools can play in eliminating discrimination and educational barriers, mobilizing resources for learning and participation, as well as promoting active change by transforming school cultures, policies and practices.

This is especially apparent when we analyze the educational trajectory of immigrant students in Italian schools. Considering that immigration is a relatively recent phenomenon in Italy, data shows that from 2001 to 2014 the number of first- and second-generation immigrant children quadrupled, to currently being 9% of the entire student population. Conversely, since 2009 the number of native students has gradually decreased (-2%). Nevertheless, the quantitative growth of immigrant students does not coincide with a qualitative one. Research highlights that immigrants' children don't have the same educational opportunities as native students (Colombo, 2013). Surveys conducted yearly in the framework of the OECD-PISA program (INVALSI) indicate that students who are the children of immigrants achieve considerably lower educational attainments compared to natives (Azzolini & Barone, 2013; Contini & Azzolini, 2016). This situation concerns all children, whether they are born in Italy or arrive at a later age. In comparison with Italian schoolmates, foreign children display lower pass rates. Moreover, in the move from primary to lower-secondary and then upper-secondary school, this divide widens progressively, especially for first-generation students (Barban & White, 2011; Mussino & Strozza, 2012). When they arrive in Italy, the

latter are also usually placed at lower grades than their age cohort. Furthermore, those not able to readily bridge the many gaps (linguistic, cultural, social…) they are facing in the new situation are usually compelled to repeat school years. This in turn gives rise to a condition of delayed school progress that worsens over time, becoming a general stigma which affects first-generation students as a whole. Moreover, compared to native pupils foreign children stop going to school earlier. Even though differences are not so pronounced during primary and lower secondary school, from age 13 leaving school before completion proves more common among foreign students. The educational gap is definitely more marked for first-generation students, who are by far at greater risk of dropping out of school. Yet even those who succeed in moving to secondary school, thanks to a considerable level of resiliency, frequently end up choosing vocational tracks. This choice, regularly suggested by schoolteachers, easily matches with the expectations of immigrant parents, who prefer their children to undertake shorter educational paths for economic and cultural reasons. Hence, a large proportion of foreign students become trapped in vocational tracks, which contributes to lowering their ability to access higher education and later to find better employment opportunities in the labour market. So, in 2012/13, only 19.3% of immigrant students enrolled in secondary schools ("*licei*"), compared to 39.4 who joined vocational educational paths. The percentage of native students picking up secondary and vocational schools is exactly the opposite (Colombo, 2013).

As we noted, this situation is commonly interpreted as directly linked to economic conditions and/or the sociocultural capital of immigrant families (Fuligni & Yoshikawa, 2003; Tang, 2015; Moguérou & Santelli, 2015). However, beyond these important factors, we must also delve into the practices of implicit categorization and, sometimes, explicit discrimination, which especially influence decisions on the educational trajectory of such students. On this subject crucial turning points are, for example, teachers' recommendations and vocational interviews held at the end of lower secondary school.

Summarizing, we can say that, after a few decades, what is currently in action in Italian schools is a sort of half-achieved inclusion for various reasons:

- The political drive that originally, on behalf of the equity principle, advocated for the inclusion of disabled children in normal schools has not been adequately nurtured, so it largely evaporated, leaving as a milestone the right of every disabled person to access compulsory school while getting additional resources. This narrowing of the attention from social to individual conditions has led in turn to a step back on how disabled children are perceived, which tends to minimize the weight of the context and social relationships in producing positive school experiences, while emphasizing the intrinsic features of disabled subjects in terms of a deficit to be compensated for (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). Consequently, the effort disabled students are required to make to adapt to the educational context is normally far greater than the investment directed at adapting the same context in

order to guarantee the full participation of the disabled child in everyday activities along with other students;

- The emphasis on the single student, often passed off as individualization or personalization, usually gives rise to new forms of segregation. Even though in Italian schools normal and special children do indeed live together in the same building, separation is resurfacing inside in the form of alienation related both to spaces and activities (D'Alessio, 2012). The environment is actually altered, but favouring separation, not inclusion. This becomes more frequent as students pass from lower to higher school levels: if in preschool sharing spaces and activities is typically the norm, in upper secondary school disabled students are, as a rule, taken outside the classroom, officially to carry out more "suitable" activities, but often just to not slow down the classmates' planned work;
- This kind of segregation in turn is reflected in the frequent separation of professional roles: even though the supporting teacher is expected, by law, to work side by side with the curriculum teacher in managing class activities, it is common to see the former working separately with the disabled child, leaving the latter free to develop the activities planned for "normal" students. Moreover, this adds to the recurring habit of deferring to external professionals (neuropsychiatrists, psychologists, speech therapists…) on decisions about what are proper activities to carry out in school with disabled students, thereby creating new forms of separation in relation to the other students and teachers.

Beyond these limitations, what the Italian context apparently misses more is the recognition that the glorious age of integration, when the world could easily be split into seemingly neat categories such as disabled and not-disabled/able-bodied people, has come to an end. The special pedagogy approach, still focused on the disabled individuals, seems to ignore the main problem teachers are dealing with in school today, that is, class heterogeneity. The pressing demands from the environment about reaching high standards favours an interpretation of students' variability chiefly in negative terms, triggering the race to disable increasing portions of students who turn out to be "unfit" on the cognitive, linguistic, behavioural, or emotional level. The current trend is to label all these minorities, so transforming disadvantage into discomfort and the majority of students into prospective patients. Even if schools look still open to all, segregation is actually in full swing: premier league (normally fee-paying) schools guarantee a safe environment and excellent results, while bush league schools are attended by immigrants' offspring, disabled children, and other pariahs. Therefore, it is urgent also in Italy to reconsider not only the school model , but also the form of society we would like education to promote.

COMMUNITY AND RECOGNITION

As we have noted, the social connotations which initially prompted the pro-integration movement in Italy have long been replaced by a view essentially centred

on the individual. This strengthened the idea of disadvantage as an outcome of a personal deficit, an inward condition representing a sort of subjective tragedy deriving from the situation of abnormality the individual is suffering from (Oliver & Barnes, 2011; Swain & French, 2008). Nevertheless, this assumption has recently been strongly criticized and an alternative description has emerged, which looks at disadvantage as a phenomenon originating essentially in context, in the form of barriers to learning and participation of less able students. In contrast with the individual explanation, a social model has been proposed which analyses exclusion as a feature of biopolitics towards diversity. Accordingly, exclusion is seen as the process of active marginalization of people who deviate from an increasingly strict and invasive definition of normalcy (Barnes & Mercer, 2010; Shakespeare, 2006).

Calling attention again to the material and external elements concurring to create experiences of disablement, the social approach greatly contributed to calling into question the currently prevailing psycho-medical view, according to which every difficulty, also in school, should be interpreted essentially in terms of both physical or cognitive personal characteristics. However, it has been rightly observed that the social perspective has been better able to express abstract critiques than implement actual changes to the practices in use (Allan, 2014). This could be partially explained considering the intense political resistance such an approach meets among the stakeholders: as we noted, administrators, teachers, parents, and consultants generally prefer to deal with disadvantage in terms of a single child's treatment rather than undertaking wider structural changes involving scholastic organization. Nevertheless, the struggle to leave a permanent mark on practice can also be connected to the contrast between the individual and social view of the problem. To say exclusion is the result of a process whose responsibility is first of all social doesn't necessarily mean to negate that disadvantage is also a subjective experience, which everyone undergoes in a different and personal way. As Vygotskij would put it, the inter-psychic becomes intra-psychic. Both dimensions contribute to building the way exclusion in school is produced and experienced.

Accordingly, we think that we need to overcome the contrast between the individual and social view of disadvantage to merge both into a larger cultural and community perspective, allowing us to recognize the role inter-subjectivity and interaction play in building the identity as well as bio-political sphere (Booth, & Ainscow, 2011; Remedios & Allan, 2010). Refocusing the topic of inclusion in terms of community allows us to understand and accept how exclusion actually impacts on the lives of people who experience it, and to assume it as a starting point for removing barriers embedded in educational environments and practices. Though crucial, the issue is not just promoting individual wellbeing or removing barriers which prevent a large segment of the population from fully accessing education. In a deeper sense, what is at stake is a conflict about recognition, namely the decision about who should really be considered a part of the community, together with the ability to define and transform the same community, adopting inclusion as an active strategy for evolutionary change (Habermas & Taylor, 2002).

Research on social capital shows that building a sense of belonging can usually be developed through a process involving three different levels (Allan & Catts, 2014; Woolcock, 2002). The first level (*bonding*) refers to the strong relationships connecting the inner circle of people who live through similar situations to us, such as relatives or friends. The next level (*bridging*) is wider, as it also includes people – colleagues or acquaintances – with whom we share something, even though our situations are different. On the third level (*linking*), we develop connections with people who are *dissimilar* to us in terms of language, interests, socio-economic conditions, abilities, backgrounds, and so on. This more complex level is exactly what school provides as an environment, offering valuable opportunities to build and strengthen relationships based not only on an obvious condition of similarity, but also on diversity. This way the educational experience can be transformed into real opportunities for participation and growth for the entire community.

A long time ago, at the beginning of the democratic era, this idea of communal participation and growth was summarized in a simple but incisive set of principles: liberty, equality, and fraternity. We sometimes forget that the tension between the first two principles can be solved only with reference to the third one. Fraternity – today we would say solidarity – allows us to see diversity as an asset instead of as a threat, and inclusion allows us to transform it into educational environments where everyone can find a space that will accommodate them and enable them to blossom.

THE INSTRUCTION MODEL

The effort to foster inclusive education in schools as a community endeavour, which involves the growth of connections based on the valuing of diversity, contrasts sharply with the current tendency to assess academic success in terms of individual performance. The ranking systems increasingly adopted worldwide to reinforce pupil stratification according to school attainment tend to reduce students to the bearers of results, dramatically impoverishing the complexity and wealth of educational experience (Slee, 2015). Thus, the urge to promote the active engagement of community stakeholders in creating more diverse and dynamic schools implies a claim to achieving more equity and social justice in educational settings. However, such an involvement is not just the consequence of assuming an ethical, value-based perspective of what education is supposed to be today, but also reflects the current evolution of school organization (Apple, 2014; Ball, 2010a; Ballantine & Hammack, 2012; Young & Muller, 2016).

As organizations, schools are services that deliver immaterial products, namely the transfer of knowledge and competences from one generation to the next. Nevertheless, schools are not operating in a void, but what they do reverberates in the socio-economic and cultural environment they belong to (Biesta, 2010; Fullan, 2010). In an industrial society, school was expected to reproduce knowledge and competences that were essentially stable and clearly defined. The degree of flexibility and innovation required from schools was quite low, as instruction was

intended to supply pupils with a basic package of information and skills (Brown & Lauder, 1992). In parallel with the growth of the Fordist production model, intended to provide affordable commodities to a large number of customers, schools were shaped as a mass organization designed to provide a standard set of abilities, in an age where teachers and books were the actual repository of all knowledge not grounded in direct experience. Consequently, schools were developed as bureaucratic machines, that is, as organizations based on the rationalization and formalization of the knowledge transfer process (Skrtic, Sailor, & Gee, 1996). School staff work was conceived according to the notion of labour division: every teacher would contribute to a specific portion of the overall task of educating children, combining and coordinating this individual effort in a tightly coupled way. Briefly, teaching was envisioned as a mechanical task which, to ensure the efficient functioning of the organization, should be grounded in clear procedures in order to achieve a predetermined goal. This model was similar to the assembly of prefabricated furniture provided in kit form. Following the proper sequence of actions described in instructions would guarantee the successful building of the intended object.

However, the actual process of teaching and learning has always been quite different from this machine-like picture. First of all, being an immaterial product, knowledge transfer cannot be likened to the in-line assembly of a physical object such as the famous Ford model T car, which was initially offered in a very basic version (just one colour – black – and no other accessories). Nor can it be compared, for example, to the production of a modern pair of sneakers, which is sold in different sizes and colours. Instructional activity is more complicated than a repetitive copy and paste process or the straightforward acquisition of information by rote. Even the very first scientific theory about learning, behaviourism, which was formulated during the same years in which Ford was refining the standard procedures for mass production, recognizes that the learning process requires more than just enhanced repetition. It needs motivation, support, and adaptation to the specific learning style of the student. Moreover, the workers in an assembly line are quite interchangeable, as the level of specialization implied by a serial task is generally low. On the contrary, a schoolteacher's profile is based on specialization, which reflects their level of education, focus on specific ages and curriculum content, and the skills they acquire during their working life. Becoming an accomplished teacher requires years of training and practice. Furthermore, specialization entails that a teacher's job cannot be described as a fixed set of basic actions. Only a small percentage of teaching activities can be portrayed in terms of routines, as most of the time is invested in modulating different types of content and strategies to deal with the students' reactions and questions to the task initially proposed. In turn, students' reactions and questions cannot easily be planned in advance, as they vary depending on several factors such as, for example, level of interest, cooperation, or elaboration a certain topic is able to prompt. Additionally, not only is a certain amount of flexibility embedded into everyday learning, but teachers also typically work in parallel, not in a line. That means that, for example, math content is not

a prerequisite for history class and vice versa. Strict content alignment between disciplines is the exception, not the rule. The features of this organization identify schools as professional bureaucracies, based on specialized and de-synchronized activities that are only loosely coupled (Moran, 2009; Skrtic, 2004; Weick & Orton, 1990). As a consequence, more than the assembly of a kit, schools can be envisioned as a puzzle, which teachers cooperate to complete according to the principle of equifinality. In both cases, the final result is well known in advance. Nevertheless, in composing a puzzle there is no predetermined sequence that dictates how to put the pieces together, as different sequences are possible.

To summarize, from the beginning of the industrial era, schools have been structured as organizations created to produce a programmed performance – the internalization of essential information and knowledge by the pupils – through the delivery of instruction. Consequently, the definition of schools as bureaucratic machines, based on the fulfilment of rational and formal operation plans carried out by teachers working in tight coordination, largely dominated during that time. Nevertheless, actual learning could not be easily reduced to that model, as teaching is a specialized and loosely coupled activity that pursues programmed objectives through multiple and adaptable strategies. Consequently, school organization has always been structured more as a professional bureaucracy than a mechanical one.

THE KNOWLEDGE MODEL

As we previously noted, the abovementioned dialectic between the mechanical and professional view of schools as bureaucratic organizations has been deeply linked to the rise of industrialization and mass production in modern society during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, in the last few decades the scenario has changed dramatically. The Fordist mechanistic organization we described, characterised by formal hierarchy, bureaucratic rules and close control, was especially suited to multiply mass production under stable conditions. Starting from the ’60s, the growing complexity of the socioeconomic situation emphasized the need for new organizational structures, better able to deal with the evolution and dynamic conditions of the globalized environment. According to Burns and Stalker (1961) such structures would assume an organic form, consisting of a high degree of flexibility and informality, as well as decentralized authority and open communication. Organic organizational forms (or adhocracies) were thought to be more adaptable to unstable conditions, thanks to the adoption of collaborative problem-solving, which could facilitate adjustable and quick responses. This in turn required a change in the way workers’ skills were conceived. Fordist work was based on improving efficiency and productivity by standardizing production tasks according to the Taylor workflow analysis. As labour was measured in quantity rather than quality, workers were seen as an essentially interchangeable workforce. Nevertheless, this picture did not match the emerging economic landscape, where workers’ knowledge and know-how would become increasingly relevant compared to the traditional capital made of factories,

machinery and equipment. As the mechanistic model of organization was declining during the affirmation of a dynamic knowledge-intensive economy in the '70s and '80s, a new theory of human capital arose, highlighting the key role of workers' initiative and creativity in developing new ways of production. In his book *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1976), sociologist Daniel Bell described what he foresaw as an imminent shift from the industrial economy founded on the scaled-up production of goods to a post-industrial economy based on the development of services, information, and communication, defining it as the beginning of a "knowledge society". This post-industrial society would focus primarily on research and development as sources of innovation.

In what has been portrayed as "the new era of knowledge economy", the value of mass production of goods and services is not provided by an increasing amount of standardization, but rather based on the ability to ensure technological innovation and flexible customization through the knowledge developed by highly skilled workers (OECD, 2001). In a globalised economy the generation and development of knowledge proves to be the key factor to competitive business. As outsourcing strategies continuously reduce production costs, the demand for low-skilled labour decreases as the need for highly skilled labour simultaneously grows. Consequently, investing in the creation of new knowledge is assumed to be pivotal to ensure socio-economic progress. One of the most influential supporters of the knowledge economy theory, Robert Reich, effectively depicted the way innovation and technology have become crucial in supplying commodities and services not based on standardized production, but on diversification. Developing intelligence of constant variations in consumers' inclination towards goods and services would allow companies to continue to thrive and be profitable, as "profits depend on knowledge of a certain medium (software, music, law, finance, physics, film, and so on) combined with knowledge of a certain market" (Reich, 2001: 120). Thus, instead of being asked to leave their brain outside the organization in order to perform elementary and repetitive tasks, workers are now encouraged to use initiative and ingenuity to bolster companies' strategies and boost their careers. Not only is knowledge regarded as the essential component fuelling new forms of production, as in the Bell prophecy, but it has also become the core product of the work activity itself, as many professions are increasingly based on skills related to technology, communication, problem solving, and the ability to work in teams.

All in all, three dimensions can be identified as complementary elements of the knowledge society structure (Hargreaves, 2003). The first is associated with the increased amount of scientific and technological data production available today. The second refers to the way information and knowledge are combined and disseminated in an economy more and more founded on the supply of services. Finally, as it becomes the primary output of organizations, knowledge requires a constant investment in supporting product innovation by encouraging the emergence of learning and practices based on extensive teamwork and collaboration. Nevertheless, as we noted, the enthusiasm that initially surrounded the arrival of

the knowledge society paradigm onto the global scene in the '90s has progressively cooled down, as the downsides of the new labour system have become apparent. The promise of post-industrial economy to free creativity and inventiveness has been transformed into a permanent condition of insecurity, as workers are asked to restructure their personal life in order maximize not only initiative and cognitive competences, but also the amount of flexibility and adaptability required to ensure the pursuit of surplus value from globalized organizations. Even scholars such as Brown and Lauder, who supported a positive view of the knowledge society from the very beginning, recently acknowledged that such an optimistic image was quite deceptive:

> To date, the productivity of new technologies in offices and professional services has been disappointing in much the same way that it took decades to realize the potential of factory production. Companies have responded by trying to reduce the cost of knowledge work through a process of knowledge capture that we call *digital Taylorism*. The same processes that enabled cars, computers, and televisions to be broken down into their component parts, manufactured by companies around the world, and then configured according to the customer's specifications are being applied to impersonal jobs in the service sector – that is, jobs that do not depend on facing a customer. (Brown, Lauder & Ashton, 2011: 8)

The joint dynamic of the global race towards the development of a highly skilled workforce and the global spread of information and knowledge made possible by the continual expansion of Internet-based technologies created a new bracket of highly skilled, low-wage workers, who are the mass of manoeuvre of contemporary "knowledge wars", through which companies are continuously attempting to outsmart economic competitors (Brown & Lauder, 2001). As a result, instead of enhancing and appropriately rewarding the increasing investment in highly educated competences made by individuals in order to deal with the global labour market thanks to their creativity, we face today a neo-Fordist scenario based on extended franchising and subcontracting of intellectual jobs that are increasingly standardized, automated, and, in the long run, progressively eliminated. To change this situation we need to reconsider the way knowledge is developed and managed in education.

THE LEARNING MODEL

Even though knowledge is a widespread term applied to the economy or society, it usually refers to a static conception of something that can easily be wrapped up and transferred, even in large quantities. The success of the Internet widely contributed to propagating this image of knowledge as an object, a commodity readily available for multiplication. However, what is actually at stake in contemporary society is not just the transfer of information packages, but the process of developing and using knowledge. We don't just limit ourselves to absorbing data, as knowledge always

implies a degree of active participation in looking for, selecting, and assessing information (Bentley, 1998; Biesta, 2011; Jarvis, 2009). Learning, both in formal and informal terms, is an especially critical component of such a process. Starting in the '50s, Western countries have witnessed a booming phase of mass education, with huge investments in instruction, the building of new schools, and the training of teachers who are well qualified, highly committed, and adequately paid (Hargreaves, 2000). The professional status of teachers was greatly reputed not just in Finland – as happens today – but everywhere. As we noted, even though schools were conceived with the Fordist model of production in mind, teachers were always able to preserve a distinctive condition as a specialized and largely autonomous workforce. However, the need to homogenize teachers' activities was limited, as teaching was based on a very simple formula essentially made of lectures, individual work, the question-and-answer method, and paper-and-pencil assessment. By the '60s, this framework started to change: concurrently with the formulation of the human capital theory and the development of new forms of production, the debate on education gradually focused on the way schools could ensure the achievement of higher skills as key levers for economic expansion (Fitzsimons, 1999; Somekh & Schwandt, 2007). Moreover, traditional investigation into instruction and behaviour was replaced by research on learning, as well as teaching goals progressively shifting from providing information to helping students achieve competences in order to develop ideas and solutions. During the same period, it became apparent that education could not be confined only to young generations, as the advent of post-industrial society emphasized the need for lifelong learning, thereby contributing to a wide expansion of the public involved in continuous education (Jarvis, 2009).

These challenges have been further heightened by the acceleration towards an economy based on perpetual innovation and extended digitalization. Public bodies and the private sector seem today equally concerned about the ability of schools to provide the level of expertise required to sustain international competition. As Robertson (2005) notes, this claim usually takes the form of a popular syllogism: knowledge overcame resources (labour and capital) in securing long-term economic growth; education has a pivotal role in developing knowledge; therefore education has to be reformed to respond in new ways to the demands of the knowledge economy. Nevertheless, although there is a general consensus about the need for educational change, opinions about how this change should be managed diverge substantially. Many options are based on the premise that quantity is the key factor: we just need "to do more of the same thing". More schooldays, more hours daily spent on studying, more courses and extra courses, more focus on the "right" academic path starting from nursery school, and so on. Students are pushed to commit over and over, to fill up their time and brains in view of a far-away, exciting future. This way, they learn that education is not connected to the present, but implies a kind of saturation in which the search for personal meaning is systematically postponed, in a way quite similar to bulimic behaviour. Unsurprisingly, an increasing number of students do not fit into this scenario, ending up being marginalized or expelled from the system.

As we already noted, this erroneous assumption that boosting quantity will eventually produce quality is reinforced by the adoption of policies focused on the measurement of student attainment through standardized tests. This in turn increasingly translates into forms of curricular prescriptions and micro-management of teachers' activities (Hodkinson, 2005; Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2010). On the one hand, this perspective reduces education to getting good grades in some specific areas (language, math, and sciences), failing to recognize that the most relevant skills school is required to deliver in a learning society refer not to technical knowledge (which quickly becomes obsolete), but to the ability to develop meaningful relationships founded on equity. On the other hand, such an approach reiterates the traditional mistake that assumes that limiting teachers' initiative will provide more control over the learning process, thereby improving schools' outcomes. Paradoxically, cultivating students' problem-solving and decision-making skills should be acquired by restraining teachers' ability to use the same competences within their classrooms. Consequently, it is not surprising that in the ranking exercises regularly promoted by international agencies the most successful countries are usually not those obsessed with standardization of curriculum and micro-management of classroom activities, but those that consider curriculum as a fully adaptable platform, give ample room to innovative teaching and flexible learning, and respect teachers as highly qualified and respected professionals (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Briefly, applying neo-Fordist tools to control schools' production, piling up rules and specifications as if they were old-style bureaucratic machines, simply undermines teachers' abilities to recognize and value diversity as a primary resource for learning. School change cannot be fostered just by importing some dated keywords from the management and economy department, just as the connection between education and the economy cannot be assumed to be a one-way relationship, in which the latter is subjugated to the former. Instead of repeating that education should do more for the economy, using fewer resources, we should ask what the economy can do for education (especially public education). How are the profit margins acquired through the employment of well-prepared students reinvested in schools in order to ensure the system's sustainability? How can we use the capital of knowledge currently available to prevent the enormous economic losses related to early school leaving and over-education? These questions lead us to formulate a different perspective on conceiving and implementing change in educational organizations.

CHANGE FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Change in schools is often interpreted as a way of tackling problems by circumscribing and solving them via technical solutions. Such an approach can actually help disentangle issues that are specific and limited, but it falls short of explaining more complex challenges, such as those involved in the promotion of inclusive education. In this case, change is usually systemic, as it implies that even small modifications of educational environments and interactions can have large repercussions on the entire

school (Hargreaves, Lieberman, Fullan, & Hopkins, 2010). As Weick emphasizes, in such complex systems change is a dynamic activity emerging through a process of social construction based on sense-making and enactment, which allows actors to develop their way of thinking about organization, to bring organizational structures and events into existence, and to put them in action (Weick, 1995; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Several theories have tried to capture this evolutionary feature of change, starting from Lewin's model which portrayed change as a sequence composed by three main stages: an initial unfreezing phase, in which the existing organizational balance is perturbed by calling into question current behavioural models; a second movement phase, characterised by the actors' antagonistic efforts to determine the direction change should take; and a third phase, refreezing, in which differences are settled and behavioural models are reconfigured according to a new overall equilibrium (Lewin, 1958). This normative way of describing the dynamics of change processes has been further elaborated by March, who highlighted how organizations are constantly looking to balance the conflicting pressures on optimizing efficiency and fostering flexibility and innovation (March, 1991; Levinthal & March, 1993). According to March, the interrelation of these two demands deeply affects organizational learning styles, giving rise to two opposed trends: on the one hand, organizations in which exploitation prevails tend to profit from existing knowledge and resources, improving and leveraging what they already know; on the other, organizations that are more prone to assuming an exploratory attitude develop new knowledge and ways of using existing resources by systematically questioning old habits and looking for new possible options.

On this subject, a relevant contribution to the understanding of change as an outcome of organizational learning has been offered by Argyris and Schön's theory about double-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978). Whereas structures based on single-loop reasoning are able to solve a problem related to a specific task employing a set of predefined corrective actions, double-loop systems are able to generate new solutions by introducing innovative forms of adaptations. In this sense double-loop learning always implies a degree of subjective reflection that helps the system to learn to learn by systematically questioning existing rules and supporting the attitude of "thinking outside the box".

As double-loop theory accounts for the way reflexivity plays a pivotal role in transforming organizational knowledge, other authors stress the social dimension that learning assumes in organizations as a vector of change. Starting with Michael Polanyi's theorization, many researchers have proved that tacit knowledge is an essential attribute of organizational functioning and learning (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Collins, 2010; Jorgensen, 2004; Polanyi, 1967; von Krogh, Ichijo, & Nonaka, 2000). Unlike explicit knowledge, which is communicated in a systematic and formal way, especially through written documents, tacit knowledge is mainly personal, based on intuition, and built with reference to a given context. Consequently, although it plays a crucial role, this kind of knowledge could be difficult to communicate and share within an organization. Many attempts have been made to clarify how tacit

knowledge can move from one organizational department to another, assuming that a smoother transfer of knowledge would be highly beneficial in terms of empowering organizational management and change (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). However, the literature also pinpoints the difference between the simple transfer of information and the way the skills to develop new knowledge are acquired through informal learning processes which take place inside the system (Cook & Yanow, 1993).

This topic is especially relevant if we analyse school as an organization in which learning is both the means and the outcome of the production process. The nature of this process accounts for the unique challenges we need to tackle when discussion on organizational change refers to the educational domain. According to Tomlinson, some of the most common factors that contribute to the failure of efforts to change in school are the following: underestimating the complexity of the change; mandating change vs. providing a vision; insufficient leadership; insufficient support and resources; failure to deal with the multifaceted nature of change; lack of persistence; inattention to teachers' personal circumstances; lack of shared clarity about a plan for change; weak linkage to student effects and outcomes; and missteps with scope and pacing (Tomlinson, Brimijoin, & Narvaez, 2008). These factors are especially interrelated in the effort to promote diversity in school, as unfreezing the existing habits – to use Lewin's image – requires dealing with different perspectives and interests explicitly bolstered (as well as simply taken for granted) by various groups inside school. Briefly, advocating change for inclusion means to actively challenge the micro-politics embedded in schooling (Ball, 1987). Actors who hold power are focused on protecting and reinforcing the status quo entrenched in institutional arrangements against the contradictions that recurrently arise from power imbalance. Conversely, marginalized actors may identify such contradictions and put up direct or indirect resistance, so developing "lines of flight" which allow them to break through the fissures of the control system and to reveal multiplicity as possible open spaces for educational transformation (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). This endeavour towards achieving equity and democracy in school can emerge through the accumulation? of distributed efforts nourished by personal reflection and initiatives, which help elaborate a critical view of unfair educational policies. However, the same endeavour also needs to be translated into forms of collective intentionality, if change is intended to fight exclusion through the systematic adoption of a participatory approach that sees inclusion as an endless, on-going process.

In that regard, Booth and Ainscow (2011) suggest that inclusion should be viewed as a never-ending commitment to developing better ways of responding to diversity. Far from being identified with a set of established policies or practices, inclusive education is a recursive process of deconstruction and reconstruction, where schools assume a creative problem-solving attitude towards removing barriers and valuing resources for participation and learning. However, considering the setbacks suffered by many schools as they try to undertake institutional reforms that aim to foster diversity and inclusion, some scholars have raised the question that organizational change doesn't automatically imply that schools will move in the direction of greater

inclusivity (Dyson & Millward, 2000). Recent organizational theory emphasizes that change, rather than stability, is the natural condition of every living and social system (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). According to this, organizations are seen as characterised by a permanent evolutionary state, in which the notion of structure plays a role less relevant than that of process, with its features of dynamicity, emergence, and continual transformation. Nevertheless, even though we admit that change is unavoidable, we need to ascertain whether transformation is leading towards a positive course or not in terms of welcoming diversity and fostering inclusion. As we noted, this cannot be achieved without developing a community approach based on participation.

As we observed, the move from industrial to post-industrial societies boosted by globalization and ICT not only provoked a radical production shift from goods to services, but also generated novel forms of organization in which membership is largely defined by the expansion of technologies and networks. The more the need for unceasing innovation and personalization replaces the old emphasis on standardization, the more the provision of services is looking to promote close and continuous collaboration with customers. Furthermore, in organizations like schools, the quality and value of the final product is progressively linked to the active involvement of stakeholders in the process of achieving a large range of skills. Consequently, school services today should not only be personalized, but also envisioned as increasingly co-produced by consumers who become prosumers (Robertson, 2104), that is, partners directly implicated in the implementation of educational strategies and attainments. To this end, building collaboration in developing inclusion as a community enterprise is crucial. Current keywords about education recurrently recommend schools focus on competition and self-interest as the most efficient guidelines for education. This helps revive the reproduction of an unfair and obsolete school model based on hierarchical relationships and exclusion. Conversely, the evolution of educational systems that we examined highlights that in the current situation the growth of quality education closely depends on cultivating new knowledge and skills through a common effort towards cooperation. The quest for educational innovation and creativity can be nurtured only by promoting diversity and inclusion as essential ingredients for developing effective teamwork and supporting shared problem-solving activities. These should be grounded not just in the search for exceptional individuals, but in the wide range of resources available within the learning community that we can build inside and outside of school.

It is worth remembering that a democratic approach to inclusion is based first of all on the idea that exclusion consists of barriers to learning and participation which can successfully be removed when the school as a community makes full acceptance and the success of all students its main goal. Scientific literature shows that schools have a store of tacit knowledge available, that is important hidden knowledge and skills which can be brought to light, becoming valuable resources for achieving inclusive practices (Ainscow, 2005; Nind & Thomas, 2005). This is possible if schools see change as an essential part of educational activities, adopting a research

stance aimed at identifying the areas of organizational and didactic transformation, especially regarding the curriculum.

This way we can increase choices available to all people attending school and put into effect these pushes for participation and success which are the heart of inclusive education as a process of open and democratic empowerment.

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4. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES IN NORWEGIAN SCHOOLS

CONTEXT AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss how inclusion in education is understood and practiced in Norway, in particular when special education is concerned, and what the present challenges are. "Equitable, inclusive and adapted education are overarching principles in school", according to the national curriculum (Ministry, 2006). The history of a school for everyone is long. Why then is Norway now mentioned among countries "where public education is increasingly challenged because of an endemic failure to provide adequate learning opportunities for all children"? (Sahlberg, 2014, p. 6).

In Norwegian policy documents inclusion is understood in a wide sense, not restricted to students seen as having special educational needs (SEN), but for the purpose of this chapter emphasis will be on the situation for this group of students, limited to compulsory education. However, a wider perspective will contextualise the particular Norwegian case.

Let us start with three glimpses of inclusion in Norwegian schools. The first is from a social science lesson in a 6th grade classroom where a kind of high bed on wheels is placed in the middle. In it is a girl, Mona, with major physical and intellectual disabilities. She does not speak, and staff and students communicate with her with signing to support the spoken language. Fellow students often make Mona smile. A teacher assistant sits next to her bed. Sometimes Mona has her lessons in the small room next to the classroom, occasionally accompanied by a couple of her classmates (Nes & Strømstad, 2011).

You may find similar situations in other classrooms, but not very many. Example number two is the average receiver of special education: a boy with reading or behavioural difficulties who has a lesson or two per day out of class following his part-time special education programme, while the rest of the time is spent in regular tuition (Demo & Nes, 2015). The third image of inclusion refers to a school, not to individual students. In 2012 the *Queen Sonja award for equity and inclusion* was awarded to Fagerlund Primary School. All learners from the local community, including those with severe and less severe disabilities as well as learners with behaviour and learning problems attend the school. Of the 500 pupils 80 do not

F. Dovigo (Ed.), Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Practices, 63–78.

speak Norwegian as their first language. According to the jury[1] this school meets the criteria for the award, being that the school (my translation):

- Is working systematically and knowledge-based and in a long-term perspective with the pupils' learning environment.
- Is practising equity and inclusion in a way that makes each pupil experience being valued in an environment characterised by participation, trust and community.
- Is characterised by good relationships between pupils and staff and between pupils – and with a good collaboration between school and home.

Before returning to today's situation, the historical and ideological background for inclusion in education is presented.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION NORWAY[2]

Influenced by the Salamanca statement (UNESCO, 1994), the notion of inclusive education entered Norwegian policy documents from the mid1990s, but the spirit of inclusion dates far back. Along with the other Scandinavian countries Norway has a history of universal schooling. In the first half of the 18th century free schools for children of 'common men' were introduced, preceded by the claim of the Church that everyone should be able to read religious texts in order to be confirmed in church. A system with a free public school 'for all' and private schools for those who could afford it, continued throughout the 19th century. For learners with a disability mostly private solutions existed, but from 1881 a law was passed about schools for 'the abnormal', i.e. the blind, the deaf and the mildly intellectually disabled.

The Unitary School

Late in the 19th century rights to seven years of education for all were stated, and the emerging ideas about *the unitary school,* based on solidarity and justice, continued into the 20th century (Haug, 1999; Engen, 2010). A well-known Scandinavian image from the early 20th century is that the good state (and school) is like a good 'people's home': «The good home knows no privileged or neglected people, no favourites and no stepchildren… The strong do not suppress and plunder the weak. In the good home, there is equality, care, collaboration, support» (Swedish leader of the Social-Democratic Party in the 1920s, here from Gustavsson, 1999, p. 92). Telhaug (1994) outlines four dimensions of the unitary school (my translation):

1. The resources dimension. There must in the financing exist equality and justice between the municipalities and between the schools everywhere. In this way equality of quality will be secured.
2. The social dimension. All students should be together; groups in schools should be heterogenous.

3. The cultural dimension. The students are not just to meet one another, they are to share a common culture and a common knowledge base.
4. The inequality dimension. The concept of equality that is used is one which respects diversity. This means that some students will have to have more support than others to receive equitable and suitably adapted education.

Nation-Building with Discriminatory Effects

Up to 1814 Norway had been under Danish rule, and still until 1905 the Swedish King was King of Norway. Building the new independent nation and its identity was seen as part of the task of the schools. A major goal of education in Norway and many other countries was to create nation-states in which all groups shared one dominant mainstream culture. It was assumed that ethnic minorities and immigrant groups had to abandon their original cultures in order to fully participate in the nation-state. In the first half of the 20th century an assimilationist conception of education existed in most of the Western democratic nation-states, Norway included. In the nation-building process – seemingly leading to more liberty and democracy – the Norwegifying assimilation policies implied exclusion of minorities and their rights (Engen, 2010). This policy particularly hit the indigenous Sámi population. Sámi learners were not allowed to use their mother tongue in schools until the end of the 1960s. Sámi is now an official language in Norway, along with Norwegian which is spoken by most people.

We see that cultural and linguistic minorities were discriminated against, but what about children with impairments or other 'special needs' throughout the 20th century? The system with mainstream and special schools continued, and after the 2nd World War the range of special schools was extended to cover 5 groups, including disruptive behaviour. The number of students in them never exceeded 1%, though. Special classes on some ordinary schools appeared in the cities (Haug, 1999). Placement for the 'feeble-minded', the intellectually disabled and even 'travellers' was decided by IQ-tests. Results indicated whether you were to be sent to a special school or class, or, if your IQ was regarded too low, to institutions within the care system, not the school system. Sterilisation was frequently part of the decision for girls (Phil, 2010). By these procedures some were deemed as 'uneducable' and were looked after by their families, later by health-care institutions.

Integration Reforms

The dual system existed for nearly 100 years from 1881 to 1975, when the Act of special schools was abolished and the 'integration law' came into force, in spite of resistance from teachers and others. All learners now had their educational rights established by a common education act. A paragraph ensured the right to special education for those who needed it, preferably in the mainstream school & class.

The special school reform which was decided upon in 1975, was not actually fully implemented until the beginning of the 1990s when the state special schools closed down. Some former special schools became competence centres to support local schools and parents. At the same time the institutions for intellectually disabled also closed down. This did not mean that necessary support should cease. According to the principles of normalisation, service, work, education etc should become physically separated from the home –a home that from now on was to be outside the institutions – and be provided by the municipality (Nirje, 1992).

UNDERSTANDING OF INCLUSION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

As 'special education' as well as 'inclusion' – and the relationship between the two – are framed differently in different countries, an explanation of the concepts and the national context is necessary. Norwegian policy about inclusion in education leans on international documents like the Salamanca statement (UNESCO, 1994) and others. Norwegian policy papers do not explicitly define inclusion, but the following definition from UNESCO matches the Norwegian position quite well:

> Inclusion is seen as *a process* of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children. (UNESCO, 2003)

This definition does not list characteristics of students, rather qualities of the school and the teaching accord with the approach of the Queen Sonja award jury above.

Nevertheless, in a Norwegian setting, as well as in many other countries, references to inclusion frequently are linked – not to qualities of a school for all students – but to students categorised as having SEN. Inclusion is also used in policy documents about children and adults with an immigrant background. Still another use of the concept is inclusion in a *social* sense. Such a use of inclusion is crucial in a new report from the ministry named "To belong – tools for a safe psychosocial school environment" (Ministry 2015, my translation). The Government has stated that all students deserve a safe and inclusive school environment without harassment, bullying and discrimination, and as a means to achieve this, a new national initiative for inclusive schools is proposed in the report. Inclusion then should be seen in a wider school environment perspective to respond to the § 9a in the Education Act: "All pupils attending primary and secondary schools are entitled to a good physical and psychosocial environment conducive to health, well-being and learning" (Ministry, 2014). This report deals with the psychosocial school environment, while the argument in the present chapter is that issues

of learning benefit and social participation are equally important in the inclusive school.

Turning to the education system, the municipalities are responsible for primary and secondary education, including special education. Compulsory education in Norway means 10 years primary (grade 1–7) and lower secondary school (grade 8–10) for students aged 6–16. Norwegian schools are often quite small and teacher/student ratio relatively favourable. The Education Act states that all students are entitled to education adapted to their abilities and aptitudes, i.e. adapted education, as mentioned above (§1–3). Since the reforms of the 1970s *adapted education in a school for all* may be seen as the Norwegian wording of inclusive education, meaning providing equal opportunities in the unitary school, "regardless of abilities and aptitudes, age, gender, skin colour, sexual orientation, residence, family education or family finances" (Norwegian Directorate, 2008; Fasting, 2013).

Special education normally takes place in ordinary schools and is seen as part of adapted education: "Pupils who either do not or are unable to benefit satisfactorily from ordinary teaching have the right to special education"(§ 5–1). This is a non-categorical definition of special education, related to the benefit of the instruction, regardless of diagnoses or other possible reasons for poor benefit. To determine whether a student is entitled to special education an expert assessment is required.[3] Through a thorough 'statementing procedure' assessment of the student as well as descriptions of the aims and content of special education are provided. Additional funding is granted for special education, and the school develops an individual educational plan (IEP). The local councelling system 'PPT' can be consulted by the school along the way, and for teaching low frequency disability students a more specialised state support system, *Statped*,[4] is available.

Before looking at inclusion in practice, it may be useful to bear in mind that inclusion has to be studied on different levels. Systems as well as mindsets and classroom practices have to be changed to meet student diversity (UNESCO, 2003). On each of the following levels support or barriers to inclusion may be identified (Booth & Ainscow, 2011):

5. STATE level: Values, ideologies, legislation and policies
4. MUNICIPALITY/school owner level: Organisation and funding
3. SCHOOL level: School cultures and policies
2. CLASSROOM level: Teaching and learning
1. STUDENT level: Does (s)he learn and participate?

INCLUSION/EXCLUSION IN PRACTICE: THE GENERAL SITUATION

Norway has an inclusive school system in the sense that there is one law for all, and that 96.5% of the students aged 6–16 attend common, free public schools (Statistics Norway, 2015). Of them about 0.6% are in special schools (GSI, 2015). In the regular schools there are no permanent segregating practices like tracking or

streaming according to ability. The students with identified SEN are in principle part of ordinary classes, and no school can deny a student access because of SEN. Students with a disability or learning problem have a right to individual support and necessary equipment, for instance within ICT. The indigenous Sami students as well as linguistic, cultural and religious minorities, including the deaf, have certain specific rights. In fact, all have a general right to support, according to the principle of adapted education.

Society in general is inclusive in many ways too. For instance, a well developed public welfare system offers services to those in need. Recent years have brought legislation about discrimination: A law prohibiting discrimination caused by ethnicity, religion etc (2006) and a law prohibiting discrimination caused by disability (2009). Universal design and universal access are parts of this law.

But is the education really as 'equitable, inclusive and adapted' as it is supposed to be? (Ministry, 2006). Do all students have equal opportunities to learn and participate? In the following possible exclusionary tendencies from and within education will be identified and discussed.

EXCLUSION FROM (REGULAR) EDUCATION

In Norway hardly any students are excluded from compulsory education or fail to complete it. But it is a worrying fact that in upper secondary schools almost 30% of the students do not complete. Very few are actively excluded, but is the system on this level failing a large group of young people? In the drop-out group there is more than average presence of boys, more students from homes where parents have little education and more immigrant students than average (Markussen, Frøseth, & Grøgaard, 2009; Nordahl & Hausstätter, 2009).

Relatively few families send their children to private schools, but the number of students in private primary or secondary schools has increased by 6% in the last year and is now 3.5% of all students (Norwegian statistics, 2015). Some of the private schools have permanent special classes (notably Waldorf schools), and are sometimes chosen because of this. In public schools the extent of segregated special education in permanent classes or separate schools is slowly increasing, but is not extensive. Some bigger cities has many special classes and schools (about 65 in Oslo), accompanied by an administrative and financial model based on diagnoses, a principle which was left long ago in the Norwegian model.[5] Oslo has 1.4% of the students in special schools or classes (national average is 0.6%) (GSI, 2014, 2015). This is still far below a European average of 2.3% (Donnelly, Meijer, & Watkins, 2011). However, placements of this kind may be underreported, and until 2012–2013 segregated educational arrangements were not officially counted at all in Norway, because in principle they did not exist – in a country where special schools had been closed down since the early nineties (Holterman & Jelstad, 2012).

0.3% of the students attend another kinds of external school provisions which are alternative, often practical programmes, for instance on a farm, meant for students

with behavioural or motivational problems. The number is increasing (GSI, 2015). Nearly all participants are boys (82%) and they attend the programme one or more days per week. Some are seen as having SEN, some not.[6] The alternative programmes used to be for secondary school students only, but fairly new is that primary school students increasingly take part in these kinds of arrangements (Jahnsen, Nergaard, & Grini, 2011). Does this segregated practice reveal how the regular lessons fail an increasing number of students in primary or secondary schools, or does it express a relevant way to adapt education flexibly?

EXCLUSIONARY MECHANISMS WITHIN EDUCATION

Inclusion means increasing participation as well as learning for all (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). When girls do better academically than boys in all subjects, apart from physical education, is that a sign that instruction is not well enough adapted to boys, so that their learning potential is not utilised as well as it could have been? In that case we are talking about an exclusionary mechanism within education. Another group of learners, the gifted and talented, seems to be under-challenged in school and hence excluded from chances to realise their capacities as fully as possible (Idsøe & Skogen, 2011). Even the low achieving students risk under-challenging, they too often do not 'have to' learn, and their knowledge is further weakened (Dale, 2008). They are met with sympathy in school, but not with expectations to learn (Egelund, 2009).

Not only gender, but socio-economic and ethnicity biases, like in the drop out rates, are present when it comes to learning outcome (lower than average) and statement about SEN (more referrals than average) (Nordahl & Haussstätter, 2009). The tendencies are that educational inequalities in education are increasing, not the opposite, as has been the political aim (Bakken & Elstad, 2012; Ministry, 2007). Corresponding underrepresentation in the high achieving group of boys, students from working class background and of linguistic or cultural minorities is found in studies in other countries too (Harry, 2014; Kozleski et al., 2014).

INCLUSION/EXCLUSION IN PRACTICE: SPECIAL EDUCATION

On one level Norwegian special education can definitely be said to be inclusive, since 92% of the 'SEN students'[7] are in mainstream settings (GSI, 2015). In the following we will take a closer look at what is going on in special education. In addition to statistics, data from the ongoing national research project 'SPEED'[8] about the quality and function of special education is included, along with other research. In the SPEED project a lot of data collection methods are used. Below survey and observation data are referred to. In the survey 15 000 students and their teachers and parents took part. The student sample was 4 cohorts between the age of 10–15 from 14 municipalities, of whom about 1000 had a decision about special education. Classroom observations were made of 159 'SEN-students' in 29 schools.

Who and How Many Receive Special Education? Increasing Numbers of Students in Special Education

For 8% of the students in primary and secondary school a decision about special education is made.[9] A decade ago the number was 6%, but the curve now seems to have passed its peak (see Figure 1). Even so, there has been an increase of more than 30% since 2005. Is this increase a sign of exclusionary pressure from ordinary teaching because the learning environment is not well enough adapted to the diverse learners? Yes, it is, according to a White Paper about special education (Ministry, 2011). An aim in the White Paper is therefore to reduce the number of students who are referred to special education. Other mechanisms with possible exclusionary effects are the stronger claims on schools in the latest school reform about documenting achievement and learning benefit for each student, while at the same time the reform aimed at strengthening adapted education (Ministry, 2006; Mathiesen & Vedøy, 2012). Parallel, in the wake of 'the PISA shock', there has been a continuous increase in the use of tests and standards for measuring students' progress. This fact is potentially also squeezing low achieving students out of the regular instruction, since some of the test results for the schools are published, but students labeled as having SEN may be excused from the tests and hence avoid influencing the school's results negatively.

Who are the 'SEN students'?

For one, most of them are boys. For decades there has been a persistent gap between girls and boys in the referral pattern to special education; twice as many boys as girls are registered, regardless of changes in the total figures (Solli, 2005; GSI, 2015). This is another fact making one ask whether regular education fails many of the boys (see Figure 1).

Who is included in figures for special education varies between countries and numbers are therefore not easy to compare (Vislie, 2003). For Rix et al. (2013) who reviewed policies about special education in 50 countries, "it seemed evident that no two countries dealt with the issue of support for pupils with special educational needs in the same way" (p. 388). The two most frequent student groups in Norwegian special education are not usually regarded as disabled, as they either have specific learning difficulties like dyslexia, or they have social-emotional problems including for instance ADHD (Nordahl & Hausstätter, 2009). As an example of national variations, up to 2010 none of these two groups received special education in Italy; now the dyslectic do (Ianes, Demo, & Zambotti, 2013). Low-frequency groups in special education include students with visual or hearing impairments, intellectual disabilities, autism etc.

If we look into differences and similarities between the 'SEN students' and the others, the similarities are the most striking. For the high frequency groups it sometimes seems accidental whether they are referred to special education or not.

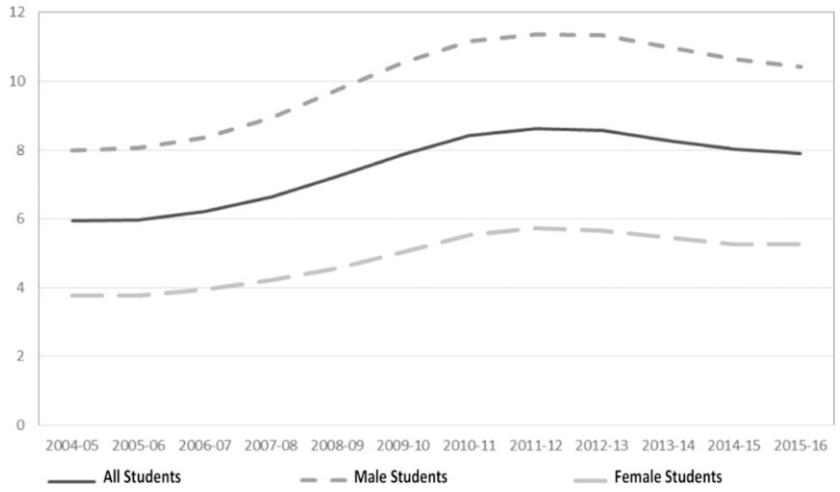
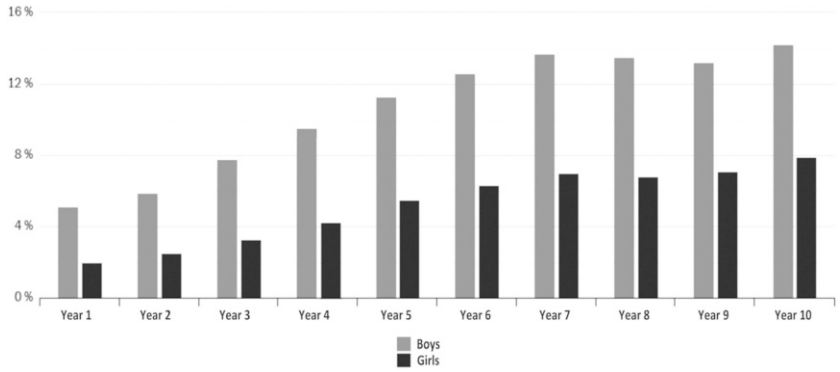


Figure 1. Students with special education in primary and secondary education 2004–2015. Middle curve – all, upper curve – boys, lower curve – girls. Percent. (GSI 2015)

In the SPEED survey data Haug (2014) finds that "no matter what 'SEN student' I single out, there is a 'regular student' with exactly the same characterstics" (p. 26). Nevertheless, analyses of the group of 'SEN students' in the SPEED survey leave an impression of students who not unexpectedly have low achievements compared to their peers, but they also have a lower score on motivation, work efforts, well-being and adherence to school norms. But when it comes to good relationships with teacher and peers, the 'SEN students' do not differ from others (Haug, 2014), although some studies report that students with a disability are more bullied and more lonesome than the average student (Kermit et al., 2014).

When is Special Education Granted?

Figure 2 below makes clear that the main 'investments' in special education is not in the early years in primary school, but in secondary education, contrary to the political initiatives about prevention and early intervention (Ministry, 2006). In Finland teachers can get support from special educators for common problems like students' reading and writing difficulties without a statementing procedure (Ström, 2013). This low threshold access to support is believed to be part of the explanation on Finland's good results in PISA (Kivirauma & Ruoho, 2007). In contrast to Norway, Finland spends more on special education for the younger than on older children in school. Figure 2 also shows that the relative difference between boys and girls is fairly stable from 1st to 10th grade, regardless of the total amount of special education. In 1st grade 2% of the girls have special education, in 10th grade



Students with special education in primary and secondary education 2014–2015, girls (dark grey) and boys (light gray) from 1st to 10th grade in percentage. (Norwegian Directorate, 2015)

more than 13% of the boys. Another fact is that although special education may start late, it rarely ends. If a student once is regarded as 'in needs', the special education is likely to continue for the whole school career (Knudsmoen, Løken, & Nordahl, 2011).

In or out of Class?

A few students with substantial needs of support, like Mona, have access to a special teacher or assistant all day. But most of the students with SEN (75%) receive special education 7 hours per week or less, like our example in the beginning of the chapter (Knudsmoen et al., 2013). By far the largest part of the week is spent with the others in class with no particular support, – this is the typical 'SEN student'. 32% of the special education lessons are spent in class, according to the teachers, but the most frequent organisation of these lessons are in groups outside class (see Figure 3).

The figure is based on numbers reported from schools. The survey data in the SPEED project reveal a similar picture, but, data from classroom observations in SPEED are different: about 95% of the special educational support is given out of class (Haug, 2015; Demo & Nes, 2015). So it seems that actual pull-out from classes is underreported in the information from the teachers in this project, but further qualitative studies need to be done to clarify how typical this is.

When looking at pupils with intellectual disabilities, one finds that they are in their regular class several lessons a day in the lowest grades, but that they are increasingly being pulled out as they get older. From around the age of 10 they seem to be mainly out of class (Ytterhus, 2004). An implication outside school is decreasing participation in the local community (Wendelborg & Tøssebro, 2010). In the SPEED project teachers also report that 72% of this group is mainly out

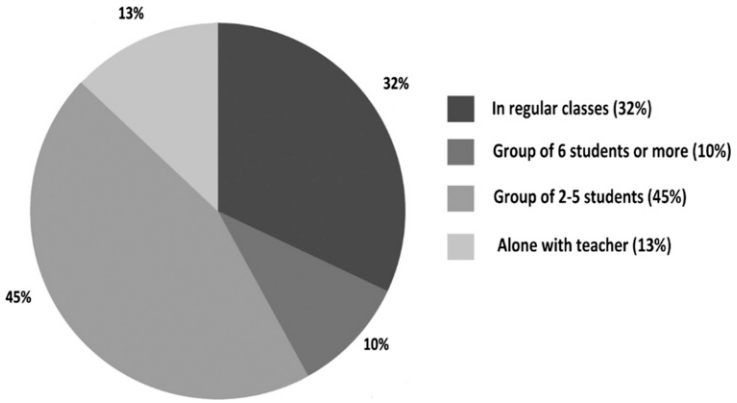


Figure 3. Students with special education in primary and secondary education 2014–2015. How special education is organised.

of class (Knetter, 2015). Even if many of these students hardly are in their own class, these phenomena are not registered as segregated provisions. Children with physical disabilities seem to participate more in the social and learning community than those with intellectual disabilities, sometimes favoured by their knowledge of ICT; they have become experts due to use of compensating and educational devices (Ytterhus & Tössebro, 2004).

What Happens in the Lessons – in or outside Class?

In-depth studies of teaching and learning in Norwegian special education are not many, but the classroom observations in the SPEED project indicate that the students in the part time programmes meet more adapted tasks, work harder and receive more teacher support in the special education lessons than in the regular lessons (Haug, 2015). Other qualitative classroom studies show how inclusive teachers in heterogeneous groups demonstrate a broad subject knowledge, collaborate well with all stakeholders, have a good relationship to the students and give them supportive and relevant feedback (Moen, 2004).

Attitudes

Even if teachers' organisations originally opposed integration of the disabled, teachers and even more parents have later been displaying strong support to the principle of a common school for all children. If asked if children should be able to go to their local school, 97% of parents and 88% of teachers agreed totally or partly. About 90% of teachers as well as parents agreed totally or partly to the statement that "very different students should be together in the same class" (Nes et al., 2004).

Whether this attitude is changing, is hard to tell, but there are some indications that teachers nowadays may regard the common school and the heterogeneous classroom differently. In the SPEED-project teachers were asked to express to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following: «At our school too many pupils have their special education lessons out of class» (N = 2326): 15% agreed fully or partially to this statement, 85% disagreed fully or partially. There is clearly no urge among the great majority of teachers in this study to include special education support more in the class. In order to tell whether this is a sign of less inclusive attitudes, more information is needed, though.

What about the students? There are many reports of students feeling stigmatised by being pulled out of class. On the other hand, in some schools in or out is not an issue. "Why? Here we go in and out all of us all the time", as one student commented when asked if pull-out was a problem (Nes et al., 2004).

SUMMING UP AND DISCUSSION

Norway has a long history of inclusive aims & actions in education. Nevertheless, practices of labeling students and arranging for lessons separated from the others seem 'resilient' in this country as well as in others (Slee, 2011). Closing down the special schools is no guarantee:

> It was evident from countries which had closed special schools, such as Italy and Norway, that traditional segregated spaces for learning can re-emerge in any context if it is not explicitly focused on meeting the needs on all pupils who belong there. (Rix et al., 2013, p. 384)

In the article "The irresistible rise of the SEN industry" Tomlinson (2012) claims that European authorities accept financing special education in order to deal with surplus people in the knowledge economies, like people with low achievements, learning disabilities, disturbing behaviour or low motivation. Part of the 'industry' Tomlinson is referring to, is about the expanding segregated facilities for students with behavioural and motivational problems, as we have seen in Norway too. Tomlinson's analysis is on a state policy level. Another system phenomenon is how the statementing procedures regarding SEN still rest on an individual diagnosis and remediation tradition, contrary to the non-categorical and relational formulations in the Education Act and the National curriculum. In summing up I will return to the 5 inclusion levels mentioned earlier in the chapter. In Table 1 are examples of what supports inclusive education and what the barriers are. On the basic level the experiences of the students are the ultimate judges of inclusion.

On the school and classroom levels we have seen that inclusive practices that support learning and participation for all exist, as well as exclusionary tendencies. An exclusionary mechanism at these levels has been called "The Janus-face of special education". The two-faced aspects are when students are withdrawn from class for support lessons officially intended to benefit the student, while the

Table 1. Inclusive education in Norway. Support or barriers at different levels. Examples

	Level	*Support for inclusive education Examples*	*Barriers to inclusive education Examples*
5	STATE level: Values, ideologies, legislation and policies	Fundamental rights to inclusive education exist for all.	Accountability demands may overrule inclusion. Is the general support to inclusive values diminishing?
4	MUNICIPALITY/ school owner level: Organisation and funding	Students attend the neighbourhood school. Additional support is available for 'SEN-students'.	Individual statementing procedures in special education may counteract inclusion.
3	SCHOOL level: School cultures and policies	Some schools have an overall inclusive policy, e.g. The Queen Sonja award schools.	Some schools have exclusionary practices, and inclusive values are not shared by all stakeholders.
2	CLASSROOM level: Teaching and learning	Some teachers find flexible solutions in heterogeneous classrooms.	In some classrooms there is limited adaptation of instruction for the diverse group of students.
1	STUDENT level: Does (s)he learn and participate?	Most students use their learning potential well and participate in the learning and social community.	Inequalities in learning and participation for groups of students exist, e.g. 'SEN-students' who are a lot out of class.

main effect is to remove challenges for the remaining students and their teacher (Haug, 1999; Bonesrønning, Iversen, & Pettersen, 2011). Obviously these challenges have to be addressed in other ways than withdrawing the 'troublesome'. A flexibility in organisation, demonstrated in some schools and classes, may be one way to meet the challenges. Reducing the issue to 'in or out' is too simplistic, when an array of class, group or individual settings is at hand as learning spaces for all students (Demo & Nes, 2015). Ballard reminds us about the continuous process of increasing learning and participation for all:

> There is no away. We cannot put people away from ourselves any more than, as environmentalists have shown, we cannot throw something away. There is no away. We live in complex interdependencies with the planet we inhabit. Whatever we do, whatever is done, includes us all, no matter what strategies we may use in attempt to distance and isolate ourselves. Actions that exclude and diminish others exclude and diminish ourselves. (Ballard, 1997, p. 254)

NOTES

[1] Befring, E., et al: Dronning Sonjas skolepris 2012 – juryens begrunnelse. Oslo. http://www.udir.no/Upload/Laringsmiljo/Skolepriser/Dronning_Sonjas_skolepris_2012_juryen_begrunnelse.pdf

[2] This passage is mainly built on Nes (2014).

[3] The assessment is usually made by the Educational and Psychological Counselling Service, which is the local support system for special education (called 'PPT'). http://www.udir.no/Stottemeny/English/Information-about-the-Educational-and-Psychological-Counselling-Service/

[4] http://www.statped.no/Spraksider/In-English/

[5] https://www.oslo.kommune.no/skole-og-utdanning/sarskilt-tilrettelagt-opplaring/spesialundervisning/

[6] When students with social-emotional problems in Norway are concerned, many are registered as being in need of special education, but not all. Some may be referred to the health system (Haug, 2014).

[7] 'SEN students' are here referring to students formally identified as having special educational needs.

[8] http://www.hivolda.no/speed

[9] Younger children as well as youths in upper secondary schools also enjoy rights to special education. The figures here are lower than in compulsory education (Markussen et al., Statistics Norway, 2015).

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5. THE "INDEX FOR INCLUSION"

Examples from Germany

INTRODUCTION

The following elaborations describe the specific form of support that both education institutions and municipalities in Germany require if they seek to have inclusion guide their further development. The emphasis here is above all on experiences with external support for facilities and institutions, their professionalization and of what use the questions from the "Index for Inclusion" (Booth, 2002).

THE SITUATION IN GERMANY

The situation in Germany has proved to be very complex. Although Germany is one of the world's richest countries, this does not become apparent in terms of its educational standards or the way the education system has developed. Thus no major efforts can be reckoned with regarding current challenges in the education sector. As a result of its history, Germany is a federal country: as far as educational issues, and in particular school issues, are concerned, sovereignty lies with the individual Federal states. This also explains why no uniform approach is applied in developing inclusive processes in or beyond schools.

There are considerable differences in the ways the individual Federal states view the concept of inclusion. Frequently, setting out from the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it is argued that inclusion exclusively addresses the school sector and only refers to the group of people with disabilities or children and youths with special educational needs. This is a fatal misunderstanding. The UN Convention has other implications. They merely draw attention to the fact that the universally valid human rights also apply to people with disabilities and that this should be specially focused on because so far, they have been very insufficiently realised. Nevertheless, this means that when we are speaking of inclusion, we mean *all* people: the young and old, poor and rich, people with impairments or people with special talents, women and men, transgender people / transsexuals, any sexual orientation, people of different skin colour, ethnic origin or faith.

When we refer to inclusion, we do not mean an abstract project but inclusive action, action based on inclusive values. This is a process that effects society as a whole and is reflected in many areas of society, including the education sector and

F. Dovigo (Ed.), Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Practices, 79–96.

the schools. Obviously, more general developments in society interact with what we experience in concrete, at local level. It should suffice to mention the large numbers of people currently fleeing – against their will.

VERY DIFFERENT WAYS OF ADDRESSING PRESENT CHALLENGES

There appears to be an irreconcilable contradiction in terms between "welcoming" on the one hand and setting up fences on the other while considering "how we can get rid of these people again as soon as possible". The reason why this contradiction is conceivable within one and the same country is that quite a number of people lack any generally valid frame of reference that our action in Germany could be based on. Inclusive action means comprehending inclusive values and having them guide all modes of action, structures and ways of living together, and to put this in clear terms.

What is lacking is an orientation accepted by society as a whole. Such concepts are prescribed on a normative basis by the human rights and the UN CRPD, but they are not perceived or recognised as a pattern guiding action. Supporting the school system in this challenging and intensive transformation process has proved to be correspondingly random and diversified.

SUPPORTING SCHOOLS IN THE INCLUSIVE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

Support is frequently reduced to options for concrete treatment of children and youths. This means that differentiation methods are imparted for school classes that are partly reduced to external differentiation. This implies a multi-tiered, selective school system, which constitutes a major obstacle to truly inclusive pedagogical action. The individuality of all children is not really seen as the starting point of all pedagogical action. Frequently, "having to" teach so many different children in a class or a tuition group is assumed to "be a burden". What is needed is awareness of the fact that heterogeneity is a matter of course without which society would be inconceivable and which cannot be voted on. Prescriptions for handling children are of only limited use. Unfortunately, many programmes for the continuing education of teachers in Germany are restricted to this focus.

Inclusion calls for rethinking in many respects. It is a matter of the systemic development of education institutions, i.e.: how can systems learn to adjust themselves to really welcoming all people? Here, prescriptions are not enough. It is for this reason that the Montag Stiftung Jugend und Gesellschaft has been supporting numerous education institutions throughout Germany with the "Index für Inklusion" (Boban & Hinz, 2003) for eight years. Longer term accompaniment of development processes in education institutions by so-called "ProzessbegleiterInnen" (facilitators) has become a concept promoting the professionalization and systemic development of education institutions (and reached beyond this).

On request by the institutions, each of them was visited by two facilitators who worked together with the actors there at different levels. They accompanied

the institutions and supported them in developing inclusive change processes following priorities that they themselves had set. This proved to be useful, for the implementation of inclusion is not merely a linear process but a continuous process of change that progresses differently in each school, educational institution or business, and unpredictability has to be constantly taken into account. The compass created by the reference frame of inclusive values provides us with an orientation. Systems are frequently overstretched when they are required to implement lateral thinking and innovative aspects within their own environs. External guidance can help benefiting from an outsider's viewpoint, giving more attention to the quality of the process and thus letting change proceed in a participatory and sustainable manner. As a rule, it is easier for outsiders to question the status quo and, in a way, bring new perspectives into the system as neutral, independent parties. The more complex a change process, the greater the expectations will be of the actors within the system itself. With the experience it disposes of, professional facilitating can support the actors on site in this complex process.

Such process facilitators require skills, a wide range of experience and an inclusive self-understanding. Given these complex requirements, the Montag Stiftung Jugend und Gesellschaft has set itself the task of qualifying process facilitators, networking them with one another and encouraging peer-to-peer consulting.

QUALIFYING AND PROFESSIONALISING FACILITATORS

Over the last seven years, the Foundation has qualified around 25 new facilitators each year who were then later on able to take up supportive activities in the respective institution. An evaluation after the first three years demonstrated that this type of support had a high level of effectiveness. Heads of the institutions supported as well as process facilitators were interviewed, and the effects they had perceived differed considerably. Process facilitation in schools has again and again resulted in activists on the ground being able to respond more openly and with more motivation to the desire for inclusive changes. There was a shift in perspective that also contributed to the system's further development when support was over.

Qualification was elaborated and refined over the years. Regular feedback from the participants and detailed reflexive discussions between participants and trainers led to a constant advancement of the concept. The concept of continuing education provides much scope for individual ideas, modifications and further developments – in fact, this is explicitly welcomed. Just as this concept has again and again been modified, adapted and individually tailored to different groups, in future, too, it is going to experience a reinterpretation and further advancement each time it is implemented.

Nevertheless, there are some aspects that have been identified as basic prerequisites for its implementation. These are the cornerstones of continuing education oriented on inclusion, which does not merely "teach" inclusion in theory but accompanies each step with living examples. These recommendations are particularly strongly

suggested to all trainers and process facilitators. A wide range of experience has shown that continuing education in the support of inclusive processes cannot work without the following aspects being considered – or, to put it the other way around: These aspects automatically result from an activity that sets out from inclusion as a matter of course attitude.

INCLUSIVE CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PROCESS FACILITATION: FACTORS WITHOUT WHICH IT WILL NOT WORK – WITH THE AID OF THE QUESTIONS OF THE INDEX FOR INCLUSION

The Basis is Working with the Index for Inclusion

In this book, Tony Booth describes in great detail the significance and benefits of the (school) Index for Inclusion. It has proven to be a valuable tool for the development of inclusive change processes and provides a good basis for system change, process facilitation and the corresponding concept for qualification.

Attitude: Inclusion can only Work if it is Inclusive

Inclusion cannot be communicated by anyone who has not actually lived it. For inclusion is not a "project", a process with definite steps that can be "worked through" and ticked, but an attitude that becomes effective everywhere and at any time. In order to make this attitude come alive, it is important for trainers and facilitators to be familiar with and address inclusive values. The goal and message of continuing education of the Montag Stiftung Jugend und Gesellschaft is: "We are convinced of the notion of inclusion. And our programme is meant to contribute to inclusive values establishing themselves in our society. We particularly emphasise the inclusive quality of the processes themselves."

This is why, ideally, the trainers and process facilitators themselves embody inclusive values. The offer true participation for all actors in the organisation that they are supporting. They treat each other and those involved in the process appreciatively, they accept and respect different perceptions, their work is oriented on resources, and they are geared to sustainability. They share their expertise in the areas of organisational development and systemic thought. They encourage and motivate while staying self-critical themselves and are aware of the contradictions in our society and the major challenges and efforts they result in. They are living a model and dispose of a large repertoire of moderation methods fitting in with this endeavour. They view process facilitation as a valuable resource.

An Inclusive Concept of Learning

"Education must be that which liberates". This claim by Martin Buber fits in with the concept of educating and learning as presented here. The aim of continuing education

is not so much that of "filling people up" via knowledge transfer but of opening up new horizons for individual education processes leading to extended or new skills in supporting change processes. This is only possible if continuing education challenges participants to come up with solutions of their own and grasp themselves as a living part of it. Learning processes are generated in people themselves, and are steered by them. Learners experiencing self-effectiveness and the build-up of skills while they are learning will develop confidence in their own ability to develop.

An inclusive learning process has been successfully facilitated if the learners – just like the organisation they are working for – have arrived at new attitudes and orientations, new insights and extended options for action. Each step of learning has to provide an opportunity for this to happen: reviewing one's own development process, recognising and reflecting on one's own resistance to create further development projects. It is the inclusive quality of a continuing education measure that gives the participants room to experience themselves as learners again and again, to orientate themselves and to feel responsible for their own learning and that of the group.

Being Aware of Roles: Process Facilitators Act at Different Levels

Facilitating inclusive change processes features a special degree of complexity. This demands considerable awareness among process facilitators of their roles in the process and, at the same time, keeping a distance from which they can assume a meta-level in the process at any time. This also includes being aware that a process facilitator always plays a role in two processes at the same time: one's own supporting process that one has been commissioned to perform, commences, controls and concludes – and the development process of the organisation, which goes way beyond the excerpt that the accompanying phase represents. Process facilitation is a process in its own right that has been planned as a sequence of steps that can set in and come to an end in any phase of the development process. One process accompanies another one. Trainers working with the concept presented here should not only live this clarity over roles for themselves but should address it again and again in the course of the continuing education measure.

Individuals who are aware of their roles

- are familiar with both their own expectations and with those of the various participants of the process, and should the need arise, they can communicate and clarify them;
- distinguish between their own expectations and those of the various participants in the process that they are to advise;
- distinguish between the tasks of process facilitation, moderation, counselling and mediation;
- feel responsible for the consultation process and design it re-assuredly while leaving the speed and results of developments in the responsibility of the individuals and the organisation involved;

- are non-partisan and keep their own feelings and objectives out of the process;
- can handle possible contradictions between their different roles;
- gain clarity over: Who am I in this concrete change process, and what am I supposed and allowed to do here? Who am I as a process facilitator? What sort of consultation is suitable for me and for my role? Which interventions do I make? Which resources are available to me? What are my skills, and where are my limits?

Self-reflection: Teachers are Learners

Self-reflection is an important prerequisite for, and element of, such clarity. Process facilitators are consultants in a guided process – and at the same time the subjects of their own learning process. They live alternating between the subject and the meta level, between a teaching and a learning role. Conversely, the participants of process facilitation are not merely learners but also teachers: They take up ideas from the outside – and in terms of participation and handing over responsibility, with their feedback and their taking part in the process, they too are teachers providing the process facilitators with important suggestions and information. This also applies to the trainers heading a qualification programme. This constant reflecting of experience gained in the process onto their own activities is a basic prerequisite for credibly imparting inclusive change and continuously developing one's own skills.

Feedback: A Culture of Mutual Appreciative Communication

Everyone depends on feedback to perceive the impact of actions or statements. In inclusive processes, feedback is not merely a method but a culture corresponding to inclusive values. Even though there are various methods to obtain feedback, the basic attitude is the crucial aspect in this context: Feedback is a precondition for all people participating in an inclusive process to learn and to influence its development. Feedback allows reflecting on individual steps of the process, developments in learning and the quality of participation. Giving oneself feedback means thinking about "climactic adventures" and "abysmal experiences" in one's own development process and one's own development of skills and to give oneself guidance via feedback from the group. In the course of a continuing education measure, it is useful to already establish a feedback culture in its early stages.

Heterogeneity: Permitting Diversity

Working with very heterogeneous groups always makes sense. It is precisely this heterogeneity which simultaneously forms the starting point of inclusion and its guiding notion. For example, experiencing pedagogues and teachers jointly working in the development of education institutions leads to a greater understanding of one another and of the respective work situation and perspective. It is of equal value

to have participants from different professional groups in a process: administrative staff, free-lancers from the fields of organisational development and consultation, continuing educators, trainers, executive staff from private agencies, psychologists, journalists, artists, people with a wide range of different experiences with discrimination.

Here, the key aspect is not merely that of getting to know the respective other professional or working field but above all of understanding the different perspectives and making use of them for the process, learning to appreciating one another in one's field and role and learning how to jointly assume responsibility. This is particularly important because educational institutions and municipalities are increasingly becoming active in joint contexts, share responsibilities in urban districts and benefit on both sides from enabling inclusive structures in cooperation and on the basis of mutual exchange.

Orienting Action on Resources: Taking Advantage of Diversity

Diversity is both a normality and a resource – this is the basic notion of inclusion. A team of trainers ought to develop this attitude together with the group and right from the start. Each participant ought to contribute to this and enrich the learning community with experiential knowledge, individual expertise and his or her personality. Incidentally, these need not always be concrete activities – an individual may sometimes contribute to the favourable progression of a process by his manner, his mediating effect, a friendly interest he displays, his original ideas, quiet, supportive reticence, etc. Here, a high level of alertness and attention is required to expect and discover resources all levels and encourage everyone to vitalise even the smallest potential for enrichment.

Participation: Assuming and Sharing Responsibility

Participation is a logical consequence of resource orientation. Appreciating the resources and potentials of each participant implies also making use of these resources. A basic participatory attitude rests on the principle of mutuality – everyone gives *and* takes, and everyone benefits from everyone else. Here, the consistent assumption and sharing of responsibility is an important element. The group shares responsibility, it supports the process together with the trainers and the respective organisers or agencies. All participants may contribute – but they are also challenged to do so. In each step of the process, each individual can actively seek and assume a share of responsibility of his or her own to make a contribution to the success of the project. Participation presupposes that one is permitted to, can and wants to participate, – and can also have a say in this respect. Here, the prerequisites first have to be created. This also includes the participants being able to formulate their respective development needs and goals. The common goals and contents set for the individual modules have to emerge from a dialogue at eye-level.

Openness Towards the Unpredictable: Understanding and Designing Change as a Process

Inclusion is a process consisting of many small and big steps that is always given life by the people shaping it – and can therefore never be accurately "planned" or forecast. This also applies to this type of continuing education: Each group is different, and each section will experience a new variation in each implementation because it is guided by the composition and dynamics of the group. This is why trainers have to be open towards the unpredictable – the only true constant of every process in which humans are involved. Such openness is a basic precondition not only for the implementation of the project but also for inclusive action in general: Accepting what people contribute – even and above all when it is unexpected and counters the plan, when it initially appears to cause resistance or even setbacks. All this belongs to the process. And this is precisely what is interesting about implementation: It never turns out the way you would think it to, but there are always unexpected positive surprises and new approaches as well that one would never have dared to plan.

Teamwork: Working as a "Couple"

Carrying out this continuing education programme as a couple places individuals on a dialogue basis. As a twosome, they can support each other, reflect, offer feedback, live feedback, conduct exercises in parallel with groups, answer difficult questions together, address resistance and conflicts in dialogue and, all in all, demonstrate in each step how inclusion emerges from mutual exchange and negotiation. The quality of inclusive activities that can be performed in this constellation is of particular value – and in the concept of the Montag Stiftung Jugend und Gesellschaft, it forms a basic element of process facilitation. Last but not least, a couple reflects a pattern of differentness: different experiences and perspectives offer participants a wide range of opportunities.

Having Fun: With the Process and with the People

Fun can't be prescribed, but you can't do without it, either. Lively, fresh communication is vital for the concept. And that it is fun to work on something together with other people is exactly what this communication is supposed to demonstrate. Even though (or perhaps precisely because) the implementation of inclusion is often experienced as being at odds with existing structures and entailing difficult processes of change, open, positive handling of everything facing the participants is helpful. A strong feeling of optimism about finding solutions is usually contagious. This is also an aspect of inclusive activities: noticing what is easy in addition to the effort of taking up daily challenges and not forgetting humour despite the seriousness of a project.

Previous Knowledge and Experience: Ensuring the Quality of Work and of being Together with Others

Every individual can start thinking and acting inclusively without any special previous knowledge. But those who wish to train others to facilitate inclusive processes in continuing education have to rely on that previous knowledge. Skilled trainers can draw on their own experience in process facilitation and moderation. They know what it means to support people in systems during change processes. They see things from the perspective of the system that they are supporting. And they are familiar with the milestones and discussions concerning the topic of inclusion.

In order to achieve a high-quality implementation of the concept referred to here, previous knowledge and experience is important regarding the following areas and topics:

- inclusion as a human right and in the context of present education policy,
- the various editions of the Index for Inclusion,
- structures and operation modes of educational and municipal institutions,
- change management theories and methods,
- adult continuing education and continuing education for continuing pedagogues,
- group dynamics and group steering,
- communication theories, verbal and nonverbal communication,
- moderating techniques, evaluation and feedback,
- systems theories, social systems, systemic change,
- process models and process facilitation,
- supervision und coaching elements.

Networking and Exchange: Open to Further Development

Inclusion means making use of the resources of many to strengthen what they have in common. This applies to many levels:

- The team of trainers and participants share responsibility for the further development of qualification. Their experiences and opinions are desired. The prospective process facilitators test their effects in concrete processes and also feed these experiences back. The range of activities is extended to new aspects and fields of practice. Establishing links with municipalities is a particularly significant expansion of facilitating skills.
- There are various forms of networking both for the trainers and the participating process facilitators. Regular exchange forums and peer-to-peer consulting are an absolute must for this purpose. Again and again, new couples or tandems develop for facilitation measures. Learning from one another and tailoring details to the system requesting support require an open approach to cooperation.
- Here, achieving a sustainable impact depends crucially on seriously meant cooperation on a par with municipal and other providers of continuing education.

Services offered by different providers contain many aspects to set out from – in the long term, it would be desirable for public agencies, e.g. state institutes running continuing education programmes for teachers, day-care agencies, etc. to take up responsibility for process facilitation.

By publishing the qualification concept, it is now possible for other agencies – public, private or government – to run qualification programmes of their own on this basis in Germany and other countries. Montag Stiftung Jugend und Gesellschaft supports those interested in introducing or implementing the basic ideas and offers suggestions on designing concepts. Applications are flexibly tailored to the respective target group.

USING THE INDEX FOR INCLUSION IN ALL ITS VARIOUS FORMS

Inclusion has a lot to do with questioning existing structures, cultures and practices. This was also the aim of Tony Booth (2000) when he developed the first "Index for Inclusion" for schools a questionnaire containing more than 500 questions in all meant to support a critical review of the status quo. Questions open the way for talks, challenge things and encourage dialogue and thinking issues over. Working with questions forms the basis of developments and is also a common thread in continuing education as a whole. Again and again, participants come up with questions from the Index. Different methods are used to work with the questions, which have as a rule been prepared by participants. Inclusion asks questions and thus approaches a (preliminary) result – the answers are always a common reflection on the way to living together inclusively.

All variants of the Index are used for inclusion (see literature list):

- Index for Inclusion for schools (2003);
- Index for Inclusion for day-care centres (Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaften, 2007; Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaften, 2015);
- Municipal Index for Inclusion (Montag Stiftung Jugend & Gesellschaft, 2011);
- Latest version of the English-language Index for Inclusion (Booth, 2011).

Developing new questions for other contexts also plays a role in the choice of questions from the different versions of the Index for Inclusion. Here too, how questions relate to an individual is of particular importance. The questions are only effective if the opinion of the questioners and the questioned is openly and confidentially reflected on. In continuing education, occasions for communication arise (also in the shape of role plays) that can be transferred to future process facilitation measures. Here, knowledge of the Index versions referred to is an important prerequisite.

Only in action do the inclusive values developed by Tony Booth develop an effect. This is precisely what the many questions, the core of the Index, are about.

WHAT QUESTIONS CAN MOVE

Working with the Index questions means reflecting on oneself, assessing one’s own thinking and acting; it means communicating with others, being inquisitive about other opinions and perspectives and discovering and using the diversity of experiences and thought. Here, the emphasis is not on the “right” questions but on open dialogue. By learning to appreciate different experiences and perspectives and developing ideas for improvements on this basis, internal participation, solidarity and affinity, the assumption of responsibility and thus “true” participation develop (Brokamp, 2011, p. 141f).

In this sense, the Index can help to:

- recognise, appreciate and make use of forms of diversity;
- understand the differentness of people as an enriching diversity;
- identify obstacles to participation and eliminate them;
- find and develop resources to support learning and participating;
- recognise, release and develop abilities;
- promote self-awareness and reflection, thus changing attitudes and action;
- focusing on the participation of all those involved in and affected by the development process and implementing it.

Questions form a good basis of dialogue and communication, helping both at the systemic level, the personal level and the level of concrete school or teaching practice. The questions prompt communication processes among the actors that may affect various levels: one’s inner self, one’s own attitude, reflecting on the treatment of one another on a small and a large scale and a focus on the whole – the school and beyond. At all levels and with regard to all aspects, the option for realising inclusion is always to be provided as a foil, like a watermark.

The questions are highly diversified, and are used at each point in time and on each occasion in the school processes and debates: in assessing the status quo, in communication, as a contribution to a pleasant communication atmosphere, as a means of involving as many actors of a school as possible (pedagogues, staff from other agencies, children, parents, technical staff, cleaners, …), as an approach to certain topics of school development, at parents’ evenings, conferences, management sessions, with the school inspectorate, the inspectors, etc. There are a large number of educational institutions that regularly work with a question from the Index at the beginning of subject or planning meetings and also of cross-institutional meetings in order to focus on the guiding perspective of inclusion before work “proper”, for the subsequent discussions.

In handling the questions, the basic structure of cooperative learning has proved to be useful (Brüning & Saum, 2009).

Examples of working with the questions:

- Everyone writes down personal reflections on the question. *(Think-alone thinking);*
- Two individuals each exchange their notes or views and discover what they share or where they differ. *(pair exchanging);*
- Individual views are presented to the group; common aspects and differences are discussed. *(shared presenting).*

The questions are to give impulses and are neither meant to control nor to embarrass anyone. In this sense, they are not standards but are to encourage thinking. They can contribute to doubts and frustration being identified but not automatically depreciated. Rather, doubts should be taken seriously and become the subject of talks.

Schools that have already been working with the Index for Inclusion for some time note that their communication structure has improved. They refer to greater openness and honesty as well as rising affinity.

The situation at schools, which is often experienced as very contradictory, requires space and time for discussions and dialogues.

STRUCTURES ARE IMPORTANT

In order to sustainably work with the Index for Inclusion at a school, it is important that not only a small group feels responsible for inclusion. A common steering group of colleagues representing different professions and with the involvement of school management, ideally also the involvement of children and parents, regards inclusion as a frame of reference for all school development processes, making it the responsibility of all school members. Establishing work with the Index in the school's central steering group is far more effective than an inclusion group working in parallel that again and again has to struggle to gain any attention. As a rule, a steering group has the task of steering school development processes in an institution, contributing to assessments of the status quo, coordinating various projects and processes, acting as a contact from outside and inside, and maintaining contacts and networks (Huber, 2011). Generally, development projects are addressed that the school is working on at the moment.

Experience has shown that the Index for Inclusion can be useful in all phases of the school development process.

Here, it is also important to tolerate contradictions and again and again remember that small steps are also important steps.

GRASSROOTS INCLUSION – EXPERIENCE GAINED WITH THE COMMUNAL INDEX FOR INCLUSION

Inclusion is a global process in an overall social policy context and cannot simply be restricted to individual systems. Inclusive change processes are necessary everywhere and only take effect respective in concert. Parallel to the education

institutions, within a major "Inklusion vor Ort" (on site inclusion) project, Montag Stiftung Jugend und Gesellschaft, Bonn (MJG) cooperated with municipalities, individual institutions/organisations, projects and initiatives that are initiating and developing change process guided by the notion of inclusion in their municipalities and the communities they are responsible for.

Diversity in a municipality refers, on the one hand, to a wide range of different institutions and organisations shaping life at grassroots level: free and not-for-profit organisations, federations, associations, organisations in civil society, churches, education institutions, cultural institutions, businesses and companies, local government authorities and several more. On the other, diversity in a municipality means a large number of people living in the municipality and acting in different life and work situations: as residents, family members, parents, children and youths, beneficiaries of existing services provided by the respective municipality, staff, including executive staff, administrative officials, political representatives of interests, members of initiatives and much more. In this sense, in the context of inclusion, the municipality is more than a local administrative unit. The municipality is a large community in which people are living together, in many forms and at many levels. Here, people can commonly act in exchange with other people and the administrative level of the location they are living in (Imhäuser, 2011, p. 8).

The "Inklusion vor Ort" project was intended as a contribution to spreading an understanding of inclusion oriented on human rights as a key guiding notion in value-oriented thinking and acting at municipal /regional level. In cooperation with municipalities and organisations/institutions/initiatives, the manual "Inklusion vor Ort" was used together with the Index for Inclusion tool at local level, and experiences and examples of designing inclusive processes were made available to others. Here, Montag Stiftung Jugend und Gesellschaft supported individually selected municipalities by providing consulting and facilitation and continues to make a framework available for networking and exchange.

For this project, the (original) *Index for Inclusion* was applied to municipal contexts. The notion of using the Index for Schools in work at municipal level comes from Suffolk, in the UK, where a manual was developed specially to implement inclusive action at all municipal levels: (McDonald, 2002). Inspired by this, and in cooperation with pilot municipalities as well as cooperation partners and actors at municipal level, Montag Stiftung Jugend und Gesellschaft developed the extensive manual "Inklusion vor Ort – Der Kommunale Index für Inklusion" (MJG, 2011).

MUNICIPAL LEVELS IN THE EFFECTS OF AND EFFECTING OF INCLUSIVE LIFE AND DAY-TO-DAY REALITY (MJG, 2011, 25F)

In a municipality, there are several levels at which every individual can become active – or benefit from the effectiveness of others. The questions from the questionnaire can provide different points of reference for reflection in the context of the different levels:

- Person/individual (I with myself)
- Here, the emphasis at the individual level is on treating myself in a partnership manner. The theme is me myself and my attitudes, my mental concepts and perceptions of the world, my assumptions, judgements and prejudices, and hence my readiness to develop an inclusive attitude.
- Social environment, neighbourhood level (I with you)
  This is the level of relations and links with others: in partnerships, friendly relationships, the neighbourhood or day-to-day encounters. The issue here is that of my attitude and my behaviour in my immediate social environment.
- Institution/organisation/initiative (we)
  The we is the first level of the public social environment. This is where we work and where actors work and act together and contribute to shaping the image of an organisation. This affects appreciative treatment of one another within the institution /organisation, around inclusive guiding notions and structures realising participation that are accessible to everyone and exclude no-one.
- Networking (we and we)
  This level features networking of institutions and of initiatives within a municipality. Viewing the bigger picture involves exchanging experiences, sharing what has been tried and tested and developing common strategies and initiatives.
- Municipal/political level (all together)
  This level addresses the municipality as a whole; here, responsibilities, strategies and structures need to be coordinated that are regarded as helpful at this level in achieving common goals. The emphasis is on designing framework conditions for participation in a manner enabling residents to participate in development and decision-making processes and eliminating existing barriers to participation.

This system with five levels demonstrates, on the one hand, an increasing degree of complexity in developing inclusive life and everyday worlds from level to level. However, it also shows that the viability of the first level forms the foundations for all these development efforts: The more involved and committed individuals establish clarity regarding their own motives for action, regarding the values driving them and their ethical attitude, i.e. regarding what they wish to take responsibility for themselves at this first level of "I with myself", the more options will emerge for the development initiatives to succeed and bring about results at the subsequent level.

The manual is a tool that helps in making use of the resources that diversity offers in developing an inclusive community. It contains more than 500 questions each of which – just like in the original Index – can be a point to set out from to think about inclusion, reflect one's own action and become active oneself. The questions are structured into three areas representing the different perspectives and levels of action in a municipality (MJG, 2011, p. 38) and corresponding to the system described above.

- Our municipality as a place of residence and a place to live in
- Inclusive development of our organisation
- Cooperation and networking in our community

Each of these areas contains a multitude of topics that the questions are assigned to. Also working with the questions in the municipalities very clearly demonstrated the potential of dialogue and exchange offers. At events and conferences, in workshops, seminars and team meetings, it became apparent again and again that while this exchange makes visible what is already there in terms of positive examples regarding the respective topic, it also clarifies different opinions that in turn create the foundations for an intensive search for ideas and solution approaches to improve the status quo that can then be supported and implemented by everyone. In teams and permanent groups, regular addressing of the Index questions has proved to be very effective in bringing about changes that are implemented in small steps and enable fast, “small” success. Various methods tried and tested in practical situations could be derived from these experiences which are described in the manual (MJG, 2011, p. 153f).

The processes and projects in the municipalities develop very differently, although they do have one thing in common: an individual or a small group of individuals taking up the topic who have looked for allies and then started. At a networking event of actors and experts from municipalities, individual institutions and projects organised in the context of the project, the term “networking infection” was created. “Infecting” other people with the significance of inclusion, handing the notion on and gaining further activists and multipliers is a central aspect in inclusive processes. Inclusion calls for change in each individual’s thinking and action, and this takes time. Recognising one’s own options for action and effectiveness strengthens this process, and the Index questions help here. Often, material and legal conditions create considerable challenges and make the process appear to be very contradictory. What is important is not to be brought off track but recognise the existing options for change despite these framework conditions and to make use of them and work towards changes in the framework conditions together with others.

PARTICIPATION AS THE CORE OF INCLUSIVE PROCESSES

In order to realise diversity in day-to-day living together, it is important to establish a corresponding awareness and self-understanding among the people at grassroots level and in the organisations/institutions: Inclusion as the key to a forward-looking society can only be achieved in participatory processes in which people are involved in developments, experience the effects they themselves bring about and are able to assume responsibility. Participation and involvement means more than “being allowed to join in” and requires other new dialogue and decision-making processes that the individual may not be familiar with.

Here, there are a number of examples of how participation and involvement in shaping processes can succeed, such as a future workshop with the children's and youths' parliament, an "Offene Töpfe Fest" – an intercultural event with the people living in the location representing different cultures, the "Index Question of the Week" in the Internet or at the town hall, a citizen's gathering to develop a guiding notion for the municipality, social environment conferences, citizen surveys, workshops and much more. Informative public relations activities help highlight what has been achieved and integrate more people in the process.

NETWORKING AND COORDINATION

Cooperation among actors from different institutions and organisations is existent in all institutions and organisations. Especially also by networking, for example, care and education institutions with other institutions (e.g. sports clubs, parent initiatives) and local public authorities such as the youth welfare office or the school board, these process are given additional dynamics. Change processes are tedious, and often a fast impact cannot be achieved or made visible. A common definition and planning of projects reaching across organisations and the implementation of initial steps help in making use of existing resources and maintaining continuity. It is important to be aware of even minor success and take a breath in between to reflect on cooperation so far and the approach in the process and gain insights for further work.

Good cooperation requires structures that coordinate activities, lead to decisions and simultaneously reflect the diversity of people and opinions in the sphere of activity. There are a wide range of options and organisational concepts for such coordination, and this also applies to the approaches and methods in the processes. There are project and working groups, steering groups and inclusion teams meeting on a regular basis as well as coordination teams with topical working meetings. Cooperation with responsible officials representing municipal administration in the steering groups is important. In addition to new structures at the start of the processes, such as steering groups (see above), existing, including well-established, municipal structures can be made use of and if necessary be changed and made more functional.

The manual "Inklusion vor Ort" has met with considerable interest and continues to do so, and nowadays, it is used in many municipalities, institutions and initiatives. The "Kommunaler Index für Inklusion" is presented at a wide range of expert conferences, and working with the Index questions is intensified in workshops. Many municipalities and individual initiatives are seeking cooperation with MJG. Currently, there is a considerable need for sustainable inclusive processes. There are a wide range of different impacts and self-initiatives. For example, the Protestant Church of the Rhineland has developed its own Index for Inclusion based on the *Kommunaler Index für Inklusion* (Evangelische Kirche, 2013). There are further examples

from municipalities at http://www.montag-stiftungen.de/jugend-und-gesellschaft/projekte-jugend-gesellschaft/projektbereich-inklusion/inklusion-vor-ort2.html.

CONCLUSIONS

One crucial aspect that will demonstrate whether inclusion can be realised in a sustainable manner is to what extent the appreciation of diversity and the manifestation of inclusive values is reflected in daily togetherness. Developments in schools and the realisation of inclusive values are embedded in municipal, social policy and global contexts. One yardstick in Germany is going to be how recent challenges such as immigration can be addressed in a decent manner. It is up to municipal policy and administration to develop and provide the framework conditions for the participation of everyone, together with the local people and the institutions. Here, municipalities are required to prepare policies to develop and enable inclusion that change everyday life.

When dealing intensively with the issue of how inclusion can be developed at municipal level, it must not be overlooked that in addition, efforts on the part of the Federal and State Governments continue to be required for the further levels of action (Imhäuser, 2011, p. 9).

ABOUT THE MONTAG STIFTUNG JUGEND UND GESELLSCHAFT

The Montag Stiftung Jugend und Gesellschaft, Bonn has set itself the task of actively encouraging, performing and promoting a positive development of living together in society. It sees itself as a place where concepts are networked and communicated that enable all people to have unrestricted access to a life worth living, that clear barriers and obstacles to such a life and that extend the opportunities to live a fulfilled life at all levels. The estimation expressed in this self-understanding of its working basis corresponds to inclusive thinking and acting and forms the foundations of shaping education and society in the sense of the guiding notion of inclusion.

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6. A CRITICAL REVIEW OF IDEOLOGY, POLICY AND CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE SWEDISH CONTEXT RELATED TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE AND STUDENTS' WELLBEING

INTRODUCTION

Building on experiences from interventions in schools this chapter will analyse ideologies and socio-cultural values that has influenced – both overtly and subtly – the educational organisation in the Swedish school system, in ways that may thwart the traditionally agreed-upon humanistic values of fairness and virtue that are although in a way still supposed to be in force. These forces that influence the learning environments of schools and classrooms therefore may counteract the efforts to build developmentally healthy and effective learning environments.

THE SWEDISH CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL REFORMS AND EMERGENT CRISIS

The Swedish educational system has been reformed several times in the last 20 years with the aim to make it more effective. The reforms have been inspired partially by the same international trends that have been applied in other educational systems and are characterised by standards, choice, competition and testing (Diefenbach, 2009; Allodi Westling, 2013b). In another sense the application of some principles of New Public Management and free market has been particularly radical in Sweden, for instance regarding its decentralisation to the municipalities and the rapid introduction of a tax-revenue funded Independent School system. These reforms, according to several analyses, have led to probably unintended but nonetheless negative consequences for the functioning of the whole educational system (Levin, 2013, Allodi Westling, 2013b). The reforms were introduced with strong determination and with the intention to make the system more effective. However according to several official analyses, the educational system in Sweden has become *less equitable* (OECD, 2103; OECD, 2014) with significant changes during the last ten years. The students' achievements according to several assessments show a *large decline* in Literacy, Numeracy and Science. Consequently,

F. Dovigo (Ed.), Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Practices, 97–116.

the Swedish educational system has been strongly recommended to implement further new reforms in order to address these issues and improve its equity and performance (OECD, 2015). Considering that many ambitious, well-intentioned and comprehensive reforms have been introduced previously, which have nevertheless resulted in the present poor outcomes, it may be important to understand the possible effects of the previous attempts, and furthermore to make good use of these insights when planning new initiatives and improvements.

AIMS AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTER

The aim of this text is to contributing to shed light on processes that seem to have emerged in this educational context, looking at observed phenomena and tendencies, and relate them to ideologies, social and cultural values and goals, which may have been incorporated in various parts of the educational system, and thereby influenced its organizations and the decisions and actions taken by their members. The aim is to identify noxious mechanisms that would have to be recognized and counteracted, and, just as well, to identify antagonist values that have to be strengthened, in pursuing the goal to improve the functioning of the educational system both for the society and for the individuals, that is, the students and the professionals involved. Some of the mechanisms that produce these effects will be analysed in this chapter with some examples of possible countermeasures. Moreover, identifying the purposeful directions needed to strengthen the broader goals of education, in order to keep the goal of inclusive education vital and effective, will also be addressed.

These reflections and understanding of the broader context arise from reflections related to an intervention project conducted with teachers and school heads in some schools and from observations from other sources, as reports, empirical studies, discussions with teachers and special educators and ongoing debates. I will argue that these considerations may be pragmatically necessary to think about for researchers, when planning further educational interventions at the school- and classroom level, but they may have also a more general relevance, for instance for policy makers and administrators with responsibility for the educational system.

The contents that will be treated are the following: (1) first some effects for children with special needs and their schooling of the performance measurements and competition between schools introduced, building on the results of a case study reported more extensively elsewhere (Allodi Westling, 2013b); (2) some contradictions and shifts that are emerging in the educational policy concerning education goals and their interpretation, as good intentions concerning inclusion and yet higher numbers of children that are identified as having special needs; (3) the relation between work environment and health; (4) large numbers of students fail to reach the educational standards; (5) tendencies to attribute the shortcomings to the children; (6) arguments for defining a system with narcissistic traits; (7) the need to consider the context (8) reflections from the conducted school intervention and (9) ways forward.

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS, MEASUREMENTS AND THE IDEA OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The national curriculum has come to place strong emphasis on standard achievements, and large numbers of compulsory national tests have been put in place. The results at the school level concerning these tests are public and they are employed to compare schools. The system with public audits is an important element that was introduced among other things in order to make it possible for the parents to make choices. The competition between schools was considered necessary in order to stimulate higher quality and better results. The schools that have low average grade results may be criticized by the School Inspectorate, sometimes are targeted for supportive interventions (Skolverket, 2015; IFAU, 2015) but also by recurrent attack in the media (e.g. Svanborg Sjövall, 2015). An unintended and unforeseen consequence of this system is that it makes those students more likely to achieve poor results quite unattractive in the competitive school "market". A recent case study describes how a school that attracted large groups of disadvantaged students and students with learning difficulties was viewed as a "failure" and was consequently targeted by unjustly harsh disciplinary measures and eventually shut down. The evaluation of the school performance would in fact not take into account the broader range of educational goals that the schools was working with and build mainly on the measure of average scores to evaluate the school performance (Allodi Westling 2013b). The case study supplied examples of how the principles of NPM risked negatively affecting the morale of the staff and the values of the educational organisation, contributing to a widespread weakening of the realisation of the goal of inclusive education in the school district. The school that in fact worked actively with the task of offering a good education to the most disadvantaged students did not receive recognition for these efforts, but only criticism for not meeting the standards. The performance of the schools related to the goal of an inclusive and equitable education was in fact not measured. There were indications that other schools in the district with a better-off student population break the regulations and tried to avoid the influx of students considered at risk for low outcomes. This system may conduce in this way to an increased concentration of disadvantaged students in some schools in the district, and this, in absence of strong compensating supportive strategies and adequate resources, may put these schools on a downward spiral of low performance, teacher turnover, and other issues Allodi Westling (2013b). These mechanisms related to the effects of standardisation and accountability for children with disabilities have also been discussed in international contexts leading to the recommendation to develop carefully other relevant assessments, in order to avoid biased, unfair measurements (McEachin & Polikoff, 2012; Smith & Douglas, 2014). Taken together, the mechanisms put in place at the moment in the Swedish system were judged as not adequate in enforcing a sufficient balance between the multiple and not always compatible goals of a democratic educational system: free choice, efficiency, equity, social cohesion (Levin, 2013).

CONTRADICTIONS IN THE PRACTICE AND A SHIFT OF TOPICS

Even if the ideal of fairness, equity and inclusive education are not explicitly and publicly repudiated or disavowed, it is important to recognize that their realisation has been made more difficult in the present educational system, at least it seems so in the Swedish context.

Broader educational goals such as "student engagement and interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, values, and attitudes (…) the full range of human development" (Levin, 2013), the goal of equity and fairness in access to educational resources and fairness of outcomes, and the knowledge about children's needs and growth, their development and learning.

These topics have been neglected in the educational debate, or they have lost their place, when the educational system has been influenced by the views of economists and management experts. These broad goals have obviously not been forgotten by the educators in their practice, even if they may have been weakened in many contexts as a result of the emphasis on management goals.

On the contrary, in reports from agencies and several municipalities there is a seemingly puzzling expression of awareness concerning the advantages of inclusive education. This awareness seems conduce to a determination to organise the special educational provisions in more inclusive ways, for example reducing the number of self-contained special educational provisions.

It is also possible that the goal of inclusive education is being distorted and interpreted in a shallow way or even sometimes hijacked to become a pretext for applying standardised organisations with regular classes and lower costs, in organisations that are not always responsive to the children's needs (Allodi, 2013b). Inclusive education can also become a politically correct notion and an ideal that has to be maintained, at least on paper, even when many decisions made daily in the schools go in another direction and lead, for instance, to a less equitable educational system.

Furthermore, even if the intentions and the means employed to enhance inclusive education would be completely honest and deserve our trust, the declaration of intents may still be fruitless if the mechanisms that powerfully enforce opposite values in the educational system are not identified and counteracted. The goals of inclusive education, social cohesion, equity and fairness should be made stronger and more manifest in the schools, for example through continuing reflections among professionals and through the development of appropriate tools and evaluation instruments that would make these goals not easy to neglect.

In the attempt to improve the characteristics of the educational settings, and in order to make them more inclusive, it is also important to counteract the tendencies to reduce the shortcomings of the educational system at the individual level, when broadly defining the children and youths as themselves problems carriers.

There are in fact indications that larger numbers of children are nowadays identified as having special educational needs and disabilities. Official statistics

are unfortunately not yet available concerning these numbers in Sweden, although there are reports of this phenomenon from the field. Some evidence can be drawn from the increasing costs reported for certain kinds of special educational needs provisions in the municipalities (e.g. Arvika, 2012; Solna, 2013; Danderyd, 2013), but a comprehensive national picture would be desirable. Admittedly, the increased costs could be seen as a positive sign regarding the willingness to provide adequate resources concerning the special educational provisions that the students need. Nevertheless, the cost increase can also mean that the educational environment the schools offer to students today negatively affects the performance of an increasing number of students who show symptoms of discontent and suffering due to the characteristics of their learning environment. Another indication of this trend came from the increasing prescription of medicaments to children with ADHD. According to a recent report from the National Board for health and welfare (Socialstyrelsen, 2014), about 4% of boys in Sweden receive prescriptions for ADHD, and the prescriptions continues to increase with large discrepancies between districts. This is viewed as problematic by the National Board because it may indicate some kind of arbitrariness.

THE WORK ENVIRONMENT AFFECTS PEOPLE'S HEALTH

The working environment, and the relationships established in it, influence mental health. A systematic review of research (SBU, 2014) has concluded that there is a demonstrated causal relationship between the characteristics of the work environment and the occurrence of depression and burnout. These mental health problems are caused by high demands, limited possibility to influence one's situation, lack of social support, anxiety and uncertainty about the future situation, and the lack of possibility to gain rewards. The review concern studies of adult populations, but there is no reason to doubt that the wellbeing of children and youth are also affected in the same way as that of adults, when they are exposed to learning environments with similar characteristics. Children, if anything, would be more, not less, sensitive than adults to the characteristics of their work environment.

When the quality of schools is debated, it would be appropriate to consider the students' right to a good, healthy and meaningful learning environment, although the main focus is more often on the students' outcomes and performances than on the characteristics of their learning environment.

There are indeed structural features in the school environment that may create stressful situations: high demands (e.g. high-stakes tests), lack of support (e.g. isolation and bullying by peers, conflicts with or lack of support from teachers), anxiety and uncertainty about the future (e.g. admission to further education based on scores and grades), and for some students, the hopelessness and anguish that may arise when they experience recurrent shortcomings in spite of honest efforts. Certain students are more at risk than others to experience these stressors at school. Several studies have shown that students that meet difficulties or experience

failures at school risk experiencing a loss of worth and lowered self-concept. These experiences influence the students' wellbeing and health (Gustafsson et al., 2010), and are threats that can be addressed with various coping strategies. The experience of social alienation, bullying and violence makes the school an unsafe environment for the students. Several longitudinal studies show that negative social experiences at school are related to negative outcomes and mental health problems such as depression that can persist into adulthood (e.g.Bogart et al., 2014, Juvonen & Graham, 2014; McVie, 2014). Therefore, these issues should not be neglected.

THE WORK ENVIRONMENT OF STUDENTS

The phenomenon of students experiencing difficulties at school and not succeeding in the educational system can be substantiated by examining the proportion of students that do not qualify for a regular secondary education programme at the end of compulsory school (grade 9). This year, for instance, 14% of 16-year olds in Stockholm did not meet the requirements necessary to gain access to a regular secondary programme. In the last few years, the portion of students who did not pass the basic education requirements has increased. This does not concern an insignificant group of students; these are students that are probably experiencing shortcomings and negative feedback in their work environment. It is problematic that this situation is more or less accepted: an obligatory school attendance (so-called *skolplikt* or school obligation) implies that a significant group of students experiences a failure to achieve the standard requirements that society expects and considers as a minimum level for its citizens. This is problematic for the students and for society, and significant effort should be made to change this situation. When a new curriculum was introduced in the 1990s based on the standardised goals and objectives to be attained, the expressed logic was that all students hould be able to reach the curriculum's minimum requirements. The students who did not reach the goals would be non-existing or alternatively a negligible and utterly limited group. The rationale of this introduction was to raise the bar and raise the competence level of the population in order to answer to the higher demands of future work life.

Despite the declared intentions, year after year it is accepted that a significant group of students fail the basic education level, without the poor results resulting in a questioning of the system, and without considering whether the education is still a right for the students that fail (Allodi, 2007) or if the education has become a burden for some of them. There is empirical evidence and robust theoretical explanations of the mechanism that links the experience of difficulties in the learning environment to the development of learning and behavioural problems.

ATTRIBUTING SHORTCOMINGS TO CHILDREN OR IDENTIFYING WHAT IS MISSING IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The problems that arise in school such as issues with relationships, attendance and learning may be seen as phenomena that are caused by the students' own characteristics. Nevertheless, this temptation should be resisted. A student's depression may influence his/her school attendance, but the school environment may have contributed to the student's symptoms. This is seldom recognized. It is often difficult to recognise the role that the educational psycho-social and organisational environment play in shaping these behaviours, even if the role of relations and processes in the social environment is well known from several fields such as developmental psychology, group and organisation psychology, stress research, etc. The tendencies to attribute these shortcomings to the children themselves may be expressed in several ways. One example is visible in the practices that contribute to the marginalisation of children that are perceived as having different or problematic behaviours. Another example on a more general plane is the attribution to children and youth of negative habits and undervaluing their competence and interests, when their culture and leisure habits (games, internet, popular culture) are suggested in the media debate as responsible for the Swedish educational system' slowering outcomes.

These standpoints can be seen as moral reactions that belittle the children as they were a minority that is not fully accepted, appreciated, respected or understood. The inadequacies of the school environment seem not be taken as seriously as those that exist in the work environment of the adults, even if the Swedish work environment authority has taken some measures lately (Arbetsmiljöverket, 2015).

The expectation that is shared among the most experts seems to be that the students all will adapt to the demands of the adults, and that during their years in school they will fully adhere to the multitude of goals decided by policymakers in the curriculum with the recurrent assessments, continuous evaluations and feedback – features that the present educational policy in Sweden has embraced wholeheartedly. I doubt that in the same conditions the educational system today expects children to adapt to and thrive under, most of us adults could grow and learn at our workplace, especially if their performances were constantly considered insufficient and inadequate.

The children should have a right to always and truly be respected as they are, and not for how they perform or what they can be in the future. When the educational system emphasises standards that have to be reached by everyone, a consequence is that the substantial group of students who fail to reach these standards may be seen as having less worth or to be less deserving respect in relation to other citizens. It should be desirable in educational policy that at the outset and without hesitation prioritize and defend the children's and adolescents' wellbeing. This would consequently promote a respectful stance of respect, interest, veneration, and trust

toward every child. These attitudes are important to maintain and cultivate, in order to build the warm relationships between teacher and students and social climate in the educational settings that several studies have demonstrated are favourable to learning (e.g. Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Hafen, Hamre, Allen, Bell, Gitomer, & Pianta, 2015). These goals and motives have not disappeared, but they are sometimes difficult to keep alive in educational organisations that are governed by economic market ideals, and that have relied more on the promises of bureaucracy and management principles for the development of quality and efficacy, than on rigorous learning and developmental theories, that are tested and ongoing substantiated in extensive psychological and educational international research.

A framework for these approaches is the *theory of bio-ecological development* of Bronfenbrenner, developed recently in an integrated model (Sameroff, 2010)that consider relations as drivers of development, and on which many other educational applications, models and interventions have originated, building on teacher-student relationship, organizational climate, peer-relationship (e.g. Pianta & Hamre, 2005; Durlak et al., 2011, Hafen et al., 2015). Another theoretical framework is the *self-determination theory* (SDT, Deci & Ryan, 2000; Vansteenkiste et al., 2010), a macro-theory of motivation, emotion and personality in social contexts, defining the human needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence as basic psychological needs. Accordingly, autonomy-supportive environments (rather than controlling) foster *autonomy*, well-structured contexts (opposed to chaotic) nurture *competence*, while warm and responsive contexts (instead than cold and neglectful) support *relatedness* (Vasteenkiste, 2010). SDT offers the exploration of constructs that are of relevance for education, as the positive role of intrinsic motivation for enjoyment in activities and learning and the potentially undermining effect of extrinsic motivation (punishment, evaluations, competition, control, some types of external rewards etc.) with the description a continuum of motivational regulations. The *theory of interpersonal attachment* (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) seeing the need to belong as a basic human need that influence emotion and cognition, is also a compatible and relevant frameworks.

The expansion in the educational policy of the principles of New Public Management during the last decades, with strategies that promised effective results with the simple application of general management models that could be valid everywhere (decentralization, standardization, management by objective, documentation, control, competition.)has been made, largely without a comprehensive attention to the specificity of the educational task and to the needs of the children. The focus on technical managerial and economic values may, over time, have weakened the awareness among the teachers of the importance of developmental processes, and of the core professional values that support children's development and learning.

It can be viewed as necessary to counteract these general managerial tendencies in the educational system, and this can be done, for instance, by auditing and reviewing the system itself. This would allow for a greater attention to the shortcomings that originate from features of the educational system, as an alternative to putting the

responsibility for the failure on the students. In this way it would be possible to introduce changes, based on relevant educational knowledge that would make the organisation of education more responsive and adequate.

AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM WITH NARCISSISTIC TRAITS

In a recent Swedish book (Udovic, 2014) in the flow of critical reports about school, the students and their parents are viewed as having arrogant attitudes, an expression of a narcissistic culture, something that would make the realisation of the educational task today more difficult.

The idea of an expanding narcissistic social culture in which individuals indulge in immature behaviours, feel great entitlement, pursue vacuous material goals, use others as objects, lack empathy and cannot experience authentic relationships, may be interesting to reflect upon. However, besides attributing narcissistic traits to the individuals, it is possible to analyse the narcissistic traits of the educational system it self. Following Pajak (2010) in his analyses of USAs policy "No Child Left Behind", which can be applied to some features of the Swedish educational policy, several traits can be identified that may contribute to a narcissistic and therefore psychologically destructive learning environment (Allodi, 2013). In the same way as narcissistic parents cause deep, long-running emotional wounds to their children, Pajak argues that an educational system may cause harm to students and teachers, through a twisted and unhealthy organisational culture.

One of these traits is the *unrealistic expectation of perfection* that is recognisable behind the enthusiastic, starry-eyed, raising-the-bar-visions of the curriculum reforms of the last decades. The unrealistic expectation simply a denial of real circumstances and express expectations about the outcomes of the educational system that in certain cases are not quite possible to achieve, for all the students and at the same time. A simple circumstance that is in effect denied in the present educational policy that emphasises standards, is that there are large individual variations in children's development and growth, and that these differences influence what children of the same age know, have mastered, are interested in, and are able to learn. The curriculum determines goals to be reached by all students at the same point, which might induce assumptions of homogeneity and deny differences in developmental pace, in addition to other differences. Denying individual differences and development, in a system overly focused on standard outcomes, may have destructive consequences for the students' learning and motivation. Therefore, the unrealistic expectation of perfection may in reality be contributing to poorer outcomes, if they make the system more inflexible, less interested in and responsive to children's developmental circumstances. An example of unrealistic expectations can be identified in the ambitious 1990s reform that required all regular programmes in upper secondary education – even the vocational programmes – to provide the students with the qualification necessary to access University courses. The reform's good intention was to diminish differentiation and encourage a larger group of students

to eventually access academic tertiary education, but the actual effect has been that larger numbers of students (14% in 2015) do not even meet the requirements of the regular secondary programmes from the compulsory level. Instead, they at tend special programmes, now called preparatory programmes, there are larger numbers of dropouts from secondary education, and also complaints about students' lowered levels of competence by teachers in tertiary education (for a review of secondary reforms and their outcomes see Allodi Westling, 2015).

There are apparently students who do not reach the expected goals. These students are entitled to receive *special support* in order to reach the goals. In this sense, the policy recognises in some way the heterogeneity and the differences. Nevertheless, the expectations of what the special support will achieve may be seen again as unrealistic. If the special support is expected to fix all the problems and shortcomings, it should be a well-documented activity, with accessible data on initiatives, efforts, costs and outcomes and recurrent assessments and follow-ups, in order to identify the most effective strategies. This is not the case, however. In the decentralised educational system there is not much information available at the national level concerning the special support activities offered, their costs and their outcomes. Better data collection is planned according to a recent national inquiry (SOU, 2013; SOU, 2014). Several quality reports from municipalities had in fact expressed over the years the need for better assessments and follow-ups of the special support provisions, in order to have an accurate picture of their effects, but these assessments have to a large extent not yet occurred. Considering the circumstances, this special support can be seen in as more like a *blind oracle*, charged with the responsibility of making the educational device function properly. These characteristics may in this way also be associated with the unrealistic traits, denying the reality.

Another trait of narcissism, according to Pajak (2011), is the obsession with *control and fault -seeking*. In Sweden, the School Inspectorate has been introduced as a national agency from 2008 and strengthened successively, following the example of inspection agencies in other countries, as OFSTED in the UK. The openly expressed task of the school inspectorate is to discover deficiencies and faults. The function of control in a decentralised system is important, necessary and useful in order to monitor the quality of the services provided. Nevertheless, is it the fear of receiving criticism or punishment that drives people to do their best effort and that inspires the most effective organisational development? Probably not. Moreover, the control should be based on reliable measurements of the broad range of performances and goals, and take into account contextual variables, since the measurement of school performance may be biased and forget to consider and measure other educational goals, such as those of inclusion, equity and fairness.

When imprecise or biased measurements are used to compare schools, there is the risk that these evaluations will negatively influence the school organisation and its values, which is also described in previous studies (Allodi, 2013b). For example, in a climate of high competition between schools, it appears vital for schools to demonstrate to customers and to the account an thigh average scores and grades,

in order to recruit many students and receive positive feedback from the official assessments, since this creates and maintains a good reputation for the school. In this situation, students with learning disabilities and special educational needs – which involve a higher risk to get lower grades – may be not welcome when they apply to a school, where the school head may be overly anxious to maintain the school's average scores.

There are other examples that show how the schools in some municipalities in the official accounts may outsource the students with special needs and disabilities to another independent organisational unit, where they attend self-contained classes. In this way, the special educational needs student's grades and scores are not counted in the main school's official statistics, but are kept separate. If the numbers are below 10 students, the grade results will not even be displayed in the official statistics. The outsourcing of the special groups is visible in the National Agency SIRIS database (SIRIS, 2016) when looking at the name of the schools in some municipalities: there may be two schools with the same name (plus some number or letters) and one of these "schools" is attended in reality by only a few students. It is pertinent to ask if these practices, induced by the organisational culture of market and competition, are compatible with the idea of inclusive education. The answer is no; this practice of audits and accountability may on the contrary enforce in the school strategies of organisational segregation and stratification. This may not be intended, but it is perfectly comprehensible, due to the operating logic. So the accountability, the control and the competition may drive the school administrators to segregate and outsource the students that risk to be low-performers, instead as it was intended, to improve their performances and "raise the bar".

Some further traits are *lack of empathy and denying children's authentic needs*. The reforms that have been introduced have not prioritised the needs of the children, but instead the needs of the society, and what one today believes about the requirements of the future working life. The students that are placed in the groups described above, where their results do not count, may feel marginalized by these placements, or may feel not equally worth as other, high achieving, students. The rank-ordering of schools may be converted in a detached rank-ordering of students. All these practice may influence the attitudes and values of the staff in the school.

Insights and knowledge about children's development and their deep psychological needs are not reflected in the national curriculum, despite children's emotional development being as important as the cognitive. These insights should be important to consider in educational environments, where there should be activities that provide both stimulation and guarantee protection of children's wellbeing and health. In the pedagogic and policy debate there appears to be a quite strong resistance to these arguments, as these considerations for the children's wellbeing may be depicted as signs of low expectations and dangerous kind-heartedness towards the students. These arguments are in fact unnecessarily juxtaposed to the arguments for high demands and top outcomes. The attempts to address issues concerning children's emotional needs and wellbeing in today's educational debate

would risk meeting derision, at least in certain contexts. Yet the goal of protecting the students' wellbeing may still be accepted and pursued in the educational system, but in an encapsulated form, more as an issue for the public health and mental health professionals, not as a fully integrated, and comprehensively considered goal in the organisation, and in all the educational activities.

According to Pajak, another narcissistic trait of the educational system, which can even be recognised in the Swedish context, is *the disempowerment of teachers*. They are seen more as a commodity, than as responsible professionals capable of autonomous judgements. The disempowerment is also a consequence of the blame that is put on them for various inadequacies. For several years the teachers and the whole educational sector has been targeted by denigrating campaigns in the media and in the press (Allodi & Fischbein, 2012). Their training has been criticised and devaluated, and their practices questioned, e.g. showing bad examples. The teachers' disempowerment is also material in Sweden, as their wages are also particularly and comparatively low (OECD, 2014). Now there seems to be a recognition of the importance of the teacher for the student's results, even if there are still doubts about the teachers' capacity to develop the educational practice on their own. "*The world's best school of shit*" is the quite symptomatic name of an ambitious TV-programme that criticised and examined problematic features of the Swedish school system. The name wanted to capture the high-flown ambitions of the policies introduced, the failures in practice and reflects the denigrating attitudes that may occur in the media debate. In Finland, whose educational system rests steadily upon better-paid teachers' autonomous judgments and strong professionalism (Sahlberg & Hargreaves, 2011) there are not the recruiting problems for the teaching profession that are emerging in Sweden, where the teachers, blamed under a regime of bureaucratic control and poor trust, are among the most frustrated and stressed workers, according to recent reports from the teachers' unions (LRF, 2013; LF, 2014).A good professional work environment for the teachers should therefore also be necessary, in order to develop a good learning environment for the students.

Another problematic phenomenon that is associated with the creation of a school market and teacher labour market deregulation is a high *teacher turnover rate* (Karbownik, 2014a; LF, 2012, 2014).This has meant increasing difficulties for schools with low student average results to recruit and retain teachers with high qualifications, according to recent analyses of Swedish teachers' turnover and mobility (OECD, 2014; Karbownik, 2014b).This is probably because these schools risk maintaining lower results and are seen as problem-ridden and failing schools (Allodi Westling, 2013b). The more frequent shifts of teachers makes it more difficult to establish trusting relationships between teachers and students, which can be even more vital for children with special educational needs or other disadvantages. A recent large scale study with longitudinal data from NY schools (Ronfeltd, Loebe, & Wonkoff, 2013) has in fact demonstrated that higher teacher turnover has a disruptive effects on the achievement of students, and that these effects are particularly strong in schools with more low performing and minority students.

AN INCLUSIVE VIEWCONSIDERS THE CONTEXT AND ADOPTS HUMANISTIC VALUES

The radical reforms introduced in the Swedish educational system have changed its functioning in many ways. Even if the goal of inclusive education has not been abandoned, its realisation may be compromised or made more difficult by the threatening processes and phenomena that have been described in the previous sections, which have contributed to make the schools less equitable, with marginalisation and wider gaps in performance among groups of students (OECD, 2013), along with increasing mental health problems among children and young people (Socialstyrelsen, 2013; Folkhälsomyndigheten, 2014; Hagquist, 2015).

It is important to pinpoint that the educational practice is a complex activity with multifaceted goals, where it is possible for the practitioners to make some of the goals stronger and to emphasise some goals instead of others. This means that even if some features of the educational system are not so favourable, it should be possible to embrace humanistic values and thus pay greater attention to the children's development and their emotional and learning needs.

Even if the educational system has been steered in other directions – with interventions inspired by New Public Management principles such as decentralisation, competition, market, management by objectives, standardisation, accountability and performance measurement – the humanistic values of inclusive education and the attention to children's needs and rights may keep their legitimate place, although they risk to be down-prioritised, especially considering that they are often not measured with the same intensity as other goals. The objectives about healthy learning environments, children's wellbeing, and warm and trustful relationships with and among the students that may be pursued by teachers and school heads may in fact be more difficult to evaluate than the students' specific performances.

EXPERIENCES OF INTERVENTIONS DEVELOPING THE SOCIAL CLIMATE OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The assessments of various features of learning environments can contribute to make evident the humanistic values and goals that risk to be down-prioritised, when the school organisation is influenced by contrasting goals. There are several examples of instruments that are used, in this sense, to assess and develop various aspects of educational settings in preschools, inclusive classrooms, emotional support, classroom organisation, and instructional support (CLASS, Pianta, & Hamre, 2009). These instruments are employed as internal tools to reflect upon and develop the school practices, and not for the purpose of controlling the quality of the settings. A similar tool (Allodi, 2007, 2010a, 2010b) was developed from a theoretical framework and employed in several contexts (junior-high schools, 6–9 grade) with an intervention in two schools, and with other applications in several municipalities and projects. Through discussions with the teachers and special educators involved, a

self-assessment instrument for teachers called *Goals and values at schools* has been further developed, which is adapted to the Swedish cultural and educational context and that has been tested with teachers in some junior high schools (Allodi Westling, 2014). The social climate in the classroom in this model is considered as shaped through the relationships between students, and between teachers and students, and as influencing students' self-concept, motivation and achievement. Through the relationships in the group, situations occur where the students feel emotions that modulate their experience of school, and affect their wellbeing and learning. That the life in school consists of a tissue of relations and emotions is something that is well known by the teachers, and many of them are capable at developing these aspects in the classroom in order to create good learning situations for their students. Still, these emotional aspects of educational organisation are often not in the foreground when discussing educational development. It may depend on beliefs about cognitive and emotional aspects as separate phenomena, and beliefs that the domain of education should only be concerned with cognition – even if neuroscience nowadays indicates that the emotional and cognitive functions are closely related (e.g. Shonkoff & Bales, 2011). There is also empirical evidence that suggests that experiencing supportive relations with peers and teachers is a protective factor for students that risk experiencing a learning disability (Kiuru et al., 2013). This can thus be a factor to consider in preventive and inclusive interventions.

The theoretical framework of this research has been developed from empirical analyses and integrates and is compatible with several theories on psycho-social environments, learning processes and values, which are thereby applied in the context of educational environments. It represents an attempt to define what characterises educational environments of high quality that enhance students' wellbeing and learning. The theoretical framework defines ten correlated dimensions: creativity, stimulation, learning, self-efficacy, safety, control, helpfulness, participation, responsibility and influence (see Allodi, 2010 for a description of the model) and has been employed to evaluate the social climate and strengthen the work with the social and emotional aspects of learning at school.

The issues that have been identified, discussed and targeted in working with this framework have been diverse, in the schools where the model has been applied. Themes that were discussed were: the achievement gap between girls and boys; the modalities of possible transmission of low expectations to some students; ways to address some counterproductive defence mechanisms and subgroup cultures; mechanisms conducing to task avoidance; ways to develop more enjoyable and gratifying experiences in the educational environment, such as during breaks and mealtimes, or with particularly meaningful learning activities; enhanced participation of students; taking responsibility for common school's routines and rules; parents' involvement into the school organisation; recognition and targeting of disruptive behaviours in the classroom; cultural clashes between students with different social backgrounds; balance between emphasis on basic knowledge contents and possibility of creative expressions; awareness about the importance of enhanced emotional

support for students at risk of school dropout, and also teachers' involvement in school organisation and development.

Teacher teams would work together and evaluate in a structured way the present situation in a class. The results are discussed to identify areas in which changes are needed, possible goals and interventions. Immediate future developments of these experiences are documentations of trials concerning the self-assessment instrument in several teacher teams, in collaboration with students in special educator training (Allodi, Sundbom, & Yrwing, 2015).

Supportive relationships between teachers and students are a characteristic of good learning environments, and the model of social climate with the theoretical framework and the assessment instruments are meant to be supporting this work, in ways that can be fully integrated into the ordinary work with the goals of the curriculum. The model is not supposed to be used to externally evaluate the quality of the schools, but instead as a tool for development and change initiated and planned by the teachers themselves. These tools may also be used by the special educators in preventive work and interventions of inclusive education, in order to support the staff in their ability to adapt the school context to the students' demands, and to avoid the tendency to identify shortcomings in the students. The responses of the teachers towards this approach are often positive, which could indicate a good social validity and acceptability of the model proposed. The theoretical framework may contribute to put missed components in the *education game*, elements that had been somewhat concealed from the pedagogic arena, and that felt missed by the teachers: supportive interactions and relations, motivation, emotions, values.

The mechanisms that are hypothesised to produce change are then both an increased awareness of the narcissistic and noxious elements that are operating in the educational system, and an increased knowledge and reflection about the processes that support learning and development in educational settings. Working with the social climate of the learning environment may lend support to the school staff that want to improve the school functioning and the students' wellbeing. But, when aiming at changes in educational settings, in order to make them more inclusive and effective, it might be important to recognise, criticize and change hindering processes that are operating at general and local levels, since they are powerful in governing and steering the school organisation and the individuals involved, and not only to inform the teachers about positive processes and initiatives. To avoid or ignore these issues could lead to produce only limited, superficial changes and no long-lasting effects in the school organisation and among the teachers.

POSSIBLE WAYS FORWARDS

In summary, the reforms introduced in the Swedish educational system have produced mechanisms that have made it less equitable and effective. Some negative trends discussed (competition, standardisation, accountability, management logic, lack of interest for children's developmental needs, teacher turnover, teacher

disempowerment, decreasing performances, increasing distress) are presently immanent in the educational organisation, but may affect particular schools in different ways, depending on local policies, and depending on the schools' status. Several mechanisms have been described at the same time that may have led to negative consequences, in particular for children with special educational needs or other disadvantages. These negative consequences are however not at all only an issue for the students themselves, they are also pitfalls for the educational system and the society. These elements could best be changed by means of educational reforms, emphasizing other goals and introducing policies that may compensate the negative effects of the previous reforms.

First and foremost, the lodestar should be to pay attention to the authentic needs of the children, and to the broad mission of education in a democratic society, which would result in changes at different level and topics, as for instance:

- The funding to the schools should take account of the school's composition.
- The schools with children with special educational needs should not be penalized or blamed in the competition between schools, but they should get adequate support and recognition for the tasks that they are working with.
- Collaboration between schools should be encouraged.
- Indicators of performance on a broader range of goals than grades (e.g. equity, organisational climate, healthy organisation) should be developed and used in the evaluations.
- The evaluations should provide support and opportunities for professional development.
- The school heads and the teachers should be empowered as professionals, gain autonomy in their work, feel respected and trusted.
- The educational system should have high and realistic expectations and goals.
- The educational system and the curriculum should be flexible, recognizing early, serving and being responsive to children with different needs, not merely running in a standard mode for the average *ideal* students.
- The compulsory school system should give to all the students the opportunity to apply to regular secondary programs, and should not relegate some of them in preparatory programs.
- The support and interventions for students with special educational needs should be regulated by a shared national policy, including resource funding, professional development, contents, implementation of effective strategies, documentation and assessment, so that attitudes of ignoring, or arbitrariness in the provision of support, could be avoided.
- The mission of education with the humanistic goals and values of care, fairness and equity should be strengthened in the school organization.
- Attitudes of commitment and support for all the children's wellbeing and best outcomes, on a broad range of goals, should be encouraged and sustained among the teachers.

The experience of professional development concerning goals, values and attitudes in learning environments shortly summarized in the previous section is an example of an attempt to address and realize some of these changes, although at a local level, giving support to the staff in schools that were struggling and were regarded as failures in the municipal school competition. Even without comprehensive reforms, in fact, it would be possible to make some changes and improvements at a local level. However, there is no time to waste (OECD, 2015) and comprehensive changes at the policy level should be necessary to really make a turnaround in the whole system, put the schools in another direction and there rediscover, again and to the full, the implications and requirements of a public inclusive education in a democratic society. These reforms should benefit firstly the children, but also make the teachers to find their work, by far, more rewarding and meaningful.

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PART 2

ANALYSING GOOD PRACTICES ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

PASQUALE ANDREOZZI AND ANNA PIETROCARLO

7. EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION AND ORGANIZATION

INTRODUCTION

Educational inclusion is the process of organizing educational practices that relate to preventing and removing barriers to learning and to all students' participation in learning.

Italy's inclusive policies were ground-breaking, with the extension of mandatory schooling and the creation of preschool in the 1960s, the integration of disabled students in the 1970s, with open and communitarian primary schools in the 1970s and '80s, and with comprehensive schools in the 1990s.[1]

Nonetheless, the Italian educational system has not been able to provide an education that meets the needs of all students, due to policies that have been divisive and not well coordinated, as well as to profound structural shortcomings, in some cases even centuries-old, which include the obsolescence and incoherence of organizational models and educational systems, as well as the ways in which school headmaster and teachers are selected and trained.

Research has demonstrated that the process of inclusion in Italy is still strongly fragmented, often impromptu and of brief duration, because it is linked to single projects and dependent on the willingness of individual actors in the scholastic world to act. Inclusive policies have been conceptualized based on a quantitative paradigm and on the concept of normative self-sufficiency, which has conceded little or nothing to the transformation of the organizational models of schools.

In fact the Italian educational system is subject to contradictory forces due to the simultaneous presence of different and incoherent organizational models: (ministerial) central and peripheral, as well as those of the schools themselves. Even though schools have had legally recognized functional, administrative, didactic and organizational autonomy for over a decade now – which was more recently enshrined in the constitution – schools' specificity, which differentiates them from other public administrations, has never been recognized.

In this picture a notable separation between ideas and norms – themselves contradictory – has been created regarding the formulation of inclusive, open and dynamic curricula, and the organizational strategies of educational processes that are fruit of the persistence of communitarian cultures that are not consistent with values and processes of inclusion.

F. Dovigo (Ed.), Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Practices, 119–142.

INCLUSION AND EQUITY

Inclusive processes must be designed as processes that aim to fully democratize the educational system, and of equity, that is of equal opportunity from a pedagogical, organizational and structural point of view (Meuret, 2001a, 2001b).[2] In the educational sphere, equity demands that economic resources and pedagogical tools be diversified in order to allow everyone to reach a basic level of competency, so as to guarantee that everyone can fully develop their potential (Benadusi, 2000:19–20). Specifically, speaking of 'educational equity' means maintaining principles and practices based on which personal or social conditions (gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, etc.) are not an obstacle to fulfilling educational potential, and this implies a commitment on the part of the educational system to remove and prevent all barriers to learning and participation (inclusion) (OECD, 2012; Faubert, 2012; Chiosso, 2003). Therefore, educational equity is understood not just as the opportunity to access and participate in education, but also as the quality of the training and the level of competence guaranteed to all, while respecting diversity (OECD, 2012:15–16; Faubert, 2012: 4; Falzetti & Ricci, 2012:3). In this sense the type of organization that characterizes an educational system can lessen or remove the influence of external factors on students' learning. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that certain aspects of educational inequality originate within schools themselves, so they can be ascribed to schools, their internal organizations and inner workings (Meuret, 2006).

Guaranteeing access to education without sacrificing quality is the challenge that all western countries, including Italy, have had to and continue to have to face (Chiosso, 2003:173–174), given that equality to access does not automatically translate into fully and optimally taking advantage of education, or scholastic success (Besozzi, 2009:6–7). In the Italian teaching and training system today there is still 'formative segregation' based on social origins, which already channels students into different educational paths when they leave middle school. This means that educational attainment continues to be strongly influenced by the cultural position and economic background of the student, and the educational system does not seem to be capable of guaranteeing all processes of social mobility, but this does not mean that we should underestimate the tremendous headway that has been made by the Italian educational system since the Second World War (Falzetti & Ricci, 2012; Besozzi, 2009:11–12). However, the Italian educational system, though it has obtained significant results in the area of extending obligatory schooling, above all for students with disabilities, and though it continues to maintain the universal education model, is not an educational system that welcomes everyone, as demonstrated by consistent data showing rates of early school leaving that are well above the European average, and by data in literature on the so-called NEET, *Not in Education, Employment or Training* (ISTAT, 2015; OECD, 2007a, 2010, 2011, 2012b, 2012c:35, 2013, 2014, 2015a; TuttoscuolA, 2014; MIUR, 2013; Checchi, 2014).[3] The persistence of such structural problems intertwines with the weakness

of how teachers and headmasters are trained, selected and evaluated, and with the endemic presence of a vast number of teachers who do not have permanent positions, who are without stable workplaces and therefore lack real ties with the school's organization (Gremigni & Settembrini, 2007; MEF – MIUR, 2007). Inclusive policies should make it possible to change the organizational environment in order to create a virtuous cycle of growth, awareness, experience and cultural change in the people involved (Ainscow, 1991). This is, then, a proactive social process, through which the organizational actors, that is, the scholastic community, is called to give a different meaning to experiences, roles and relationships in optimistic and pragmatic ways that are truly open to participation (Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Dovigo, 2014:10).

THE LENGTHY EVOLUTION OF THE INCLUSIVE PROCESS

The evolution of the concept of inclusion is rooted in reflections on disability (Barnes, 1991:12; Ferrucci, 2004:8). From a historical point of view, the concept of disability has experienced a profound evolution, going from supernatural ideas of the origins of disability, which were completely exclusionary (Canevaro & Gaudreau, 1988:13; Albrecht, Seelman, & Bury, 2001:12; Cole, 2003:128; Barnes, 1991:12; Garland, 1995:14–15; Braddock & Parish, 2001), to another, in the modern age, in which it was progressively traced to medical factors (Ferucci, 2004:22:86; Medeghini & Valtellina, 2006:25). The first attempt to conceptualize illness in sociological terms is attributed to Talcott Parson (1951), who defined illness as a particular form of institutionalized deviance, and the sick person as an involuntary deviant. According to this perspective, society labels individuals as deviant because their behaviour diverges from shared social norms, the predominant structure and cultural norms (Goffman, 1959, 1963). Today, critiques of Parsons's structural-functionalist system are well-known, but they marked a clear change of perspective which tied illness to society instead of conceptualizing it as an individual attribute (Parson, 1951).

A significant break with the medical model only occurred in the 1970s with the publication, in England, of the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation, UPIAS manifesto (1976).[4] Proponents of the principles contained in the manifesto argue that people with disabilities are not incapacitated by their impairments, but by environmental, economic and cultural barriers that exist in society. It is environments that disable people, because they are designed and built for those who are not impaired. According to this perspective, learning difficulties are the result of structural inequalities that are reproduced and persist in the social processes of selection and adaptation.[5] In 2001 the World Health Organization's (WHO) proposed a new classification: the *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health* (ICF), which developed a 'biopsychosocial' approach that synthesized the medical and social models with the intention of providing a consistent perspective on the various dimensions of health (biological, individual and social). The conceptual model of the ICF is no longer the sequence of 'disability' and 'handicap' that previous

classifications were based on (WHO, 1970, 1980), but the relationship between a person's functioning, the state of their health, as well as environmental and personal factors (WHO, 2001:20–21). One frequent criticism of this classification regards the use of a medical lexis that continues to be used too widely. According to critics, in fact, terms such as 'inability', 'health', 'functioning' and 'damage, frequently used in classification, are taken from the medical tradition (Barile, 2003; Barnes, 2006).

A completely different perspective with a social, political and economic character comes from UNESCO (2001). According to UNESCO, a vision of inclusive education should encourage political decision makers to create policies that are capable of preventing and removing barriers to learning: inadequate curricula, teacher training that often does not adequately prepare teachers to work with diversity, communication styles not suited to education and buildings that are not accessible or inadequate (Ainscow, 1999, 2005:109–124; Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2003; Ainscow & Miles, 2009).

With the *World Declaration on Education For All* (UNESCO, 1990) of Jomtien (Thailand) and the Salamanca Declaration that followed it, UNESCO objectives directed at policies for educational inclusion were strengthened (UNESCO, 1994). UNESCO policies have raised awareness on problematic and contradictory issues both on a theoretical level and a political level.

Despite the fact that the definition of SEN proposed by UNESCO, according to which SEN refers to students with disabilities and students who encounter learning/schooling difficulties, is commonly accepted (UNESCO, 2012:83; OECD, 2007b:18), at the international level there is a wide range of policies and interventions that derive, in turn, from different taxonomies and classifications (OECD, 2007b:32–33; FGA and others,[6] 2011:34–35). In fact, according to the Eurydice Agency, the positions of European countries with regard to integration policies adopted at the national level can be divided into three approaches: *one-directional*, generally inserting people with disabilities into the regular educational system, as is the case in Italy; *multi-directional*, inserting disabled people into a plurality of regular and differentiated services, and *bidirectional*, with the generalized insertion of disabled students into schools or special classes (Eurydice Italy, 2004:14; Eurydice, 2009; TuttoscuolA, 2010:3). According to this international monitoring, too, the fragmented and segmented nature of the employed policies is the critical element that should not be underestimated when trying to deal with the subject of the efficacy of policies of inclusion (Eurydice, 2008).

FROM THE 'ITALIAN MODEL' OF INTEGRATION TO THE PROCESS OF INCLUSION: SOME CRITICAL CLARIFICATIONS

Until the end of the 1960s in Italy in spite of the change from the war and the struggle against Nazism-Fascism to the Constitution of the Republic, in the process of integration, first the logic of exclusion and then that of medicalization prevailed (FGA and others, 2011:69–71; Meazzini, 1978).[7]

From the 1960s until the mid-1970s there was a change with the birth of special classes in state schools, though it was still seen through the lens of separation (Law n. 1073 from 24/07/1962). Formal legislative recognition in the field of integration for people with disabilities arrived in 1971 with Law 118, which marked the first, partial step towards normative progress, though it referred to only certain types of diversity ('mutilated people', 'invalids') and made no reference to the term 'integration', much less to pedagogical or didactic organization (Nocera, 2001:31; Maviglia, 2008; Capo, 2009).

Between the second half of the 1970s and the 1980s, the integration perspective was tied to the social emergency that in the previous decade had accompanied the most intense economic growth in the history of the Italian Republic, with vast internal migration, in particular from south to north, but also from the countryside to cities (Avon, 2009:641–644; 2010; D'Amico, 2010:623–634; Nocera, 2002).[8] Naturally, these social upheavals soon also hit the educational system which, forced to face this unexpected emergency, reacted by placing the social, linguistic, that is, cultural differences, under the broad and 'reassuring' categories of 'learning difficulties', 'different routes/paths' and 'special schools' (Canevaro, 2002; Nocera, 2001:32; Augenti, 1977:21). Precisely during this period, on the other hand, movements that for years had been battling against segregationist policies and social discrimination, that decisively reject the logic of 'special schools', found themselves in a more favourable climate (Zelioli, 1977; Maviglia, 2008).[9] In spite of strong social and political contradictions, during these years there was a substantial cultural change that marked the passage from the logic of insertion to that of integration. One fundamental stage in this passage was the work done by the Falcucci Commission,[10] constituted in 1974,[11] and the law that followed on 4 August 1977, n. 517**,** which fully transposed the spirit of the Falcucci Report and translated its measures into norms (FGA and others, 2011:76), with the abolition of special classes, the provision of specialized teachers in classrooms, and far more importantly in inclusive terms, the provision of individualized didactic planning to be agreed upon internally in the class council, and dedicated administrative and financial planning, agreed upon between the state, local authorities and local health units (Nocera, 2001:39–40).

Since the approval of Law 517/77 a long series of legislative measures have been issued[12] that gradually extended the process of integration in schools and which ideally was to conclude with the judgment of the Italian Constitutional Court (1987) which opened the doors of high schools to students with disabilities.[13]

In the 1990s, the most important new piece of legislation was the Law of 5 February 1992, n. 104, *Framework law for the assistance, social integration and the rights of disabled persons*, which was a comprehensive regulatory intervention on educational and social integration for people with disabilities (FGA and others, 2011:77). Today this law is still the essential law on the subject of educational and social integration for people with disabilities and the standard point of reference (Nocera, 2001:45–48; Avon, 2009; FGA and others, 2011:78–81). In the years after the approval of Law 104, as had occurred with previous laws, numerous regulatory

measures that had been issued were implemented which, in the overall institutional and administrative framework of Italian law regarding this matter had, to put it one way, alluvial and disorganized effects, despite the fact that the objective had been to make interventions more efficient.[14] The Presidential Decree of the Italian Republic (DPR), n. 275/1999, *Regulation for school autonomy*, profoundly changed the legislative framework regarding didactic autonomy, making explicit reference to educational integration in the Plan of Studies (paragraphs 1 and 2, of article 4).

The education system, as conceived in the *Regulation* of the above presidential decree, is responsible for transposing into action, education and teaching the culture of integration, and therefore, as some have pointed out, can be seen as a moment of passage from the logic of integration to the logic of inclusion (FGA and others, 2011:81). In fact, the *Regulation* on autonomy was born in a cultural climate that intended to exalt the pluralism of decentralized social and institutional issues, recognizing that society and schools must deal not just with students with disabilities, but with a wide range of heterogeneity connected to personal and cultural situations that every student brings with him/her, and therefore, in the educational context, adopt an 'inclusive pedagogical and organizational culture', given that the integration perspective could no longer be enough to satisfy the needs of all students.[15] The lengthy process of building inclusive policies found a turning point which requires we think carefully about the issue in the Law of 3 March 2009, n. 18, *Guidelines to the school integration of students with disabilities*, with which the Italian parliament ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that came into effect on 3 May 2008. In this measure, educational staff is urged to refer to the model of the *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health,* ICF, (MIUR, 2009:9). Previous regulations had already indicated that the ICF model was the frame of reference for certifying disability.[16] In Law n.18/2009, however, it is hoped that this model will constitute the fundamental frame of reference for training educational staff, primarily teachers (FGA and others, 2011:84). With the Law of 8 October 2010, n.170 (MIUR, 2009:6–7; 2011), and the enactments that followed it,[17] regulation takes a further step in the direction of intervening to support students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD),[18] and for the first time in Italian regulation the term Special Educational Needs is recognized alongside the ICF model, which remains the basis of the Italian educational system's policies of inclusion. It is necessary, though, to reflect on the fact that the generic nature of the term SEN, which was pointed out some time ago, has absolutely not helped to reduce the number of categorizations – on the contrary, it has contributed to the creation of a wider and more vague subcategory of 'learning difficulties' which has generated further divisions between students with 'declarations' and without 'declarations'. Concentrating on needs, furthermore, means taking for granted the assumptions regarding the nature of these 'needs' and, once again, the fact that they recall the concept of 'normality': 'normal' cognitive development, 'normal' behaviour, etc. (Roaf & Bines, 1989; Hargreaves, 1983), not understanding, or underestimating, the

real barriers to learning and participation created by the social and organizational context of schools. From this point of view, as has already been pointed out, the concept of inclusion does not regard just disability and SEN but also goes further to embrace isolation and exclusion based on social class, socio-economic, racial and sexual disadvantages, it deals with equal opportunities, human rights, and the intertwining of ethics and practice (Topping & Maloney, 2005:1–3; Mitchell, 2009:22–35; Lewis, 1995:4–10). The inclusive process enables the modification of the organizational context that people are inserted into with the aim of creating a virtuous cycle of growth, awareness, experience and cultural change for the actors involved (Ainscow, 1991; Porter, 1995; Walker, 1995; Booth & Ainscow, 1998; Mitler, 2000:10–12; Booth, Nes, & Strømstad, 2003:1–2; Dovigo, 2007:38–41). The central theme of inclusive processes is the implementation of processes of scholastic autonomy (administrative, organizational, and didactic, of research and experimentation) which, as already stated, though strongly supported in the regulatory plan, have been weakly executed.

AUTONOMY OF SCHOOLS AND PROFESSIONALISM OF TEACHERS

Italian schools have experienced a decades-long ideological conflict, the most obvious phenomenon of which has been summed up in the contra positioning, still at work today, between the Catholic model of schools and the secular one, which has played a large part in the convulsive events in Italian society, which were reflected in the inability of the educational system to renew itself even in the face of a thousand projects and experiments. In the context of many dualisms, and ideological and political conflicts in Italian society, the autonomy of schools has represented the highest cultural peak after the period of reforms of the 1960s and 1970s.[19] The basic idea about school autonomy was that within a public school system, every school should enjoy a certain amount and degree of decision-making responsibility relating to its own didactic activity, its internal organization, the management of financial and human resources, and its relationship with the local community it serves. Notwithstanding these premises, the process of functional autonomy for schools, which was launched fully during the second half of the 1990s,[20] remained incomplete from both a didactic-organizational point of view and in terms of the allocation of resources, from the point of view of institutional resources, as witnessed by the much-debated reform of Titolo V of the constitution to which it explicitly refers (paragraph 3, art. 117 of the Italian Constitution).

In fact, according to numerous authors, the principles of autonomy included in the 2001 constitutional reform are a consequence of the longstanding contradictions and divisions of Italian society, which has imposed on Italian schools a contradictory institutional design that lacks mediation channels that are necessary for a unitary and at the same time differentiated school system structure (Antonini, 2006; Sandulli, 2003:126–152). The process of gaining autonomy first got tangled and then finally blocked around the strategic themes of transferring financial and personal resources,

together with the crucial question of the distribution of competences according to the model of school, with the result that it produced a patchwork of rules that were difficult to interpret, and which the Constitutional Court intervened several times to clarify, without being able to untangle the knots which were, and remain, of a political nature (Poggi, 2002: 771–814; 2005, 2008). Schools' self-rule, and with it the aims of formative success, didactic flexibility, collegiality, educational dialogue, educating community, openness to the region aimed at by the rules and implementing regulations, has therefore been characterized by a high degree of ineffectiveness because it was based on the illusion that change could be generated by regulations alone and not as the complex result of cultural, organizational and normative innovation.[21] The process of school autonomy needs not only a different type of State administration organization (decentralization), but also a different distribution of this, according to a horizontal model, in which schools carry out their functions (teaching, training, educational research) while working closely with the local community, with the aim of reaching objectives set by the state which finds in this its function as regulator and guarantor of the public character of the system. However, as a counterpoint to schools' increased decision-making powers, there should be greater social accountability. The other fundamental variable for building an inclusive educational system, the professionalism of teachers, is in a constant state of endemic weakness to the extent that it fits the metaphor of the hornet that shouldn't fly but does (or flies low, in any case). Leaving behind metaphors, in the process of increasing school autonomy teachers acquire a fundamental role, because in fact autonomy is based on an idea of pedagogy that is extremely high maintenance and that requires that responsibility be taken, which takes for granted that there is motivation, awareness and a constant updating of skills. It seems unrealistic to expect all of this from Italian teachers who have, for a long time now, been dissatisfied with their economic and professional circumstances (Cavalli, 1992, 2000, 2010; FGA, 2009: 32–87).

Teachers' professionalism, according to a broad swath of literature, can be seen as a progressive process of sedimentation of experience and relationships that, part of initial training, is enriched by work experience and individual as well as team research efforts, and is supported by systems of evaluation and real career opportunities.

These positive factors are favoured in environments characterized by real cultural, didactic, administrative and financial autonomy, by leadership on the behalf of management, by organizational structures and technologies that are adequate, and by good salaries (Andreozzi, 2013).[22]

Only in 2013, after two decades of intense debate and experiments that were often opposed, was a compulsory evaluative system introduced that assessed the quality of the school system as a whole, of managers and teachers. It is in any case too soon to critically evaluate these normative innovations (FGA, 2009:32–42).[23]

ORGANIZING INCLUSIVE CULTURE

In autonomous schools, planning, delegating responsibilities, redefining roles, and emphasizing competencies and leadership emerge as fundamental elements for defining organizational structure and its ability to face innovations and changes. In Italy, the specific elements of schools as organizations have (deliberately) been underestimated by political decision-makers, and are still unknown in public debate today, in in-school dialogue between teachers, with families, and with the external environment. Organizational theories offer some insight into concrete daily life in schools, when understood as complex systems with reference to what they produce, the process of teaching-learning, and the institutional and social relationships that characterize their most notable structural aspects. Teachers can be seen as the operative nucleus of a structure that operates like a *professional bureaucracy*, while the school *management* and *leadership* carry out tasks of integration and coordinating structures and roles (Mintzberg, 1983; Bidwell, 1965; Landri, 2000; Bonazzi, 1989:267–273; 2002:38). In these types of organizational and professional configurations, professionals are trained outside of the organization and their actions within the organizational structure, in relation to the tasks they are trusted with, are characterized by a more or less wide-ranging discretional power precisely because of this (Becker, 1953:128–141; Cassese, 1990:150; Sandulli, 2003:218).

Organizations with a *professional bureaucracy* are, therefore, 'democratic' as they attribute power directly to members (professionals), giving them a lot of autonomy, releasing them fully or partially from the need to coordinate with their colleagues. It is precisely this democratic character and strong autonomy of the operative nucleus that, as long as the stability of the external environment lasts, is why this organizational model does not cause problems. When, on the other hand, the organization is exposed to exogenous challenges, the external training of the professional capacities (standardization) is no longer able to deal with change (Mintzberg, 1983). A response to changes in the external environment, in fact, would require a reinterpretation or the identification of new practices, through which there is a return to shared forms of collaboration ('reciprocal adaptation') between the operative nucleus and managerial structure (flexible work groups, which act as a community of practice), with the aim of developing new competences and new projects.[24] However, it is very likely that processes of change will enter into conflict with organizational routines with the division of power fixed in a hierarchical structure,[25] to the point of becoming disruptive in strongly institutionalized organizations (like schools), because they are engaged in open conflict with the leadership's monopoly on power.[26] Furthermore, in schools, there is another dimension that operates, a cognitive-symbolic one that cannot be neglected. Schools are effectively organizations that involve being more than having to be, their processes, their organizational action and the values they are characterized by, become effective only when the actors in the context are in a

position to give these meaning (Weick, 1977). From this point of view, schools are the most typical organizations that have *weak links*, given their capacity to obtain results even when not all parties participate efficiently in the process of teaching/learning.[27] The concept of *weak links*, however, is not a synonym for weak and inefficient organizational structures, on the contrary, strongly shared cultural values of the members of the organization allow them to adapt to exogenous changes, but at the same time to reject change when it is not consistent with the values and underlying assumptions that prevalently guide organizational action (Weick, 1976).

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Within organizations, culture can be understood as a system of ideas and images that orients and binds the behaviours of various organizational actors, and defines the internal climate and relationships between the organization and the external environment.[28] Organizational structure is the result of the culture of its members and of groups within the organization and their relationship with the outside environment. The cultural roots therefore represent a strong propellant for the organizational action's coherence, but also a strong bond that can prevent the perception of environmental change that derives from innovations, technological and scientific, of processes and products (Ferrante & Zan, 1994:91–135; Bonazzi, 2002:157–163). The cultural identity of an organization seems, therefore, to preclude there being any space for change, that is, for searching for effective alternatives of action. That is, innovations could be taken on in a formal sense (new organizational charts, new modules, and new regulations) but the organization could largely continue to behave and act with the same fundamental assumptions that guided its action previously. It is precisely in these moments that the leader and *leadership* are fundamental variables for mobilizing resources, guiding change and guaranteeing the stability of the organizational dynamics in internal and external processes of the organization (Gagliardi, 1986:420; Greiner, 1982; Tagiuri, 1982).

In school organizations the role of the leader can be divided into two functions: management and leadership (Kotter, 1990). These two concepts refer to two modes of acting that are distinct and at the same time complementary, both necessary for facing the complexity of the organizational structure of schools made up of different dimensions: administrative, professional, didactic and linked to the socio-economic circumstances of the environment they are set in. The school leadership's actions, in fact, are conditioned by a combination of relationships that unfold through the political bodies (the school board) and technical-didactic (teachers' board), and through relationships with other administrative, auxiliary, and institutional bodies and offices of the external environment.[29] These functions must constantly deal with the heart of the operative process of schools, which is the relationship between learners and teachers, especially because teachers are guaranteed the freedom to decide how to impart their teaching, as long as it remains within the regulatory limits and the study paths defined by the Three-Year Plan of Studies (*Piano Triennale dell'Offerta*

Formativa, PTOF) of autonomous schools.[30] School leadership must therefore be able to deal with the ceaseless influx of the social and institutional networks it is in contact with and must enjoy wide political, instrumental and resource autonomy. Its functions are organizational, relational, related to directing people, and address the development of processes of empowerment, aimed at the success of education.[31] Following a transformational approach, the school leader should be charismatic to generate consensus, focused on the success of teachers and other personnel through the rational use of contingent rewards, be they material or of public recognition, and above all capable of managing decision-making power by delegating extensively, distributed leadership (Burns, 1978; Leithwood, Tomlinson, & Genge, 1996; Serpieri, 2007). If schools are places of continuous learning for teachers and students, as well as the leadership, then the latter must be intrinsically democratic (Woods, 2005; Wallace, 2003; Serpieri, 2000),[32] that is, a collaborative leadership that is based on the codetermination of the ends to be reached and on cooperation between the leader and the teachers (Telford, 1996).

THE INCLUSIVE SCHOOL

Building an inclusive educational system implies having an organization that promotes the development of cultures, practices and politics that are inclusive, that is, a process that entirely and profoundly involves the school (educational system) in a way of thinking, and deciding and organizing its human and material resources (Ainscow, 1999; Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2003; Ainscow, 2005; Dovigo, 2007:122). An inclusive school is an organization that learns, internalizes and manages continuous change through *adaptive* learning, which regards the capacity of organizations to know how to respond to contingencies, as well as, above all, through *generative* learning, which regards the generation of the impulse towards creativity, understood as an expansion of one's own capacities, *learning organization* (Senge, 1990:7–23). The organizational challenges posed by schools can, in fact, only be faced through so-called 'high leverage' that is capable of looking at the dynamic complexity of phenomena, understood as profound long-term changes. Scholastic organizations, on the other hand, often give great importance to producing planning documents, conferences, and in-service courses, which can contribute to the organizational climate but do not bring about significant structural change in ways of thinking and in practices, so-called "low leverage" (Ainscow, 2005; Ainscow & Sandill, 2010:401–416). New technologies too, by themselves, are a surreptitious shortcut through processes of social learning that develop within workplaces (Ainscow, 2005; Ainscow & Sandill, 2010:401–416).[33] From this perspective, the *index for inclusion* underlines the enormous importance that organizational culture has in conferring strength to the values that must guide the building of an inclusive curriculum (Booth & Ainscow, 2011:21–22). In Italy, as repeatedly stated here, awareness of this strong autonomy between the regulatory frameworks, didactic culture and scholastic organization is constantly undervalued, if not ignored, as the fundamental vehicle

for innovation that it is in the pedagogical field and for the curriculum (Fassari, in edited by, Benadusi & Serpieri, 2000:34–47).

RESEARCH

We conducted empirical research (Pietrocarlo, 2013)[34] to verify whether organizational model of schools and their educational projects increase and are themselves causes of social exclusion.

Our research, which is prevalently qualitative, focused on five institutes, of all levels, in the city and province of Bergamo, and aimed to clarify these two questions: 1.) whether schools detect cultural and structural constraints that prevent them from taking a path of change towards inclusive processes; 2.) whether and in what way these promote an organization that is inclusive. Our enquiry was mostly qualitative with medium to low structuring and the chosen processing technique was phenomenological. Two comprehensive schools and three higher schools with several educational paths were chosen in the province and city of Bergamo. We studied the socio-economic and demographic background of the chosen institutions, the curriculum offered, the scholastic careers of the students, the organizational structure, and records kept on projects carried out. In addition, several different research tools were employed: focus groups (with teachers and parents); semi-structured interviews (headmasters and their staff); in-class observations; three online questionnaires (for teachers, parents and students from middle and high schools) derived from the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). There were twelve focus groups, of which six were for teachers and five for parents; eleven semi-structured interviews to headmasters and their staff; seven classes were observed. The questionnaires involved: 596 teachers, 132 of whom responded (31% of the population involved); 4439 students, 1735 of whom responded (39% of the population involved); answers received from parents numbered 154 (it was not possible to determine the number of subjects involved). We then proceeded to validate and make coherent the material collected through a process of data and method triangulation (Trinchero, 2002:84–85).

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

A weak connection between the cultures, formal structure, the declared aims and the school practices that regarded inclusion emerges from the empirical results. Most of the interventions adopted, in fact, did not seem to have left any real mark on the way in which the schools analysed, planned and organized their activities.

The empirical research made it possible to get a picture of the school system, which is segmented and not coordinated, as regards the initial training of teachers, which does not concern itself with inclusion, but more generally with integration, which is in any case delegated to a small group of ‘support specialists’, often perceived as ‘other’ in classes; as well as the failure to accomplish scholastic autonomy,

which prevents allotting personal and financial resources to projects that are truly inclusive, and that aim to change the professional culture and how work is organized in schools, as well as, finally, the real regulatory chaos in the education system, which presents dispositions that have been stratified over time that often conflict with each other, which constitute a big obstacle to achieving inclusive educational processes. However, this picture mustn't lead one to believe that these schools are passive institutions, on the contrary, they demonstrate great vitality in terms of planning and have strong ties with the external environment. They maintain and try to build relationships with local administrations which, in spite of the limitations of their budgets, often contribute significantly to the functioning of schools, financing activities and projects that improve the educational offerings.

Families, on the other hand, are satisfied with the atmosphere and with their children's learning, but in spite of this they perceive that teachers are not in tune with them when it comes to collective decisions and they continue to ask to participate more fully in school life, which the families do little of at official meetings of the corporate bodies, but do widely as far as cultural and play/recreational activities are concerned. The students' opinions, on the other hand, are ambivalent, and in particular they state that they enjoy going to school, especially because they have good friends there and more generally because there is a pleasant atmosphere at school. In this their opinion differs dramatically from that regarding their teachers. Most declare themselves to be very happy with curricular and extracurricular activities that the schools offer, but are less emphatic about appreciating their teachers, against whom they are remarkably opposed, indicating very clearly their appreciation for only 'some' of them. Further, the students state that they would be more interested if teachers suggested more educational activity workshops, recreational activities, and above all, workshops that make greater use of ICT and fewer traditional teacher-led lessons, which are considered boring. Analysis of their answers, but also of the focus groups with the teachers, confirmed that these kinds of activities are carried out rarely and by few teachers. One strong criticism, which objectively limits the building of ideas and inclusive projects, is found in the *comprehensive schools*. In these institutes, the unification of the various levels of education is perceived as forced and can even be seen in the physical separation in the teacher's boards and more generally in school life, in which teachers behave as though they were foreign entities cohabiting in a single building. Consequently, joint didactic planning is an element that is extremely important for school autonomy. Because of this, the efforts of headmasters, in these institutes, are focused, often with little success, on creating space for shared work, using topics that may interest all teachers and, above all, take advantage of the link with associations that are very active on the topics of environmentalism and keeping local history alive. Secondary schools also experience processes of separation and not sharing collective activities. In this case, the dividing lines regard the subject departments and the almost friendly relationships between groups of teachers that have consolidated over the years.

One criticism of secondary schools, in terms of inclusive processes, regards the absence of cross-institute curricula even though there is no shortage of parallel impromptu experiments and tests across multiple disciplines. All materials analysed (interviews, focus groups, questionnaires and observations) underline the great importance of the 'teacher question' from various perspectives, as has been underlined several times already in the course of this chapter, including the demographic structure, with reference to the high average age at all school levels,[35] the precariousness of teachers' employment status, and the weakness of didactic training and collective planning, as well as inclusive practices. The corporate bodies of schools, in everyone's unanimous opinion, are considered an obstacle to organizational innovation and the implementation of inclusive processes. In the opinions expressed above all by the management and parents, these bodies, born in the cultural climate of the 1970s, appear to no longer be capable of responding to parents' wishes to participate, or to favour interdisciplinary and didactic dialogue between teachers, and between teachers and parents. As far as the Study Plan is concerned, which indicates the strategic objectives of cultural identity, according to general and generally agreed upon opinion of the subjects involved in this study, it is at risk of becoming a formal exercise or a vade mecum of good intentions, not capable of expressing the effective intertwining between the curriculum, the personalization of the educational profile and the organization of school practices.

According to these opinions, one of the main reasons for the increasing irrelevance of the Study Plan, which should be the material constitution of the school, derives from the absence of a system for evaluating institutes and their actors. The most macroscopic consequence of the divergence between scholastic theory and practice can be detected in the position of the support/special needs teacher, which, it is unanimously believed, is relegated to an ancillary role that is separate from the class's activities and, frequently, outside of it. Direct discussion with the management (and the school community) also confirms the weak presence of leadership functions inside schools. The management often define themselves, metaphorically, as figures that are neither here nor there, and as such, whatever about personal merit, are perceived as not being particularly useful. On the one hand, the system for selecting headmasters is not consistent with the organizational and cultural leadership role they are expected to take on; on the other hand, they do not have any real leadership powers, in spite of the regulations that put them at the head of all processes in school life. In fact, the headmaster is seen as an important figure mainly dedicated to jobs that are imposed from outside and that do not contain any real power to remodel their own organizations.

In conclusion, the critical points underlined so far do not allow us to think that we are dealing with a school that is in crisis and completely indecisive. On the contrary, the schools analysed, like those in most of the region, show themselves to have vast capabilities to plan, welcome, integrate foreign students and those with disabilities, to certify linguistic and technological capabilities, education about personal health, sports projects and promote organizational wellbeing, extracurricular support

activities, to listen and discuss with students and their families and last but not least, organize projects (seminars, meetings, and educational field trips) that support respect for the rule of law. Nevertheless, what emerges from the analysis is that this tremendous planning work always runs the risk of not actually being completed or being impromptu, and not determining any kind of stable change in the organizational framework of the way the schools operate, chiefly because of a lack of attention to the principle of scholastic autonomy and the consequent responsibilities.

THE PROJECT «LA BUONA SCUOLA»

The school reform project launched by law 107 from July 2015, the so-called *buona scuola ("good school")*, in the context of the analysis conducted here, seems to be a first answer to questions and critical points of Italian schools that prevent full implementation of inclusive processes. This law, in fact reaffirms, widening its reach, the principle of scholastic autonomy, which some wish to support with the introduction, for the first time in Italy, of a real process of evaluation of the scholastic system. The new law also aims to support the widening of management responsibilities through the choice of assistants, so they constitute a first nucleus of the middle management that has for some time been expected, but also through the evaluation of teachers to whom recognition can be given based on the criteria identified by an evaluation unit also composed of representatives from families, and, in high schools, students. Even with these adjustments the headmaster remains a figure who is more like a state functionary than a leader who is responsible for all his choices to the local community. Furthermore, the law aims to reorder and simplify the variety of rules that besiege Italian schools and to review how teachers are selected and trained. Last but not least, the law has provided a budget with a notable increase in the financial allocations for schools, and by already hiring over one hundred thousand new teachers, promises to eliminate the endemic plague of teachers who do not have permanent positions. However, though the law seems to have answered the questions posed by our analysis, it is still too early to understand whether this measure can be a real turning point for the Italian educational system or will be the umpteenth broken promise.

NOTES

[1] Preschool, or the Italian *Scuola dell'infanzia*, which originated at the end of the eighteenth century, as a type of support service (like day-cares), has benefited from the pedagogical skills of the Agazzi sisters and Maria Montessori, and more recently from Loris Malaguzzi and Sergio Neri. It was regulated with the Law of 18 March 1968, n.444. The new Italian primary school (formerly elementary school) came into being with the Presidential decree of 12 February 1985, n.104 and the Law of 5 June 1990, n.148, based on the need to approach educational problems from infancy until the teenage years in a unified and integrated way. The Law of 4 August 1977, n.517, opened the school doors of elementary (today primary) and middle schools to students with disabilities after the first measures taken in the 1960s and 1970s; sentence n. 215 of 1987 passed by the Constitutional court extended these provisions to high schools. The comprehensive institutes that include preschools, primary schools and middle

schools, set up according to Law L.97/1994, were defined as being 'experimental' while they were being launched, and with Law 30/2000 were included in full in the corporate regulated guidelines/directions. Today, article 19, paragraph 4, of the D.L. n.98 of 6 July 2011, converted and modified by the Law of 15 July 2011, n.111 has foreseen/planned for the inclusion of comprehensive schools.

[2] Much of the literature reflects on equality and equity referring to Sen's thinking, see Sen (1982, 1992).

[3] http://www.istat.it/en/

[4] It is worth mentioning here the other important authors who have supported and developed the social model of disability: Barton and Oliver (1992); Oliver (1990); Barnes (1991); Shakespeare and Watson (1997); Hunt (1966).

[5] For an analysis of the socio-political perspective, see: Tomlinson (1982); Clough and Corbett (2000:51–54).

[6] Giovanni Agnelli Foundation, Italian Caritas and TreeLLLe Association.

[7] In the Ministerial Circular n. 771 of 1/03/1953 the first indications regarding students who were to be directed towards special schools or special classes were made. At this time intervention in secondary schools was completely excluded.

[8] The answer to the question about democracy in schools was identified with the launch of the Presidential Decree n. 416/417/419 decrees of 1974, which instituted the school boards in schools at every level accepting the participation of both the students and social community in school decision-making; allowing wide and renewed innovative research on educational practices and texts; and, finally, innovating on teachers juridical status.

[9] In addition, this is witnessed by the commitment of the Research Movement born in 1951 in the footsteps of the pedagogical and sociale thinking of Célestin e di Freinet and the Barbiana school of Don Milani of which it is a symbol (Milani, 1967).

[10] Undersecretary for Public Education, after whom the document is named.

[11] The commission's work was reformulated in operative terms with the Ministerial Circular, 8 August 1975 n. 227.

[12] Given the aims of this work, it is not possible to take into account the patchwork of norms that, located at various levels of normative sources, have addressed the subject of integration.

[13] With the ruling of the Constitutional Court n. 215 del 1987, the court declared the unconstitutionality of this article. 28 point 3 of law 118/1971, thereby definitively opening the doors of secondary and middle schools to students with disabilities.

[14] For a chronological overview of the provisions made until 2009, see: Avon (2009:641-644).

[15] That this is still a problematic issue can be seen from the recent law, from 13 July 2015, n.107, known as *Good School*, that broadened the inclusive concept of the Study Plan (which turns into a three-year Study Plan), with the expectation that there would be broader scholastic autonomy, which will be discussed further on.

[16] Presidential Decree of the Council of Ministers (DPCM) 23 February 2006, n. 185, and the Unified State-Regions Conference, Repertoire Acts n.39/CU of 20 March 2008.

[17] Ministerial Decree (DM) 12 July 2011 n. 5669.

[18] Followed by two successive norms of legislation: D.M. of 27 December 2012 and working advice expressed in the Ministerial Circular (C.M.) n. 8 of 6 March 2013.

[19] The evidential historiography of the most important juridical and political critical points of the Italian educational system in the context of the many dualisms in Italian society (north/south, left/right, Catholic/lay, higher level schools, lyceums and lower level schools, technical and professional training institutes, etc.); the absence of a system for evaluating the educational system; the use of occupational leverage in schools to reduce tension on the intellectual work market. As far as school's autonomy is concerned, see: Cassese (1974; 1990:147), Berlinguer and Panara (2001), FGA (2009: 32–91), D'Amico (2010: Chapter 25: pp. 477–573; chapter 33, pp. 603–616; chapter 37, pp. 648–653); Nociforo, (2010).

[20] Law 59/97, to which the supporting structure, the Law of 10 February 2000, n. 30 was added, which regarded the reorganization of courses (known as the Berlinguer Law).

[21] It is no coincidence that the recent Law 107/2015, known as *Good School*, begins (paragraph 1, art.1) with the solemn reaffirmation of the principles of school autonomy that are the basis of the recent law with the aim of relaunching the process of achieving autonomy in schools set out in the Presidential Decree of 8 March 1999, n. 275, *Regulation for school autonomy*, pursuant to art. 21 of the Law of 15 March 1997, n. 59.

[22] On the identity and the social prestige of teachers see also: European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2013); OECD (2013; 2015).

[23] After a lengthy developmental and experimental phase, in 2013 the Presidential Decree of 28 March 2013, n. 80 was issued, based on which schools launched a process of self-evaluation/evaluation divided into the following phases: (a) self-evaluation of school institutions; (b) external evaluation; (c) taking action to improve; (d) social reporting of the school institutions. This system was recently flanked by Law 107/2015, *Good School*, which, apart from provisions for relaunching schools' autonomy, contains an early-stage teacher evaluation system and is authorized by the government to radically reform the recruitment and evaluation of school managers/headmasters.

[24] Mintzberg calls this organizational configuration *Adhocracy*, or project organizations (Mintzberg, 1983). Benadusi and Serpieri (2000:20) take up Mintzberg model again, emphasize the critical point of coordinating action within the communities of professional practice and training contexts, the dynamics of which though always more focused on the group than on the induvial remain an open question.

[25] Project organizations, according to Mintzberg (1983), are not suitable for managing ordinary activities as they carry high costs in terms of communication and unbalanced distribution of work. If the objective is to absorb change and invent new solutions posed by environmental challenges, then it is very likely that the responsibilities will weigh heavily on the shoulders of a few, while others will lose power and try to prevent innovation.

[26] From this point of view, *institution* is understood as a set of social norms that orientate and regulate behaviours based on sanctions which tend to guarantee individuals' respect (Triglia, 1998:17–18).

[27] Educational organizations have in fact been described as contexts characterized by a high degree of *ambiguity, loose coupling,* and *garbage can* types of decision-making or like *organizational anarchies* (Weick, 1976; Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972; March & Olsen, 1976).

[28] "A pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group has learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (Schein, 1984:3), see also Schein (1990:111).

[29] Paragraphs 2 and 3, article 25, Legislative Decree (Dlgs) 30 March 2001, n. 165.

[30] Article 33 of Italian Constitution; article 1, Dlgs 16 April 1994, n.297; article 3 and 8, Presidential Decree 8 March 1999, n. 275; c. 14, article 1, Law 13 July 2015, n.107. While underlining the tasks that the school organization must carry out in order to guarantee 'educational success' of students, and the limits that it is subject to, in this sense, see paragraphs 1-13, article 1 of Law 107 just cited above.

[31] The recent Law 107 of July 2015 (known as *Good School*) moves in the same direction as the already cited article 25, Dlgs 165/2001, which once again underlines the crucial role of school managment (paragraph 78, article 1, Law 107/2015) and its evaluation (paragraph 93, article 1, Law 107/2015), which is essential to achieving the objectives of the recent law which reaffirms the central role of the school into the knowledge society, to ensure the education right, to contrast the inequalities among people and different part of the country, to prevent the drop out and the early school leaving (paragraph 1, article 1, Law.13 July 2015, n.107).

[32] Legal literature has also referred to the need for democratic leadership in order to underline the differential character of school leadership compared to administrative leadership: Sandulli, (2003:197–204); FGA and Cerulo (2015).

[33] The authors mention some other authors critically who see in ICT a fundamental tool for developing inclusive practices. For more on this, see also: Stainback and Stainback (1990); Wang (1991); Sebba and Sachdeva (1997); Florian (1998). The last comparative study by the OECD (2015a) shows how

unclear it is what role ICT plays determining students' abilities and the inclusiveness of school systems.

[34] PhD thesis.

[35] Among the teachers surveyed in this study, the average age and distribution of sex (mostly female) reflect almost perfectly the national and international statistics from the OECD (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015), see also Andreozzi (2013).

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8. CREATIVE ART-BASED PROJECTS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Promoting Intercultural Education through Art

INTERCULTURAL ART EDUCATION

Our time is marked by very rapid migration and ideological vision. Beginning from this, we deepen the relationship between processes of inclusion and artistic expressions where the benchmark is represented by the difference, the singularity and the relationship. We focus on listening to the reality being investigated, adopting the artistic medium to promote inclusion. Before showing how research is articulated, it is appropriate to outline the main problems that led to reflect on this theme: there is still a lack of promotion of artistic/cultural activities without considering their intercultural potential and the potential of pedagogical reflection on the relationship between inclusion process and artistic expression is not still able to establish a coherent scientific action both in theory and in practice, therefore requiring a deeper attention. Moreover, it must be defined how the contribution of artistic communication can support the promotion of inclusion processes, especially with regard to their relationship with the school curriculum. Considering these foreign groups of our postmodern time in which we are asked to educate, we want to achieve a scientific search that can rethink the intercultural strategies used today and promote new processes of inclusion for the wellbeing of everybody contributing to the achievement of aims widely expected by the same intercultural pedagogy. We need to strengthen the identity of individuals and groups (not in opposition, but in common with each other) and we want to develop personalities able to think of themselves, of the others, and of stereotypes and prejudices and to be aware of the complexity and relativity of different points of view. Today, a new set of social categorizations suggesting a "re-institutionalization of weaker and marginalized people, as well as an institutionalization of the minds, the habits, the ways of feeling and the cultures seems to be emerging. We can create a new identity focusing on the possibility of a mutual delivery of lives and generations. We can fight the risk to build a false social identification. The pedagogical challenge of research is to be able to ensure an education of identity respecting diversity and to promote the interpersonal dialogue, the protection of individual peculiarities and completely new forms of democratic life. We know that art can be a way to obtain this, thanks to its characteristics in common with the identity and on which we can

F. Dovigo (Ed.), Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Practices, 143–161.

propose a pedagogical work. This means moving from the concept that sharing a project, an idea or a passion in the artistic communication, promotes the diversity of relationships in the belief that everyone can add new values and wealth. This is how we want to go beyond a vision of emergency, looking at the presence of different people with different qualities and cultural perspectives in our educational and social context as a way for inclusion, considering them as a possibility for a dynamic and creative exchange in communications which is own of the artistic medium.

We are aware of the fact that, using the term "inclusion", we refer to the promotion of conditions (contextual and relational) which allow the recognition and the empowerment of everyone as the right to be himself and showing an attention to the difference in a open and democratic society. The art world is a welcoming place in which communication takes place in a transparent way and in accord with hospitality. According to this way of thinking, feeling and enjoying the art, which is part of common sense, we can find two different ways of thinking about the relationship between art and culture. The first of these two ways, considers art as a mirror and expression of the authenticity and the irreducible diversity of a society: cultures will appear as discrete units, a sort of atoms, and art production is their germ, which expresses their inner life. Thus, art and cultures are looked at as "objects" which can be collected, a kind of private property to recover and preserve from the ravages of time. This is the position of cultural relativism, of exotic art collection, multiculturalism and neotribalism that, although appearing different, share an obsession for 'authenticity'. The second perspective is intercultural: art seems to promote understanding between different perspectives and points of view by avoiding their juxtaposition, as the previous view of multiculturalism, and showing their coexistence and mixing, that is to say, interculturalism. This position differs from the first one as for the aim, however sharing the same starting point: the intercultural dimension is thought in terms of planning and intentionality and ethical policy. Artistic forms and interculturalism have a common path and share places of belonging. It is important to find and create places where we can have interculturalism through art both in physical places (schools, museums, libraries, etc…), and mental places (times, daily routine.). To do interculturalism through art, we must ask questions, promote research and projects that are able to create places for interculturalism in everyday space-time. In actual educational spaces, research wants to promote interculturalism through art: this is why it was immediately decided to the school. Not just a school which considers new languages in its space, but a school promoting a communication between them, thus becoming a place of identity, relationships and history.

Thinking about promoting intercultural education through art, it is evident how our idea of art itself changes. This approach in fact reflects and expands the boundaries within which the education of art has been defined, particularly in schools. Up until now, art education has essentially followed a role model based on western art as a privileged standard of beauty. Thus, the goal of art education is to take people to an awareness of the fact that in the moment we look at the art of other cultures, we always do so from a cultural perspective, and, in this case, to speak of authenticity can

be misleading (Blocker, 2005; Clover, 2006; Delacruz et al., 2004). Thinking about education and the role of art in schools, it is evident how this kind of perspective raises questions on the traditional way of teaching art as the general education of a standard of beauty of the younger generations.

To propose an approach able to put in communication the art itself with the intercultural perspective is a potentially new educational idea. Art becomes the mediator that allows people to have an experience with their own culture and with the culture of others, creating a "third space": that of intercultural understanding. Intercultural art education recognizes difference, in particular cultural difference, thus becoming a promoter of different inclusive practices. The goal of an intercultural approach is that of taking people to a place where they are able to culturally adapt, meaning that they have the tools that allow them to voluntarily take on the ways, behaviours and traditions of a culture different from their own. In this perspective, differences are no longer seen as something negative but as the opportunity to enrich one's ability to be efficient in any context. The extraordinary added value to uniting the intercultural approach with the artistic practice is in allowing us to look at things through a different lens, not limiting our areas of study from the "different", by promoting instead a deeper sensitivity that regards all: anyone can be considered different depending on the criteria used to place them in a category.

This said, it is clear that art education didactics can no longer refer only to a western standard of beauty or take into consideration only its final artistic products. Art, in an intercultural sense, is considered under a wider perspective, that values both the product and, especially, its process; for this reason becoming the medium toward inclusion. Under this perspective, art is not very different from other subjects which are important for our coexistence in a global planet (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001; Flecha, 2004; Rusanen, 2011). It is also equally clear that the "mixing" is no longer an interference to the "purity" of the specific traits of a culture; on the contrary, it becomes the element through which every culture nourishes and evolves itself through confrontation with what is different.

Bhajju Shyam is a Gond painter, born and raised in a Gond village in India. At a young age, he moves to London to paint the walls of a famous Indian restaurant. His paintings are noticed for the very reasons just explained. In his painting (Figure 1) the artist represents the concept of "time" uniting in a single subject the symbol of time for the Gond culture and that of the London culture. The rooster "mixes" with the Big Ben, demonstrating how tradition and change can coexist. The educational potential of intercultural art education is closely related to artistic experiences such as those of Bhajju Shyam.

It is important, however, to underline that, although artistic research is based on the continuous development of techniques and the maturity of new sensitivities, such as the Gond painter's, contemporary art encloses an interesting potential but nobody says that it is better than that of older time periods. This said, the potential that the artistic medium offers in the role of education is not to be found in the contemporary art products but in the experiences of the artists that throughout the centuries were

Figure 1. Bhajju Shyam, Masala Zone, London

able to view "differences" as creative opportunities. The difference in respect to the past is in the very concept of artwork which, enriched by multiple points of view, no longer has such defined boundaries as in the past. Today, product and process are often intertwined and expand becoming a single element. The cultural-artistic branch organizes and produces a "project" no longer intended as an action but as a more complex element including actors, contest, topic, goals, activities, results and evaluations. It is this being "project" that best describes a good part of our contemporary production making it original and new compared to the past. The work of the artist is expressed and made manifest through actions and meanings that include, add and combine differences that become in themselves a work of art. So the concepts that define both the artist and the artwork expand. Once again it is evident how art is a potentially valuable and unique key, able to embrace different perspectives and expand our opportunities of coexistence placing at the centre of education a consideration on values that recognizes and celebrates differences as a fundamental component of our humanity (Eisner, 2002a, 2002b, 2004).

An example of this is represented by the creolized artist (Bourriand, 2009), able to explore diversities through three main competencies. The first is the *ability to transform:* when creating, the artist so connected with his work to the point of transforming himself and entering into his artwork. Once he has finished, he is aware of the fact that his product has the capacity to express more, so he recreate a cycle of constant "becoming". So, the artists has also the *ability to multiply*. The producer often creates without thinking of the possibility that his work might last in time. Therefore, many paintings are finished once the artistic processi s over, leaving no trace behind them, such as the mandala and Gond painting. The third is the *temporary ability,* allowing the artist to free himself from this final product in order to concentrate and live the creative process itself, moving the goal of his work from something stated and defined to something more dynamic and fleeting, but rich in its becoming.

Exploring the various competencies taking place inside and outside the artist while creating allows us to understand how different forms of art can be useful in education itself. They stimulate and develop our ability of thinking holistically, conjugating perception and emotion in a production of meaning, expanding our senses and enriching our experience of reality (Dewey, 1951; Gude, 2004; Korthagen, 2004).

TOWARD AN INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM THROUGH ART

If the real objective of inclusion in education is the blooming of a variety of ways of thinking, experimenting and building reality, it is clear how art has yet an unexplored potential in the school curriculum.

Arts are infact considered secondary in the educational program for two main reasons: they are under evaluated and have a little impact on the student scholastic carreer (Boughton, 2004; Willis, 2014).

According to various researchers, we have been witnessing an impoverishment in education. Contents have been unified and the measures and procedures used do not promote inclusive curricula. Scholastic merits and honours are pre-established following rigid evaluation schemes, only apparently objective. Following the logic of tests and exams, there is a sort of hierarchy in the subjects. Using this method, the Maths grade inevitably has more importance than the Art grade. It is necessary to think of new scholastic itineraries able to strengthen education and, without any doubt, Art is among these. Another theory still present among many educators is the idea that art is not so much a learning process of shapes, sound and movement, but simply a communication channel used to bring forth naturally creativity in children (McArdle, 1999; Stern, 1997). The idea that the child in himself already owns, from the very beginning, all possible expressive resources, is no doubt a myth (Kindler, 1996). Assuming that art is not only a self-expression but also a form of communication for and with the others, then the role of the teacher is not only to provide materials and let the children do what they want, but to take responsibility to stimulate, analyze, value their students' activity to help them to build a significant experience with art that can become part of their development both as individuals and as members of a wider community. A good art teacher knows that art cannot be confined in the classroom. A teacher knows that through art he can build new skills that allow him to work with other teachers, with his students and their families, exploring the territory by engaging the community mixing once again his artwork which is his language.

In a broader sense, good didactics does not reduce but, on the contrary, increases the variety inside a classroom, a school, a territory, offering every students a wide range of opportunities to learn, taking into consideration his inclinations, needs and desires. The so-called inclusive curriculum heads in this direction and the potential expressed by art represents the practical way for its realization. Instead of proposing a standard program in content and time, what teachers really need is a general frame of reference regarding the themes and subjects they consider important to develop.

In this sense, one of the most important benefits arising from the artistic experience is the possibility to appreciate the positive role of surprise as an element that facilitates learning. Working with art, we regularly encounter the unexpected, which, for the students, comes in the form of images, sounds or movements suggesting new combinations and directions of work, while for the teachers this is represented by confrontation and observation of the amazing results the students are able to produce when their work is sufficiently supported and given a good length of freedom (Sawyer, 2011; Dovigo, 2015). Putting the emphasis on a standard is closely connected with control, prevision and measure. Everything inherent with creativity and the unexpected has little space in the educational experience. Doing so, the risk is that of removing life and vitality from the educational experience, thus taking away the dimensions of exploration and discovery.

The essential instrument through which the potential of education can be expressed is the school curriculum, revised in a more active didactic way. From this point of view, the scholastic curriculum represents a privileged instrument through which this transformation can take place by creating the conditions that allow children's mental capacities to mature (Eisner, 1987; Steers, 2004). To revise the curriculum means coming out of the traditional planning model of the twentieth century, acting as a point of reference for decades (Efland, 2002; Lindström, 2012). It is necessary to define educational goals that are then translated into didactic targets, that is to say, a series of statements related to the abilities that should allow the students to mature. In this sense, all activities related to art and discovery represent the "motor" of the didactic experience, since the ability to give value to the component of unpredictability that emerges is not less important than the effort to predict the results that are intended to be obtained through the didactic action (Irwin, 2013; Finney et al., 2005). In this perspective, it is important to integrate well the curriculum, intended as the abstract project of a didactic itinerary and the real curriculum that instead takes form through the practical activities achieved in school.

Introducing an artistic approach to the curriculum, the teacher, just like the artist, must not only act as a good designer, able to prepare accurately the plan and the material for his lesson, but also as a skilled improviser. Thanks to his competence he will be able to make good use of the variables emerging during the learning process, interacting with the class and putting himself in a position of constant dialogue with his students' questions and suggestions (Farr et al., 2007; De Backer et al., 2012; Wild, 2011).

In this sense, artistic subject teaching is able to indicate an interesting path towards pedagogic innovation, locating in a practical way a few elements able to design an active type of education that keeps in consideration the different areas and abilities through which the process of art education is structured: criticism, history, beauty and production. Analyzing, for instance, the artistic production experience through lab activities, it is clear that this offers the participants the possibility to transform a certain material into a channel of expression and communication, allowing the development of a series of cognitive and social skills through a tool able to transmit ideas, images and sensations. The lab represents a "place of training" where a person

can put aside the logic of discipline, notion, selective thinking, offering the chance to look at cultural contests in a more plural way, captivating the interconnections that each area of knowledge has with the human culture as a whole and consequentially developing different points of views and different cultural views. It also incentivizes new ways of social construction and knowledge and the ability to put them into practice. The lab becomes a place of learning where knowledge is distributed and shared in the social group of students as a community experience in which relationships are held together and interconnected in view of a common interest.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: CREATIVE ART BASED PROJECTS, LABS FOR AN INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION OF ART

Research aimed at creating two complementary tools, addressed to promote the quality and to assess the efficacy of creative art-based projects (CABP) through qualitative and quantitative strategies.

This new research looks at the realities that follow this approach, tries to form his own idea of the relationship between art and education, including interculture, in particular by proposing a system for evaluating new, innovative ideas, necessary to understand what the level of intercultural sensitive students present in schools today, with particular reference to pre-adolescents.

Over the last few years, many scholars have argued about the relevance of the creative art-based projects (CABP) as a mean of fostering intercultural sensitivity in education (Byram & Fleming, 1998; da Silva & Villas-Boas, 2006; Donelan, 2009; Eisner, 2002; Sinclair, Jeanneret, & O'Toole, 2009; Volk, 1998). Accordingly, CABP including music, drama and other art forms have been widely promoted both inside and outside schools. Nevertheless, even though CABP are now popular as educational practices, we still lack a systematic analysis of the quality and the outcomes they achieve.

This research aims to contribute filling this gap, focusing on CABP addressed to 10–14 year-old children. Research shows that this age range plays a crucial role in developing a personal orientation and sensitivity towards cultural differences (Gonzales, Knight, Birman, & Sirolli, 2004; McCaig, 1994; Phinney, 1992; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). To that end, two integrated lines of research were carried out, aiming at building a list of quality indicators concerning CABP in intercultural education, developing the Children Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (CISI) and assessing the efficacy of intercultural CABP.

For the first research line, we investigated three major CABP performed in Italy, to build a set of indicators able to provide a valid assessment of the educational and artistic dimensions involved. The projects were organized as workshops addressed to the children aged 10–14, covering intercultural subjects in the shape of tales, dramas, and illustrations which required the children's active involvement. For two years, we investigated three major CABP carried out in Italy as workshops addressed to about 140 children aged from 9 to 13, both inside and outside schools.

During the workshops, we collected data using participant observations, taking pictures, interviewing the artists involved, and extensively talking to children and teachers about the project. All data were transcribed and analyzed to produce a first set of indicators.

We chose this age range because through "arting" (Eisner, 1994) it is possible to push and break boundary, to bring things together in a new way. Children became arting-inventor with a new perception of relationships. The inquiry resulted in a list of indicators to analyse the qualitative requirements implied by CABP. The list is not a prescriptive tool about how to manage CABP, as it would contradict the creative element of art-based experiences. Conversely, it is thought as an instrument aiming at stimulating a dialogic exploration which enables the stakeholders to contribute to the continuous improvement of the creative art-based practices in the intercultural education domain.

The qualitative research produced a list of six educational dimensions and six artistic dimensions.

Educational dimensions are:

1. Shared management: the educational skills and artistic mixed manage.
2. Space management: suitable space for creativity and free expression.
3. Active involvement: the artist prefers activities directly involving each participant's contribution.
4. Participation degree: to choose the artistic expressions rather than others encourages participation by reducing insecurity.
5. Time management: to establish the time mediating between inner and outer factors of workshop.
6. Monitoring and Evaluation: to predict a person for observation and mediation during the workshop. To analyse whether the objectives have been met.

Artistic dimensions are:

1. Multiplying: many ways to see and interpret the artistic process, multiple perspectives.
2. Handling: to think through and within a material, passing the boundary between person and material.
3. Unbinding: the artistic process helps to think of words like "border" and "openness"
4. Visualizing: the participant sees in art object more and news art form.
5. Transforming: art as transformative practice
6. Merging: from the workshops have to emerge new forms of art creoles

Each dimension contains between four and six indicators, which provide reference points to set priorities for developing and assessing the quality of intercultural CABP.

Indicators offer a flexible picture on what actually happens in a CABP; hereunder are reported some dimensions identified to explain how the artistic medium in an intercultural perspective is efficient in promoting an inclusive curriculum.

Examining, for instance, the artistic dimension of *handling,* it appears evident how the CABP offers the participants the possibility to transform a certain material into an expressive and communication tool, allowing the development of important cognitive and special abilities through a channel that is able to transmit ideas, images and sensations. This happens through a constant conversation between thought and available material: the material can transform only conceptualizing the process in the mind, testing the mental frame and observing how it changes depending on the limits and options offered by the specific material, to give life, in the end, to a work of art in which intentions and substance can blend and are re-enforced thanks to the aesthetic creation. From this point of view, the material is not only something "resisting" to intentionality, but also a propeller, driving towards creativity. This functions does not occur through the simple application of a pre-set rules, but through an imagination process confronting itself with the variables of tools and materials available to give life to a whole of expressive shapes.

Thus, thanks to each individual's unique imagination, the material is transformed. The confrontation with tools and materials taking place when a student is placed in front of an artistic problem promotes the development of highly divergent thought. It is necessary to have well in mind the goals we intend to achieve, as well as the ability to modify them along the way through an intentional and, at the same time, flexible approach.

Figure 2. "Paloma's string" lab. The artist creates the Eiffel Tower

Figure 3. "Paloma's string" lab. Children inventing other figures

To give a further example of what happens in the CABP in the educational perspective, we take into consideration another aspect, i.e. that of *participation*.

Working with art in a lab situation allows to see how it is possible to suggest ways of working that are accessible to the whole group. Not only the multiple art expressions stimulate participation in many different ways, reducing the in security that can emerge in a traditional didactic activity proposing measure more than an educational experience. Participation is closely connected with motivation, which is essential for the outcome of any activity. What the experience of learning through art highlights is specifically the importance of working on the intrinsic motivations of the students, that is to say, structuring activities that are not tied to an external reward such as a grade or the desire to please the teacher, on the contrary, offering the opportunity to find deeper satisfaction in the actual creation, in the pleasure of relating with art through the emotions, thoughts and surprises flowing from it. An inclusive curriculum promotes participation because it ties together and blends suggestions, areas of interest and learning, captivating the interest of the students. Activities like the CABP offer a good combination of known and unknown, captivating the students' interest both by consolidating their own abilities and by challenging their possible improvement (Eckhoff, 2008).

Following the creation of two lists of indicators, the qualitative analysis has allowed to identify a series of elements that can represent just as many points of reference to direct the paths of what has previously been defined as intercultural art education. Such elements are: attention on relationships, building technical skills, flexible planning, sensitivity towards the materials, the exercise of imagination and community learning (Dovigo, 2015).

- *Attention on relationships*: every artistic expression field, either directed to the production of images, music or dance, is characterized by the pursuit of a

relationship in which the different elements making up the whole are integrated to produce a result in which the whole is bigger than the sum of the single parts. This composition activity can be achieved after a long training aimed at catching and highlighting not only the single elements, but also the way in which they interact with each other, so that they can give life to a dynamic equilibrium in which the different dimensions make the most of each other;

- Building technical skills: even the best conceptually conceived artistic realization needs a satisfactory technical skill to be concretized in a satisfying way. Unlike the Romantic myth according to which the artist is the one who asserts the supremacy of the idea imposing an aesthetic form on the limits set by the substance, in the reality of the artistic production the form itself often arises from the suggestions made possible by the continuous link to the possibilities and limits offered by the techniques. Acquiring a technique and try to expand it systematically, is a didactically highly effective practice when working with art;
- *Flexible planning*: this concept refers to the role played by improvisation within the artistic planning paths. The first step of traditional rationalistic approach is the definition of the objectives, followed, at a later stage, by the definition of the means to reach them. As noticed, a work of art can be planned only in a limited way, as the objectives and the means used to reach them, can change along the way. In this sense, these means do not represent only technical tools, but they act as material partners allowing to give life to a dialogue and to offer suggestions, often as unplanned effects, which, if accepted, can improve the composition. It is important to keep an open attitude, not simply executing a plan;
- *Sensitivity towards the materials*: through a work of art our intentionality is expressed through materials that are transformed in communication mediators. In this sense every material we use to create contains in itself a series of opportunities and limits, with which the students have to work developing their ability to catch the possibilities it offers in a specific way. From this point of view, the activity with art represents a continuous exercise to develop and improve sensitivity, thus giving access to new forms of the perception of reality which gradually enlarge our experience of what surrounds us. At the same time, the best results of this exercise are characterized by a richness in quality and relationships thanks to which their capacity to communicate new sensations and emotions will recur over time and after years;
- *Exercising imagination*: a large part of the work carried out at school has a strictly functional purpose and is focused on the classification of phenomena, like, for example, when students learn to apply correctly the so-called grammar analysis or the concept of mathematical function. Although important, such analysis activity must not be separated by the development of the students' imaginative capacities. Art, in this sense, plays an essential role promoting the development of an exploratory approach challenging conventions and generating deep questions, based on the innate pleasure of discovering. Art education supports students in their effort to use systematically and broaden their imagination as a tool to re-

organize the schemes with which our surrounding world is perceived. And it is actually this possibility to expand our perception of the reality that allows art to make our daily experience towards reality even stronger, clearer and more gratifying;

- *Community learning*: according to its multisensory nature, artistic activity represents the ideal context not only for individual, but also for community learning. The dynamism aspects linked to the unpredictability and improvisation characterizing a work of art act as a natural trampoline towards the organization of the activities according to which the students learn to work on developing simultaneously different ideas. At the same time, this way to tackle the analysis of problems connected with art highlights the importance for the students to consider themselves as possible resources for the others, thus laying the foundation of an inclusive use of art education. Giving value to everyone's contribution and their different point of views, at the same time creating an atmosphere allowing a constructive discussion of all these ideas, means giving life to a community learning which goes far beyond the simple appreciation for art to become a training field of that democratic confrontation so often mentioned as primary task for everyone's school.

The assignment and assumption of an identity has, in fact, the effect of the assignment of a specific place in the world and the self-and hetero place in different contexts of belonging, a process conveyed by socialization. This socialization process is in the language of both the content and the most important tool in the identification process and art can be one of these because it is able to convey symbolic meanings shared. Thus, it becomes possible to think of a way to identify Italian inclusion through art, an original trail that comes from the comparison with other European countries, and that exits from the vision of an "integration of emergency" problem, and thereby promote an including emerging" that could become a contribution to intercultural pedagogy, which would improve education in general.

Art education represents a crucial opportunity for the school to promote a holistic approach to teaching, based on creative and multiple modalities of developing the students' sensitivity towards the global, cultural and community context they belong to. An education of art oriented in an intercultural sense shows instead how it is possible to rethink the way in which we identify our educational objectives and the most proper tools to reach them and define the criteria for the evaluation of work. As previously explained, thanks to the experience and analysis of different CABP, there are different ways to plan school learning, where exploring, improvising and appreciation of the different have a primary space, reviewing a curriculum still based on planning, controlling and standard idea. Not only the CABP allow to learn to appreciate also the process in which this path has been constructed thanks to the contribution given by all those teachers, students, artists, art critics and historians who have worked to reach this result. Even if not yet fully understood in all its potentiality, intercultural art education is really a highly fertile educational proposal, able to

stimulate the development of an open and imaginative thinking, which, through the artistic and aesthetic experience becomes a collective experience, essential element of the capacity to constantly regenerate our conceptions and cultural practices.

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH: THE CHILDREN INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY INVENTORY (CISI)

The second research line is devoted to the measurement of intercultural sensitivity of children aged 9–13 in CABP settings. Over the last few years, many scales have been developed and validated in order to assess the amount of intercultural sensitivity (Chen & Starosta, 2000; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; West, 2009; Zea, Asner-Self, Birman, & Buki, 2003). Such scales are currently used to test the ability of adults in dealing with cultural differences. Nevertheless, our hypothesis is that intercultural competences are developed throughout the childhood. As a consequence, achieving an earlier assessment of the degree of intercultural competences owned by children would be a desirable goal, enabling to improve both the planning and the evaluation of intercultural CABP. To this end, by comparing and systematically revising the adults' scales we created a questionnaire (Children Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory, CISI), which provides a measure of preadolescents' sensitivity to cultural differences. Even though the validation of the questionnaire is still in progress, early data are now available and will be discussed during the session. Learning what level of sensitivity exists in this period and seeing if the cross-cultural projects that are under the children have their own effectiveness and above all observing how it changes and how it manifests throughout time, is the empirical part of this research. A CISI designed to assess intercultural sensitivity within the primary socialization is also important to understand what processes of formation the pre-teen is putting in place.

Starting from the awareness that one of the most efficient tools to evaluate people's intercultural sensitivity is the Intercultural Developmental Inventory developed by M. R. Hammer and M. J. Bennett (1998/2001) it has been thought to evaluate in respect to the extensively validated IDI tool, which elements were essential to elaborate a new likewise efficient tool but addressed to a younger target. It has then been decided to build the CISI following the 50 items structure, not to modify the correspondence between items number and the orientation of the corresponding intercultural sensitivity. The single scores obtained in the different orientations have then been highlighted, going into details to visualize for each stage at what level the person are in their own sensibility building path. This choice allows to facilitate the recognition work related to the objective, highlighting the building processes of the pre-adolescent's worldview. The language according to which the items of these psychometric tests are generally elaborated is for adult people, already characterized by consistent experiences and knowledge. In relation to our objective, it has been necessary to formulate the items in a more comprehensible language, considering the age range of the people the questionnaire was addressed to.

Using, for instance, the word “culture”, repeatedly used in the questionnaire, has for a preadolescent a totally different meaning in respect to an adult, thus making the result of the test not true. To confirm and validate the choice to avoid, for example, the term “culture” in a broader sense replacing it with a more comprehensible one, it has been asked a sample of 60 students belonging to the last classes of the primary schools and the first classes of the secondary, to explain the meaning of this word. According to the majority of them, the concept of “culture” was linked to the customs and traditions of the ancient populations they had studied at school. Culture was therefore perceived as something belonging to Romans, Egyptians, Greek populations, but was not considered in its contemporary meaning. For this reason, it was clear that it was necessary to replace this term with another one, actually not the same for all the items, which, according to the sense of the sentences could be “culture” or “set of values”, or, in other cases “Country” or “traditions” and so forth. The first step was so working on the language in order to make it as comprehensible as possible without modifying the sense of the items.

In order to verify the validity of the modifications carried out, the test was given to a sample of ten students, all belonging to the first class of the secondary school. While the students were carrying out the test autonomously, the researcher controller the execution time, estimating an average of fifty minutes, i.e. about a minute for each sentence. The test was followed by a non structured interview, based on open questions about the possible difficulties and the possible unclear points of the test. What emerged from these interviews was the necessity to explain further the meaning of some of the terms included and that the vocal support while reading the items by the researcher would have facilitated the understanding of the whole test. For this reason, it’s necessary to underline the importance of the correct comprehension of the items so that the answers given can correspond as much as possible to the idea about the differences. The validation of the tool was then completed through a 5% statistic significativity hypothesis ($p = <.05$). The reliability of the results according to the age group of the people who carried out the test, i.e. preadolescents, were attested by Cronbach’s alpha.

This led to the elaboration of a final version, which was given to various schools, with different modalities in the monitoring of the execution of the test. For the fourth and fifth classes of the primary school, the test is divided into two steps, each made up of 25 items, in order to make the most of the students’ concentration. For the first and second classes of the secondary school, the test was handed out in its entire version, but, in both cases, with the assistance of the researcher: after having read aloud the items, the adult waited for all the students to answer before going on.

It is important to highlight that, in all classes, it has been necessary to make clear that there were no right or wrong answers, but that they needed to express a personal opinion, thus trying to reduce the concern about being evaluated on their intelligence or skills but on the development of their specific relational capacity towards their intercultural sensitivity. Some secondary school students started off saying they felt this was rather strange, because, for the very first time since the beginning of the

school year, they had to carry out an assignment without being evaluated but just to express their personal opinion.

We administered the questionnaire to children 9–13 in two steps. In the first step a sample of 170 children participating in the CABP answered the CISI before and after the event. The results were analyzed and compared with a control group of children who didn't take part in these sessions. The second set was a sample of 450 questionnaires to children 9–13 that didn't participate in the workshop. Currently totaling questionnaires amounted to 620.

The second research line shows that the children attitudes to the cultural differences are not the same before and after the CABP experience, highlighting an increasing level of intercultural sensitivity, especially with regard to younger children. As expected, this is not the case of the control group. The average score (*DS score)* of the sample considered is 96.0, collocating in the minimization of the differences, for which it was concluded that the existing cultural differences are not yet visualized by the group. The results of the CISI in relation to the sample show that the preadolescents taken into consideration are in the minimization phase but still in transition towards the low stage of the acceptance of differences, thus highlighting a general trend on the way to a more advanced phase of intercultural sensitivity, as well as a not excessive GAP between DS and PS (13.0 points), always within the same minimization phase.

The results of the CISI highlight also that the students who participated in the CABP are facing relational, emotional and cognitive dynamics linked to some aspects of the defence phase, such as the avoiding of the interaction with cultural differences and the tendency to focus on the "we" and "they", seeing the "we" as superior (Figure. 98) but with resolution signals, in particular regarding the interest towards the different cultures. During this transition phase some discrepancies emerge in respect to the samples' negation/defence attitude. At a first glance, it could be possible to notice an oscillation between the distance keeping, the use of the "we" and "they" and the necessity to live an experience of community and a research of similarity. Along this path towards the *continuum*, even if still at a minimum level, a certain recognition of the cultural differences will start to be perceived, with a positive evaluation, although still superficial and referred to aspects like food, cloche, musical tastes, etc. During the minimization phase, the students no longer feel the fear of being invaded by the other, who becomes similar to them; the group does not denigrate their own cultural group, at the same time not considering any other group as superior. The collected data show that the sample preadolescents tend to minimize the differences, interpreting the political mechanisms of expulsion and reception as not very respectful of the "we are all the same" principle. At this stage they start to feel an attitude to assimilation as respectful reception and integration modality.

This happens even if the group is in a positive transition phase toward the resolution of the tendency to think that people with different cultures are basically as "we are". On the other hand, the tendency of the considered preadolescent group to

apply their values to other cultures is regarded as solved. This is relevant if we think about the next orientation, that is to say about the sample's future development: putting aside the idea of universalism, people can access to the low acceptance, thus increasing the curiosity toward differences.

In addition to this, the fact that the sample is positioned in the minimization phase, i.e. the ethnocentric one preceding the ethnorelative ones, is an interesting fact, considering that this is scarcely characterized by long experiences in foreign countries but has only sporadic and not sought contacts with them; a girl reported a difficult coexistence within her volleyball team, while another boy told about the frequent quarrels during the summer church camp. The objective of the group, the so-called "leading orientation", is to develop ethnorelative competences facing on the acceptance phase, increasing the capacity to make differences visible and to build on them sensible questions helping to develop respectful and sympathetic attitudes toward other and multiple worldviews. The pilot study through CISI, seems to support the hypothesis that, during preadolescence, it is possible to be in transition towards more advanced stages of the development of the intercultural sensitivity but also that such sample is unlikely to be located in ethnorelative phases.

Nevertheless, the sample is actually too small to infer ultimate conclusions about the impact of CABP on intercultural sensitivity. Consequently, we plan to repeat the assessment in conjunction with new intercultural CABP developed in other European countries, as a mean to validate the instrument.

PROMOTING AND EVALUATING INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY THROUGH ART

An intercultural art laboratory would be even more effective if it were included in the inclusive curriculum and became an evaluation tool of the differences within the school. It is particularly during the interaction of children and students, or with the guidance of a teacher capable of facilitating the free expression of a comparison game that curiosity and arguments are produced, explanation of reasons and the discovery that there isn't only one vision of the world but, on the contrary, an interaction of different worldviews. Intercultural art education promotes the ability to costantly regenerate our ideas and cultural practices as demonstrated through some examples in the here above descrive research.

The building of a system of indicators has allowed to elaborate 'an intercultural art laboratory', which can be replicated in the future, hopefully in the vicinity, and which can be fully included in the revision of the curriculum as operating modality to promote active didactics in schools. The CISI creation has allowed to deepen the relationships developed by people in respect to the themes linked to the differences starting from preadolescence and that, are still not very researched.

The obtained evaluation has made clear how some educational modalities and certain socialization processes have a strong influence, yet not permanent, in respect to the way differences are approached by preadolescents and, consequently, on their

capability to start structuring their worldview in a critical and personal way. Both the building of the laboratory and the CISI creation have allowed to outline how preadolescents can create different worldviews and identify the variables and the scenarios appearing in relation to their development. The results remark how the acquisition of cultural views differing from our own is not a natural process (Bennett, 2002) and that the modalities of reaction towards all what is perceived as different are numerous and must be declined in terms of meaning in the context in which they develop. Supporting the CISI in the considerations about the "preadolescence and differences" relationship, it is necessary to highlight the educational role of the adult, firstly within the family, then within the network of relationships linked to the age, and school plays a crucial role as possible intercultural sensitivity supporter. If, on the one hand CISI is a tool to better understand the phenomenon, on the other hand, it is the educator, firstly the teacher, who promotes such a development. For this reason it has been chosen not to propose only a study of the intercultural sensitivity developed during preadolescence, but also to promote, through laboratory activities, the intercultural education arisen from the combination competences respecting the relevant identity and roles. In this way, preadolescents are supported and equipped to become the adults of a not too far tomorrow with a more ethnorelative inclination toward the other and adequate competences to live efficaciously in harmony in a multicultural society able to give value to diversity in a critical way.

One of the major results in respect to research is being able to observe the outlining, since preadolescence, of a worldview which is no longer that deriving from the passive acquisition of a parental worldview, but has an own modality to experience the other and diversity. Such a result cannot remain isolated but must be included in a broader context, offering, in particular, a reinterpretation in an pedagogical key, in order to elaborate new educational actions to increase the starting level.

The research, in its theoretical and then empirical structure, with the proposal of a pilot study experimenting CISI and the activation of an intercultural art laboratory, appears as a new goal towards a better and greater comprehension of the dimensions of intercultural sensitivity in respect to the considered age range. Therefore, both dimensions should be examined in the following researches. From one side it would be advisable to develop indicators for intercultural art actions enriched by practical experiences, making them always more flexible and able to be put in a context in order to become real reference tools for such important proposals. On the other hand, it should be possible to develop further the intercultural sensitivity survey tool, comparing it with other studies recently carried out.

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9. BUILDING EVALUATION CAPACITY IN SCIENCE EDUCATION TO SPREAD SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

This research project focuses on the evaluation of the Inquiry Based Science Education (IBSE) teaching method promoted at a European level as a pedagogical practice for renewing science teaching in formal and informal education systems (Rapporto Rocard, 2007). Different studies have demonstrated its efficacy in improving both teachers' motivation and students' interest and achievements and in increasing participation for all students in science and sustainable education (Duschl & Grandy, 2008; Minner, Levy, & Century, 2010). Despite the increase in IBSE projects, adequate development of a solid evaluation practice is lacking. Participants are often uncomfortable with the evaluation task, usually spending little time on it and using poor tools to evaluate IBSE activities (Coyle, 2005).

To investigate this issue, this research project has analysed the European INQUIRE project (Inquiry Based Teacher Training for a Sustainable Future). Adopting the theory of Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB, Preskill, & Boyle, 2008) INQUIRE aimed at bolstering IBSE in schools and botanic gardens promoting training for teachers and educators on the topics of biodiversity loss and climate change and is targeted at the 9–14 age group. ECB is a process which intends to develop evaluation capabilities in order to conduct rigorous evaluation. This research makes use of a mixed-method approach in systematically analysing how the evaluations were used within courses held in Italy between 2011 and 2013. The study found that the INQUIRE project has helped participants to improve their ability to conduct effective evaluations in schools. However, we identified two weak points: evaluation practices of IBSE activities tend to focus on a cognitive rather than a participative model and on summative rather than formative evaluation methods. Four key points are suggested as crucial steps to overcoming these weaknesses and improving evaluation practices in inclusive sustainable development education: promoting dynamic assessment processes, ensuring clearness and flexibility, valuing tacit knowledge, and fostering collaboration.

F. Dovigo (Ed.), Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Practices, 163–190.

SCIENTIFIC BACKGROUND

Recently, many international studies have underscored that young people's interest in science and mathematics has experienced a worrying decline, largely due to the way science is taught in schools (Eurobarometer Report, 2005, 2010; PISA, 2006, 2009). The traditionally pedagogical approach in science teaching is the "deductive approach" also described as a "top-down approach", in which the teacher transmits knowledge acquisition and presents and explains the concepts and their relationships directly to the students, frequently using textbooks, and plans and provides procedures for performing experiments without actively engaging students. In this way students play a passive role, they listen to lectures, fill out worksheets, read from texts and there is little peer interaction. The focus is therefore on memorizing concepts rather than on understanding. As one teacher interviewed during the research effectively illustrated, the transmission teaching method is still the most common educational approach to scientific activity, with the teacher narrating textbooks as learners listen passively or answer stock questions. Even when 'experiments' are carried out in a laboratory, the teacher is the central focus of attention, designing and providing procedures step-by-step while students are executing tasks rather than actively posing questions or exploring hypotheses. This approach tends to promote shallow thinking and a dislike for learning instead of critical thinking and passion for learning. In addition, the learning environment does not appear to meet the students' individual needs.

Conversely, in a constructivist approach to scientific education, the aim is to ease learners into building up their knowledge to learn together, starting with a discussion of preconceptions (Jenkins, 2013). The constructed knowledge is socially mediated as a result of experiences and interaction with peers in a social context. This interaction can help develop new ideas about scientific phenomena. Science teachers assume the role of facilitator, making tools of scientific culture available to students, and also guiding and co-constructing the knowledge with their students through discourse about shared practices (Driver et al., 1994; Kearney, 2004; Wilson, 2000). The teacher actively engages students in using flexible strategies to solve real problems, consistent with students' knowledge and abilities. Thus, learning is a social and collaborative activity in which people develop their thinking together, and discussion and documentation are essential in this process (Harlen, 2006). To favour the constructivist approach in Science Education, the Rocard Report (2007) strongly recommended the dissemination and integration of innovative inquiry-based methods. Inquiry based science education (IBSE) is an active, constructivist, learner-centred approach (Harlen, 2006). IBSE is an active approach that leads students to develop key scientific ideas through learning how to investigate and build knowledge and understanding of the real world (Harlen, 2013). IBSE emphasizes curiosity, observations, the use of critical thinking and reflection, and enables the development of a range of skills such as working in groups, written and verbal expression, and

experience of open-ended problem solving. As in professional scientific inquiry, IBSE engages students in the same sorts of activities, practices, skills and thinking processes that scientists use in their work, such as: raising questions, collecting data, reasoning, reviewing evidence, drawing conclusions, and discussing results (Inter Academy Panel, 2010). Students are expected to assume the role of young scientists. They develop communicative skills for interacting collaboratively with peers and with the teacher when they form hypotheses, design experiments, observe and analyze results, and critique each other's work (Crawford, 2000; Fox, Grosso, & Tashlik, 2004).

Therefore, IBSE can help students to develop and improve science inquiry skills. As in professional inquiry, the IBSE approach is debateable, contested, iterative, reflexive, and both cooperative and competitive. This is in contrast to an 'ordered vision' of science sometimes presented to students with recipe-style laboratory exercises and a control of variables or fair testing (Levy, Lameras, McKinney, & Ford, 2011). IBSE has emerged as an effective pedagogical practice for revamping science teaching. Several studies have supported its efficacy in improving both teachers' motivation and students' interest and achievement (Duschl & Grandy, 2008; Minner, Levy, & Century, 2010). In IBSE, the learning process is a cycle using the BSCS '5E' model: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate (Bybee et al., 2006). Each phase has a specific function: to pique student interest and elicit prior knowledge, to get the learner directly involved with phenomena and materials, to communicate conceptual understanding and demonstrate process skills, to develop a deeper and broader understanding and adequate skills, and to assess understanding and abilities achieved by students.

In this learning process the teacher supports all students as much as possible welcoming their diversity. IBSE has the potential to deal with students' diverse learning needs. This assignment answers the international demand for dealing with diversity in schools and for inclusive learning environments. As general policy documents, e.g. the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Special Needs Education (1994) and the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), as well as migration and demographic changes have highlighted that answering to students' diverse needs is considered one of the biggest challenges in many European schools (Meijer, 2010). Diversity defines differences in mental and physical ability, but also differences in gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and religion (Abels & Puddu, 2014). Also, the National Science Education Standards (NRC, 1996) and Benchmarks in Science Education (AAAS, 1993) defended the creation of inclusive science education, which comprises all students, regardless of race, gender, nationality, and cultural background (AAAS, 1993; NRC, 1996). In addition, the National Science Foundation (NSF) (1998) emphasized that different cultural perspectives should be integrated in curriculum materials to make science accessible to all students.

The IBSE approach is viewed as a way to achieve this. It is a resource to reduce barriers to learning and to promote the participation for all students in science and sustainable education.

According to the science education community, inquiry-based methods are more effective, but the reality of classroom practice is that in most European countries these approaches are not applied in science teaching and evaluation is often limited. To spread IBSE, the 7th European Programme, "Science in Society", has funded innovative projects such as Pathway, Profiles, Pri-Sci-Net, and INQUIRE to design innovative professional development programmes aimed at teachers and science educators in order to improve IBSE approaches in their own practice (Dutton et al., 2013).

Compared to the large number of projects based on the IBSE method, the evaluation of inquiry-based activities still remains rather underdeveloped. While many assessment tools for evaluating the quality of IBSE activities and students' skills are currently employed, since IBSE has proved to be a complex process, there is no 'right way' to assess it (Dillon, 2012).

Although "Science in Society" projects include program monitoring and formal evaluation to determine whether the intended goals are being achieved, practitioners are often uncomfortable with the evaluation task, usually spending little time on it and using poor tools to evaluate IBSE activities. They often manifest concerns over how, when and why to evaluate (Coyle, 2005; Fleming & Easton, 2010). The challenge for teachers is to implement an evaluation that reflects the characteristics of the IBSE approach and welcomes student diversity. Moreover, an additional challenge is the inability of organizations to provide resources to support educators in improving their skills in and knowledge of programme evaluations (NEEAC, 1996). To investigate this issue, we developed an analysis of the European project INQUIRE (Inquiry-Based Teacher Training for a Sustainable Future) within the framework of Evaluation Capacity Building theory (ECB).

INQUIRE was a European Union project funded under the 7th Framework Programme. It was a three-year project (2010–2013) which aimed to reinvigorate IBSE in schools, botanic gardens and other Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) institutions. The primary objective was to enhance children's science learning by training practitioners and giving them IBSE science experiences in and outside of the classroom. INQUIRE was coordinated by Innsbruck University Botanic Garden (Austria), in collaboration with Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) and two universities, King's College (London) and the University of Bremen (Germany). Seventeen partners from 11 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Portugal, the UK, Russia, and Spain) are involved. Fourteen botanic gardens took part in the project and developed and evaluated their own IBSE training course. Each botanic garden designed two 60-hour training courses on IBSE for practitioners and a "train the trainers" course. These courses were conceived for teachers and informal science educators who

work with pupils aged between 9 and 14, and offered them support in building their subject knowledge on climate change and biodiversity loss and helped to enhance their teaching skills in IBSE. Through these courses, the INQUIRE project intended to offer high-quality IBSE resources, making these widely available, and to help schools to develop and strengthen relationships with science research centres and Learning and LOtC (Bromley et al., 2013).

The main definition of Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) is given by Stockdill, Baizerman, and Compton (2002) and reads, "ECB is the intentional work to continuously create and sustain overall organizational processes that make quality evaluation and its uses routine". Others have described it as "the ability to conduct an effective evaluation" (Milstein & Cotton, 2000) and "the process of improving an organization's ability to use evaluation to learn from its work and improve results" (Welsh & Morariu, 2011). In order to develop a sustainable ECB, it is essential to embed evaluation into daily work practices and policies which enable the promotion of cultural change in schools. Building the evaluation capacity of individuals and groups means understanding and discussing the motivations necessary for engaging in EBC, the assumptions and values supporting evaluation, the goals of assessment practices, and how they contribute to effective decision-making, and add value to school organization. EBC fosters the active collaboration of the stakeholders involved through hands-on learning and by doing activities planned to design, implement and manage evaluation projects in an accountable way (Preskill & Boyle, 2008). We elected to examine the monitoring process and the assessment instruments implemented by the INQUIRE project through the ECB lens in order to evaluate the ability to provide staff with skills and sufficient resources to conduct rigorous, lasting and inclusive evaluations.

METHODOLOGY

The investigation involved the analysis of documentation (forms, questionnaires, reports, manuals, and lesson plans) used during the INQUIRE project, research about the stakeholders' opinions and practices (interviews, focus groups), and direct participation in courses, workshops, and meetings held during the project.

In particular, we elected to analyse two IBSE training courses (pilot and mainstream course) for practitioners (teachers and botanic garden educators) run in Italy by the Science Museum of Trento during the 2011–2013 school years.

The pilot course involved 14 educators and 13 teachers (5 from primary schools, 8 from secondary schools). The mainstream course involved 26 educators and 19 teachers (7 from primary schools, 12 from secondary schools). In addition, we examined the main evaluation tools used during training courses carried out by the other European partners involved in the INQUIRE project.

We conducted the study with a mixed-methods approach aimed at investigating the following questions:

- Which criteria are most suitable for effective assessment of IBSE activities?
- To what extent and how did practitioners develop evaluation skills through the training courses and implement them subsequently in the classroom and/or in learning outside the classroom practices?

We chose to employ a mixed-methods approach, as the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative tools provides for a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experience and viewpoints.

Participants were: 32 teachers from primary and secondary schools; 40 educators from the botanic gardens, museums and parks; 800 students involved in IBSE activities who completed the self-evaluation form; 10 European and Italian teacher trainers involved in the INQUIRE project.

We developed different instruments to assess: the IBSE training courses, IBSE activities and students' learning outcomes (Table 1).

Table 1. Overview of INQUIRE evaluation instruments used in an Italian context

	Quantitative instruments	*Qualitative instruments*
IBSE training courses	Questionnaires (Pre- and post- training course);	Semi-structured and Delphi interviews[2] (during training);
	Structured interviews;	Research journals (during training).
		World Café[3] (at the end of the course);
IBSE activities	Evaluation form (for the pilot course);	Final reports (for the pilot course);
	Observation form (for the mainstream course);	Post-experimentation form (for the mainstream course);
		Participant observation;
		Self-evaluation form;
Students' learning outcomes		Concept maps;
		Portfolios of evidence;
		Concept cartoons[4].

To analyse data, we used SPSS© to carry out statistical analysis of quantitative variables, and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to detect and examine qualitative variables arising from the participants' experience (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). IPA allowed us to explore how teachers and botanic garden educators ascribe meaning to assessment practices both in their IBSE activities and during the IBSE training courses in interactions with their environment. ATLAS-TI© was used to manage the coding and linking of different variables, and

to ensure a constant comparison of data in order to improve the reflective process of analysis.

INQUIRE PROJECT: THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATION

Quality management (QM) within the INQUIRE project has been organized to ensure the effective use of available resources and reliable management of the goals pursued. The main tasks of QM were:

- to build the evaluation plan as well as to provide formative and summative
- assessment of the courses and the professional development of participants;
- to support the training of the partners regarding the implementation of the evaluation process;
- to assist the partners through meetings with experts held at the botanic gardens involved in the project;
- to help share reflective practices with partners at the European level, and foster the same practices among course trainees at national and local levels.

To achieve these goals, QM prepared four questionnaires (two for the teachers, two for the educators) to be administered at the beginning and end of each course. Additionally, QM devised a set of guidelines to formulate the portfolio of evidence as a tool for analysing, documenting, and evaluating the project process and outcomes. Moreover, QM prepared a chapter focused on assessment methods within the practitioners' handbook for teachers and educators, clarified the difference between formative and summative evaluation both in theoretical and practical terms, and offered a range of tools and techniques to evaluate students' learning, including observation, research journals, and the World Cafe'. Special attention was paid to reviewing the evaluative practices adopted during the first training course, asking the participants to illustrate what assessment tools proved to be the most effective, for what reasons, and how to implement them in future course activities. The final picture showed that each country had employed a diversified and particular range of tools in order to adapt them to the cultural and local features of the course. As a consequence, QM was careful not to impose a strict standard framework, enabling each partner to make use of the set of tools they deemed most appropriate to the context in which they operated.

In short, participation in the project meetings stimulated the members to assess, evaluate and improve the training courses and, more generally, the activities promoted within the INQUIRE framework, on the one hand assuming a habit of constant reflection about the educational actions undertaken, on the other openly sharing outcomes, successes and shortcomings to favour the continuous professional improvement of every partner.

In light of the collected data, tools were eventually grouped into five sets: asking questions, observing, building mind and conceptual maps, discussing and reflecting.

The various sets represent the different research paths possible to take through the evaluation process (Table 2).

Table 2. Overview of INQUIRE evaluation instruments used at the European level

	Instruments	*Partners*
Asking questions	Questionnaire	NBGB, Belgium UBG, Bulgaria UAH-CSIC, Spain BGRHB, Germany BORD, France
	Interview	MSU, Russia BGRHB, Germany Uni-HB, Germany LFU, Austria
Observing	Observation (paper and pencil)	UBG, Bulgaria KEW, United Kingdom BGRHB, Germany
	Observation (grids)	UL, Portugal
	Videorecording	SBZH, Germany
	Social Network Analysis	LFU, Austria
	Energy Graphics	UBG, Bulgaria
Schematizing	Conceptual Maps	LFU, Austria
	Mind Maps	SBZH, Germany
Discussing	World Café	MUSE, Italy
	Open Group Debate and Discussion	KEW, United Kingdom BORD, France MSU, Russia
	Personal Meetings	NHM, Norway
Reflecting	Portfolio of Evidence	MSU, Russia UL, Portugal FCTUC, Portugal BORD, France MUSE, Italy
	Final Report	UAH-CSIC, Spain

EVALUATING ITALIAN TRAINING ON IBSE METHODS USING THE ECB LENS

The Italian project staff opted for several of the tools proposed by the QM to evaluate the IBSE training courses. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect

the participants' opinions before, during and after the course to monitor the field activities carried out at the botanic gardens and to evaluate the learning outcomes of the students participating in the project.

The selected tools were: questionnaires (pre- and post-); semi-structured and Delphi interviews, research journals (during training); and World Cafe´ (at the end of the course).

The Questionnaires

Within the INQUIRE project, questionnaires have been developed to collect information about trainees' opinions, expectations, and practices and to evaluate the impact of the project on the participants' professional growth. Through the online platform Questback©, the organizers administered a total of eight anonymous questionnaires, addressed to the teachers and educators at the beginning and the end of the pilot and mainstream course, respectively. As open questions dominated in the first questionnaire, only a small number of questionnaires were returned after first course, a completion proved generally too laborious for participants. Consequently, the organizers decided to structure the second course questionnaire mainly around closed questions to raise the completion rate by reducing the time required to complete the form.

Overall, at the end of the project 96 questionnaires were collected (Tables 3–4).

Table 3. Respondents to the questionnaires (first IBSE course)

Course "IBSE: like a scientist!" (Italy)			
	Teachers	*Educators*	*Total*
Pre-training Questionnaire	12 (92%)	8 (54%)	20 (74%)
Post-training Questionnaire	8 (62%)	2 (14%)	10 (37%)

Table 4. Respondents to the questionnaires (second IBSE course)

Course "IBSE: like a scientist!" (Italy)			
	Teachers	*Educators*	*Total*
Pre-training Questionnaire	18 (95%)	22 (85%)	40 (88%)
Post-training Questionnaire	15 (79%)	11 (42%)	26 (58%)

Analysis of the answers related to the topic of evaluation demonstrated that teachers and educators shared a strong interest in improving their assessment skills (Figure 1). Trainees indicated ability to evaluate the efficacy of educational interventions as a crucial competence for qualified teachers and educators (Figure 2).

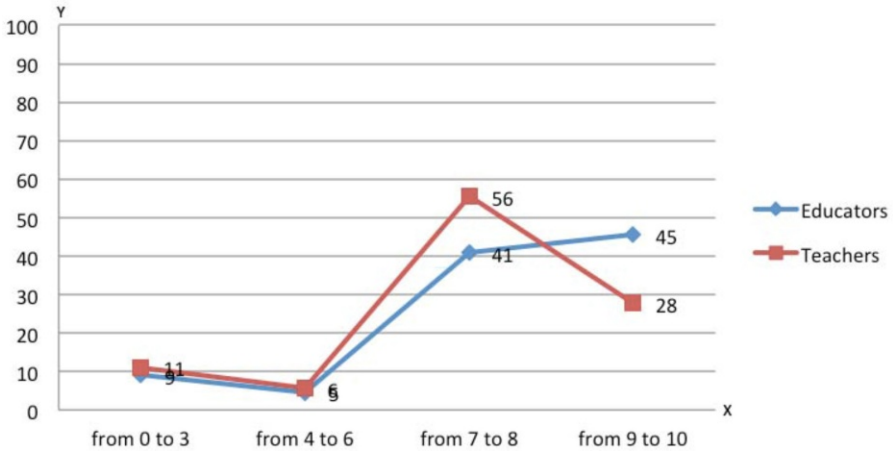

Figure 1. Improvements in evaluating IBSE activities

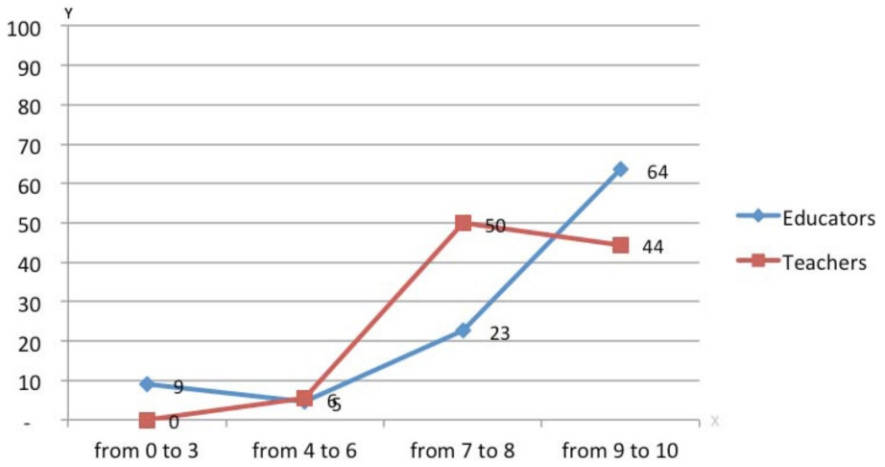

Figure 2. Improvements in evaluating the efficacy of IBSE lessons

Compared to those filled out at the beginning of the course, post-course questionnaires showed that participants thought that the project greatly helped them to improve their skills to manage educational evaluation. Even though they felt that a large gap remained to be filled before they could consider such an ability permanently acquired (Figures 3–4).

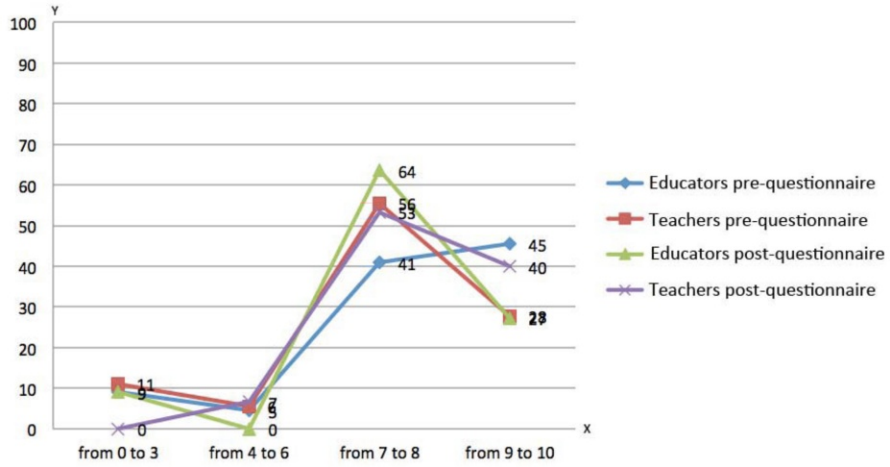

Figure 3. Improvements in evaluating IBSE activities
(pre and post – course compared)

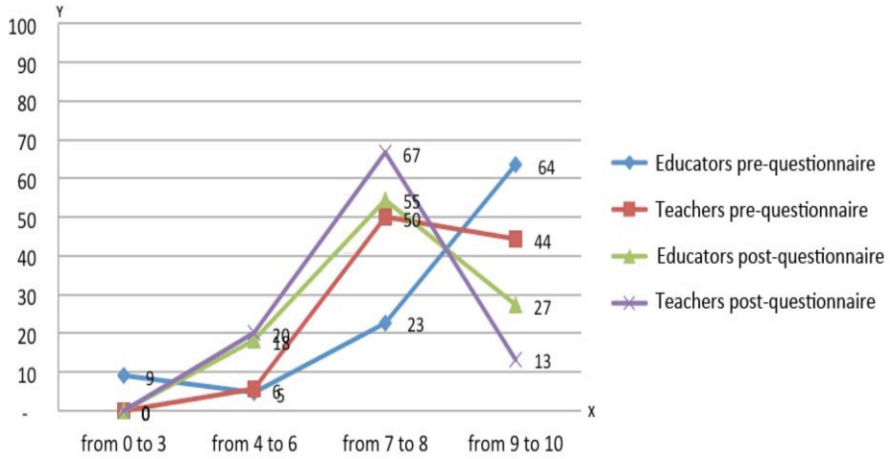

Figure 4. Improvements in evaluating the efficacy of IBSE lessons
(pre and post – course compared)

With reference to the implementation of the five evaluation phases envisaged by the IBSE approach, the Evaluate step proved to be less developed compared to the others (Figures 5–6).

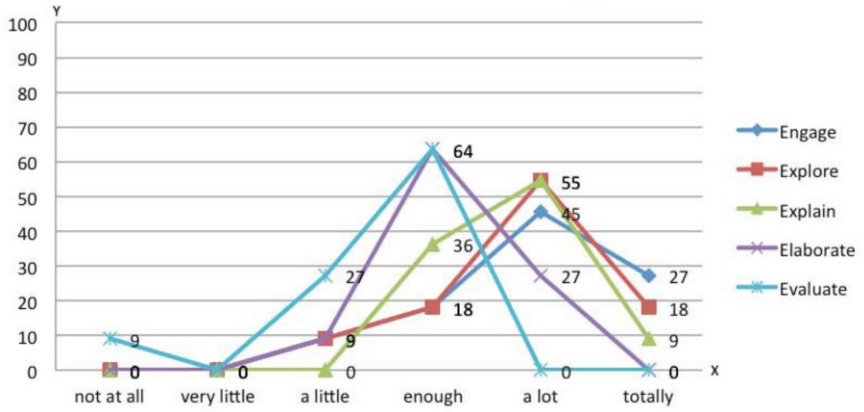

Figure 5. The 5E model implementation during the IBSE activities (Educators)

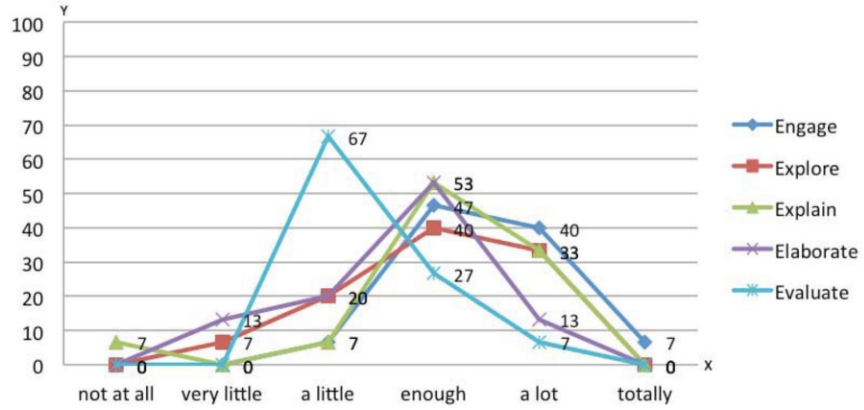

Figure 6. The 5E model implementation during the IBSE activities (Teachers)

Teachers and educators pinpointed that the five phases model was not clear in terms of differences between one step and another. Moreover, time requirements for each phases were seen as not fully specified. They suggested that the model needed to be clarified, especially through examples of what represents appropriate implementation and feedback on trainees' attempts to put it into practice.

Semi-Structured and Delphi Interviews

Semi-structured interview is an approach based on a fairly open framework which allows for focused, conversational, two-way communication. It was used to collect

the participants' opinions during the two training courses, so as to get immediate and ongoing feedback from the participants. Questions were asked to obtain information about:

- knowledge and skills acquired through the training;
- how much the participants modified their teaching styles and interactions with colleagues because of the course;
- observed changes in students after experimenting with the IBSE approach in the classroom;
- the participants' opinions on the course itself.

After the first course, the interview structure was modified. Some questions were changed or refined, but the major shift involved the introduction of the Delphi method as a way of increasing the number of people interviewed (Table 5). Analysis of the interviews after the first year's course shows that trainees had become aware that evaluation needed to be reconsidered, especially as a more distributed practice within the classroom. Moreover, they emphasized that evaluation deserved more time, required more variation in methods, and called for greater attention to the five steps of the IBSE approach (especially the Evaluate phase). Also, the interviews highlighted an emerging sense of anxiety about the final evaluation of the IBSE activities, as trainees thought that it should be different from traditional evaluation. Two participants commented as follows:

> First of all I learnt to pay attention to the different evaluation steps. Before I didn't think a lot about it during my classes. The course gave me the opportunity to reflect and carefully articulate the assessment phases.

> What I am really scared of is the final evaluation… Afterward the IBSE course it should not be the traditional evaluation we usually did anymore, we need to involve the students more directly in reflecting on the work they did.

Trainees also stated that involving the students in the evaluation process was quite demanding compared to what they normally do in class, as it requires a huge amount of time and the ability to master complex tools.

The Research Journal

The research journal was employed throughout the course as a means of getting feedback from the participants in terms of reflections and evaluation. At the end of each module, trainees were invited to answer two to four open questions about the topic. Even though the number of research journals collected at the end of the first course was low (19%), the journal was proposed again during the second course, emphasizing the value and meaning of this tool. As a result, the number of research journals kept by teachers and educators at the end of the second course increased markedly (44%, Table 5).

Table 5. Respondents to the evaluation instruments (Pilot Course and Mainstream Course)

	Pilot Course	*Mainstream Course*	
	Interview	*Interview*	*Delphi Interview*
Teachers	5 (38%)	7 (37%)	7 (37%)
Educators	2 (24%)	3 (12%)	5 (19%)
Total	7 (26%)	10 (22%)	12 (27%)
	Research Journal	*Research Journal*	
Teachers	5 (38%)	11 (58%)	
Educators	0	9 (35%)	
Total	5 (19%)	20 (44%)	
	Evaluation Form	*Post-experimentation Form*	
Teachers	7 (54%)	11 (58%)	
Educators	1 (7%)	7 (27%)	
Total	8 (30%)	12 (44%)	
	Final Report		
Teachers	9 (69%)		
Educators	3 (21%)		
Total	12 (44%)		

A number of critical points had already emerged from the first research journals that criticized evaluation practices proposed during the course, and stressed the lack of clarity about the distinction between skills and content evaluation. Consequently, during the second course, the organizers decided to spend more time and resources delving into the educational reasons and goals of evaluation, and the use of the assessment tools. The analysis of research journals at the end of the second course highlighted a shift in trainees' perceptions of evaluation. Evaluation was seen as a professional tool to reflect on educational action, and formative evaluation had become central both as a way to avoid the linear assessment of children's skills development and a useful tool enabling teachers and educators to question their pedagogical decisions.

One teacher wrote:

> Evaluation is a process that helps you to gain feedback on your work. In fact through evaluation I can understand how much content and knowledge has been transmitted to the children and also how effective my teaching methods have been. I believe that the way in which a lesson is taught should also be evaluated, and its dynamics and possible variations studied.

Two additional educators noted:

> Evaluation is a way of understanding whether we were effective in doing the planned activity and how.
>
> Evaluation allows you to understand what remains after putting time and effort into a certain educational path.

At the end of the course, evaluation was seen not only as a way of checking the knowledge acquired, but also as a kind of inquiry into the students' ability to elaborate on their knowledge and to transfer it to other educational domains.

The World Café

As we said, the World Café is a public meeting that facilitates cooperation between people, stimulating active contribute ideas, to link together their findings, to interconnect individual and collective dimensions, and to build knowledge through creative thinking and through sharing problems that arise from open questions (Brown, Isaacs, The World Café Community, 2005). This technique perfectly matches the IBSE approach in emphasizing the role of active cooperation and idea-sharing among the participants involved in the project.

The World Café was employed during the course both to develop new activities through creative workshops, evaluate the evolution of the training by asking for the participants' opinions about the strong and weak points they observed, and elicit their suggestions about possible improvements to the training experience.

Through the Café, trainees pointed out that evaluation generally suffers from a negative reputation in school and teachers often feel unprepared as they deal with this specific task. Moreover, participants complained that evaluation did not receive adequate time and attention compared to other activities scheduled for the course. Consequently, they urged the organizers to delve more deeply into this topic during the second part of the program. The latter approved this request, organizing a training section devoted to the implementation of evaluation practices and tools. Moreover, they modified the schedule of fieldwork that had been planned for later in order to leave teachers and educators more time to complete the evaluation tasks.

THE ANALYSIS OF IBSE EVALUATION TOOLS

IBSE activities have been analysed using a number of tools, including evaluation forms and final reports (for the pilot course), post-test and observation forms (for the mainstream course), and the self-evaluation form. Evaluation involved different IBSE actors, namely, teachers, educators, students, and external observers.

The Evaluation Form

The evaluation form was conceived with the objective of helping trainees to develop self-evaluation and analyse students' behaviour during the IBSE activities. External

observers used the same form to analyse teachers, educators and students interacting during classroom and fieldwork activities, to point out positive and negative events, and to provide feedback for improvements.

Only a small portion (27%) of the participants used this form, namely, seven teachers, one educator and three external observers (Table 5). Even though few forms were actually collected, it is interesting to compare them to the related lesson plans, which were the operational programs conceived to organize the IBSE activities step-by-step. The comparison highlights that most of the teachers thought that evaluation was a useful means of observing and assessing several educational elements such as:

- relational abilities;
- teamwork effectiveness;
- planned sequence of activities;
- the ability to explain logically;
- the specific knowledge acquired about the lesson topics;
- the final individual and/or group outcomes of the activity;
- the ability to link everyday and school experiences.

Therefore, beyond assessing scientific knowledge, practitioners assessed students' inquiry skills as raising questions, observing, designing investigations, collecting data, linking evidence to explanations, finding appropriate solutions, listening to each other, getting along socially, and working cooperatively. Analysis of evaluation forms shows general agreement about the value of helping students to develop self-evaluation. Conversely, not all trainees agreed about the efficacy of peer evaluation. A shared concern was the teachers' inclination to focus attention on the individual student, a tendency reinforced by the use of observation grids. Accordingly, the analysis suggests it would be beneficial to actively involve students both in self-evaluation and in the assessment of other students, provided that teachers and educators ensure that critiques are fair and help to promote the reflective process. In fact, the ability to help students to acquire a cooperative approach in reviewing each other contributions to the discussion cannot be taken for granted. Teachers should help students to readily recognize and value what they see as a positive and supportive contribution.

The Final Report

The final report was conceived as a set of categories implemented to categorize the course outcomes, i.e. as a metacognitive tool for facilitating self-evaluation and to help teachers and educators to reflect on the experimentation carried out throughout the IBSE project. We focused the analysis on seven key points: cooperative learning, teacher as facilitator, students active participation, knowledge and skills acquired by students, the 5E, assessment process, and teaching approaches.

As shown in Table 5, twelve final reports were written representing 44% of trainees. Participants commented positively on the reflective stance the course helped them to assume on evaluation:

> The course enabled me to reflect on the steps we need to follow during classroom activities, and especially to pay attention to the Engagement and Evaluation phases (Teacher, Primary school).

At the same time, teachers and educators seemed to acknowledge evaluation as a difficult and thorny (sometimes problematic) task:

> It is not easy to say whether and what kind of knowledge we have acquired… For sure, we developed skills in team-working, sharing ideas, organizing work plans and making hypotheses. Maybe some gained more complex skills than others. But for sure student motivation has improved. Therefore an important goal has been reached! (Teacher, Lower secondary school).

Other important remarks emerging from the final reports are the following:

- the importance of openly praising students when they are showing what they have discovered and learned through the IBSE experience;
- the significance of seeing evaluation as an ongoing and recursive activity, in which observation, reflection, and assessment are part of a holistic process deeply embedded into the students' educational path;
- the need to discriminate between evaluation of content (to know something) and evaluation of competences (to be able to do something);
- the value of becoming able to use a wide range of evaluation tools such as conducting observations, posing questions, formulating explanations, making predictions, planning and conducting scientific investigations, interpreting data, communicating observations and results, and working in groups.

The Post-Experimentation Form

In the second IBSE course, a new form called "post-experimentation form" replaced the previous evaluation form and the final report. The new form invited trainees to self-evaluate the IBSE activity they designed, observing students in the classroom and during fieldwork, and reflecting on the competencies developed and the evaluative tools adopted.

The post-experimentation form was filled out by 40% of trainees. Participants thought that they correctly put the IBSE approach into action and showed genuine enthusiasm for the INQUIRE project (Figures 7–8). Educators expressed very positive opinions about the activity they completed, whereas teachers remained more cautious about it (Figure 9).

According to the participants some elements needed to be improved: the timing of the activity, a clearer definition of the activity's goals, and the application of the

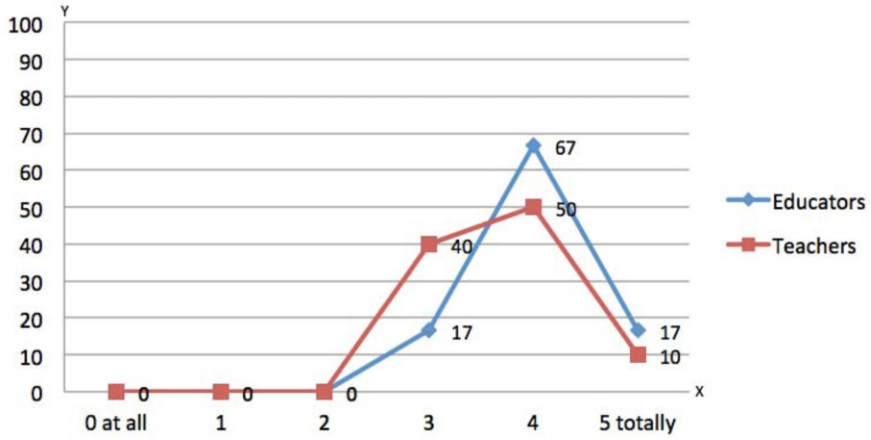

Figure 7. Implementation of the IBSE activities

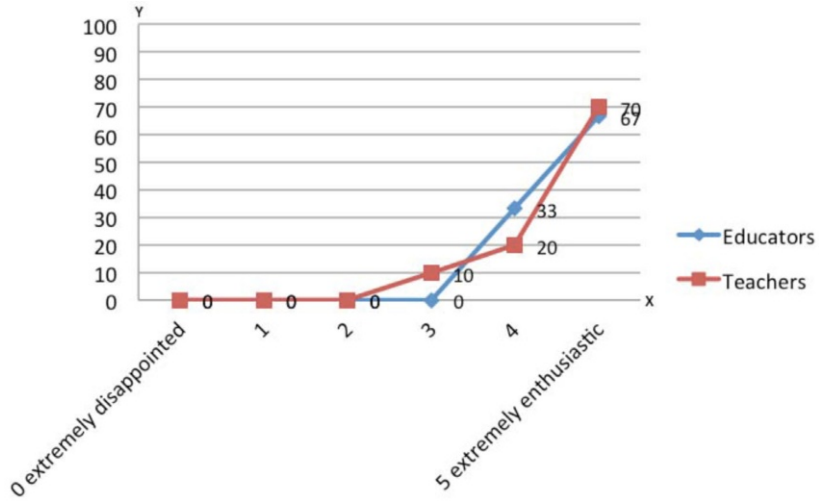

Figure 8. Enthusiasm at the end of IBSE activity

5E model to the activity's content and students' potential. Additionally, in the forms collected, teachers emphasized the following as essential priorities that should be more carefully evaluated: linguistic, communication, relational and planning skills; the ability to produce questions, observations, and hypotheses; the role of teamwork; the processing of new concepts and the transfer of acquired knowledge to new contexts. The educators stressed the need to build more competencies in conducting research as well as fostering the participation and real curiosity of students. Moreover,

as most of the tools adopted to ensure the assessment of the IBSE activities were unfamiliar to trainees, they suggested that the organizers should allocate more time to allowing participants become acquainted with them in the future.

All participants agreed that, even though the course had triggered their interest in developing evaluative skills, they needed even more training to delve into the difference between summative and competence evaluation, as well as to become able to promote a wider culture of evaluation in schools.

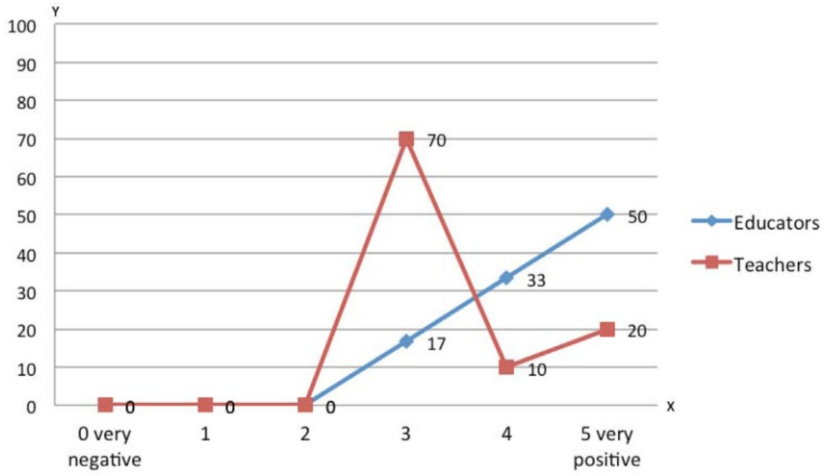

Figure 9. Evaluation of IBSE activity

Observation

During the second course, the organizers suggested observation as a means for supporting participants through the analysis of the five phases envisaged by the IBSE approach. Observation was focused on the behaviours and interactions among students, teachers, and educators in order to highlight critical elements and evaluate the way the approach was actually implemented. Even though, for organizational reasons, only few observations were fully achieved, the data highlighted two interesting points. On the one hand, observers noted that trainees paid only marginal attention to evaluation during activities, often postponing it to the end of the educational process. Evaluation was very often identified with completing a final task, as well as confined to students' oral comments prompted by teachers' open questions posed at the end of the project. On the other hand, observers criticized the automatic association which often occurred between evaluation and teaching. Indeed, they suggest that an effective evaluation process requires more active involvement on behalf of all people involved in the project, and especially self- and peer evaluation of students.

Self-Evaluation Form

Students evaluated themselves by answering questions concerning what they learned through the IBSE activity, including positive discoveries, barriers encountered, and the experience of working in a group.

Even though only a small portion of trainees (7% in the pilot course, 29% in the mainstream course) filled out the form, the respondents found it useful in providing relevant feedback about scientific knowledge, attitudes and social skills acquired by students. All in all, through the form, trainees were able to gather more evidence to improve IBSE activities, and students had a stronger say in the evaluation process.

Tools to Assess the Students' Learning Outcomes

Concept maps, portfolios of evidence, and concept cartoons were introduced to practitioners through examples and practical activities during the training course to help trainees both observe and evaluate student learning outcomes.

- *Concept map:* Although concept maps area well-known tool for learning and evaluation, only one educator and one teacher implemented them during the course as a way to analyse students' previous knowledge and assess learning. Practitioners generally found it difficult to integrate maps in their daily educational practices, as they considered them as time consuming activities.
- *Portfolio of evidence*: Neither during the first nor the second course the portfolio was awkward to follow, as trainees thought that it was too demanding, requiring considerable time to document, analyse, and reflect on ongoing practices. Only one teacher wrote an accurate portfolio, even though it was focused more on describing activities than developing critical reflection. Again, teachers found this instrument too laborious to fit with the complex flow of everyday activities. Conversely, the staff was able to effectively implement the portfolio approach through focusing on more limited and discrete events as those represented by trainees' learning classes.
- *Concept cartoons*: Practitioners really liked concept cartoons as a quick, simple and effective means of evaluating students' learning. Three trainees designed and implemented cartoons focused on floatage, seed dispersal and sustainable diet to, respectively, provoke discussions, stimulate thinking, and evaluate the development of social skills and scientific knowledge during the IBSE project.

CONCLUSIONS

The following themes relating to the experiences of participants in the IBSE training course emerged from triangulation of instruments: developing knowledge of assessment, implementing assessment techniques, increasing understanding of the

IBSE approach, challenging reflective practice, and promoting self-appraisal and peer-assessment. The data analysis stressed that participants showed an interest in improving their knowledge of assessment and techniques in order to make progress in assessing the efficacy of IBSE activities and, indeed, all students' progress.

As already discussed, IBSE is a dynamic, cooperative approach to learning that promotes the development of "skills used by scientists" (such as planning investigations, searching for information, debating, forming arguments), and this makes assessing IBSE learning goals more difficult than evaluation in traditional science teaching. What is assessed is often what can be assessed rather than what ought to be assessed (Harlen, 2013). This gap is particularly large in the case of IBSE because professionals lack confidence in their ability to use assessment knowledge and tools. Some participants communicated that assessment should be different from conventional evaluation methods.

The traditional approach emphasizes summative assessment, which is carried out to check the knowledge acquired by students at a particular time, is teacher-referenced, and student self-assessment is limited. But, in IBSE practice, it is important to combine summative assessment with formative assessment, as stated by participants at the end of course. Assessment was seen as a professional tool for reflecting on educational action. Formative assessment had become essential to providing feedback, from teacher to student and student to teacher. In this way, assessment is a process in which teachers use information about learning to adjust their teaching and tailor it to different contexts, so that all learners have the opportunity to learn. Students are involved in self-assessment to reflect on and improve their learning. However, what formative assessment looks like in practice is a little more problematic because involving students in the evaluation process requires a lot of time and the ability to master complex tools. As analysis of the evaluation forms shows, there is general agreement about the importance of helping all learners to develop self-evaluation, but not all trainees agreed on the efficacy of peer evaluation. Recognizing and valuing the different contributions from all students as a positive and supportive contribution cannot be taken for granted, but it is essential to promote inclusive science teaching.

For this reason, teachers and educators require formative feedback from staff while they are engaged in an IBSE activity during the training course to improve their assessment skills, to help students to acquire a cooperative approach and promote reflective process. Reflecting on practice is a key part of the INQUIRE project, so, within the course, staff encouraged participants to use different instruments to monitor, evaluate and revise their own practices. It is important to note that professionals also require more time to discuss matters with each other throughout the course in order to support their learning and professional development.

In sum, our research shows that the INQUIRE project contributed to building evaluation capacity in professionals, providing convenient resources and improving technical skills that helped practitioners to clarify the meaning and purpose of

evaluation that reflect the characteristics of the IBSE approach and welcome student diversity.

The main outcomes concern cognitive, behavioural and affective aspects, including:

- an increased understanding of evaluation as a multidimensional approach, participants understood the difference between summative and formative assessment, and recognised that assessment requires adopting a reflective approach. In fact, it is important for a teacher to know the students' individual learning needs, how to best implement the IBSE tasks in relation to the students' attainment levels and implement the assessment in relation to the students' ability;
- an enriched ability to use a plurality of assessment tools (such as World Café, concept cartoons, research journals, and a portfolio of evidence) to collect and combine different types of data about environmental education and better address the different needs of learners;
- decreased evaluation anxiety and increased confidence in the usefulness of evaluation practices built on continuous networking among professionals.

Both teachers and educators think that evaluating students is actually a crucial but difficult task, as the relationship between experience and learning often revealed to be more indirect and elusive than expected. They appreciate the structure of IBSE as paying special attention to the evaluative process. However, unlike in the first training course, in the second one, they were able to spend more time clarifying the meaning and purposes of evaluation and putting systematic assessment into practice through the use of concept cartoons, forums, diaries, questionnaires, concept maps, portfolios of evidence, interviews, and observations. This plurality of assessment tools can promote an inclusive evaluation.

In particular, concept cartoons were especially appreciated as creative combinations of words and drawings enabling teachers and pupils to explain their perspectives about IBSE activities. As a teacher stated during the follow-up interview:

> I really like concept cartoons. I introduced them in my class as a basis for debating environmental subjects.

Also, teachers highlighted that this instrument actively involved students that generally have difficulty in oral or written evaluation tasks.

The IBSE forum also proved to be a valid source of support for developing an evaluation culture, especially because it allows teachers to share opinions, experiences and questions about how to implement assessment effectively.

Teachers and educators agree on the significance of listening to different opinions and sharing experiences in order to improve knowledge and develop new creative ideas. And, it is useful to design and successively implement science evaluation according to the students' individual needs to welcome their diversity.

In the same follow-up, one educator positively commented about this way of sharing ideas:

> Comparing notes with other teachers and educational staff during the course has been very important. We can always learn from each other's experience, voice doubts, clarify problems and discuss the difficulties we have encountered along the way and formulate new ideas.

Some participants positively evaluated the fact that the training course addressed teachers from different schools and educators from different botanical gardens, science museums, and natural parks, because it provided an opportunity for cooperation and developing an understanding of how IBSE is conceptualised, used and evaluated in different settings, while also gaining different perspectives on IBSE practice. During the training course, opportunities to collaborate and share opinions, experiences and questions with colleagues were offered by staff using: World Café, concept cartoons, and building an Inquire Forum.

Similarly, the research journals helped professionals to actively reflect on their own personal roles in the assessment process:

> We need to evaluate not only the knowledge that the students acquired, but also the inquiry and social skills developed during the IBSE activities, for example working in small groups. Besides, evaluation helps me to understand how successful I have been in managing the IBSE activity.

The questionnaires confirm that combining both external evaluation and self-evaluation is a very effective way of analysing the practitioners' need for continuous training in terms of the IBSE pedagogical approach. The investigation further highlights two additional points.

First, one shortcoming can be pictured as a sort of methodological "funnel" narrowing the focus from cooperation to individual learners. IBSE projects are based on the constructivist view of learning as process of knowledge building based on context and discussion between expert and novices, which emphasizes the cooperative role of learners as a community. However, current evaluation practices used by IBSE are only partially consistent with this participative model, because, in reality, a cognitive model, oriented towards a more individual learner perspective, often prevails. This individual perspective is particularly emphasised by the use of observation grids strictly focused on the behaviour of one student at a time, and multiple choice tests or true-false tests that assess the information the students have acquired. This perspective does not consider the central role of classmates in learning and consequently evaluation tends to disregard cooperation in IBSE activities. Teachers generally comply with this attitude; it is a shortcut for coping with the pressure of assigning grades and offering quick evidence of learning improvements. As a teacher noted:

> I disagree with the current spread of bureaucratic evaluation based on the quantity of information a child is supposed to swallow. Assessing skills takes time.

Cooperative practices such as collecting data in a group, planning and conducting investigations, interpreting evidence, drawing conclusions and discussing results with peers and adults have to be taken into account, as they are at the centre of the IBSE approach. Also, peer interaction in evaluation tasks is a way to encourage the participation of all students. An ECB perspective can help to provide a more balanced evaluation style that can further enhance the benefits of the IBSE participative model.

The second critical point can be imagined as a type of "black box". Although one purpose of INQUIRE has been to introduce a positive view of evaluation practices, professionals still find it hard to see evaluation as a supportive process for learning activities. Evaluation procedures are often fragmentary or confined to limited periods of time. They are mainly focused on pre- and post-tests more than on the real dynamics of educational interplay. This in-between process is seen as a black box. Consequently, teachers and educators usually see assessment more as a summative than a formative practice and the learning potential of students is frequently overlooked.

Our research shows that many practitioners are aware that formative evaluation requires careful planning with time and resources. Most of them want to improve their abilities to conduct meaningful evaluation of scientific educational practices. The evaluation activities developed during the INQUIRE project confirm that ECB could be a reliable framework to integrate time constraints with high quality assessment. ECB perspective can be a trustworthy framework for understanding in-depth the meaning of evaluation in science education and improving assessment practices according to the IBSE participative model.

Supporting the continuous training of professionals on the basis of the ECB perspective as a way to provide innovative competencies and tools to be implemented in daily evaluation practices.

From our investigation the following recommendation emerged relating to assessment in IBSE activities. As already discussed, IBSE goes beyond transmitting scientific facts or phenomena, so assessment cannot be limited to testing the scientific knowledge transmitted by the teacher, but involves observing the processes and inquiry skills (such as data collection, analysis and communication of findings) that learners have used. In this way, teachers propose real tasks compatible with the background knowledge and reasoning skills of students that require active participation to answer a question, which is different from fill-in-the-blanks, paper-and-pencil, multiple-choice texts. Teachers need to be able to assess learner's prior understanding of a topic and to address any misconceptions that they may have. They also need to develop the skills to design formative and summative assessments, provide formative feedback on students' work, and select suitable evaluation tools to encourage participation of all students. Furthermore, assessment should become a practice shared with students to help them to improve the overall quality of their knowledge, clarify and refine their understanding of concepts, and promote "independent thinking". Involving students in self-assessment in order to find out what they have learned, encourage them to recognize their weaknesses and

strengths, and identify what they need to do to improve. In this way, each student can demonstrate his own capability. Therefore. they become more responsible for their own learning and for correcting their own mistakes.

Our research highlights four points as crucial steps towards overcoming these weaknesses and improving evaluation practices in inclusive sustainable development education as follows:

- Dynamic assessment processes: systematically gathering information about changes in scientific knowledge and skills over a period of time;
- Clearness and flexibility: sharing evaluation standards with learners and updating them according to course development;
- Valuing tacit knowledge: taking on students' preconceptions as a challenge for building new knowledge;
- Cooperation: fostering debate based on different viewpoints to develop students' metacognition about acquired knowledge and skills.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has some limitations that must be pointed out. First of all, considering the wide range of evaluation tools employed during the course, the amount of information and answers provided by trainees was lower than expected. This can be interpreted as a manifestation of participants' uneasiness with regard to the topic of evaluation and its role in developing effective educational strategies. Secondly, we initially planned to extend the original sample of the subjects – based on Italian course trainees – to other IBSE courses held in the rest of Europe; however, this was only partially implemented due to time constraints.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Our research suggests that adopting the ECB approach in IBSE projects would be beneficial in terms of gaining a broader understanding of the role of evaluation in science education to meet students' needs and promote the participation of all students. Also to gain further insight into the way systematic evaluation actually impacts educational practices. Moreover, we propose future research on IBSE practices and to build the evaluation capacity of IBSE activities to provide more in-depth understanding of the long-term effects of training courses on teachers, educators and students, and to foster a positive vision of inclusive assessment experiences for implementing IBSE in both outdoor and classroom environments.

NOTES

[1] Although the chapter has been jointly conceived and discussed by the two authors, Fabio Dovigo is specifically responsible for the first until fourth section and Vincenza Rocco for the fifth until eighth section.

[2] The Delphi method is a forecasting method based on the results of surveys sent to a panel of experts. Two or more rounds of surveys are sent out, and the anonymous responses are aggregated and shared with the group after each round. The Delphi Method seeks to aggregate opinions from a diverse set of experts, without organizing a physical meeting.

[3] The World Café is a conversational process for prompting conversations linked and built on each other as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas, and discover new insights into the questions or issues that are most important in their life, work, or community.

[4] Concept cartoons are cartoon-style drawings that put forward a range of viewpoints about a science concept or every day event. This strategy takes account of constructivist views of learning - taking students' ideas into account when planning teaching. By presenting a number of possible alternatives, "cognitive conflict" generates conditions for learning readiness. It also draws on research into common areas of misunderstanding in science.

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10. THE ROLE OF COUNSELLING IN CHILD CARE SERVICES AS AN INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

INTRODUCTION

As an educational environment, childcare services everyday work on the relationship with families, assuming it as a central means to promote active participation by supporting, collaborating, and being in partnership with parents (Henry, 1996; Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2005). Investigations concerning children's services emphasise that these services carry out their interventions paying particular attention to transitional events, especially those requiring the involvement of parents (and sometimes the whole family) in developing shared responsibility during the move from family to a childcare service environment (MacNaughton, 2003; Mantovani, 2007). These practices, which focus on the dialogue between teachers and family, aspire to develop a community pedagogy aimed at empowering parents and developing their ability to feel confident and competent in the daily decisions concerning their child (Dalli, 2008). To support parents' empowerment, teachers develop skills based on different kinds of knowledge, a particular "blend" – made both from personal experience, commonsense, tacit knowledge, lessons learned "by ear", and formal learning – which refers to a set of variously elaborated educational paradigms on early childhood (Urban, 2008; Lindon, 2010). Accordingly, this knowledge may operate both at an explicit and tacit level. The explicit level denotes an objective and rational knowledge that can be expressed in words, sentences, numbers or formulas, and is context free. It includes theoretical approaches, problem solving, manuals and databases (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). .Formal knowledge is involved in teachers' professional background, this being something they recognise as a fundament of their practice. Explicit knowledge is technical and requires a level of academic knowledge or understanding that is gained through formal education, or structured study (Smith, 2001). In contrast, the tacit level denotes knowledge that one is not focally aware of or consciously attending to in a given situation (Polanyi, 1958, 1966). Tacit knowledge is about knowing more than we can tell, or knowing how to do something without thinking about it. This highly personal, subjective form of knowledge is usually informal and can be inferred from the statements of others (Tsoukas, 2003). Tacit knowledge is technical or cognitive and is made up of mental models, values, beliefs, perceptions, insights and assumptions (Smith, 2001). This level of knowledge develops in a free and open environment where people exchange ideas and practicalities through face-to-face contacts, e.g. casual conversations,

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story-telling, and mentoring. Tacit knowledge tends to be local. It is not found in manuals or books and it cannot be taught in formal lessons.

Examining tacit knowledge is especially relevant in order to understand the role of knowledge-guided practice in childcare services, as it helps to identify the reasons behind their professional choices. Recognizing teachers' tacit knowledge allows us to clarify the knowledge blend adopted by teachers in managing their daily practices with children and parents. As an educational tool, this knowledge blend greatly aids teachers' professional practices aimed at promoting children's skills, as well as helping parents increase their ability to support a child's wellbeing and ongoing development. Moreover, the analysis of the blend of explicit and tacit knowledge used by teachers enables them to critically assess activities carried out in childcare, fostering the achievement of a reflective stance towards their professional practices (Moss, 2008; Paige-Smith & Craft, 2007).

To clarify the role of explicit and tacit knowledge in counselling activities between teachers and parents, we carried out research in three childcare services in Northern Italy. Research was based on qualitative methodology, and focused on educational counselling provided by teachers during both individual and group meetings with parents.

Data collection was based on:

- Participant observation of the interaction between teachers, parents and children during meetings and play activities;
- Audio-recorded in-depth interviews with parents and teachers;
- Documentation materials collected from the services.

Data were coded and analysed through the IPA (*Interpretative phenomenological analysis*) method (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009; Smith, 2011). According to the IPA methodology, transcribed recordings were recursively analysed by researchers so as to produce codes (first level categories) and memos (personal notes about text and categories). *Atlas-ti* © software was employed to manage the coding activity and the linkage among codes. Researchers subsequently established connections and relationships among codes that proved to be reliable, so developing emergent themes (or second level codes), which provided a higher level of abstraction, even though they still reflected the source material. Finally, emergent themes were selected and then grouped together according to conceptual similarities in order to create categories, which were used to produce the overall interpretation of data.

CREATING SPACES FOR SUPPORTING PARENTS

Services for young children play an important role in unfolding educational interventions that are limited not only to the daily care of children, but are also able to positively mediate the communication between parents and children, and to support families in their educational duties. To implement these actions, coordinators

and teachers should review the organisation of services to develop a more inclusive approach to educational activities. This includes a sharing of aims, objectives, and knowledge with respect to the service, in order to redesign and renovate spaces and reception arrangements, so as to tailor educational interventions to the needs of parents and children. In the child care services we investigated, the reception areas have been reorganised to enable parents to stay longer with their children in comfortable spaces, playing with other children and talking with other parents and teachers. This conceived new space in addition offers co-ordinators and teachers the opportunity to carry out individual and group counselling for parents regarding their child's education, supported by direct observation of children at play. In this way, the activities of counselling with parents – previously considered marginal compared to direct work with children – becomes a systematic and integrated part of everyday activities aimed at ensuring parents' inclusion.

Counselling activity is structured in two phases: the phase of legitimacy and role allocation, and the phase of counselling. During the first phase teachers help parents find their own place in an educational environment usually designed for children, not for parents. At this stage we witness a process of role expansion: parents strengthen their position as a reference point for their children, partially assuming care activities normally carried out by teachers. This in turn allows teachers to expand their professional role in the direction of family counselling. The analysis shows that teachers put in place specific educational strategies aimed at creating an educational environment that encourages the active participation of parents. Such strategies focus on four fundamental objectives.

The first objective is to create an inviting and welcoming educational environment through:

a. The construction of visual space in the entrance areas and corridors that reflects the presence of families in the service (photos, artefacts, images) and creates a strong sense of belonging ("This is our child care");
b. The design of comfortable spaces for accommodating parents, both to facilitate teacher-parent conversations and to ease the creation of a network of relationships among parents.

The childcare services we observed assign a central role to parents in developing a positive educational environment, so reinforcing their empowerment. Moreover, they create a sense of confidence through the implementation of mutually respectful and responsive relationships between teachers and parents, so making explicit the long-term commitment needed to improve and maintain a positive educational environment.

The second objective for the services is to develop complex skills teachers need to promote active participation from parents and create an inclusive environment aimed at systematically and consistently improving service-family relationships. This involves developing positive relationships based on trust through:

a. A constant search for dialogue with parents to understand their opinion about the service and expectations about their parental role;
b. The creation of a reserved space within team meetings to discuss the participation of parents in the service activities, to assess participation practices, and to spread information to suggest new ideas;
c. The creation of dynamic programs within the service that support the teachers in establishing effective partnerships with families. These programs are designed to offer teachers the opportunity to collaborate and learn from colleagues and parents, and to practice and transform acquired strategies.

The third objective is to study issues related to early childhood, service-family relationships, and educational co-operation. This activity is fostered through:

a. Group research on texts and information that may provide useful suggestions to improve service-family relationships;
b. The promotion of pedagogical practices focused on developing communication skills that enable an active role for parents in child care;
c. Daily conversations with parents about their child's progress and what this implies in terms of follow-up home activities.

The ultimate goal is to offer a full range of opportunities to promote active participation from parents by engaging them in specific events (workshops, celebrations, trips, networking), and scheduling activities that can meet the needs of parents in line with their working hours.

To strengthen the active role of parents, teachers of the child care services observed elaborated four main strategies. Firstly, they clearly communicate that all parents have an important role in bringing up children, emphasizing this aspect both in written (e.g. in the service leaflet) and verbal (e.g. in individual interviews) communication concerning the development of children and the educational tasks of parents. Secondly, they give specific information about what parents can do to intensify participation in services and listen to the parents' opinion about how participation is managed. The third intervention is focused on giving parents a positive feedback on the impact of their participation. This means clearly expressing that the activities of parents are making a difference in the child's growth. The fourth strategy is to create and support networks of parents and teachers within and beyond the child care service, so creating a supportive environment that helps spread the beneficial effect of counselling. This strategy reflects the concept of 'holding environment' developed by Winnicott (Winnicott, 1964). Creating a supportive environment, as Winnicott says, means maintaining a solid network of loving relationships around children and their parents, providing aid even in situations that do not apparently require it, giving children and parents attention, and fostering trust in their competences without judging them.

All these strategies, within the early childhood services examined, play a crucial role in prompting parents to take an active educational role, and consequently feeling

entitled and able to further expand upon it. Such strategies are the framework in which counselling activities are developed, as the core consulting work achieved by teachers with parents. During the consultation, in fact, teachers and parents develop a joint analysis of a child's behaviour in order to make visible the constitutive reasons for such behaviour and understand less visible underlying dynamics .

In this way, they contribute to innovative family education, traditionally based on a conventional logic of knowledge transmission, through openly discussing and valuing different educational styles adopted by parents and teachers in order to improve them, so developing a process of mutual empowerment that responds more adequately to the complex needs of children.

THE PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE BEHIND THE COUNSELLING WORK

Observing the work of teachers during counselling activities, investigation allowed us to analyse how knowledge is deeply embedded in professional practices with parents. Elaborating upon recent research findings (Miller, Dalli, & Urban, 2012; Vanderbroeck, Urban, & Peeters, 2016) it was possible to identify three types of knowledge that guide teachers' work: knowledge of child development, knowledge of designing and implementing educational activities, and organisational knowledge and networking. Each of these knowledge dimensions plays an important role in determining what an early childhood professional education is and how it should operate within the service. This classification emphasises Urban's observation about how childcare professionals must not only provide assistance that addresses children's essential needs, but also respond to broader educational, social and cultural questions which increasingly emerge from families today.

Teachers' knowledge of child development refers to various, widespread theories on cognitive, psychosocial, and emotional dimensions of early childhood. Such knowledge represents the cornerstone of early childhood professional practices (Morrison, 2004), as they allow teachers to understand how children grow and develop going through different developmental stages: physical, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, and social. Therefore, knowledge of educational theories merges with observations of child behaviour, so enabling teachers to implement effective educational practices with children and their families.

Knowledge of the design and implementation of educational activities refers to the theories influencing the everyday planning of early childhood services. In childcare services, these theories are especially focused on the approach of active pedagogy that sees young children as people who dynamically construct their understanding within a physical and social environment (Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva, 2004). Far from considering the child as a passive recipient of the action of the adult, active learning highlights how children construct new meaning through direct and immediate experiences which implies responding to objects and interacting with people, ideas and events. Accordingly, educational settings need to be organised so as to provide young children with opportunities to be actively involved and proactive

in the learning process. From this perspective, play as a spontaneous exploration is pivotal in the planning of childcare activities, since they should be conceived as a permanent research endeavour.

Organisational knowledge and networking includes theories about the educational environment and pedagogical coordination, with special reference to the way connections are established between teachers and families in order to foster wider participation. An important component of this knowledge is the ecological perspective formulated by Bronfenbrenner (1979) about the four environmental levels (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem) that influence child development. This knowledge enables teachers to extend their educational interventions from the limited, internal system of the service to the complex system linking parents, children, and teachers in the larger environment existing also outside the service. Accordingly, teachers can leverage on the multiple resources represented by children, parents and other stakeholders involved in activities developed not just inside, but also outside of the service. This way, a teacher's role falls within the scope of the action network created with parents, colleagues, and other organisations interested in sustaining an interdisciplinary dialogue.

The classification of knowledge we propose allows us to understand how the three categories contribute to the design and implementation of educational counselling with families. The examination of interaction developed during counselling activities with parents shows that teachers' mediation is characterised by different phases, deeply rooted in the knowledge categories previously identified. The first phase of counselling involves a joint analysis carried out by teachers with parents in order to clarify what the children needs and abilities are and elucidate what factors affect a child's development. At this stage, therefore, teachers aim to provide parents with an image of early childhood as close as possible to reality. In this sense knowledge about child development represents the core foundation of this phase, as it is the main source of information conveyed to the parents in order to help them understand how a child's behaviour changes over time.

Reflections that emerged in the first stage lead to the second phase of counselling. This includes the development of guidelines aimed at supporting parents in developing an educational attitude focused on the reinforcement of a child's well-being. At that stage, knowledge of the design and implementation of educational settings based on active pedagogy theories plays a central role, as it allows teachers to engage parents in supporting children in their active efforts to develop all evolutionary abilities – cognitive, emotional, and social.

Finally, the last phase is focused on strengthening the parents' ability to autonomously interpret a child's behaviour and put into practice the guidelines set up with teachers. Here, organisational knowledge and networking become relevant in order to ensure that parents acquire durable educational competences not just as individuals, but also as active members of a net of distributed knowledge. The goal is to involve "expert" parents in offering advice to novices, so extending the ability

to provide educational support that goes beyond the direct intervention of teachers and other early childhood professionals.

All in all, the three categories of knowledge are closely related to the different stages of planning and conducting counselling work (Figure 1).

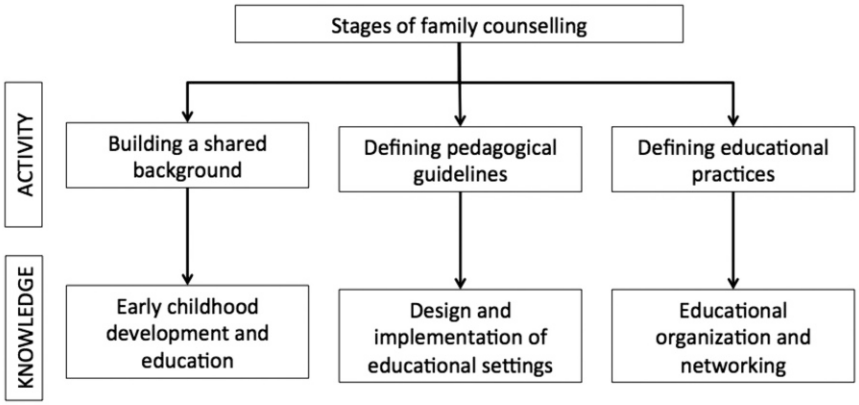

Figure 1. Stages of family counselling activities and knowledge involved

HOW THEORIES ORIENT CONVERSATION WITH PARENTS

As shown in the previous section, the design of consulting activities in child care services can be grouped into three phases: (1) provision of basic knowledge about child development; (2) creation of educational guidelines for parents; (3) implementation of pedagogical practices helping parents understand a child's behaviour and put into practice suggested guidelines. The findings from our field research reveal that these stages involve elaborating knowledge both at an explicit and implicit level. More specifically, the first and second phase mostly use explicit interaction levels, while the last phase relating to pedagogical practices is largely based on implicit communication. The effort of conducting a joint analysis with parents regarding their child's behaviour induces teachers to make their opinions and thoughts explicit about child development and education. Data shows that in developing this analysis every teacher makes reference to some theoretical constructs, which are rooted in different research traditions on early childhood development. In using these constructs teachers adopt and adapt scientific knowledge according to the specific situations observed, through a kind of "conceptual bricolage" that crosses and combines various paradigms in an opportunistic way in order to offer parents an explanation of their child's behaviour. In the second phase, the components of this conceptual bricolage are redefined in educational terms and translated into guidelines aimed at helping parents favour psychosocial development of the child. Finally, in the third stage teachers achieve educational practices that implement the guidelines

developed in the second phase of the counselling process. Even though, during this phase, teachers widely use their organisational knowledge and networking ability to support practices, the theoretical underpinning and references remain mostly implicit, as activity is predominantly based on nonverbal communication. Consequently, to identify the various educational paradigms underlying the consulting activities of teachers we needed to carry out a double analytical study: the analysis of the content of conversations between parents and teachers, and the analysis of the educational setting. On the one hand, the content analysis of dialogues between teachers and parents allowed us to recognise the various educational paradigms that contribute towards the creation of the "knowledge blend" employed by teachers when they observe and discuss with parents their children's behaviour. On the other, the analysis of the educational childcare setting helped clarify that theoretical references are tacitly embedded in the methodological choices teachers adopt in undertaking a specific course of action with children.

Content analysis of conversations teachers usually have with parents about their child's behaviour emphasises some recurrent topics on counselling activity. These can be grouped into four main thematic areas: (1) educational styles; (2) how playing activities can favour a child's development; (3) management of aggressive behaviour; (4) management of a child's tantrums. In counselling parents about topics related to a specific thematic area, every teacher employs a particular knowledge blend deriving from training as well as professional experience. In turn, this personal blend becomes a regular subject for discussion among the group of teachers in order to elaborate and revise the pedagogical guidelines offered to parents, making them a coherent set of indications agreed upon among the childcare staff.

Educational Styles

The first area, educational styles, refers to the issues concerning the parental role, especially maternal and paternal functions, the balance between permissiveness and severity, physical punishments, and parental educational techniques such as induction, love withdrawal, and power assertion. Data analysis shows that paradigms mainly used by teachers during parents' counselling relating to these topics consists of the following theoretical references:

- Child psychoanalysis: Spock (1946), Bettelheim (1962, 1987), Bion (1961), Juul (2011, 2012);
- Ecological systems theory: Bronfenbrenner (1979);
- Developmental psychology (educational models of parenting techniques and social rules learning): Hoffmann (1977, 1988), Baumrind (1967, 1996), Dunn (1988), Schaffer (1996), Eisenberg and Fabes (1992);
- Intersubjectivity and the layered self: Stern (1985, 1990).

Theories of child psychoanalysis based on Spock, Bettelheim, and Juul studies, are largely used by teachers to support parents in building a view of their child as

a competent and intelligent person, who should be involved in continuous dialogue and reasoning. Teachers also further complement these references with suggestions about educational parenting techniques and the learning of social rules derived from developmental psychology. These studies highlight the connection between the moral development of the child and the use of educational techniques that involve starting conversations with the child and giving him/her explanations. Many teachers make reference to Hoffman's notion of inductive discipline, an educational strategy relying on the ability to provide the child with a cognitive reason to convince him/her to comply with accepted social models. Following Hoffman, teachers criticise the way power (both physical and verbal) is used to force the child to adopt the desired behaviour, as it fosters a moral orientation based on fear of being punished instead of the correct internalisation of moral standards. Control built on explanation, conversely, helps children generalise the rule they have learned, enabling them to apply it in other situations. Teachers also refer to Einsenberg's theory about the value of promoting reasoned discussion with children as a way of teaching them the art of negotiation. Therefore, both Hoffman's and Einsenberg's references are employed by teachers to encourage parents to adopt an educational style based on dialogue with the child.

To facilitate parents' understanding of these conceptions, teachers usually translate theoretical references into practical guidelines. These in turn are based on pedagogical references derived from literature related to active pedagogy. There were essentially two guidelines on educational styles we found in the observed childcare services:

- Children are intelligent people, so they must be respected and treated as such;
- Physical punishment should always be avoided because children need to be educated to verbalise their thoughts.

These guidelines are primarily based on the studies of Goldschmied (2004), who states that teachers as professionals should oppose the use of physical punishments and teach parents how to talk and reason with their children.

The kind of conceptual blend teachers utilise by selecting from different educational paradigms related to parenting styles can be exemplified through the analysis of two short excerpts from interviews with parents.

The Strong Arm

Mother: "At home we are a bit puzzled as we do not know how to react when she pushes or scratches her friends… When it happens we mildly slap her hands. Is it okay or not?"

Teacher: "We generally try to talk to the child in order to make her understand… Especially because it would be a contradiction to affirm that she should not hit other children by hitting her. Here at childcare, when something like this happens we explain to children

they must express themselves using words. Children are intelligent, you can talk quietly to them and they understand … They were born to become reasonable human beings … Sure, it takes a little longer, but it is also the most effective way for them to get it".

Learning to Negotiate

Mother: "At home we have problems with rules… My husband and I have tried everything… Not even threats work now… How should we act? Should we be stricter or punish him more?"

Teacher: "See, power games never work… They don't help children… Do you think that if you just punish him, he understands the reason for doing a certain thing? Or he behaves because he is afraid of the consequences?"

Mother: "I think he's just scared…"

Teacher: "Yes, exactly… If you offer an explanation to help him learn the meaning of the rules, he will accept them more easily... Moreover, an explanation encourages him to negotiate. So, he starts to understand that if he doesn't want to do something, just saying no is not enough. He must also explain why he doesn't want to do it".

Play Activities

The second thematic area refers to the way playing activities can favour a child's achievements in terms of developing tactile, sensory-motor, cognitive, and verbal skills. Analysis of the childcare settings we observed shows that the educational paradigms on early childhood utilised during counselling with parents relating to these topics are:

- Genetic epistemology and cognitive development: Piaget (1953, 1959)
- Educational psychology (playful learning): Bruner (1990, 1996)
- Developmental psychology:
  - visual development: Fantz (1954);
  - sensory development : Kaye, Fogel (1980);
  - social cognitive learning: Bandura (1986);
  - reciprocal capacity and intentionality: Trevarthen, Hubley (1978), Bretherton (1984);
  - adult and child conversations: Eisenberg and Fabes (1992);
- Attachment theory: Bowlby (1969, 1999), Ainsworth (1978);
- Zone of proximal development theory: Vygotsky (1962, 1978)

The knowledge blend composed by teachers starting from these theories aims to promote parents' awareness about how play and interactions with adults build favourable environments that help children learn new skills. Drawing from studies

on visual and sensory development, social cognitive learning, and reciprocal capacity and intentionality, teachers try to explain to parents the different stages of play in a child's development, from the initial observation of adults, to the manipulation of objects, to collaboration with other children in shared play. These notions are then integrated by teachers with attachment theories and studies of conversations between adult and child in order to demonstrate that the interaction with caregivers is an important resource for the development of a child's essential skills, especially in the social, cognitive, and linguistic area. Such theoretical references also help teachers provide parents with clarification about the "why" questions posed by children. Starting from Eisenberg's theory, teachers are able to connect this request to the child's need for linking the features of different situations they experience to social meaning. Finally, the zone of proximal development theory is employed by teachers to emphasise the central role of adults in helping children develop their potential skills. Here again, teachers reformulate this theoretical framework in terms of active pedagogy, so as to provide parents with effective guidelines to be applied and adapted according to specific situations. The guidelines emerging from the content analysis of the dialogues held in childcare on this thematic area are as follows:

- Children need play activities that can stimulate a wide range of abilities: sensory, motor, cognitive, and emotive;
- Adults should always be attentive and responsive to the curiosity shown by children. If children express the desire to understand something, adults should provide them with simple and clear explanations;
- Interaction with caregivers is pivotal in the development of language, cognitive, and especially social skills.

These guidelines take inspiration from the educational models theorised by Emmi Pikler (2003), Maria Montessori (1916, 1949), and Elinor Goldschmied (2004). These models share a common concern that education should ensure that a child's development be a complete and rich experience, based on a wide degree of freedom, movement, active discovery and creativity.

The following excerpts from our research reveal how the blend of these theories about play is embedded in teacher – parent conversations during counselling.

The "Why" Question

Mother: "For a week now every time I do anything she asks "why?" I'm pandering to her because I read that that's the way they learn new words. Have you noticed any change?

Teacher: "Oh dear… There we are… She really is in the "why" phase… It's a phase that begins with the development of language. At this age the child is able to understand what you say. She begins to speak and be understood quite well. Therefore, she feels the need to use her new skills… So, the "why" questions are a way of exercising

her new abilities. Speaking with adults helps her develop this ability and acquire new words… You're doing a really good job with your daughter. My colleagues and I noticed that she has recently learned many new words. This is really important, as in the future these new words will help her to better express thoughts and emotions".

Playing Alone, Playing with Others

Father: "I feel a little frustrated, as I would like more interaction when I play with him"

Teacher: "It's normal that children at this age are not able to really play with others. They are still in the egocentrism stage… There is only their own point of view. The only play device at this age is their own body. So, they like to explore it to find out how it's made and how it can be used to interact with the world outside. They are also interested in their surroundings. They touch objects, bringing them up to their mouth to find out what they are and how to use them. Here at childcare we use the treasure basket. It is a set of common objects that serve to stimulate the five senses of a child and satisfy their need to explore. If you want you can watch this activity this afternoon, so you can propose it to your son when he is at home with you… You'll see, you too will have fun with him".

Managing Aggressive Behaviour

The third thematic area identified through the analysis of interviews with parents is related to the management of aggressive behaviour. It covers all concerns that arise in parents when their child manifests aggressive attitudes: biting, scratching and pushing, against adults or towards other children. To address this issue, teachers carry out with parents a joint analysis of the aggressive behaviour of their child, primarily using the following reference paradigms:

- Child psychoanalysis (emotional development): Klein (1932);
- Developmental psychology:
  - the nature and development of aggressive behaviour: Schaffer (1996); de Wit and Hartup, (1974);
  - the understanding of self and others: Selman (1980, 1990);
  - the importance of facial expression: Izard (1994), Shariff, Tracy (2011);
- Genetic Epistemology and cognitive development: Piaget (1953, 1959);
- Learning Theory (frustration-aggression hypothesis): Dollard et al., (1939); Sears, (1953);
- Zone of proximal development theory: Vygotsky (1962, 1978).

These theoretical references are used to alleviate the concerns and anxieties that a child's aggressive behaviour triggers in the minds of parents. Teachers use these educational paradigms to explain that aggressive behaviour in children is a normal phase of child development. Drawing from research about the nature and development of aggressiveness, genetic epistemology, and Selman's studies on interpersonal understanding, teachers identify egocentrism as the main source of aggression. In this phase the child is not able to share an object (e.g. a toy) with a peer. Consequently, the dispute over the object of desire prompts aggressive gestures. Teachers also agree with the hypothesis formulated by Dollard (1939) and Sears (1958) regarding aggressive behaviour as determined by the child's sense of frustration as when, for example, not getting the desired object triggers the child's anger. Moreover, the knowledge blend composed by teachers also includes the interconnection between the models of emotional development, studies of facial expressions and the zone of proximal development theory. The latter is employed by teachers to support parents in countering aggressive behaviour not only with words but also visually, i.e. showing facial expressions that help children understand that their conduct is inappropriate. Finally, teachers also incorporate into the blend Klein's theories on intellectual and emotional development, as it attributes to adults a central role in helping children verbalise emotions.

Interpreted in terms of active pedagogy, such references result in a single pedagogical guideline for parents, especially aimed at fostering the child's emotional wellbeing:

- Children's aggressive behaviour is generated by their emotional distress. Therefore, as adults we must recognise this discomfort and teach children to verbalise their emotions.

These aspects are well illustrated by the following conversation that took place between a mother and a teacher.

Animal-Like

Mother: "I am quite worried about my daughter, because watching her playing I noticed that she plays badly with the other children… She pushes, scratches, and especially bites. It seems to me something very animal-like. Is that normal? I don't know how to behave."

Teacher: "First of all, relax and don't worry… It's normal: some children push, others pull hair or bite… That's a phase all children go through, because they are in the egocentrism stage and fail to grasp the point of view of others, to share an object with them… They argue about it, so when one doesn't get the much-desired object, the feeling of frustration and anger unleashes. Then they bite or scratch... When they behave this way, you must only be careful not

> to laugh, although they will try to get a smile out of you. You have to show the seriousness of this behaviour and then explain to them that if they want something, they have to verbally ask for it."

Managing Child's Tantrums

The last area of concern relates to the management of a child's tantrums. It is related to all strategies adopted by children to oppose their parents, and conflicts arising therefrom. Data analysis highlights that this is the most significant issue for parents, probably because such conflicts are often regarded by parents as directly questioning their parental role. To address these issues, teachers refer to the following educational paradigms:

- Genetic epistemology and cognitive development: Piaget (1953, 1959)
- Psychoanalysis: Anna Freud (1966–1980), Bettelheim (1962, 1987), Dolto (1977, 1985), Klein (1932), Winnicott (1964, 1971);
- Developmental psychology: Spitz (1957);
- Attachment theory: Bowlby (1969, 1988), Ainsworth (1978);
- Zone of proximal development theory Vygotsky (1962, 1978);
- Intersubjectivity and the layered self: Stern (1985, 1990).

Childcare teachers use these scientific paradigms to carry out a joint analysis of child tantrums with parents, so as to clarify the reasons underlying this behaviour. Teachers tend to share a common opinion about the constitutive reasons for children's tantrums, in which they generally refer to the different stage-specific developmental needs of the child. In this sense, among different explanations of tantrums teachers privilege egocentrism, as it prevents children from understanding that desires and rights of other people can differ from their own. This situation causes feelings of anger and frustration in children, often resulting in oppositional behaviour crisis.

Another explanation for oppositional crisis offered by teachers is closely linked to the attachment theory. Teachers see tantrums as a means children use to express their need to separate from attachment figures, thus asserting their personal autonomy. This line of thinking is founded in Spitz's research on developmental psychology, which showed that opposition is the most important cognitive result that children achieve during growth. According to this theory, opposition demonstrates a child's ability to affirm their identity as an expression of increased autonomy. Finally, we also found that teachers sometimes refer to the psychoanalytic paradigm, as they explain to parents that tantrums are determined by a child's need to test their own omnipotence and that of their parents, as well as the need to assert their gender identity.

Translated in terms of active pedagogy, these theoretical references led to the formulation of three educational guidelines aimed at fostering children's psychosocial wellbeing through the recognition of their needs, distresses, and emotions. Through

the analysis of counselling interviews focused on this thematic area, we identified three main guidelines:

- Children's tantrums are a display of discomfort, so before taking action it is important to understand the source of this unease;
- Children constantly test the limits of their abilities and power. Adults have the task of providing these limits;
- Oppositional behaviour is a means through which children try to assert their identity and autonomy. Adults must teach and show the child that there are alternative ways to assert individuality and independence.

These aspects are especially evident in the following conversations between teachers and mothers:

The "no" Phase

Mother 1: "Good heavens! At home he is continuously saying "no", especially to me… Maybe I did something that hurt him… But I don't know what exactly."

Teacher: "You should not take that "no" as a personal affront. Firstly, it's a normal stage of child development. All parents and teachers have to deal with it, sooner or later. Secondly, your child is growing, so this is his way of separating from the attachment figure. Thirdly, he is male. So he says no to you especially because he must oppose the female gender and affirm his identity as a male."

Mother 2: "Well, for three days now my child has been saying no to everything I ask him. He is not doing this just with me, also with my husband. It really is exaggerated behaviour, I don't think it is completely normal".

Teacher: "Oh yes, he is just beginning the no phase too… He's three years old now. So he's going beyond attachment and wants to assert his identity. He also tries to assess the limits of mum and dad… Yes, it is a normal stage of development, even though some children experience it in a more intense way. The stronger his personality, as is the case of your child, the more intensely he lives life … Moreover, he is also facing the transition from childcare to pre-primary school, it's a major change for him."

Screaming and Crying

Mother: "Oh my! In this period I can't put up with him anymore. He screams and cries and doesn't want to do anything he's told. Is it normal?"

Teacher: "It is normal… Actually this period is a very important phase for children, it is the necessary step to achieving independence. Therefore, it's a positive period… Of course, it's hard to face their challenges, partly because things often end with screams and crying fits. But this is because children don't know how to express their needs, as they don't even know how to use words properly, so they (shout/scream/cry?) and then an outburst happens. Bear in mind that children at this age understand that they are a different, separate person from their mother. So they are trying to discover their own personality, their own identity, which is different from that of the mother. The task for the adult is to set limits, because they are a way to guide him in this research."

HOW THEORIES ORIENT COUNSELLING WITH PARENTS

The work of teachers with parents is not limited to these four areas of interest, but aims to generally promote parents' skills both in analysing their child's behaviour, and in putting educational guidelines into practice. Regarding to the educational practices of child care services this inclusive approach is based on the active participation of parents in meetings and on the development of a common operative model based on dialogue, listening and containment of children's emotions. At a methodological level, this translates into the construction of three types of professional intervention: individual, group and workshop.

The individual intervention includes both formal talks that take place regularly between teachers and families, both informal moments in which a teacher and a parent talk about the child during the day. This intervention is based on creating a cooperative atmosphere, where the parents play an active role in building the family counselling process.

In the second type of intervention, group meetings, parents have a chance to talk in small groups and with the facilitation of teachers, about the positive aspects, but also the concerns and fears related to the upbringing of children. The role of teachers is to encourage a shared, reflective discussion among peers within the group, stimulating the growth of empathy and collaboration, and facilitating the development of new ways of expression and communication. Moreover, this activity promotes the building of social networks, both formal and informal, between parents.

The workshop interventions include direct participation of parents during children's play activities held in childcare. In this case, the role of teachers is to help adults reflect on the meaning of the educational experience, developing their pedagogical skills through play activities. Through observation of play activities, parents have the opportunity to understand how children progressively develop autonomy by exploring the surrounding environment, and how it is possible to help them during this process.

Therefore, all these interventions are grounded on activities fulfilled through a shared process, in which parents become active partners in building educational objectives, developing mutual support and complementary roles with children. During this process, teachers do not assume a traditional directive role, but act as empowering agents, i.e. as professionals systematically helping parents expand their skills and assume a leading role in educating children, so gradually lessening their dependence on teachers' advice. Close examination of these activities we observed allowed us to pinpoint the theoretical references used by teachers in implementing such educational interventions.

The first theoretical reference concerns the non-directive style that teachers, following the Carl Rogers model (1969), usually adopt during interviews. Teachers' conversations are aimed at exploring practices, images, attitudes, and opinions relating to parents about some issues. This exploration is conducted using an indirect training method, in which the traditional roles of the teacher as an expert and parent as a novice are modified in order to foster effective co-construction of knowledge. According to this approach, the best way to support the parents' educational role is not to tell them what to do, but rather help them understand the specific situation and manage their own resources. This aid consists precisely in enabling parents to reactivate and reorganise their cognitive, emotional, strategic resources, on the assumption that people have the potential to elaborate solutions on the basis of their personal resources, once they are made aware of them. We find an example of this non-directive communication technique in the following conversation between a mother and a teacher:

Teacher: "How does your child behave at home?"

Mother: "Well... When we get home, as we are together she wants cuddles and breast feeding... As I still have milk, I decided that I will nurse her as long as it lasts, because I see that this is solace for her. So, in such cases I allow her to feed. Then I noticed that sometimes there is a moment of... I think it's kind of jealousy towards parents. For example, on Saturday I go to work, so she stays at home with her father. When I come back she doesn't come to me like she usually does. It is like she has got a special feeling with her father, so I think she is a bit jealous of her dad... I do not know if it is a normal behaviour."

Teacher: "Is that something she does only with you or also with your husband?"

Mother (after a short reflection): "No, she also does the same with me, when we stay home together in the afternoon. When her father comes back, she doesn't go to him as she usually does."

Teacher: "So you still think she's doing it because she's jealous or to make you feel guilty about leaving her?"

Mother (after a short reflection): "Indeed to make me feel guilty, because she behaves that way both with me and my husband, especially when we meet again after an absence… So maybe it is normal behaviour at this age, I presume…"

Teacher: "Yes, it's normal, it is part of the attachment phase".

We can see from the interview that the teacher devotes much time to the thoughts and emotions of the mother. Comments are addressed to help the mother better understand the situation, starting from her own feelings.

Another theoretical reference emerging from the organisation of the various interventions carried out by teachers at childcare, aimed at encouraging the involvement of parents during welcome activities and workshops, refers to the concepts of guided participation and participative appropriation developed by Rogoff (1990, 2003). These constructs describe the educational process as a mutual act, in which the learner, in this case the parent, appropriates knowledge and practices from the expert (the teacher) through participation in activities situated in a context. As a result, the various professional interventions in childcare are structured so as to give parents the opportunity to interact with their own children as well as other children, parents, and teachers. Moreover, these moments of participation allow parents to observe teachers as they interact with children, and consequently to appropriate some of the educational practices employed by teachers. Our research shows that, by observing how teachers deal with disputes with the children, parents were able to acquire conflict management skills based on listening and talking with their children. For example, observing teachers at work many parents learned, when a child's tantrums result in screams and tears, to leave their children some time to express their anger before inviting them to express their emotions and intervening on the oppositional behaviour. The acquisition of this practice was particularly significant because, as we noted, parents see conflicts with their children as a real threat to their parental role and skills. This aspect clearly emerged during an interview conducted with a group of parents:

Researcher: "Did you learn anything from the teachers that allowed you to feel more confident in your role as a parent?"

Mother 1: "Sure, their calm attitude. I have always been an impulsive and impatient person. When my son started acting up I immediately lost patience, I was hasty in trying to placate his cries, and I told him off. Obviously, this only made the situation worse. He screamed more, he lay down on the ground for a long time, so I felt helpless… Then one day, when I came to childcare to pick him up, he was having a tantrum because he did not want to go home. I saw the teacher taking him aside, ise calming him down, and then quietly explaining to him that it was time to go home. He calmed down and did as he was told. I was surprised how the teacher had managed it, because she was talking to

him as if he were an adult. I had never thought that you could do certain things with young children. Since then I have acted like the teacher did… It is a time consuming job, but at least it's not a time full of screams… Now I feel I can control the situation."

Mother 2: "For me it is the same. His tantrums were becoming a real problem at home… I did not feel able to cope and wondered what I was doing wrong. Then they explained to me that tantrums always have a reason. You should try to encourage the child to express in words what he wants. I followed their advice, especially after seeing how they behaved with children. Now I have no problems, I feel more confident as a mother."

Mother 3: " Yeah, me too. Tantrums really put you through the wringer as a parent. Actually it doesn't take much. Sometimes you think that talking to children doesn't solve anything, or that it takes up too much time. But it is not so."

Mother 4: "For me I think the "no" phase was the most difficult to deal with, because you can feel completely stuck. I also saw my husband really in trouble for the first time… Also it causes anxiety in front of others, because you are afraid of being judged as a parent. I also learned to manage conflicts by observing teachers during the reception and farewell time. They talk a lot with children. The first thing they do is to calm them down.

Besides learning how to deal with their child's conflicts through the guided participation process, parents also acquire other relevant educational practices, including how to handle physical playtime with a group of children, how to lead group activities and contain possible tensions that may arise, and how to organise heuristic play activities.

A remarkable aspect of these interventions is the space dedicated to play activities, as a dimension that allows parents to better understand their children. Through play children test not only their ability to act in the environment, but also express their emotions. For example, as noted by Juul (2012), physical play with fathers often creates a dynamic situation of pretend aggression, which helps children to develop motor skills and manage their energy. In turn fathers, through this type of situation, give their children a measured response that helps them become more autonomous in managing physical interaction with others. In addition, the opportunity to participate in heuristics activities within childcare helps parents expand their knowledge of play activities they can offer their children at home. The following comments collected from two mothers observed during our research in one of the services emphasise help clarify this point:

Mother 1: "Look how well he's playing . At home he just goes from one game to the other, messing the whole room up…"

Mother 2: "You've said it!! Everything that I propose at home holds his attention for just a few minutes… it's like this every day. I think that every now and then I will propose this activity [heuristic play], maybe on Saturdays, when my husband is at home."

Mother 1: "Yes, yes, when he's not going to childcare I have the same problem… We'll also try this at home".

Finally, the last theoretical reference emerges from group interviews teachers held in childcare with small groups of parents, following the psychoanalytical models proposed by Bettelheim (1962, 1987), Winnicott (1964, 1971), and Juul (2011, 2012). These interventions led to the formulation of a new model of family education, which goes beyond the conferences and lectures normally given to parents during traditional parenting courses. In the new model the teacher plays the role of coordinator, assuming a non-directive position within the small group of parents. This way, she helps develop reflections that allow parents to acquire greater awareness of the significance of their educational actions (Moss, 2008). Within these groups, teachers do not provide pre-established solutions. They let them emerge as conversation unfolds, urging parents to discuss and compare their values and educational methods. The purpose of this activity is to provide parents with an educational setting in which they can find the most appropriate solutions for themselves and the goals they want to achieve as a family.

DISCUSSION

Recent research trends examining childcare services emphasises the shift from a traditional organisation (day nursery), based on providing children with essential assistance through routines focused on body care and nutrition, to a new educational model, which sees young children as active learners and parents as relevant partners of teachers in fostering a child's development (Urban, 2008; Musatti, Picchio, & Di Giandomenico, 2012; Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2005; Nuttall, Coxon, & Read, 2009). In the services we observed, this transformation from care to education has promoted an expansion of normal activities towards new forms of parental counselling, in which teachers help parents analyse their children's behaviour through a combination of joint observation of play activities and reflections arising from conversations with mothers and fathers.

To encourage parents' active participation, teachers of the observed services undertook a double process of reorganisation involving both the childcare setting and the way communication was managed. To create a setting especially apt so as to put parents and children at ease during welcome and farewell activities, some childcare spaces were organised with comfortable furniture suitable for both adults and children, as well as displaying toys, books, and other objects that could invite parents and children to develop joint play activities. Moreover, the usual schedule of the service was modified so as to enable teachers and parents to have more room

for regular meetings, both at the beginning and end of the day, and for individual and group counselling. In turn, communication with parents improved both on an individual and group level, through interviews focused on discussing children's behaviour that parents perceived as problematic, as well as jointly observing children at play in order to help parents improve their ability to analyse and interpret some challenging situations.

All these counselling activities aim to help parents develop their ability to feel competent in daily decisions concerning their children. It is particularly apparent in these counselling sessions how teachers from the observed services employ professional skills grounded both on explicit and tacit knowledge, through a kind of *bricolage* that blends formal learning, professional practices, and personal beliefs (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). Data shows that the knowledge blend used during counselling with parents generally refers to a composite group of research paradigms on early childhood, which teachers employ to provide an explanation of a particular situation e, by freely aggregating different theoretical models. This way, they create an individual, unique system taken from different theories held together by reference to personal and professional expertise refined through practice. We call these individual systems of theories "conceptual clouds", as they are an accumulation of ready-to-use knowledge packages, which do not have a rigid structure, but change shape according to the problem posed by a given situation. Therefore, joint observation of children or questions posed by parents "activate" the teacher's conceptual cloud, who retrieves and combines theoretical and practical information, thus producing a blend that supports educational problem-solving through the proximal analysis of a child's behaviour (Figure 2).

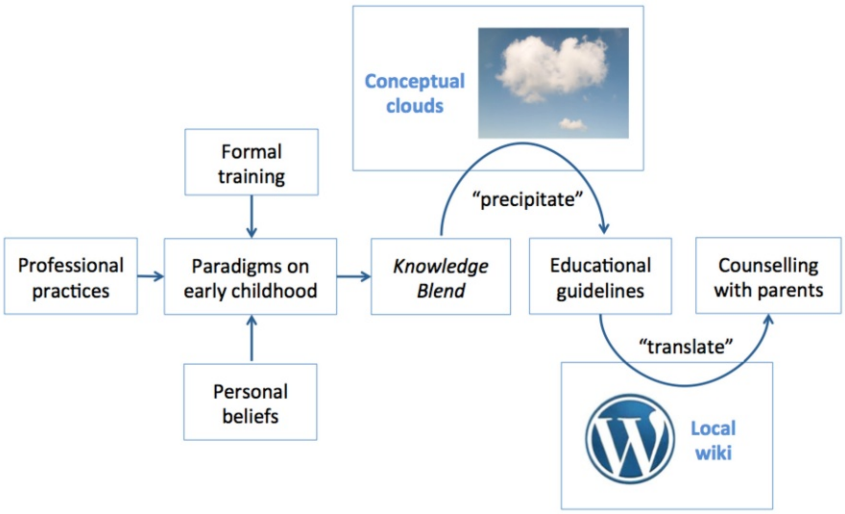

Figure 2. From knowledge to practices

As a personal form of knowledge based on adhocratic explanation tactics, conceptual clouds differ from one teacher to another;, two teachers may produce different interpretations of the same situation. This may create the risk of conflicting communication in handling parents counselling. Consequently, the childcare systems observed decided to create guidelines, which provide a common ground for managing conversation with parents. To achieve shared guidance, teachers use individual clouds as boundary objects, i.e. "objects which are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites" (Griesemer & Star, 1989: 393). Therefore, teachers exploit the flexible structure of conceptual clouds to combine and then "precipitate" them in the shape of educational guidelines that every professional agrees to comply with when communicating with parents. Consequently, guidelines so produced become an organisational framework that, on the one hand, ensures coherence across teachers' activities, and on the other builds up a local wiki of knowledge from which teachers draw and exchange information that are employed during parents' counselling on specific topics such as educational style, the educational role of play, and children's aggressive behaviour or tantrums. Furthermore, the observed childcare services used their local wiki to undertake a translation of professional guidelines into practical recommendations not conveyed in the form of prescriptions or lectures, but arise from informal training achieved by involving parents in a joint analysis and interpretation of their child's behaviour.

CONCLUSIONS

Today's childcare services show an increasing interest in promoting the inclusion of parents as active partners in fostering not only children's wellbeing, but also their social and cognitive skills. Observations from the childcare services we examined confirm this trend towards implementing counselling activities addressed to strengthen parents' awareness of their child's abilities through joint observation and discussion. Data show that teachers draw from explicit and tacit knowledge to produce knowledge both on a personal (conceptual clouds) and team level (local wiki) that is translated into counselling practices with parents.

Further research should clarify the way these activities can be connected to the development of a reflective stance on the part of teachers, enabling them to assess and improve the quality of the knowledge blend they use in supporting counselling interventions with parents. Reflexivity is crucial in developing more skilled practices through a critical appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of different knowledge types used in promoting parental empowerment. Therefore, helping teachers become more aware of the special combination of explicit and tacit knowledge they employ during counselling would provide valuable suggestions regarding the improvement of teachers' professionalism, especially regarding parents' training as a way of furthering inclusive education in childcare services.

NOTE

[1] Although the chapter has been jointly conceived and discussed by the two authors, Fabio Dovigo is specifically responsible for the first, third and sixth section, and Francesca Gasparini for the fourth and fifth section. The Conclusion was jointly written.

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11. WORKPLACE INCLUSION FOR WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES

An Italian Experience

INTRODUCTION

Work is important for people with disabilities as it may affect their social inclusion (Lysaght et al., 2012) and is associated with better health. In addition, people who are not employed and receive welfare payments are excluded from society and considered dependents by those working in the welfare system.

Despite these advantages, people with disabilities face numerous difficulties in finding and keeping jobs (Lennox et al., 2005). Cook (2005) summarized the most important barriers for workers with disabilities: lower productivity, unfavorable labor market dynamics, lack of effective vocational services, low educational attainment, labor force discrimination, failure of protective legislation, and linking of health care to disability beneficiary status, disadvantages upon labor force re-entry, and employment disincentives. Moreover, even when workers manage to find a job, they tend to be employed in marginal positions, characterized by reduced working hours and low wages. This also affects their chances of career advancement, which are much more limited than for their peers without disabilities (Fioritti et al., 2014).

The literature about the workplace experience for workers with disabilities can be summarized in three big research traditions. The first is about the background and conceptual framework which this experience is included in. Does the issue of finding a job for people with disabilities cover only a limited number of individuals who need to be protected, or it is an issue that can involve all members of society?

A second approach instead focuses attention on the factors that can affect the experience of hiring these workers. Knowing these factors can help both employers and employees with disabilities to understand which elements can be considered in order to facilitate positive outcomes for the hiring experience.

Finally, a third tradition is about workplace accommodations, which are all the changes that can be implemented in the organization to help employees to complete their tasks. The accommodations can be seen as support only for workers with disabilities, or as an opportunity that can be useful to all members of the organization. Also in this case, one choice or another significantly influences the choices that are made within the organization, as well as the manner in which how human resources are managed.

F. Dovigo (Ed.), Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Practices, 217–239.

INTEGRATION OR INCLUSION: A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW ON THE WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE

The Italian Constitution states that:

> The Republic recognizes all citizens have the right to work and promotes the conditions to fulfill this right. Every citizen has a duty to perform according to their ability and individual choice, an activity or function that contributes to the material or spiritual progress of society. (Art. 4 Italian Constitution)

Over time specific legislation was born that had the aim of ensuring/guaranteeing this right for workers with disabilities. In 1968, Law 482, known as "General compulsory recruitment in public administrations and private companies" or, more simply, "the law on compulsory employment", provided for the establishment of special lists for the placement of certain categories of subjects for whom it was more difficult to enter the world of work. These special lists were established in all the Provincial Offices of Labour, in which special committees of compulsory employment were also formed (Crispiani, 2000). The term "compulsory employment" referred to the fact that all companies, both public and private, that had more than 35 employees, were required to hire a percentage of employees with disabilities (Bagat & Sasso, 1995). The procedure was simple: when a company reported the need to hire, the worker with a disability who occupied the highest position on the list was automatically referred as a candidate to the company, which had to hire him. Moreover, there was an administrative sanction for those who did not hire second reserves as established by law. The person with disabilities becomes a subject who has the right to work and to promote their skills. This law was important because it underlined the importance of the right to work for people with disabilities. On the other hand, however, its philosophy was bureaucratic: it established an obligation and a right, but did not worry about how these obligations and rights could be exercised within companies. Furthermore, workers with disabilities joined the company without specific training, and this could be problematic both for the organization and the employees. The presence of the worker with disabilities was likely to be a burden, when in fact it was guiding principle underlying the idea of a "targeted employment", to assess the appropriate workplace to the person who had to be hired (Battafarano, 2011).

Law 482 has several shortcomings and was replaced by the current legislation, law 68/1999 which completes the transition from compulsory to targeted employment. This expression is the set of tools that enable the proper assessment of the working capacity of the candidates by analyzing the jobs and forms of support and solutions to problems associated with the environment, tools and relationships. According to Boffo (2012) "targeted employment" fosters integration through gainful "targeting" of companies, and highlights the skills/employment potential of the person, identifying the most appropriate interventions to facilitate the worker's employment. The purpose of the legislation is, therefore, the promotion of the inclusion and employment of people with disabilities in the workplace.

Battafarano (2001) described the services offered by the public services to companies. Companies are supported by experts both in the selection of the candidate and during the time of his entry into the organization. In particular, companies are supported during the identification of the tasks that can be assigned to a worker with disabilities. Subsequently, companies receive help in finding the candidate who meets the criteria required to perform the job, and also during the assessment, which is usually conducted through a job interview or aptitude tests. After choosing the candidate, the support continues through the first contact with the company. The company and employees are guaranteed supervision during the trial period, which is 340 hours long. At the end of the trial period, employees can be hired by the organization or a new job search may begin if the employee is not suitable for the task, or prefers to give up the job.

The purpose of the law is to ensure that the needs of companies meet those of the workers to be hired. This change in legislation overcame the idea that people with disabilities should be integrated within an organization that receives them passively in favor of a more dynamic concept, that of labor inclusion (Angeloni, 2010). Inclusion can be defined as the degree to which an individual is perceived to be part of the staff, and depends on whether his experience is satisfactory as a member of the organization and also as an individual seen in his uniqueness (Karten, 2015). It is also the way in which employees have access to information and resources, and are involved in teams and may influence decision-making. Still, it is an opportunity for the the worker to be accepted and treated as part of the staff. Inclusion, therefore, focuses on the ability of each individual to be part of the decision-making process and to contribute fully and effectively to the life of the organization. Feeling included in the workplace significantly impacts how an individual perceives his or her place within that organization (Mor Barak, 2005).

When we talk about a culture of inclusion we think about an organizational environment that allows people with multiple backgrounds, mindsets and ways of thinking to work effectively together and to perform to their highest potential in order to achieve organizational objectives based on sound principles (Pless & Maak, 2004).

FACTORS AFFECTING THE HIRING OF WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES IN ORGANIZATIONS

Stone and Colella (1996) described a model of factors affecting the treatment of workers with disabilities in organizations. Specifically, the model suggested that personal characteristics (attributes of the person with disabilities, attributes of the employers), environmental factors (legislation) and organizational characteristics (norms, values, policies, the nature of jobs) combine to affect the way individuals with disabilities are treated in organizations. Furthermore, the model indicated that the relationships are mediated by employers' cognitions (such as categorization, stereotyping, expectations) and affective states. Finally, the model predicted that

the disabled person's responses feed back to modify employers' expectations and organizational characteristics. This model has guided all research about the factors affecting the hiring and treatment of people with disabilities in organizations.

A first interesting series of research focused on personal attributes, such as the gender and age of employers (Burge et al., 2007; Yazbeck et al., 2004) and the personal characteristics of workers with disabilities, such as type of disability, educational attainment, and gender. The results of these studies showed mixed results. For example, with regard to the worker's age, some studies have highlighted that younger employees may have more opportunities to find/a greater chance of finding a job than older ones because they are more flexible and faster at completing the tasks required. Conversely, other studies have pointed out that older workers with disabilities have a lot of skills and experience compared to their younger colleagues. Similarly, also with regard to gender, the data appear to be conflicting. In some cases it was found that males have an advantage in the job search, but other investigations argue that it is easier for women to find work (Howlin et al., 2005). With regard to the type of disability, Dalgin and Bellini (2008) and Foster and Fosch (2010) investigated the impact of physical and psychiatric disabilities and found no significant effects in terms of the extent of disclosure and type of disability. The results on the characteristics of the employers are equally mixed. In general, it seems that women and those who have higher degrees are more sensitive and willing to hire people with disabilities within their organizations. Also in this case, however, the data are not the same for all experiences (Chan et al., 2010).

Secondly, other research has studied the opinions and attitudes of employers. A series of questionnaires explored different topics, such as concerns about hiring workers with disabilities, the opinions of employers about the legislation governing the employment of individuals with disabilities, and employers' reactions and beliefs (Gilbride, 2003; Mansour, 2009; Unger, 2002). In addition to this quantitative research, a series of qualitative studies was also carried out using in-depth interviews and focus groups with employers and human resource managers from different sectors (Davidson, 2011; Gilbride, 2003; Hernandez et al., 2000). These studies highlighted that several concerns may derive from myths and misconceptions rather than from the direct experiences of employers (Dovidio et al., 2011). On the other hand, when employers believe that hiring people with disabilities produces mainly positive outcomes, their attitudes are more favorable and vice versa (Amick et al., 2000; Hartnett et al., 2011). Other concerns were related to workers with disabilities and their productivity and job performance (Gustafsson et al., 2013; Mansour, 2009). Critical issues have also been raised relating to organizations, particularly regarding safety, costs and a perceived negative impact on staff and customers (Davidson, 2011; Houtenville & Kalargyrou, 2012; Lindsay et al., 2014). Finally, a last set of difficulties was related to employers and their fear of not being able to

handle the needs of employees with disabilities, a lack of experience with people with disabilities, discrimination laws, and reasonable accommodations.

Finally, a third series of investigations has been based on environmental characteristics. Some of these factors may be related to organizations, such as types of activities and size of the organizations. The literature did not show any business sector more willing to hire workers with disabilities than another, but instead there are differences due to the sizes of organizations. In general, studies have argued that big companies are better able to accommodate workers with disabilities because they have a greater number of available positions. Conversely, other investigations have reported that small companies, thanks to their small size and family atmosphere, are known to be the friendliest and most suitable location for accommodating an employee with disabilities. The literature has emphasized the different recruitment practices between small and bigger companies (Houtenville & Kalargyrou, 2012; Gilbride, 2003). Regarding the evaluation of candidates, large companies generally choose their workers based on aptitude tests, job application forms and curricula vitae (CVs). On the other hand, in small and medium-sized businesses, the process essentially relies on employers' intuition and turns out to be more problematic. These recruitment methods are potentially exclusionary for workers with disabilities. In fact, it may be difficult for such people to perform an aptitude test or be interviewed (Davidson, 2011; Frazer et al., 2011).

Finally, regarding the factors related to context, an important role is played by the law that governs the workplace experience for people with disabilities. Different research has produced different findings. Some studies have argued that legislation can encourage employers to create facilities that are accessible to workers with intellectual disabilities (Arni et al., 2013; Lalive et al., 2009; Skivington, 2013). However, detractors of the legislation are convinced that it cannot change the reactions and behavior of employers, especially in terms of more visible disabilities (Clayton et al., 2012).

Although the factors affecting the hiring of people with disabilities have been explored extensively, research has produced inconsistent findings (Luecking, 2004). Firstly, some factors that are seen as positive attributes by some employers have been cited as concerns by employers in other studies. This discrepancy may be due to the diversity of the methods used to conduct the research, which have meant that the results were not comparable (Gilbride, 2003). In addition, potential employers generally tend to express positive attitudes toward people with disabilities, but when pressed more specifically about hiring individuals with disabilities (particularly certain subgroups, such as people with severe mental health issues), they are often reluctant to actually authorize hiring (Schur et al., 2014). Finally, studies on employer attitudes toward hiring workers with disabilities suffer from different definitions of attitudes and insufficient concern with the hiring decision itself (Rimmerman et al., 2013).

DISABILITY MANAGEMENT: THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Disability management analysis has focused on the issue of matching companies' productivity goals with the needs of workers, and reasonable accommodation is conceived as an interactive process involving employees and employers (Gates, 2000; Florey & Harrison, 2000), but also colleagues and service providers (Geisen, Harder, 2016). To emphasize the importance of a holistic approach, special terms have been coined, such as Integrated Disability Management (Angeloni, 2013) and Comprehensive Disability Management (Harder, 2005). It is the latter term that emphasizes the evolution that the concept of "arrangement" has experienced over time.

The concept of reasonable accommodation is derived from the ADA (American Law) but is also recorded in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Reasonable accommodation refers to necessary and appropriate changes and adjustments that do not impose a disproportionate burden, put in place to ensure that people with disabilities can enjoy human rights on an equal basis with others. The concept of "reasonable" introduces an important critical question: how is it possible to determine when the arrangement is "reasonable" and when it is not? The risk is that a change requested is not granted because it is considered too expensive for the organization. A choice of this kind has a negative impact on job opportunities for employees with disabilities (Disability Management Employer Coalition, 2012).

Several researchers have examined the process of accommodations in relation to specific disabilities (physical disability, neurological disease and mental illness) and have underlined the importance of organizational changes and the procedures needed to carry out the tasks required (Ifoezeh, 2011; Gilbride et al., 2003). These include the work environment and work station (Yelin, 2003; Sabata et al., 2006), ergonomic standards to reduce pain (Hogan et al., 2012), coaching (Amick et al., 2005; Balser, 2007), and training for employers and colleagues (Bruyere et al., 2006; Dong, 2011). Other studies have analyzed decision-making in relation to requests for and the granting of special arrangements. It emerged that there are some risks for workers inherent in declaring their disabilities, especially when these were not visible, relating to stigma or negative reactions from employers and colleagues (Frank & Bellini, 2005), and discrimination (Fesko, 2001). Conversely, the biggest stumbling block for employers was the cost involved and the risk that the cost was too high compared to the benefits (Hamberg-van Reenen et al., 2012; Unger & Kregel, 2003; Campolieti, 2004; Gold et al., 2011; Oire, 2013).

Finally, numerous studies have demonstrated the benefits associated with making reasonable accommodations, for people with disabilities (Baldridge & Veiga, 2001; Fesko, 2001; Fabian, Waterworth, & Ripke, 1993; Dong et al., 2010) and for organizations (Hunt, 2009; Young et al., 2005). A review conducted by MacDonald-Wilson et al. (2008) highlighted five main variables involved in this process:

variables related to people with disabilities, to employers, to organizations, to the nature of reasonable accommodations, and to the nature of disabilities.

This research aims to investigate the workplace inclusion of workers with disabilities. Particularly, we would like understand firstly the employers' opinions with regard to hiring workers with disabilities; secondly, what factors determine the choice to hire these, and then what accommodations could be introduced within an organization.

METHODS

Sample

Five hundred and twelve organizations from Lombardy welcomed an employee with a disabilities; after nine months 400 workers had kept their jobs. We sent an electronic questionnaire to the human resource managers in order to investigate their opinions on this experience. The questionnaire was based on 6 closed questions; participants responded on a Likert scale which included six possibilities (from "not at all" to "completely"). The issues investigated by the questionnaire included the evaluation of the following aspects: the level of employers' satisfaction, the utility of the task covered by the employee with disabilities, the benefit obtained by the company, the perception relative to the costs that the company had to bear, the degree of the workers' organization and the desire to repeat this experience. We collected 335 questionnaires.

Then, we chose thirty companies that employed workers with disabilities at the time of the research. We requested an interview with the person who was responsible for selecting staff and who then shadowed the worker when s/he joined the company. Thus this person could be the owner, the human resources manager, or a colleague who was particularly close to the employee with a disability. We chose companies with a variable number of employees (from 15 to 150) and from different sectors, such as manufacturing – food, electrical, chemical, mechanical, textile – or services, such as school canteens, care services for elderly people, and kindergartens. We then contacted the applicants with intellectual disabilities chosen by the employers involved in the research; the sample was made up of 15 women and 15 men, between 21 and 50 years old.

Subsequently, we studied the career paths of two young men with disabilities (one with a sensory impediment and the other with intellectual disabilities) until the end of their trial period. This is a period of three months (for both people with disabilities and their colleagues), after which the employment relationship can be interrupted, or the person may be taken on with a fixed-term contract. The first man was employed in a school canteen. Here, for five hours a day, he was in charge of setting up the dining room before the arrival of the primary school children, and of preparing the carts with the dishes. Subsequently, he dealt with serving food to the children, clearing the tables and taking care of cleaning and tidying the environment.

During his work he was accompanied by three colleagues who carried out the same tasks and who he could turn to for help if necessary. The second man worked in a small supermarket for five hours a day. He was in charge of preparing the goods on the shelves by checking the sell-by dates of the various products. Then, he was asked to keep the lines in order and to check the cleanliness of stock. There were two people who were doing the same tasks but who also took care of the orders (activities not requested of the workers with disabilities) and a store manager who supervised the other colleagues. We were thus able to directly observe how the path of negotiation was implemented and analyze the way in which decisions were made.

The study was conducted in Lombardy, a region in northern Italy. In Italy there is a law that governs the inclusion of people with disabilities in organizations. In fact, companies that have more than 15 employees must employ a percentage of workers with disabilities that is proportionate to the total number of workers employed.

Data Analysis

Our research project used mixed methodology based on questionnaires and interviews in order to gather the views of employers and workers with disabilities involved in the process of accommodation. Interviews are particularly useful because they enable the researcher to gather in-depth feedback. The triangulation of the different points of view gives us the opportunity to form a complete picture of this experience (Silverman, 1998).

The questionnaires were analyzed with the help of software for statistical analysis, SPSS. This acronym stands for Statistical Package for Social Science, the most widely used statistical software used for data analysis in the human sciences. This allows us to apply a lot of management procedures and carry out data manipulation and analysis (Di Franco, 2009).

The interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants and then transcribed. The data were analyzed using a phenomenological approach that aimed to remain as faithful as possible to the participants' point of view (Smith, 2006). We identified different themes for each group of participants. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) has been developed as a distinctive approach to conducting qualitative research in psychology, offering a theoretical foundation and a detailed procedural guide (Chapman & Smith, 2002). Analysis requires close interaction between analyst and text: the analyst seeks to comprehend the presented account whilst concurrently making use of his or her own "interpretative resources" (Smith et al., 1999). At the heart of this perspective (and hence at the core of any piece of IPA research) lies a clearly declared phenomenological emphasis on the experiential claims and concerns of the persons taking part in the study (something which clearly distinguishes it from discourse analysis, for example). Hence, an IPA researcher must approach their data with two aims in mind. The first aim is to try to understand their participants' world, and to describe "what it is like". The second aim of the IPA perspective is to develop a more overtly interpretative analysis, which

positions the initial "description" in relation to a wider social, cultural, and perhaps even theoretical, context. This second-order account aims to provide a critical and conceptual commentary upon the participants' personal "sense-making" activities.

The first step was repeatedly reading each transcript and then identifying and writing down all the interesting and significant elements that emerged from the data. The second step was to identify patterns of recurring content (abstraction process) and organization of the patterns into emerging themes (from the comments on the issues). The themes were not selected on the basis of their frequency, but of their meaning and relevance, and they highlight similarities and differences between groups of participants. Then data were organized into thematic categories in order to capture the meaning of the experience. Gradually, the labels of a more synthetic theme emerge from the data. Finally the last step was identifying the relationship between the issues found. Some themes are grouped, other categories become superordinate (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

In the case studies we used several methods, such as participant observation, interviews with the employee and his colleagues, and a diary that was kept and updated every day. Case studies are particularly useful because they start from the definition of the cognitive objectives that relate to how and why certain events and behaviors occur, within a real-life context. In addition, they require the active involvement of operators working in the field who act, like the researchers, in a decisive way in the implementation of the research and understanding of the event (Trinchero, 2004). The research was carried out with the permission of all people attending the services involved: workers with disabilities, employers, and representatives of the services. The data collected during the research were treated confidentially. The anonymity of participants was protected throughout the research process and will be hereafter in any future published work. The results come from a precise and detailed analysis of the collected materials. The answers given in the interviews were not taken out of context and small observations have not been discussed without putting them in the appropriate context.

RESULTS

The analysis showed three themes that influence the workplace experience of employees with disabilities: employer's opinions about the experience, a series of factors related to the employers and to the company, planning for an accommodation and negotiation between employers and employees.

Employers' Opinions about the Hiring of Workers with Disabilities

The hiring of employees with disabilities in an organization is not always synonymous with an employer's satisfaction with his work; that is why the first question investigated whether the human resources managers considered the presence of the employees satisfactory. The value chosen by most participants

was quite (77 preferences) followed by: not at all (62), very much (56), and little (52). The lowest result is significant: (43) who said they were completely satisfied with the experience. The sample is fairly divided between those who have given a positive evaluation (51%) and those who, on the contrary, had a negative view of their experience (49%). The first finding confirms the importance of legislation as a guarantee of the right to work for people with disabilities and could be a chance to transform a legal obligation into a significant opportunity for both the employee and the organization itself. On the other hand, 19% of people in the study were not satisfied, even if the worker with disabilities was still in the working group.

The path of being hired takes place due to an imposition rather than out of a real desire on the part of employers; in this case, it is possible that the company does not need a new worker. So, it is important to investigate which task is assigned to him in the organization. The main data, in this case, is negative: for 70 employers the task covered by the workers is not very useful, for 57 employers it is not useful and for the other 57 it is of very little use. On the other hand, however, 49 employers declared that employees with disabilities did very useful work, and another 53 were completely satisfied because the worker responded to the need of the company. Summarized, most of the sample, (58%), claimed that the employees with disabilities held a small job that brought low profit to the organization. Only 15% said they had intended for the new employee to cover a position that is quite useful to the company. Finally, 27% expressed a very positive opinion with regard to the task, and this testifies to the investment firm, to the worker, and the belief that he can make an important contribution to the cause of the organization. This positive performance is the guarantee of the feasibility of reconciling the needs of the organization and those of employees with disabilities, and to achieve/obtain positive results for the company.

The cost-benefit ratio is one of the key elements that have repercussions on employers' evaluations of their experience. In this case too, the main data is in line with what has emerged previously, and is negative; in fact, for 77 employers the benefits were low, for 48 others very low, and 42 employers declared that they experienced no benefits. On the other hand, however, 71 managers considered themselves quite satisfied with the benefits they obtained from the hiring, 48 employers were very satisfied, and 47 completely satisfied. The highest choice indicates that benefits were few (23%), with the addition of 27% who actually claimed to have gained an advantage; this picture seems to be quite in line with what emerged earlier: when the job is not very useful to the company, it is also more likely that the benefits obtained will be poor. Next to this negative data, 21% of people contacted said they had obtained quite a positive benefit; in this case, they recognized the contribution that the worker provided, but it was not evaluated as being sufficiently high in comparison with the standard of the company. Finally, 29% of employers declared they obtained very significant benefits, and this may be proof that hiring an employee with disabilities can give companies an advantage

and is the starting point for improving future experiences. Related to the benefits are costs, which were investigated with the next question.

The costs are considered a major concern in the literature and, therefore, one of the obstacles to the acceptance of employees with disabilities within the organization. This is why one of the questions investigated the perception regarding the costs that the company incurred in order to accommodate the employee with disabilities. The data showed a rather complex situation; in fact, for 69 employers the costs were low, for 62 others, on the contrary, the expenditures were very high. Similarly, 59 employers declared very low costs, while 51 stated they were quite high. Finally, the two extremes received the same numbers of votes: 47 employers incurred no costs and another 47 incurred very high costs. The data seem to suggest that it is possible to contain the costs, as stated by 21% of the sample; in addition, another 32% of those had very low costs. On the other hand, however, this opinion seems to be in contrast with the 33% who complained of very high costs for the organization. The heterogeneity of these results may be partly explained by the diversity of needs of employees with disabilities and, consequently, with the different accommodations that the organization had to put in place to meet those needs.

Another aspect that was investigated was the lengtth of their stay within the company. This permanence is not a guarantee of their ability to be a part of the staff especially when the employees covered a marginal position in the organization. This aspect seems to be crucial as it affects how employees are treated within the organization by colleagues and superiors. The data are again very heterogeneous, reflecting the specificity and uniqueness of the experience that each employee experiences. For most employers involved in the study (74) the workers were an integrated enough part of the organization, while for 57 employers the person was in a marginal position. In summary, there were 175 employers who are part of the workplace, while 160 were excluded from it. The results show that, in the employers' opinion, almost half of workers with disabilities (48%) were not part of the organization. This situation seems to be the direct result of the choices described above (marginal position and perception of little benefit for the organization). According to a significant proportion of the sample (22%) the worker with a disability is fairly included in the organization; in this case there is a sort of limbo, which leads to the workers not being excluded, but also not fully included in the group. Finally, 30% of workers with disabilities were/are very much or fully a part of the workforce.

Despite the problems that emerged earlier, 30% of employers are quite willing to repeat the experience, and another 30% are even enthusiastic about the worker hired. On the other hand, however, the remaining 40% do not intend to hire the employee again, although they have nevertheless decided to keep them on their staff. This situation confirms the importance of the tax regulations governing the recruitment of persons with disabilities: without this requirement, these workers would be excluded from the organizations that currently receive them. This disgruntled group

of entrepreneurs, however, seems to be happy not to seek another candidate; this can in part be explained by the belief that employees with disabilities are a category of workers who are not productive in all workplace activities. Then there are employers reporting a moderate willingness to hire the employee with disabilities again; in this case too it would be interesting to identify the factors that influence this choice. Finally, 30% of respondents expressed a very positive intention to hire permanently regarding hiring the worker; this percentage demonstrates the possibility of creating positive experiences beyond what is imposed by the regulations.

Factors Affecting the Hiring of Workers with Disabilities in Organizations

The data collected on the personal characteristics of employers and workers did not point to specific characteristics that might influence the hiring of workers with disabilities. As regards the employers, there did not appear to be any significant differences regarding age, gender, and level of education. However, the concept of disability that employers have in mind was significant. In terms of the concept of disability, the employers surveyed had three different views that influenced? their opinions and attitudes. Firstly, some employers identified the employee with disabilities in terms of his/her pathology. The employee is referred to as the "mad man/woman" or someone with an illness. The limitations of the employee here are highlighted, which make him/her different from other colleagues, as noted by employers: "He is deaf, he isn't a normal worker, he is deaf." Secondly, the employee was seen as a "person with disabilities", emphasizing both the appearance of the individual and the presence of a disability. In this situation, employers expect the employee to put in place all necessary strategies to limit the important consequences of the illness. As noted by employers: "He is a person with disabilities, he is a person but he is also a person who has a limitation. I will expect the person to put into place all necessary strategies in order to reduce his disability. I see the person but also I see the disability." Thirdly, some employers identify workers with disabilities without reference to the disability and recognizing the specificity of each individual, regardless of the pathology, as highlighted by employers: "For me he is a worker, he is Mike, not a person with disabilities, but only Mike".

The second important factor is the previous experiences of the employers and the company. When the employer has had a positive experience in the past, he/she is more prepared to hire workers with disabilities, mostly with the same type of disability, as noted by a large part of employers: "We always hired workers with the same intellectual disability and we enjoyed it, so we decided that this category of workers is right for us, we are very satisfied". The risk, however, is that employers consider that only workers with a particular disability can be integrated into the company and refuse to take on other categories of workers. On the other hand, a negative experience can make the employer reluctant to hire workers with similar disabilities to those they had to deal with in the past, and sometimes they are reluctant to hire anyone with a disability, as declared by two such employers: "Several years ago

we had a worker with intellectual disabilities who created a lot of problems, so we no longer hire this category of worker, and we don't do job interviews or we don't look for their CVs. We don't consider this possibility, it is not important if we don't know the worker, that's our position". Regarding the characteristics of the workers, employers classify people with disabilities into two major categories, physical or intellectual disabilities. Generally, they seem more willing to hire workers with physical rather than intellectual disabilities, particularly if they don't have previous experience. On the other hand, those who have hired a worker with intellectual disabilities in the past have said that when a suitable job is found for them, they can be as productive and as reliable as their non-disabled colleagues. As noted by three employers who hired workers with intellectual disabilities: "When the employee with intellectual disabilities knows his job, he is productive and more reliable than other colleagues. I watch his work and I am very surprised, very very surprised". In addition, employers have been found to be more prepared to hire younger workers because they are believed to be more willing to take any job, and they are more flexible and quicker to learn. As noted by one human resource manager: "They are very available, when you call them, they immediately arrive".

A second set of factors emerges about the hiring practices within companies, particularly regarding the identification of tasks and the selection of the candidate. Some employers argue that there is a suitable job for every person with disabilities: "It should be a simple series of repetitive actions, which are not absolutely fundamental to the productive process, ensuring that the company has no problems even when an error occurs". Other employers, however, believe that the job of the worker with a disability should be equal to other colleagues: "In our company all workers are equal, all workers do the same tasks and have to reach the same company standards". Finally, other employers report that each worker has a personalized task according to his/her abilities: "Every worker is different, and each plays a different role that is essential for the organization. The worker with disabilities is as important to the organization as all other workers". This mode of identifying the job also emerges from the stories of workers with intellectual disabilities. Some complain of being left on the sidelines, with a simple job to do and little time in which they are actually employed. In these cases, the workers make different decisions, with some people trying to make themselves useful: "When I finish my task, I see if I can help someone else in the company, as I want to make myself useful to my colleagues." Other workers, however, prefer to take long breaks: "When I finish, I lie down and I rest, and my boss doesn't say anything. I've done my job, my little job." In other cases, however, the workers with disabilities say they are happy with their work: "I know I'm important to the company, my work is as important as that of the others and I feel important to my organization, I am very happy."

The identification of the task is directly linked to the choice of candidate who is going to be assigned to that location. Again, employers may have different ideas about or images of the "ideal applicant". Some employers think that there is an ideal candidate who possesses certain characteristics: "Workers with disabilities in our

company must all be the same, have the same illness and perform the same work. It is not important what they can do, it is important they carry out a task that is designed for them". In this case, the workers are compared to "a parcel that has been deposited at the company, all that counts is that it has the characteristics required by the company." The person with disabilities is thus viewed more as an object with certain functions than as a human being. Other employers consider workers with disabilities to be like all other colleagues. In this case, the image used is that of soldiers: "Workers (disabled or not) are like soldiers, all in a row, all of which move together at the same pace and in step with each other. They all wear the same uniform which hides the differences, all workers are equal." Finally, some employers argue that it is not possible to think of an image of the ideal candidate, "Workers (disabled or not) are all different, each has particular characteristics that should be valued by the organization." In this case, the employer is compared to a tailor, who must create a bespoke suit for his employees: "Employers have to take measurements of the workers and build the task that is most suited to his/her characteristics without distinguishing between employees with disabilities and those without disabilities."

This image of the ideal candidate affects the evaluation of the workers, which is usually based on the CV and the job interview. During the interview, the company representatives may request the support of a tutor to work alongside the disabled worker and help him/her take the test. The tutor is a specialist who knows the world of intellectual disability and can help the employer assess the candidate. In other cases, however, the company contacts may prefer an autonomous choice, without the interference of someone outside the company. The evaluation may follow two criteria. First, the workers may be assessed in terms of their limitations, that is, by observing what they are not able to do, the tasks that cannot be performed, and the difficulties involved. Alternatively, the employees are assessed in terms of their ability, what they can do at that point in time and what they might be able to do in the future, with the help of all the aid and tools available. These criteria condition the decision of whether or not the worker is suitable for the job available.

Then, the decision to hire the employee with a disability within the organization is affected by opinions about the regulations governing the workplace experience for employees with disabilities. For some employers this is a negative element: "The law is like a stone that drops on you and crushes you, and you cannot do anything, apart from trying to protect yourself and running away." For other employers, however, the legislation is a positive opportunity: "The law is like a bridge, which benefits the company, and, at the same time, offers a job to people with disabilities." This view is also transmitted to the workers. If the recruitment is seen in negative terms, the employee with an intellectual disability knows that he/she is a burden to the organization and has only been hired because the company is required to. If the recruitment is considered as an opportunity, then the worker is evaluated positively, as an opportunity that will enrich the company.

Finally, another important topic is the concerns of employers regarding the recruitment of people with an intellectual disability: "If a person has a disability,"

say some employers, “they cannot be productive like their colleagues.” Others remarked, “When a worker is disabled, he/she must have some problem, and sooner or later some difficulties will arise, otherwise he/she would not be disabled.” Before knowing the worker, employers already believe they will have problems and assume that they will not have the same productivity as their non-disabled colleagues. The costs of accommodating the person with disabilities and making the environment accessible are also a key issue as declared by a large group of employers: “The cost is not sustainable, as it is only the person with disabilities who benefits from this change”. A third problem is the safety risks for both the employee with disabilities and the organization. Employers are afraid that the employee with disabilities might get hurt or could be dangerous to other colleagues. Another pressing concern is managing the emotional reactions of the disabled employee. Employers say they do not always understand the reasons behind them and, therefore, do not know how to cope with these reactions, as noted by a large number of employers: “Some of the reactions of workers with disabilities are excessive, and in our view are not always justified. When we do not understand what the reasons are for these reactions, it is difficult to know what to do, you do not know how to handle them, which is worrying for us”. When employers do not know how to handle the emotions of employees, the employers also struggle to manage their own emotions, which they find very difficult.

Planning for Accommodation and Negotiation between Employers and Employee

The accommodations can be identified at two stages: during the job interview and during daily activities. When a candidate has a job interview, it is possible to introduce an accommodation. As a human resources manager noted: “When we conduct a job interview, we talk about the needs of the workers, and also our needs. The candidate tells me that he has a problem with public transportation, he doesn’t drive a car, he can come here by bus, so he can start work at 9 o’clock while other workers start at 8.30 am”. Employers added another important point about the environment: “Then we talk about the physical space, we don’t have an elevator and I ask if there is a problem in order to go to the first floor where the canteen is.” Employees also highlighted: “I take pharmacological treatments that affects my job performance: for me it is easier to work in the morning, because in the evening I am very tired. They proposed a part-time contract and then we organized my work during the mornings, and I can organize my work myself”. This thus reconciles the needs of the organization and those of the worker; employers explained that: “These changes can be planned before an employee with disabilities begins working at an organization”.

Most of the changes, however, are directly determined during the course of employment, as employers stated: “Accommodations are necessary when the employee has to cope with an unexpected situation or a problem that makes it

difficult to perform tasks". Employers explained: "Usually, critical issues concern the ability to complete the assigned tasks, managing the emotional sphere of employees, and relationships with colleagues". Employees also talked about their difficulties: "When I have a problem or I make a mistake, we negotiate with the employers in order to identify together the strategies needed to deal with these situations and solve the problem". In such cases, the accommodations cannot be planned beforehand but are worked out during an ongoing negotiation. Employers said that: "During workplace activities, there are three types of adjustments: procedures to complete the tasks required, use of aids and assistive technologies, and the presence of a company tutor".

With regard to the first type of adjustment, employers and employees can intervene by changing the procedures or introducing new rules that may be specific to the employee or involve his/her colleagues. Employers noticed: "Identifying routines and fixed actions that are repeated over time may be useful in order to enable the employee to become familiar with the job. A typical example is the phrase used to answer the phone. When a worker has difficulty with the traditional response, the employer can help him/her think of an easier way of responding". Employees also stressed: "It can be difficult for me to do what others are doing, but I can do it my way and get the result we want to achieve in a different way." With regard to managing duties, employers suggested that: "It may be useful to introduce changes in the working hours, by letting the worker know in advance in order to ensure that s/he has more time available to complete tasks".

Secondly, aids and assistive technologies can be used to accommodate employees with disabilities, as noted by employers: "For example keyboards or microphones for PCs, or means to facilitate travel to and from the organization. In other cases, diagrams can be used that help the worker to understand procedures. Reading the procedures helps the employee to internalize them, then he feels more confident in managing the different steps required." Employees also said: "We introduce a small microphone, it is a small aid, but it is very important, it changes our work. With a small adjustment we can overcome a big problem".

There are several factors that influence the decision to grant an accommodation. The arrangement can be requested only after direct observation of the need to tackle an unforeseen circumstance in the workplace. Employers noted: "The workers with disabilities may declare or demonstrate an uneasiness or difficulty, or the employer may observe fatigue and decide to take action, share the problem, and seek solutions together with the employees with disabilities. The decision to introduce an accommodation is mainly based on trial and error". In practice, the accommodation identified is experienced directly in the field; if the outcome is positive, then the accommodation is integrated into the organization's work policy, otherwise it is abandoned.

The employee's opinion is absolutely fundamental, s/he is the person who must decide whether the accommodation is useful or not. Employers stated that: "One of the decisive factors in choosing an accommodation is precisely the type of change

required. It is easier to grant an accommodation that relates just to the employee (e.g. special keyboard), without the involvement of the organization, rather than one that requires changes that also involve colleagues". The workers underlined that: "When the arrangement involves colleagues, these colleagues may be more reluctant to accept it and then the worker may feel discriminated against".

Secondly, the culture of the organization seems to play a decisive role. Employers noted: "The culture of the organization is important, so whether the workers are all considered equal, like soldiers, or if each of them is seen as a single person, different from the others". Employers said about this topic: "If the values shared within the company are based on equality, it is more difficult to grant an accommodation, because it could be seen as unfair to the other employees. Conversely, when the values are based on fairness, it is easier for an arrangement to be seen as reasonable and, therefore, to be positively accepted". Workers with disabilities also noted: "We know the importance of the culture of the organization, because it orients the attitudes of other employees and determines the treatment that the employee receives".

The third important element is the perception of the usefulness of the accommodation, as employers explained: "There may be a disparity between the views of the employers and the employees. Employers may consider those accommodations unnecessary. Conversely, workers may have little attention paid to their needs and there may be a lack of willingness on the part of the organization to support them. In this case, the role played by representatives of the support services who seek to protect the worker and to supervise him/her during the experience are very important".

To make an accommodation, the role played by the company tutor is important, as noted by employers: "The tutor may be the employer or a co-worker who helps the employee to complete the required task but also to handle mistakes and emotions, both positive and negative, as well as work stress". Employers highlighted the importance of this role: "With regard to the task, the coach can give verbal explanations or demonstrate the procedures to the employees with disabilities. A tutor can reassure the worker when he makes mistakes and can offer suggestions for improving the worker's performance". Employers added that: "Sometimes employee's attitudes can be excessive and unjustified. The tutor's role is thus to understand the reasons for the employee's attitudes and to always try to find, together with the employee, the most practical solutions for the employee, and also for the organization".

Employees acknowledged the help given by the tutor but also highlighted that sometimes there can be a problem: "The tutor is an important source of support because he helps me, understands me and helps me make decisions and solve the difficulties and hardships. Sometimes my tutor doesn't understand my needs, and that is a big problem for me." This difference in opinion may create difficulties, and in fact service providers have underlined the importance of understanding each other's points of view to find strategies and address difficulties together. Employers stated: "When there is a problem, when we don't agree, and we don't understand the different points of view, we have a solution. We can talk with service providers

and they can help us." Employees also remembered: "It is important that my/the tutor can hear my point of view, and service providers can help me, but so can the tutor". Clearly, tutors need to know the employees. Employers noted: "tutors need to know about the fears and weaknesses of the employee. They also need to distinguish between isolated incidents, and those situations that suggest there is a problem that could be dealt with by at least temporarily lightening the workload".

Another important point is about relationships between employees and colleagues. Employers said: "The tutor helps non-disabled colleagues to understand the behavior and requirements of employees with disabilities and to find the most appropriate way to support them. This involves listening to and helping colleagues to manage their feelings towards employees with disabilities". Employers added: "The non-disabled colleagues may be overprotective or feel uncomfortable and avoid having a relationship with disabled colleagues. The tutor listens to colleagues and offers advice on how best to relate to employees".

Finally, tutors are important because they then evaluate the worker with disabilities and his/her performances and thus help to decide whether to hire the candidate at the end of the trial period in the company. In our case studies, at the end of the period, the young man with intellectual disabilities was hired at a supermarket. His tutor emphasized his punctuality at work, his willingness to fulfill the requests of colleagues, and the great effort he put into every activity. He also quickly learned the tasks assigned to him and finished them on time. Initially his tutor gave him examples (e.g. how to stack shelves) and then stood by in order to ensure that the procedure was correct. Later, the tutor observed him from a distance, intervening only at the end of the task, in order to verify the outcome. The tutor also stressed: "It was very important to consider the good relationship that the employee had built up with other colleagues and with the store's customers". On the other hand, the young man with sensory disabilities did not pass the test period in a school canteen because of a number of critical issues. In particular, the tutor stated: "The employee always needed to be encouraged while performing the task. Secondly, he was too slow and this fatigue affected the success of the other colleagues' work. The biggest problem, though, was his withdrawn and introverted nature, which created some difficulties with colleagues who felt uncomfortable with him and thus tended to marginalize him". Colleagues were also worried about pointing out his mistakes for fear of offending him. The result was that he failed to reach the standard of productivity required to remain within the organization. In this case the path of mediation was not successful because the tutor failed to bring out the difficulties and to cope with the worker. Silence then led to discomfort with colleagues and this led to his exclusion from the group of colleagues.

CONCLUSION

The literature emphasized the various difficulties that people with disabilities encounter when they are looking for a job and even when they have to keep it.

Some of these difficulties can be related to the employer's prejudice, they are reluctant even before starting the hiring experience. The questionnaire data showed that half of the sample (176) is satisfied with the experience, while 159 employers are not satisfied. This means that, despite the presence of a regulatory requirement, the employers recognize the possibility of obtaining a benefit for the organization. Conversely, however, a large number of employees with disabilities are tolerated within the organization but their work is not useful. Thirty percent of employers declare themselves quite willing to take the employee back, followed by another 30%, which is very willing. This result is encouraging, although there is still a very high percentage (40%) who have little intention of repeating the experience. Again, it would be interesting to understand what the factors that determine this choice are; in particular it would be helpful to understand if behind the positive choice there is no real satisfaction, or resignation and the conviction of not being able to obtain greater benefits.

A second point was about the factors affecting the hiring of workers with disabilities. Research also showed that there are no employer characteristics that are more helpful than others to hiring an employee with disabilities. The data highlighted the importance of three elements about the employers: their opinions on disability, their previous experience, and their ideas about the ideal candidate. These opinions are important because they influenced the employer's attitudes before the hiring process too. Then, the decision to hire a worker with disabilities is also influenced by their opinion about the legislation and concerns about the safety and productivity of the employees.

Finally, the last topic was the accommodations, and this research shows the importance of the concept of "reasonable", which is determined by employers. There are two types of accommodations, the first ones are planned before the workers' arrival in the organization (such as personalized working hours) and the second are negotiated when there is a problem or unforeseen change/issue (such as a change in work procedures). The literature emphasizes the concerns of employers regarding the costs that they will incur through the accommodations. There are actually adaptations that may have high costs, such as adapting the physical space, while others may have much lower costs (such as technological aids). But there are changes, such as intervening with work procedures or organization that may have no cost. Finally, these accommodations can be useful for the workers with disabilities but also for colleagues.

Despite this evidence, the majority of people with disabilities are excluded from the labor market or are employed in low positions. There are several factors that can cause this situation. The first barrier already appears during the interview when it may be necessary to introduce changes to the organization. When the employer is not willing to make changes before he has even seen the employee at work, he can generate resistance that turns into barriers that prevent the entry of the employee into the company. A second barrier may be linked to the path of negotiation. In particular, case studies have shown that the tutor plays an important role in understanding

the needs of the worker and with him has the task of identifying strategies for overcoming the employee's difficulties. This role is not easy, especially when the employers think that the reactions of the employees are disproportionate or when they are struggling to explain these reactions to colleagues and, consequently, do not know how to behave towards employees. In addition, these strategies are implemented as attempts, not as conscious and deliberate choices. Improvisation can be a disadvantage that decreases the chances of a positive outcome because the accommodations can become more sporadic and isolated actions instead of a series of practices known and shared by everyone in the organization.

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