

# Inclusion in Italy: From numbers to ideas... that is from “special” visions to the promotion of inclusion for all persons

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## Abstract

*Our considerations, in reply to Giangreco, Doyle and Suter’s (2012) paper, are grouped into different sections: reflections related to the history of inclusion in Italy that have led to disassociate the ‘special’ visions, and accept the necessity to adopt, together with quantitative analyses, qualitative and contextual approaches that also take into account socio-economic contexts; the importance of those individuals who mediate in school contexts (i.e. teachers, parents and children) their attitudes and beliefs, referring to recent theoretical models (e.g. Life Design) that emphasize narrative and life stories; the need of using indices for assessing inclusion experiences that take into account their complexity; the importance of sustaining future practitioners, and their efforts toward school inclusion to avoid that excessive attention to special educational needs that can become a “threat”. In the conclusions, we will summarize some of our reactions, hoping they also will be able to contribute to maintain the inclusion issue at the center of our attention.*

**Keywords:** Inclusion; Disability; Special education needs.

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## 1. Introduction

The publication of Giangreco, Doyle and Suter's (2012) paper on the condition of inclusion in Italy has provided an opportunity for discussion within the research groups each of us coordinates at the University Center for Services and Research on Disability, Rehabilitation and Inclusion of the University of Padua, and among our members of the International Hope Research Team.

First of all, we want to start by saying that the considerations we are presenting to Italian and international readers are not "objective", but biased. Although these considerations draw on research activities we have conducted over a couple of decades (e.g.: Soresi & Nota, 2000; Soresi & Nota, 2004; Nota & Soresi, 2004; Nota, Ferrari, & Soresi, 2005; Nota, Ferrari, & Soresi, 2006; Nota & Soresi, 2009; Soresi, Nota, & Wehmeyer, 2011; Soresi, Nota, Ferrari, & Sgarabella, 2013) they are, in fact, influenced especially by: (a) recurring collaborations and supervision activities with teachers, practitioners and school heads for the experimentation of inclusive programs in numerous Italian schools; (b) "reactions" to Giangreco *et al.* (2012)'s paper which we took note of during specific focus groups, organized within our research groups at the above mentioned University Center; (c) analyses we carried out in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) that a group of 73 university students, interested in the Psychology of Disability, Diversity Management in working settings and Rehabilitation Counseling, related to the issue of school inclusion in Italy.

In describing the story of our reaction to Giangreco *et al.* (2012)'s paper, in the first section we wish to remind how, in Italy, it has been decided to exclude both "special" and isolated approaches to education of students with different types of disabilities, and paternalistic, pietistic and essentially privatized relationships with these students, in favor of more "scientific" and professional approaches which emphasize inclusion of every person. The second section of "our history" refers to the representativeness issue of the data published by Giangreco *et al.* (2012) and by Ianes, Zambotti and Demo (2013), and to the legitimacy of some of their reflections, in order to underscore, as also suggested by Di Nuovo (2012), that the analysis of inclusion requires, in addition to quantitative and descriptive data, drawn from more qualitative and contextual approaches that take also into account the socio-economic context in which we live.

The third section concentrates on what we think makes the difference in inclusive settings, and some of their characteristics. The quality of inclusion depends especially on those who are members of a particular school context, i.e. teachers, parents and children, their attitudes and beliefs. Research and practice should consider these aspects, in particular those more relevant for

the historically important age we are going through. Therefore, we focus on dimensions that are becoming more and more relevant in analyzing inclusion phenomenon, attitudes such as hope and expressions of job satisfaction, and on suggestions about narratives, life stories and languages provided by recent theoretical models (e.g. Life Design).

The fourth section focuses on the need of using indices for assessing inclusion experiences, an issue that is important also for Giangreco *et al.* (2012). Based on the most qualified models in the field of disability, these indices allow us to consider the inclusive process's complexity and to facilitate the beginning of high quality and socially relevant changes.

The last section is devoted to the future of inclusion or, more precisely, on how future practitioners in the field of disability and inclusion should "take care" of school inclusion in order to avoid that excessive attention to "special educational needs" becomes a threat to school inclusion itself.

In conclusion, we will reiterate some of the questions identified by Giangreco *et al.* (2012) and, in relation to them, we will propose some of our "reactions", hoping they will also contribute to keeping alive interests on the inclusion issue, even in times of socio-economic hardship and crisis of values that we are currently going through.

## 2. Inclusion in Italy: A question of ideas and visions

The debate which Giangreco's paper stimulated among Italian researchers must, first of all, lead us to think about the reasons underlying the abolition of special schools in Italy, and the beginning of a process which we do not consider either conclusive or yet definitive, in Italy as well as in every other country in the world, and which is essentially finalized in treating disabilities in common contexts, in realizing truly inclusive life conditions for all at the school, work and social level.

It is well recognized that inclusion in Italy has had a long history, and we sincerely are grateful to several researchers interested in school and in children with difficulties who worked in this field at the beginning of the twentieth century, and who underlined the role education has also had in the development of individuals who experienced the most relevant problems. We refer here, for instance, to Montessori, Montesano and to other pioneers who demonstrated that children with diverse pathologies were, as a matter of fact and under certain conditions, potentially "educable". At the same time, we are grateful to those researchers who since the end of the nineteen-sixties and during the decade of the seventies have

been fighting for a legal recognition of a compulsory education open to students with disabilities of every type and severity, determining thus the progressive dismantling of special classes. Some of these researchers, the first author of this paper was among them, were actively involved in political battles, also organizing hunger strikes, specific demonstrations and campaigns aimed at providing significant support to make schools more able to guarantee access to children with disabilities, and to transform educational institutions into an inclusive context capable of rejecting differentiation and discrimination.

During those decades schools was accused of being partisan and inadequate to meet student needs and because of these difficulties and disadvantages students were unable to benefit from standard teaching practices. Don Milani's motto, "If we let loose boys with the most severe difficulties, school is not school anymore; it is an hospital that is in charge of healthy individuals and refuses ill persons", was frequently quoted to individuals asking for changes to the education systems.

Developments following this kind of thinking, mostly characterized by ideological and political implications, have led one to believe, erroneously, that a school cannot be considered more inclusive because it is aimed at satisfying "special education needs" of a given group, either because a larger number of socio-sanitary connections are available, or because it has at its disposal the most advanced empowerment programs for specific cognitive processes which are available for compensating behavioral disturbances which, additionally, require constant support from a team of experts and specialists.

Presently, following –in particular- the WHO's suggestions which have provided us with a new classification criteria of impairments, should allow us to privilege participation and involvement in our analyses, because these constructs are the most reliable indices for verifying both treatment efficacy and satisfaction for quality of life experienced by the community (see for instance, Schalock, Bonham, & Verdugo, 2008). Both at the level of research or fostering inclusion, all these remarks imply a systematic reference to a clearly ecological-behavioral approach by which contexts and situations are relevant for the analysis even more than persons and individuals, who are responsible for specific interventions (for instance, in teaching, support, assistance, rehabilitation) or assume specific roles (for instance, teachers or students, experts).

In our view, this position is particularly important if one is interested in studying school inclusion in a country such as Italy where decisions which have led to the termination of "special" schools and to the beginning of our path toward inclusion, were not based merely on scientific grounds, but mostly in a line of reasoning where ethical, political, social and legal aspects were given priority over those of pedagogical, psychological or educational nature. additionally, it is worth remembering that these "remarks" have not been de-

veloped homogeneously across the Italian regions. Although the idea of inclusion is widely shared, there are still some pockets of resistance that we can understand on historical, cultural and contextual grounds.

When dealing with inclusion, researchers should first of all highlight how such widely shared principles have been “realized”, if they choose not to shift to a purely administrative and descriptive analysis, as may occur with those who search for a description of the modalities used to satisfy special needs of specific groups of students. It is better to ask how both “normal” and “not normal” actors in the inclusionary process, with their efforts and involvement, have contributed to maintaining schools as oriented to all, and at the same time remaining open to every single person’s needs (Larocca, 2007).

According to this point of view, instead of focusing on how different types of students are treated, it is preferable, as suggested by Waldron and McLeskey (2010), to take into account how an inclusive school plans, organizes and promotes:

- an open welcome to all students;
- designated roles and professional competencies of all teachers who should be considered as the “educational capital” of the for inclusion not only for students with special educational needs but for all students involved;
- flexibility in teaching in order to facilitate learning for all students;
- systematic monitoring of all student improvements in order to decide systems of support and additional activities needed, collaboration and additional involvement of the educational community;
- efficacy assessment for both programs and teaching methods used to facilitate all students;
- sharing teaching problems and responsibilities in order to overcome “divisions” among different actors, specificity of technical languages, and divisions which separate different specialties (regarding health, psychology, education, assistance and administration) sometimes transformed into real and important barriers in the realization of an inclusive school open to all.

In other words, when analyzing inclusion it is worth referring to the way different inclusive contexts have attempted and still attempt, by means of different political choices and strategies, to break-down marginalizing social barriers, to strengthen both active participation and sharing of responsibilities.

### 3. From numbers to ideas... for renovating and promoting inclusion

In agreement with Di Nuovo (2012), we believe that articulated phenomena such as those of education and inclusion can be adequately understood and described

only if principally descriptive reports are accompanied by contextual analyses and qualitative reflections. All this, of course, without reducing the relevance of quantitative analyses, especially if the aim is to test experimental hypotheses or to evaluate different treatments and inclusive programs' effect-size that may be suggested by one or more researchers or derive, as in the case of inclusion, also from the application of legislated norms and regulations which, by their nature, do not utilize operational languages and therefore there's the alternative of leaving to diverse "actors" the choice of treatment, interpretation and degree of freedom.

Not surprisingly, Italian laws regarding inclusion, as well as those of other countries, request those who have responsibilities in this particular field, to choose, plan and emphasize aspects from time to time considered important in specific local situations, to create conditions to facilitate this, which may be markedly different when considering the various situations that exist in a relatively small country like Italy. as researchers, in other words, we should not be surprised by the presence of high rates of variability regarding how the principles of inclusion have been applied in schools. This doesn't mean, of course, that other relevant "realities" struggling to achieve a high quality level of inclusion should not be identified, but that it is necessary, in order to start the processes of change and improvement that we care about, to consider analyses and "indices of inclusion" that can, first of all, let us understand the reasons -which can only be historical and contextual- underlying what is happening.

Data reported by Giangreco *et al.* (2012), first of all, recall other data, published several times by the Italian Ministry of Education (MIUR, 2011a, b), that take into consideration the entire Italian school population and not, as Giangreco *et al.* admitted, sample groups of schools of dubious representativeness. They also recall those data published by the Italian Institute of Statistics (Istat, 2013), which provides more correct and clearer analysis than Ianes *et al.* (2013), who, in turn, offers "his" data and "his" percentages, sometimes not easy to read, resulting from not particularly sophisticated analyses in consideration of the fact that they are, once again, observations derived from groups and not from representative samples. Analyzing these works, it appears that some "scientific" considerations continue to be formulated on the basis of observations that simply involve not "randomly chosen participants", but those who are actually easier to reach, because scholars have already, for various reasons, connections with this or that researcher. In our opinion, merely admitting that the data are not representative is not enough, especially if they are used to "take stock" of a complex and multifaceted phenomenon such as the state of inclusion in Italy<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> In the website of the Ministry of Education, for example, we tracked down in the Annals of Education data on the situation of students with disabilities enrolled in Italian schools dating back to 1979-80 and referred to the whole nation. ([http://www.annaliistruzione.it/var/ezflow\\_site/storage/original/application/aa73caf4747b2fb9c5c3b7e5c7174e44.pdf](http://www.annaliistruzione.it/var/ezflow_site/storage/original/application/aa73caf4747b2fb9c5c3b7e5c7174e44.pdf)) ISTAT (2013), confirming the growth trend registered in the past decade, estimated in the 2011-2012 school year, approximately 145 thou

Even a superficial reading of official and representative data, such as those to which we refer in the notes, is sufficient to emphasize that there is a lot of work to be done and that in Italy there is a high variability about inclusion.

In our opinion, when analyzing inclusion research one must demonstrate the requirements of the scientific relevance and social validity, and that they are able to stimulate processes of change and innovation. In this regard, are reminded of some thoughts provided by Moretti (2013) who, given the economic crisis that is gripping many countries, accuses some disciplines, including psycho-pedagogical ones, of having no “vision” and are unable to regenerate themselves and produce innovation. In times of crisis such as these we are experiencing, when hardship and difficult situations are increasing, original and courageous assumptions are required, together with a widely inclusive vision (Savickas, Nota, Rossier, Dauwalder, Duarte, Guichard *et al.*, 2009; Nota, Soresi, Ferrari, & Ginevra, in press). Moreover, all this is taking on a particular significance in our schools because the variability and heterogeneity in the classes seem so substantial as to make us believe that all students need an inclusive school and educational personalized attention. Today, more than ever, it is also necessary to pay attention to teachers in order to encourage them to develop skills useful to realize a truly inclusive education, as suggested at length by Giangreco (Giangreco, 1989; Giangreco, Cloninger, Dennis, & Edelman, 1994), and also to strengthen and develop attitudes and beliefs useful for them in coping with the difficult times we are going through, and for the benefit of both their personal and their students future.

#### 4. People and narratives make the difference

Models previously mentioned refer to the involvement of the “context” to the extent that it is not possible anymore to talk about inclusion or to try to describe and evaluate it without considering the levels of involvement that are registered in a community both inside and around a school.

Among these persons we certainly include managers, executives and teachers because, independently from their roles, qualifications and specializations, they all carry the main responsibility for a “culture of inclusion” and for the “climate” perceived at school.

and students with disabilities, 81 thousand (2.9% of the total) in the elementary school and little more than 63 thousand (3.5% of the total) in the middle school. Intellectual disability is the most common problem in both levels of schools. Pupils with disabilities spend most of their time in the classroom (on average 25.0 hours per week for the elementary and 21.9 for the middle school) and are taught outside of class for only few hours (on average 3.9 hours per week in elementary and 4.5 in middle school). The mean number of pupils per teacher with disabilities is nationally very close to that provided by Law 244/2007, one support teacher for every two pupils with disabilities.

As regards teachers, common teachers, in particular, are those who, by means of their values and expertise, may favor or set back a participated and shared management of teaching and learning. Parents, either those having or not an impaired child, represent the reference community culture that can sustain or disrupt inclusion. They, in fact, may determine a reduction or persistence of prejudices and stereotypes as well as promote the adoption of “school regulations” and programs more or less explicitly inspired to inclusion and solidarity principles. Finally, we mention also schoolmates who everyday exhibit social behaviors mostly informed by cooperation or competition, by friendship or antagonism, by solidarity or marginalization, inclusion or segregation.

Focusing our attention on teachers, trying to understand the quality of inclusion in the last ten years, often researchers mention work related self-efficacy beliefs they have with respect to their work involvement. Members of our group, in cooperation with some American colleagues (Lent, Nota, Soresi, Ginevra, Duffy & Brown, 2011) and involving 235 Italian teachers, have shown that efficacy-relevant support and positive affectivity produced significant direct and indirect -through self-efficacy- paths to job satisfaction, and that either job satisfaction, progress in personal work goals, and positive affectivity were predictive of teachers’ life satisfaction. We believe these findings are relevant given that in contexts characterized by higher levels of adult satisfaction, it is more probable that children experience high levels of quality of life (Hoy, 2013).

We would submit to readers attention that “voices” saying that teachers, managers and executives in order to foster inclusion, besides more tradition competencies, should also show some “positive aspects”, probably more difficult to define and measure, such as hope, optimism and resilience, and the ability to instill these values in their clients (Ferrari, Sgaramella, & Soresi, in press). Taking into account all these dimensions and using a series of questionnaires constructed by researchers working in our International Hope Research team (see *Designing My Future; About Work*) we had the opportunity to find out, from a cluster analysis conducted on data collected from a group of 500 teachers and educators of the Nord East of Italy interested in working with people with impairments, that there are four groups characterized by different attitudes toward teaching and inclusion. The first group was composed by teachers we defined “*pessimists and disappointed*” (35% of participants), who consider themselves as unable to instill confidence and hope in other persons or even to face in an adequate modality difficult situations they encounter. Obviously these practitioners are inclined to show passive emotions, feelings of high resignation and try to delegate to others the responsibility of searching for adequate intervention and strategies capable of overcoming obstacles and barriers.



The second group includes 27% of our participants and seems to us as “*moderately supportive, optimistic and realist*” and characterized by sufficient self-efficacy beliefs about their work. These practitioners in the field of education and inclusion, additionally, have positive feelings with respect to the work they do, which they consider as socially helpful. They believe they are able to effectively conduct their work and to be helpful to others. The third group is composed by nearly 21% of participants: we have considered them “*very positive, optimist and resilient*” because they believe that more positive events than negative ones can happen also in the “disability planet”. Particularly relevant for the inclusion issue, these school workers consider themselves as capable of establishing positive relationship with colleagues, and they also recognize in themselves the ability to instill confidence and hope also in those persons who are worried about their personal discomforts and difficulties. Inclusion necessitates this last type of practitioners, especially in times characterized by crisis and uncertainty such as those we are currently passing through. And to these types of persons, more frequently than what we are used to do, we should address public recognition and esteem because it is thanks to their enthusiasm and to their positive feelings that inclusive processes are still fostered in several different local contexts. The fourth group, the smallest one, includes nearly 17% of our participants. In our opinion, they represent a true and real threat for education and for inclusion because they appear, also in students’ opinion, *definitely unsatisfied and pessimists*. From a strictly professional point of view, they recognize themselves limited in self-efficacy beliefs, they feel unable to help persons facing real difficulties nor able to instill feelings of hope and optimism which they need in order to face difficulties and obstacles they everyday encounter in their lives. They are also inclined to recognize a low value and social prestige in the activities they perform.

In our opinion, it is clear that students, either with or without impairments or “special needs”, dealing with teachers such as those in the first and fourth group, will easily exhibit learning difficulties, low levels of motivation to academic achievement, low self-efficacy beliefs and self-regulation abilities. In our view, it would be misleading, incorrect and demagogic to search for causes for this in children, in their incongruous and minimally homogeneous “cognitive”, “behavioral” and “emotional” profiles, as far as in a distant past where this was considered adequate and relevant (Cornoldi & Soresi, 1980).

It is becoming apparent, then, that it is people who make the difference and this is the reason why research and education should assume the task of spreading in our schools and communities the values of inclusion and participation, visions and positive feelings towards the future, dispensing at the same time notices and

recognition to all those teachers who, even without specializations and high sounding qualifications, and in spite of the numerous limitations, persist in believing that quality of inclusion depends heavily on them, on “common” and “regular” teachers.

Other interesting voices attract attention to the weight that words assume in school, languages and narratives permitted, might have on people’s life hence, in our view, on inclusion. These are the voices of individuals who recognize in the Life Design approach (Savickas *et al.*, 2009), developed trying to retain negative effects and threats that these times of crisis direct against people’s quality of life. The life design approach invites us to abandon linear and individualistic perspectives in favor of more “circular” and contextual visions, to avoid recurring to specific and restrictive languages and readings, in favor of more holistic, interdisciplinary “metatheoric” forms.

A central role is recognized in the possibility that every single person can significantly direct personal choices and behaviors as a function of personal values, anticipations, representations and expectations, as well as of narratives and stories that would be developed and articulated according to contexts in which the story is actually included. According to this vision, the analysis of complex phenomena, such as inclusion, cannot be limited to a simple analysis of frequencies and percentages; the reliability and validity of these actions requires “narratives” provided by students and teachers, by parents and executives, by those who, in other words, experience “under their own skin” the difficulties and contradictions connected to inclusion (for instance, personalization *vs.* equality, cooperation *vs.* competition; self-determination *vs.* solidarity). These narratives should not be used in comparative analyses; they should simply and mainly be considered by researchers and policy makers as useful indices of what it is worth dealing with. They, in fact, provide evidence of what makes the difference in people’s life and what facilitates a perception of sense and meaning in their own lives (Mar, 2004; Ferrari, Sgaramella, & Soresi, *in press*).

School, especially when inclusive, is a privileged place where students, teachers, parents, executives and politicians narratives meet and easily intertwine and give birth to new and “contaminated” stories which cannot be sectorial or corporative. In other words, the identity of a school, as the identity of a person, is a “co-constructed” phenomenon. In order to deeply understand this, we need to carefully consider co-construction. This means, for instance, that Giovannino’s (either a student, a parent or a teacher) idea of himself and the idea that the others have about Giovannino is a relational phenomenon, the result of interactions. It is not his own. It belongs also to persons with whom he happened to interact. Giovannino’s identity is a social co-construction which develops thanks to the

verbalizations and narratives associated with his interactions with other persons in even markedly different contexts and environments (Heyd-Metzuyanim & Sfard, 2012).

As regards this, as experts in disability and inclusion, we cannot forget that in these co-constructions of identities, a significant role is played by prejudices and stereotypes, by the way individuals present themselves and are presented by others... The different diagnostic labels which, as a matter of fact, are advertised (certified disabled, brain damaged, autistic, more or less specific learning disturbances, dyslexic, with attention and hyperactivity problems, with emotional and/or behavioral problems, socio-culturally disadvantaged, foreigner, with special educational needs) have a consistent role in producing the co-construction of identities and representations we referred to in this paper. The diagnostic labels, which are still too frequently used, are full of negative elements; they underline first of all deficits and special needs and give unavoidably birth to disadvantaged communication processes; they are minimally centered on pinpointing abilities and features which are interesting for all and in different contexts (Scior, Connolly, & Williams, 2013).

Words such as “special”, “disability”, “special needs” and so on, have a such negative connotation that they lead parents to consider diversities as something to refuse and to keep away from (“It is not a dream to have children with special needs”; Snow, 2013) and teachers to generalize problems and difficulties (Smith, 2005; Booth & Ainscow, 2011). Going back to Giovannino, if we declare he has special needs, it is probable that we will stimulate the idea that he needs special activities and separated environments, considering the possibility to reduce the time spent in curricular activities and in common environments, until finally dispensing him from carrying out disciplines such as Italian language, or mathematics and so on, as occurred in some Italian schools (Sgarabella, Nota, Ferrari, & Soresi, in press). If we refer to Maria as a girl with learning difficulties, for instance in mathematics, it is probable that there will be a reduction in the access to curricular activities in mathematics, to basic mathematic knowledge, thus facilitating the co-construction of a marginalized identity (Ben-Yehuda, Lavy, Linchevski, & Sfard, 2005; Soresi, Nota, Ferrari, & Solberg, 2008; Nota, Ginevra, & Santilli, in press).

It is important to consider that words we use (*disable, special, with difficulties*) evoke emotions and images which perpetuate stereotyped and negative perceptions, which are capable of creating barriers to inclusion and definitely negative attitudes. This is in contrast with: (a) the possibility to facilitate development of rich and articulated identities to all, being able to actively participate on a technological basis to more and more complex social realities; (b)

research data showing that it is possible to successfully teach scientific curricula (Knight, Smith, Spooner, & Browder, 2012), mathematics (Monari Martinez & Benedetti, 2011), reading (Browder, Wakeman, Spooner, Ahlgrim-Dezell, & Algozzine, 2006), social skills (Soresi & Nota, 2000), computer science and information technology (Brodin, & Lindstrand, 2003) to children and adolescents with intellectual impairments. The overspreading of diagnostic labels, the emphasis on difficulties and limits rather than on facilitating the right to learning and promoting inclusion, contributes, in our opinion, to call into question the inclusion itself, to create uncertainties, in other words to create barriers. Additionally, what is described above, seems to reject principles and suggestions provided by recent records from important organizations such as the United Nations and WHO. These documents have been undersigned by the vast majority of nations, among them the US and Italy, and reaffirm the need of breaking from traditional modalities in defining and classifying difficulties, because they were finalized in evidencing and circumscribing deficits, difficulties and obstacles, in favor of visions more centered on activities and abilities, on empowerment and participation. In line with this position, there are also research data clearly stating that when persons with impairments and difficulties are positively presented, describing what they are able to do in regular contexts and what they can share with other participants, more positive attitudes are stimulated both in teachers, independently from their role (regular or support teacher), in parents and in schoolmates (Nota, Santilli, Ginevra, & Soresi, *in press.*).

Based on previously made considerations, we are asking the world of research, but also the school system and teachers, to direct more of their efforts to finding conditions which may facilitate the increase of effectively inclusive interventions, careful to value the uniqueness of the individuals, realized by regular teachers rather than allowing room for actions aimed at differentiating and classifying differences and needs. This would help reinforcing, in our view, the introduction of languages, narratives and relationship based on what can facilitate the development of positive identities, of satisfaction, of quality and a supportive relationship towards all.

Additionally, addressing these last lines to researchers and scholars interested in inclusion issues, it should not escape our attention the fact that we also play a crucial role in characterizing narratives worked out in schools by teachers, parents and children, and that we are the first asked to give space and emphasis to those words and languages - which more than others- can make the difference in favor of inclusion and participation. It should not escape our attention that either written, oral -in conferences as well as in educational contexts or public settings- our support just to “special visions” will, as a matter of fact, negatively contribute to “limiting dreams, hopes and people’s opportunities” (Snow, 2013).

## 5. As regards indices used when evaluating inclusion

As Di Nuovo (2012) has already stated, and as previously mentioned, in Italy significant progress in the disability field has been made by the introduction of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), also known as biopsychosocial model. It was promoted at the beginning of this century by the WHO (World Health Organization, 2001), and led to the final abandonment of traditional views that focused on deficits, difficulties and impairments in conducting an independent life (ICD; ICIDH), and in the past legitimized special modes to handle the problems of people with disabilities (Mitra, 2006; Hughes, 2009). In 2009, the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR, 2009) released in our schools the guidelines which state, among other things, that education must adopt the biopsychosocial model proposed by the World Health Organization (ICF model). Since the school year 2010/2012 the Ministry of Education has promoted the ICF Project “*From the WHO model of the inclusion, design for the development of contextual factors that stimulate effective inclusion, quality of life, participation and self-determination*” (Wehmeyer & Smith, 2012).

The article of Giangreco *et al.* (2012) reminds us that as researchers, by taking into account just the globalization and evaluation of inclusive policies and practices, an international perspective should be undertaken. This means that, as mentioned several times and according to literature, we have to consider school inclusion as a complex phenomenon that is based on values such as equity, the right to education and participation of all (Laluvein, 2010). Inclusion requires the promotion of positive social relations and the development of shared meaning among all the actors involved in the process itself, primarily parents, teachers and children. In this regard, Kugelmass (2006a, b) reminds us that pursuing inclusion requires attention and investment in several lines of thought: (a) to believe and be committed to inclusion, (b) to take into account students’ and teachers’ differences as resources; (c) to promote collaboration among students, teachers and other school staff; (d) to support the teachers’ desire to achieve inclusion and persist in spite of difficulties; (e) to consider social and political factors; (f) to disseminate inclusive values in the school and in the community.

There is no doubt, anymore, about the fact that there is a close relationship between the spread of an inclusive culture and its success, so much so that in literature there exist several indicators, developed with the intention of evaluating the inclusive culture of a school and of identifying areas for improvement, could be traced back (McMaster, 2013). While researchers can resort to rapid calculations to get an idea of the state of inclusion, as suggested by Giangreco *et al.* (2012), other authors emphasize the need for procedures that

take into account more factors to obtain a more representative picture of these contextual factors, and to make decisions on the future of the inclusion more in line with the voice of numerous involved actors. Among them, McMaster (2013) includes the Quality Indicators for Inclusion (Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education, 2006) and the Whole Schooling (Peterson, 2004) developed in the U.S. context; the Canadian-born Indicators for Success (Community Living Ontario, 2005) and the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) generated in the UK at the beginning of the new millennium. The latter has taken a leading role as shown by the fact that it the index was translated and used in more than forty countries, and also adopted by UNESCO to promote its inclusion in developing countries. We consider it important to realize that in its adoption, for example, in Australia (Deppeler & Harvey, 2004), New Zealand (Smith, 2005; Carrington, Bourke, & Dharan, 2012), or Hong Kong (Heung, 2006), the context, the culture and the legislative policies present at the state and local level, and also those of the involved schools, have been taken into consideration. This indicator, in particular, by involving teachers and school staff, parents and pupils, aims at examining the capacity of a school in: (a) Creating Inclusive Cultures; that is, promoting and sharing inclusive values in the community; (b) Producing Inclusive Policies, which means creating projects for the inclusion and participation for all interested parties (c) Evolving Inclusive Practices that respect cultures and local policies.

The index for inclusion has been a subject for many publications. It has been reviewed several times (2002; 2006; 2011) and an index for inclusion in the network has also been created (<http://www.indexforinclusion.org>). As reported on the website, the dimension 'creating inclusive cultures' includes 11 indicators for the section 'building community' (i.e. 'Everyone is welcome'; 'Staff co-operates'; 'Children help each other'; 'The school is a model of democratic citizenship'), and 10 indicators for the section 'establishing inclusive values' (i.e. 'The school develops shared inclusive values'; 'The school encourages respect for all humans rights'). The dimension 'producing inclusive policies' includes 13 indicators for the section 'developing the school for all' (i.e. 'The school has a participatory development process'; 'The school has an inclusive approach to leadership'; 'Staff expertise is known and used'), and 9 indicators for the section 'Organizing support for diversity' (i.e. 'All forms of support are co-ordinated'; 'Professional development activities help staff respond the diversity'). The dimension 'Evolving inclusive practices' includes 13 indicators for the section 'Constructing curricula for all' (i.e. 'Children explore cycles of food production and consumption'; 'Children find out about housing and the built environment'; 'Children study life on earth'), and 14 indicators for the section 'Orchestrating learning' (i.e. 'Learning activities are planned with all children in mind'; 'Learning activities encourage the parti-

icipation of all children'; 'Staff plan, teach and review together'). In order to further facilitate reflections and an evaluation process, several questions for each indicator have been developed. For example, for the indicator 'The school is a model of democratic citizenship' 12 questions are provided (i.e. 'Does everyone learn to get along well and to be good citizens by being at school?'; 'Do all staff welcome the active participation of children and adults in the school?'; 'Does the school have public forums where the adults and children regularly share their ideas?'). Access to relevant materials is complemented by specific questionnaires for staff, parents/caregivers, children, and schools. In addition, in the latest version of the index special attention is dedicated to the values of inclusion: equality, rights, participation, community, respect for diversity, sustainability, non-violence, trust, compassion, honesty, courage, joy, love, hope/optimism, and beauty.

Indicators and questions allow school community members to participate collectively in the inclusion process following the five phases established by the model: "getting started" (establish inclusive values and initiating the process in the school); "finding out together" (reviewing the school culture and integrate existing initiatives or interventions taking place in the school); "producing a plan" (creating action plans around prioritized areas, identifying supports and barriers); "taking action" (implementing the plan, activating supports and removing barriers); and "reviewing development" (rethinking support systems, further reflections and planning).

Giving voice to a variety of professionals (teachers, educational psychologists) and also to contextual figures (parents and administrators) interested in the process of inclusion, it is possible to highlight the benefits this involvement entails. Hick (2005), for example, interviewing some educational psychologists involved as external consultants (critical friends) in a school project to promote inclusion centered on the application of the Index for Inclusion, found that it contributes to: (a) creating a 'common language' and talking about inclusion from a common base and core values; (b) responding to the specific needs of the school context and consequently generating engagement and, at the same time, challenging the status quo in order to move towards inclusion; (c) focusing on children's needs and necessities taking into account what they think and consider important, listening to what they have to say, conducting interviews, spending more time with them, observing them; (d) improving the educational practices of all those who are involved in the process of inclusion for the benefit of all children- not just of those with disabilities.

With regard to these international suggestions, if there is a sense of reproach that can be expressed against Italy, this is the lack of a widespread dissemination of the translated edition of the Index, which has limited its systematic application. It has been only used on an experimental basis, and in a relatively few studies, which

limits the possibility of drawing broad conclusions (see <http://www.indexforinclusion.org>).

Coherent with this, back in 2001 ( i.e. in unsuspected times) Soresi and Nota suggested that the analysis of inclusion should include multiple assessments, both in terms of dimensions considered and actors involved. In an inclusive school context, together with problems related to the acquisition of knowledge and skills, relational difficulties should be also considered; moreover, the involvement of not only students with disabilities but also of their school peers and of many educational figures should be planned. Scholars involved developed a series of assessment suggestions that include observation, the use of sociometric procedures, and grids for registration of educational continuity and programming, aimed at determining the numerous figures' involvement and their contribution in terms of inclusion.

This idea of inclusion as an articulated, rich and valuable phenomenon for classroom settings, allows us to emphasize its perfect harmony with the Capability Approach promoted by Nobel prize Amartya Sen (Sen, 2012), and developed in collaboration with the American philosopher Nussbaum (2006). These authors emphasize the role played by the possibility individuals have to exercise their inherent rights to freedom of choice, because they consider this a value and that these values are crucial for one's well-being and quality of life. Among the list of primary capabilities: being fed, having a house, being educated and healthy, and participating in public life without fear of shame. Among the more complex capabilities, political and social participation are included. The duty of social policy is to ensure these capabilities and, therefore, the freedom and possibility of achieving a sense of satisfaction and well-being. In other words, even originating from other pathways the duty of educational institutions, including universities as social institutions is emphasized, in order to work for reducing poverty and deprivation that come from the limitations associated with disadvantages and impairments, and to guarantee everyone the same freedoms and opportunities.

## 6. The future of the inclusion in Italy: Some privileged “witnesses” views

After dealing with the past and present of the inclusion in Italy, we want to project forward by imagining inclusion in the future. Therefore, within a specific focus group, we have launched a survey project involving 12 researchers of the University Center for Services and Research on Disability, Rehabilitation and Inclusion and La.R.I.O.S. Laboratory (Laboratory for Research and Intervention in Vocational Designing) of the University of Padua and a group



of 73 students attending the university classes of Psychology of Social Inclusion, Diversity Management in working settings and Rehabilitation Counseling. These individuals were considered as attentive “witnesses” to the issue of school inclusion: the first ones as scholars and authors of specific publications, the second group involved as possible future inclusion practitioners, interested in the concerned issues and in inhibiting the threat consequences we perceive in our specific context.

Students were therefore asked to complete the following sentences: “As regards school inclusion, the most important things to consider are...”; “In my opinion, a school can be considered inclusive if...”; “The inclusion of a person with impairments and disability requires that...”.

Following a suggestion provided by Savickas (2003), we decided to conduct a SWOT analysis on both our 12 scholars’ comments and on students’ responses. We decided to use this procedure for at least three reasons: a) it allows reflection on a very complex phenomena, characterized by differing and not necessarily consistent or interrelated aspects; b) it facilitates the involvement of participants interested in deeply analyzing an issue and motivated to identify ideas useful to stimulate changes and improvements; c) it is simple to implement and generally well accepted from “participants” interested in expressing their ideas and “voice” in the project.

Although the SWOT analysis was developed over 50 years ago as a procedure for supporting the definition of business policies and strategies, in the past 20 years it has often been used also in social research and planning. It is a methodology useful in providing support to specialists and protagonists in a given context, to show findings to policy makers and other significant figures in order to consider alternative development scenarios. It helps in making a “territorial diagnosis” and program evaluations, especially when statistical analysis are not sufficiently able to effectively define the advantages of one option over another and when there are competitive interests.

As regards school inclusion, this methodology could be useful for some schools in a given area for initiating a sort of ‘campaign’ for emphasizing its benefits, by promoting “educational posters” and inclusive programs, in order to attract more professionalized teachers, a specific typology of students and parents, and the consensus of some opinion leaders. The same methodology could also be useful to facilitate the understanding of the reason why in specific contexts “the numbers of inclusion” can vary, or can produce unexpected results that “suddenly” appear out of nowhere. The contents of our analysis and the advantages we found applying this methodology in a different field (i.e. career counseling and vocational guidance, Nota, Soresi, Ferrari, & Ginevra, in press), motivated us to use it.

We stimulated participants -in activities within their focus groups- to express their opinions about school inclusion in Italy after reading Giangreco *et al.*'s (2012) paper, and other reaction papers. This allowed us to identify participants' views on school inclusion, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and external and contextual Threats. To analyze participants' responses in the focus group, a panel of four members (two judges, one auditor, and an external consultant with expert knowledge on the examined concepts and the qualitative method used) was established. The two judges independently analyzed participants' responses, with the aim of identifying and describing recurring topics. In addition, after the two judges worked together to analyze agreements and disagreements and discussed with the other two members the preliminary list of the main topics mentioned, they drew up the final list of key topics. All were reminded that methodological issues and analysis details will be addressed in a forthcoming publication. We summarize very briefly in the present paper the findings about the four aspects (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats).

(1) The most frequently highlighted *Strengths*, that is positive elements and advantages of school inclusion, regard the belief that inclusion:

- Promotes children with and without disability's cognitive, social, and emotional skills development. Students with disability who experience inclusive settings are more likely to develop their skills, specifically in relation to increased competitiveness that characterize the class climate; typical development classmates can enhance important skills and feelings as those of cooperation and solidarity;
- Stimulates participation and is associated with greater likelihood of experiencing life satisfaction, owing to the heterogeneity of the relationships that can be established in inclusive settings;
- Allows even the involved adults (parents, teachers, school heads, etc.) to assume attitudes characterized by solidarity, cooperation, social equity, because it acknowledges children with disability the same rights and duties as that of their peers without disability;
- Allows for promoting original and advantageous for initiating learning development ideas.

(2) *Weaknesses*, that is its limitations, disadvantages, what should be eliminated, which regard specifically:

- Greater professionalism and involvement of different individuals, i.e. teachers, school heads, useful for collegial planning and teaching to heterogeneous student groups;
- Costs and additional commitments needed in early planning phase, in subsequent implementation and monitoring phases, and in evaluating and monitoring the started inclusion process;

- Investments in training for a large number of teachers, or almost all of them, on inclusive education issue.

(3) *Opportunities*, that is, resources and supports that our participants perceive in environmental contexts and that sustain the inclusive model, are:

- A “by the time” generalized perception of the superiority of the inclusive model handling diversity rather than the “special” model;
- The idea that the inclusion culture developed over time in Italy (common school for all) is characterized as a “heritage” to be proud of;
- National and international laws and regulations that promote school inclusion and active participation of students with disability in school and social life, such as those emanated by WHO and ONU.

(4) *Threats*, that is barriers and obstacles that may limit the inclusion, are:

- The resistance due to stereotypes and prejudices that sometimes are also present among teachers and specialists interested in defending their roles and their corporate interests;
- The school resources’ reduction and the indiscriminate cuts that may threaten the budgetary support necessary to make school really inclusive for all;
- The belief that ‘special educational needs’ require “special choices” and interventions made by education “specialists” rather than by all teachers.

On one hand, these reflections underscore the need to continuously work for guaranteeing inclusion in the future, enjoying all its benefits, and favoring social equity as underscored by legal norms, related research and certified official documents. On the other hand, they highlight the need of preparing oneself to deal with school inclusion threats. The risk of “re-institutionalization” and “medicalization” of common educational contexts, which is considered a serious threat for the future, worries our focus group participants and we agree with them. We believe that in Italy, but perhaps also in other parts of the world, this risk should be attributed to specific areas of special education, differential psychology, cognitive psychology and neuropsychology, which require new ‘diagnoses’ and continuous differentiations. This favors diagnostic labels that accompany people throughout their lives and encourage, in contrast with ICF recommendations, the analysis of deficits and difficulties and the implementation of special and specialized interventions by not “common” and not “regular” practitioners in separated time and space.

## 7. Concluding remarks

The points we have made in this paper derive from our belief that supporting

inclusion requires recognizing that the risk of exclusion is still present as well as the risk of situations that could still evoke on one hand anger and indignation and, on the other, the implementation of courageous initiatives for creating truly pleasant educational, social, and work communities.

Moreover, inclusion also stimulates in us also the idea of innovation and change, the need of continuing to work for it... because global and full inclusion constitutes a process without “endings”, which cannot definitely be realized once and for all. The idea of inclusion, in other words, is associated with the concepts of “dream”, “utopia”... but how can we teach or deal with individuals’ difficulties if we are not to some extent naïve and dreamers? We still need dreams and utopias because the risk of exclusion and separation is still present; inclusion is still threatened, often in a deceptive, not explicit or ambiguous way. These threats, sometimes, are hidden under demands of realism and concreteness, or they are sheltered by resource constraints that, although real, have always been present in the Italian school context; sometimes they are even disguised behind a false attitude of “goodness” and of a falsely “scientific nature”.

Booth and Ainscow (2011), among others, remind us that talking of pupils with Special Educational Needs may be the first step in a process that involves: a) labeling of many students, b) a reduction of educational expectations, c) and the need to organize “compensatory” educational proposals exclusively reserved for them. Hence, little attention is devoted to participation, “reflexivity” and co-construction of projects and plans, as required by inclusive educational models or counseling activities inspired by the Life Design approach.

Returning to Giangreco *et al.* (2012)’s paper and to our “reactions” to it, it clearly appears that we are mainly considered with: (a) the ideology that, in the past, led Italy to rebel against the idea that separate and special educational and rehabilitation environments were needed for diversity treatment, (b) the deleterious effects that recent socio-economic crisis has, besides reductions in welfare investments thus encouraging negative characteristics such as exacerbated meritocracy and competition. In times of crisis, according to many economists (Moretti, 2013; Zamagni, 2013), the risk that the school is ‘left behind’ and doesn’t take the leading role that it should have by renewing itself, and becoming more inclusive, has to be avoided. Finally, (c) we have paid attention to indicators for inclusion assessment that highlight its complexity and also to qualitative and narrative procedures which give voice to the protagonists. Their story helps us to consider constructs which rarely until now have been taken into consideration by psycho-educational research interested in inclusion (career satisfaction, psychological capital, resilience, hope, time perspective, career identity, and so on) while they are well accepted within positive psychology, and by those who confidently care about personal others’ future (Wehmeyer, 2013).

By referring to the “past”, to “present” and “future”, we thought a lot regarding to questions raised by Giangreco and colleagues and to the need of sharing a vision, a mission... The path to truly make schools more inclusive for all is full of obstacles and research must be more committed to identify and overcome them. As researchers, we could start by complaining that the methodological limitations of those studies provided a merely descriptive analysis at the expense of more contextualized and “narrative” ones. It is necessary to give voice to best practices facilitating their dissemination (Begeny & Martens, 2007) and to acts of solidarity, the main core of inclusion (Mastropaolo, 2012; Starkey, 2012).

An important question raised by American colleagues concerns the percentage of students with disabilities who are in our classes and the way they are allocated in schools in a given area. Since inclusion is mandatory in our compulsory education, we, first of all, believe that the presence of children with disabilities in every school should be in the same proportion as people with disabilities in our communities. The fact that some schools, more than others, welcome these students should be interpreted as a “threat” and this factor, first of all, should attract the attention of administrators and policy-makers.

Since the law establishes inclusion until compulsory school, and lower enrollment rates in high school are established it should not come as a surprise but rather indicate how much work is still to be accomplished. At the end of compulsory school, many students with impairments are unfortunately placed in private vocational schools, or in special classes in health centers or in other social care contexts that, in our view, represent a sort of “institutionalization”. For many of them, a “restriction” phase in their social participation starts which lasts across an entire lifetime. This is the most insidious threat and the strongest “betrayal” to the inclusion principle: to let people with disabilities and their families benefit from inclusion for a few years, and then force them - at the moment when work inclusion should follow school inclusion- to accept special and separate treatments.

Giangreco *et al.* invite Italian colleagues to think about the amount of time students with disabilities or those with special educational needs spend outside the classroom. The “temporal” dimension is certainly important: we would very much prefer, in a truly inclusive view, that the hours dedicated to Italian language and literature, to mathematics, science, etc., should not be uniformly distributed, but rather that, based on individualized projects, for some students there should be proposed more hours for history, geography, mathematics, especially if they have difficulties in these disciplines, while for other students less hours should be devoted to other disciplines, and that these individualized activities should be implemented both inside and outside the class. Everyone should benefit from not overly standardized educational opportunities, but rather from initiatives that lead

them to participate in other classes in heterogeneous groups based on different interests, for projects to be accomplished in a collaborative way.

What an inclusive school should not allow is that these ‘out of class’ times or personalized activities are planned only for selected students, for realizing specific training programs aimed at the reduction of deficits or, worse, in the implementation of rehabilitative practices. We would like to consider school as a place of teaching and learning and other services, devoted to health and welfare, as educational occasions for rehabilitation and assistance.

Similarly, we would like to think that teachers also are diverse in nature, and that they could be differentiated not only on the basis of the type of students they deal with, but on their teaching skills and preferences so that everyone can actually give the best of themselves. An inclusive school, in our opinion, should also care about teachers’ development and job satisfaction, which is more likely to be higher if these subjects could be independent, according to a participation and self-determination perspective, to be able to choose among different educational practices, to attend heterogeneous classes and groups (of colleagues, students and parents), and all this on the basis of inclusive projects embracing all interested parties.

At this point questions should not be “How in an inclusive school do common teachers their work? And how do special ones? How do support teachers perform their activities?”; rather, these questions should be the following: “What and how many are the opportunities of personalized learning and teaching collegially planned? With how much flexibility is this done? Which and how many personalized learning opportunities does the school consider appropriate to do? How much ‘social’ sharing can be documented? What supports and resources are provided by the specific community to the school? On what competences can the school rely on, including parents, volunteers... and others in the educational project?”. Merely wondering how many common and specialized teachers a school requires is, in our opinion, overly simplistic and reductive.

Other questions which Giangreco *et al.*, Di Nuovo and all of us care about, refer to the sensitive problem of the diagnosis of a student with disability or special educational needs. We believe that as far as this issue is concerned, just attempting to “diagnose” the problem is overly. we would prefer, for instance, that this approach is not applied when visual, auditory or sensory impairments do not exhibit significantly disabling impacts on learning nor when these difficulties can, as a whole, be considered mild and only requiring teachers knowledge related to principles of personalization and progression of learning processes. If these children do not have learning difficulties, they should not be “counted and certified”. As it seems obvious, we would like to contrast with

energy actions aimed at identifying and multiplying special educational needs as well as the desire to make the normality “special” such as those policies carried out by some experts in “special education” and that consultants of our Ministry of Education also conduct.

In Italy, as in other parts of the world, we have already experienced the deleterious outcomes of “diagnostic campaigns” aimed at identifying difficulties. Already in 1972, Soresi highlighted the risks related to an increase of psychological diagnostic, screening and *dépistage* actions, underlying the increase of: 1) dependence of regular teachers from emerging practitioners, e.g. school psychologists, child psychiatrists, experts in “training focused on the deficit”; 2) the recognition of certain laws “in favor of weaker students” disseminated by our Ministry of Education in those years (i.e. CM n. 4525 of 1962 and n. 934 of 1963) supporting, even from an economic view, the screening and *dépistage* procedures mentioned above. In fact, certifications increased as well as special educational needs and support requests addressed to different practitioners from “regular” ones (to child psychiatrists rather than pediatricians or family doctors, to assistant teachers rather than to valid math or linguistic teachers, to special pedagogists rather than to pedagogists or teaching experts, to psychomotricists or rehabilitation practitioners, etc..).

Today, none of those who support the request of giving attention to ‘Special Educational Needs’, or who sustain that regular school has to become “special”, mention the diagnostic instruments used in those years, often valid and reliable measures... but, perhaps, the philosophy and the ideology of their claims are the same: based on a simplistic and predominantly “individual and intrinsic” vision, difficulties are ascribed to the student; the latter determine their special educational needs and, hence, the need for special interventions (Häggström & Emanuelsson, 2010 reminds us that the problem is not ‘inside the student’).

Today, teachers and specialists who believe that diagnoses of difficulties and special needs are necessary in order to help persons with disabilities (and their relatives), should be reminded of the negative consequences of these actions by saying, for instance, that “*diagnoses are perhaps useful for them... we do not need them! We need first of all “normality”*” (as referred by a worker with motor disabilities), “*As a mother of three sons from 10 to 16 years old, with one of them being “multi-labeled” as dyslexic and celiac... I’m personally experiencing some bitterness because of threats to inclusion...*” (a mother); “*I’m systematically in touch with classes where there are children-boys who for several different reasons (coming from other schools and/or countries, have impairments and so on...) have difficulties in being included or, more precisely, they experience*

*difficulties in being included because some classmates and teachers represent real barriers to their full participation to in class life. In this period I'm involved in a project named, "Kindness", developed in a third level class where last year a girl arrived ( with no particular difficulties), who - from most of her classmates- is still considered as a stranger... and we should thank "labels" for this!"* (A teacher 'who does not like Special Educational Needs'). *"If we are serious about removing barriers... Isn't it time to stop calling people names, which they never choose to use about themselves? ... And when the great Wall of attitudinal barriers falls, other barriers will also come tumbling down* (Snow, 2007).

To conclude, we are seriously worried about what is happening in schools, which from being basically inclusive or inclined to it, are going back to being "differential" and, even worse, "special". In conclusion, then, *hurray* for SEN if it stands for Special Education Not-anymore! Some participants in our group have already seen it in action for too much a long time. In current times, more than in the past, we need schools, professional competence of teachers, flexibility, sharing of responsibility, participation and, why not, positive feelings and utopia.

Finally, thanks to Giangreco and other participants in the debate, for stimulating us to summarize these thoughts, and for what they will do in order to spread these concepts in the world of research and inclusion. From our side, we are activating a blog to which all will have free access from the website of the University Center for Services and Research on Disability, Rehabilitation and Inclusion of the University of Padua (for information: [ce.ateneo@unipd.it](mailto:ce.ateneo@unipd.it)). This will facilitate and stimulate open and free discussion in favor of a school of quality for all for making better known the best inclusive practices.

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