Edited by
ILARIA D'ANGELO, NOEMI DEL BIANCO

INCLUSION
AT UNIVERSITY

Studies and practices

TRAIETTORIE
INCLUSIVE

FrancoAngeli

Informazioni per il lettore

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TRAIETTORIE INCLUSIVE

COLLANA DIRETTA DA
**CATIA GIACONI, PIER GIUSEPPE ROSSI,
SIMONE APARECIDA CAPELLINI**

La collana "Traiettorie Inclusive" vuole dare voce alle diverse proposte di ricerca che si articolano intorno ai paradigmi dell'inclusione e della personalizzazione, per approfondire i temi relativi alle disabilità, ai Bisogni Educativi Speciali, alle forme di disagio e di devianza. Si ritiene, infatti, che inclusione e personalizzazione reifichino una prospettiva efficace per affrontare la complessa situazione socio-culturale attuale, garantendo un dialogo tra le diversità.

I contesti in cui tale tematica è declinata sono quelli della scuola, dell'università e del mondo del lavoro. Contemporaneamente sono esplorati i vari domini della qualità della vita prendendo in esame anche le problematiche connesse con la vita familiare, con le dinamiche affettive e con il tempo libero. Una particolare attenzione inoltre sarà rivolta alle comunità educative e alle esperienze che stanno tracciando nuove piste nell'ottica dell'inclusione sociale e della qualità della vita.

La collana presenta due tipologie di testi. Gli *"Approfondimenti"* permetteranno di mettere a fuoco i nodi concettuali oggi al centro del dibattito della comunità scientifica sia nazionale, sia internazionale.

I *"Quaderni Operativi"*, invece, documenteranno esperienze, progetti e buone prassi e forniranno strumenti di lavoro per professionisti e operatori del settore.

La collana si rivolge a tutti i professionisti che, a diversi livelli, si occupano di processi inclusivi e formativi.

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Index

Foreward

by *Catia Giaconi, Maria Beatriz Rodrigues*

Are the times mature to talk about inclusive University teaching?

Certainly there are more texts that argue for the school integration of children with disabilities (especially in Italy), but the present book demonstrates that international experiences demonstrate excellent practices of supporting and integrating students with disabilities and with Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) in universities.

The contributions allow to compare good teaching practices, but also demonstrate the possibility of designing contexts capable of becoming real environments for adulthood experiences for young people with disabilities. Therefore, the topic addressed requires interdisciplinary reading keys as evidenced by the professional origin of the authors. The University teaching, taking charge of young people with disabilities or with specific learning disorders, calls into play educationalists, psychological, neuroscientists, neurolinguists, etc. The volume manages to give voice to these plural points of view that overall make the work a collective heritage.

The epistemological founding questions of inclusive University teaching will be addressed in order to discuss the essential issues related to the teaching and learning processes. Special attention is given to the challenge of Universal Design, to the choices of inclusive teaching strategies for University contexts, and to the plurality of technological devices that a student with a disability or SLD can have available to start personalized University courses with high levels of autonomy.

Furthermore, various contributions photograph the state of the art of centers of excellence for integration in University contexts: from Arizona to Brazil, and to Italy.

The complexity of the reflections also recalls an important epistemological paradigm that concerns the enhancement and promotion of emancipation paths for University students with disabilities. The time has also come for universities and for scholars of inclusive University

education to start talking about University students with disabilities starting from their own voice and their stories. The achievement of this perspective is confirmed by the movement defined as student voice, identified as a space and a time to increase the levels of self-determination and self-representation. We, therefore, believe that the text represents an interesting starting point to deepen studies and research in the direction of increasingly inclusive University practices.

Introduction

by *Ilaria D'Angelo, Aldo Caldarelli, Noemi Del Bianco, Catia Giaconi, Maria Beatriz Rodriguez*

The volume, born from the desire to gather in a single collective work the national and international theoretical advances and operational proposals, inherent to a University teaching that knows how to plan itself as inclusive, opens with the contribution *Inclusive University Teaching: critical issues and perspectives*, by Catia Giaconi, Maria Beatriz, Rodrigues, Arianna Taddei. The chapter highlights the possible inclusive scenarios achievable in University contexts. Through the reconstruction of national and international regulatory frameworks that currently govern the right to academic education of students with disabilities or with Specific Learning Disorders (SpLDs) the authors try to outline the lights and shadows of the actual University inclusion. In that direction, authors present a review of strategies, trajectories and perspectives activated in the national and international scene, aiming to guarantee a significant pedagogical framework of reference.

In the second chapter Noemi Del Bianco presents an *International recognition of technological tools used by University Students with Specific Learning Disorders: an analysis proposal through rankings*. The contribution aims to highlight the main tools and technological devices that can be used to support and plan the study of the student population, specifically with SpLDs, in the University field. More than a hundred are the tools emerging from the analysis of the three rankings examined. The technological proposals of each University have been investigated one by one by the author. Information obtained have been crossed to create a list of tools/Apps/instructional technological supports for University students with SpLDs that are more common in the Universities fields. The data obtained by the crossing of the ranking lead the author to reflect on the necessity to relate the different kind of tools to the study method that is recognized as

the first compensatory tool par excellence for students with SpLDs. In this direction future perspectives are proposed by the author as a result of the analysis of the research conducted.

Continuing the discussion of the opportunities offered by new technologies, also the chapter by Catia Giaconi, Noemi Del Bianco, Aldo Caldarelli, Maria Beatriz Rodriguez and Arianna Taddei aims to address the combination of technologies and teaching as an opportunity to renew traditional teaching models. The chapter *International review of technological tools used by University teachers* focuses specifically on rethinking teaching from an inclusive perspective. In detail, the authors direct their attention to the platforms that can be used by University teachers to promote the dynamics of teaching and learning. The latest market proposals will be presented in this chapter, in addition to the end of the reader some implementation hypotheses. Furthermore, this chapter outlines a pilot project, developing at the University of Macerata, that is called EduPlan4Inclusion, oriented to implement accessibility in academic contents for all students, through the use of technologies. The project, that can be addressed as an Educational Planner, is design to create and share accessible resources, implementing a more shared inclusive culture.

   A Model Program for the Success of College Students with Attention and Learning Disorders, is presented in the fourth chapter. The authors, Cynthia P. Demetriou, Gabrielle E. Miller, Laurel G. Mason, Christine L. Salvesen, provides an overview of the Strategic Alternative Learning Techniques (SALT) activated at the Center of the University of Arizona. As the number of college students needing learning support increases, there is a critical demand to identify programs and approaches that produce optimal outcomes for students. Institutions of higher education have been called upon to engage college students with learning disabilities in campus life, to provide effective learning supports, and to hold high expectations (Tinto, 2012). The SALT Center is one of the best model programs providing comprehensive support to 700 college students with Learning Disabilities of United States. The authors, retracing the history of this institution, presents the components of its program based on different levels of intervention that allow to offers holistic support for through the undergraduate academic career from recruitment to degree completion. The program, as the data shows, has demonstrated that it can significantly increase the likelihood that undergraduates with attention and learning challenges will succeed.

Simone Aparecida Capellini, Bianca dos Santos, Alexandra Beatriz Portes de Cerqueira César, in the fifth chapter: *Survey of complaints and behaviors of students with learning problem. Investigation Learning Disabilities Laboratory*, present the survey of the students referred to a laboratory specialized in interdisciplinary diagnosis in learning disorders and attention, the LIDA/FFC/UNESP center, based in Brazil. The center provides interdisciplinary diagnosis of learning and attention disorders, clinical and educational interventions for learning and attention problems that are not yet formally assisted by the Brazilian government guidelines. By the service offered, the center plays an important role in the real challenge of discussing the inclusion of this population. The authors, after highlighting the critical issues of diagnosis for the early and timely identification of Dyslexia and Learning Disorders, discussed the lack of national guidelines for the educational assistance of students with Neurodevelopmental Disorder and the necessity to act in favor of a more effective inclusion of this students' population.

Inclusive Perspectives and Inclusion Practices: The National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID): A Model of Inclusive Practices for Deaf Students, it is the title of the sixth chapter written by Gerard Buckley. The contribution traces the stages of the constitution of the NTID at the Rochester Institute of Technology, that have let the access to new educational and career paths to students with Hearing Impairment, to which they had been excluded before. To date the NTID have created an effective model of inclusion that has led to more than 8,500 Deaf students successfully graduates. In the article the author shows the effectiveness of an academic project that identifies different action plans: from an academic programming, that is continually updated in response to the demands of business and industry, to the planning of accessible services, in which the communication access remains one of the most important variables of the inclusion of Deaf students, passing by the offer of accessible experiences related to the active participation in the academic life that is central for the personal and social development of students and for their future employment.

Arianna Taddei, Giampiero Griffo, Riccardo Sirri, in the seventh chapter *Disability mainstreaming and international cooperation: which challenges for University education?* deal with the topic of Higher Education for the actors of international cooperation. The reflection starts from the existing gap between policies on the emancipation of people with disabilities and practices, that has to be overcome. Indeed, even if the

normative frames and interpretative paradigms of disability support perspectives and principles aimed at the emancipation of people with disabilities themselves, it is also evident that the skill needed to develop a mainstreaming approach to disability aren't sufficiently widespread between professional figures involved in international cooperation. In this direction a central role is played by University as training agencies. The authors, after mapping the first training courses to the Disability Mainstreaming Approach, contributing to the delineation of the state of the art of Italian Universities on this topic, elaborate strategic considerations that can be able to respond to University training challenges.

In the eight chapter: *Witness the Knowledge, Learning How to Do: Knowing How to Be Through Autobiographical Narrative Teaching Strategy*, Grazia Romanazzi, in order to trace a way to face the new crisis that the entire school system is living, proposes the autobiographical or narrative teaching as a real professional habitus of the teacher, able to have positive resonances in didactic field. Two are the main dimensions that this approach can sustain. The first one is the communication with students as a power tool of the relationship. A wise and accurate use of language is addressed by the author as an effective path for the teacher to contain and orient communication exchanges with students for the construction of shared meanings, within a common axiological horizon. The second dimension is about the teacher's ability to "lay" in a heartfelt and free dialogue and relationship with his/her students which is supported by his/her ability to transmit a knowledge anchored to a lived experience. The narration, especially the autobiographical one, becomes, in this way, a rightful research tool and didactic approach whose dimensions are investigated in the contribution.

In the nine chapter, *The Italian University system: disability and learning support action plans,* Gianluca Amatori and Stefano Zucca describe disability and learning supports and action plans in the Italian University landscape. The two authors, after recall the historical and social stages of the inclusion of people with disabilities in the academic institution, focus on the current inclusion issues of the University system, from orientation to teaching. By mapping the most common concerns of students with SpLDs, authors present a specific service developed at the European University of Rome: the tutoring help desk for students with SpLDs. Highlighting the necessity to build an integrated system of interventions able to fulfil students' requirements in terms of University education in the prospective vision of a complete and significant life

project, the contribution explicit the importance of this place for a dialogue and understanding aimed at supporting students in making responsible decisions and at increasing perception and rational self-control.

Catia Giaconi, Simone Aparecida Capellini, Noemi Del Bianco, Ilaria D'Angelo, Arianna Taddei, Maria Beatriz Rodrigues, in the tenth chapter entitled *Inclusive University teaching processes and practices: the project "Inclusion 3.0"*, introduce a project of the University of Macerata, designed to suggest hypotheses that can be spent in University contexts within an inclusive perspective. Taking into consideration the new challenges that Universities have to face, such as the importance of incorporating new educational planning formats and methodological practices to achieve a greater accessibility of their context, authors present the *Inclusion 3.0* project. In line with the international and national priorities and strategies, *Inclusion 3.0*, activated in 2017, focuses its intervention strategies on the strengthening of University services and on international and national awareness events aimed to improve political and scientific guidelines, as well as the development of support processes for the academic success of every student. After an overview of the project the authors trace a pedagogical proposal of processes and practises.

The pilot project of the University of Macerata, presented in the eleventh chapter, *The students' Voice: a case study*, by Noemi Del Bianco, Ilaria D'Angelo and Manuela Crescimbeni is aimed to answer at the organizational and educational complexity, emerged after the growing number of students with disabilities and SpLDs, enrolled in Higher Education. Indeed, the task of an inclusive University is to achieve the autonomy and personal aspirations of all students. To this end, spaces are needed for listening to the voice of the students and for co-planning in order to construct new inclusive practices and environments. As active participation to the University life is recognized as a driving force for the construction of the personal life project, ways to enhance possibilities of co-responsibility of the management of the educational context needs to be placed, starting from rising the point of view of student about the services prepared by the University. In this direction, after a survey on the state of art of the Students' Voice movement of students with disabilities and SpLDs in the Italian contest, the chapter presents a pilot study that concerns the possibility of creating a space for listening the academic experience of students with disabilities.

1. Inclusive University Teaching: critical issues and perspectives

by *Catia Giaconi, Maria Beatriz Rodrigues, Arianna Taddei*

1. Introduction

In the normative stages, that marked the access to the higher education of students with disabilities or with Specific Learning Disorders (SpLDs) in Italy, the processes of social inclusion are essential for the full academic participation of people with disabilities.

In our studies, we have focused in the reconstruction of the normative framework and of the structural changes occurs at organizational, teaching and cultural levels in order to create competent and inclusive University contexts (Giaconi *et al.*, 2020; Giaconi *et al.*, 2018a; Giaconi *et al.*, 2018b). What we noticed through these studies is the intrinsic complexity of the challenges and the evolution of the needs of students with disabilities or with Specific Learning Disorders, that make essential to develop innovative research, new and intelligent technologies, processes and methods, mechanisms of social innovation.

In order to understand, analyze and build inclusive, innovative and reflective societies, political levels need a response to free the potential to share ideas in the future to create new knowledge, technologies and capabilities.

The main directives of the activities in the "Inclusive Societies" focus on the understanding and promotion or implementation of the following elements, which are fundamental also in the project that we are mentioning. They concern:

a) the mechanisms to promote an intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth;

b) the trusted organizations, the practices, policies and services that are necessary to build adaptable, inclusive, participative, open and creative

societies in Europe, keeping in account especially migration, integration and demographic changes;

c) the role of Europe on the world-scale, concerning especially human rights and justice in the world;

d) the promotion of sustainable and inclusive environments through territorial and urban planning and design.

To nurture and encourage greater inclusion of people with disabilities and SpLDs during University courses through the development of methodologies, assessment of frameworks and indicators that will be responsive to the needs of everyone.

The areas for intervention concern innovative practices and multidisciplinary procedures to be used at different levels in the University context, able to respond promptly to the needs of students, even with disabilities and SpLDs, thus ensuring greater usability and inclusion.

In this direction Europe proposed "Horizon 2020", specifically PART I, "Scientific Excellence" that is articulated in four specific objectives, including the point "Emerging and Future Technologies (EFT)". It supports collaborative research to expand the capacity of Europe to produce cutting-edge innovations capable of revolutionizing traditional thinking. It stimulates interdisciplinary scientific collaboration on the basis of radically new, high-risk ideas, accelerating the development of the most promising emerging scientific and technological sectors as well as the Union-wide structuring of the corresponding scientific communities.

With the EFT production, is possible to promote research and technology beyond what is already known, encouraging new and visionary thinking to open promising routes toward new technological forms, some of them being likely to develop guiding paradigms in the technological and intellectual contexts over the next decades. To achieve the objective of promoting innovative technologies that offer the possibility of opening new ways of teaching and, at the same time, of guaranteeing access to University learning for people with disabilities and SpLDs.

Concerning the state of the art, in the scientific and social fields, interest recently grew to understand and evaluate how the continuous and different applications of cutting-edge technologies, the fields of information and communication can improve the quality of information and communication perceived by the subjects (Ridolfi, 2002; Besio, 2006; Pinnelli 2011, Giaconi, 2015). In this direction, the technological sector has a great potential to explore and improve the accessibility for the users in relation to multiple areas of intervention for University students with disabilities and SpLDs. Using available or innovative technology is not enough to realize a

good system adaptable also to students with disabilities and SpLDs. To pursue this direction, a crucial element is the accessibility and usability of the system by teachers and students with disabilities and SpLDs. It is necessary to look at the technology in an innovative way, from the point of view of the real users who will have to use it, taking into account their needs. An overview of the main presently commercialized ATs, for people with disabilities and SpLDs, go from voice synthesis (Carlo II), to screen readers (JAWS, VoiceOver), Braille displays, pocket Braille or Notex Braille, screen magnifiers (ZoomText, Supernova, Magic), to voice recognition software (Dragon Naturally Speaking), direct subtitling systems (VoiceMeeting) direct or deferred translation (VoiceTranscribe), systems of augmented alternative communication (Picture Communication Symbols (PCS) and Bliss) and Vocal Output Communication Aids (VOCAs) portable machines that allow the user to select and transfer icon messages with the voice.

Mainly, three factors affect the effectiveness and efficiency of a technological aid the correct identification of the most appropriate product for the characteristics of the subject in accordance with the tasks to be performed, the context and the degree of acceptability tolerated by the user; the integration of the products previously presented; the deployment of the integrated solution of previously founded, through the identification of an appropriate configuration of the aiding tool, user training, supporting competence of assistants or teachers, level of accessibility of the physical environment.

2. University and Inclusion: National and International overview

The international Universities listed below have shown strong programming and solid support services even more a consistent value and priority for meeting the physical, social and academic needs of students with learning disabilities and special needs. With remarkable programmes (that offer support, tutoring and special courses designed to make everything less stressful for enrollees) these excellent schools are some of the best at committing resources and funding to equipping their students with Assistive Technology and tools they need, to not only become a successful student in the classroom, but also a valuable member of the student community as a whole on the campus. Specifically, we remark the following international institutions, as we are going to see in the next section,

The process of inclusion of students with disabilities and SpLDs in the Italian University courses is supported by specific normative laws to safeguard and guarantee to right to study of which we list below the main laws of reference from Law n. 104, 5 February 1992, "Framework-law for the assistance, social integration and rights of handicapped persons" to Law n. 17, 28 January 1999, "Integration and modification of the Framework-law n. 104, 5 February 1992, for the assistance, social integration and rights of handicapped persons"; from Law n. 4, 9 January 2004, "Legal provisions to favour the access to information tools for subjects with disabilities" to Law n. 18, March 2009, "Ratification and execution of the Convention of the United Nations on the rights of people with disabilities, with optional protocol, signed in New York on December 13 2006 and institution of the National Observatory on the conditions of people with disabilities". Finally, we remember the Law n. 170, 8 October 2010, "New standards regarding specific learning disorders at school" and relative Guidelines.

In particular, Law n. 17, 28 January 1999, "Integration and modification of the Framework-law n. 104, 5 February 1992, for the assistance, social integration and rights of handicapped persons" contemplates a number of activities that Universities must implement to ensure the integration of disabled students in the University courses. The services that must be provided by the universities concern: technical and teaching subsidies, institution of special services of tutelage, individualized treatment to pass the exams. Universities must reserve a quote of the University Ordinary Funds (UOF), the Dean nominates a teacher delegated to the diversity responsible for coordinating, monitoring and supporting the implementation of the initiatives regarding the process of integration of the students with disabilities (CNUDD, 2014, p. 2). The constant need of sharing practices and experiences developed by the single Universities on the theme was at the basis of the constitution, in 2001, of intra- University coordinating body called "National University Conference of the Delegates for the Disability" (*Conferenza Nazionale Universitaria dei Delegati per la Disabilità*-CNUDD). The collaboration between the CRUI and the CNUDD enhanced the redaction of the early guidelines towards a common perspective for the efforts of the Italian universities on integration. The Guidelines underwent revision according to the evolution of the legislation and the experience developed by the different actors. The updated version (2014) includes a specific section for the students with SpLDs. The general objective of the document is to "address the policies and the good practices of the Universities, stimulating exchanges and synergies within the scope of a greater qualification of the right to study for those students with special

learning needs and the constitution of inclusive academic communities" (CNUDD, 2014, p. 3). As highlighted by the Guidelines, it is essential that each University "establish a supporting administrative structure, coordinated by the Delegate". The latter has a strategic role in facilitating the services for students with disabilities and SpLDs, specifically: firstly, it is the reference point in the University for all questions concerning the theme; also, represents the reference for all realities outside the University that are involved with disabilities and SpLDs (for example, a regional agencies for the right to study, associations and firms for labour insertion); promotes the process of awareness in his/her the academic community, through the realisation of targeted initiatives; is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the offered services to guarantee the development within an inclusive perspective; finally, takes the role of mediator between students and teachers, raising awareness on integration.

In general, the services for students with disabilities should be equipped with personnel with relational competence and related to the concession of specific technical and information aids.

At national level, the state of the art of the SDDA's services, briefly exposed below, has been measured by a survey carried out on the sites of 77 Universities that adhered to the CNUDD. The data gathered would need verification through a field study capable to analyse effectively the presence of indicators of quality in the activities of each individual service. Here, we limit ourselves to the illustration of some general considerations based on the online survey and the results of studies carried out at national level. The goal is to identify possible perspectives of further development and improvement of the quality of the services provided to guarantee the right to study to students with disabilities, hence, an improvement of the levels of inclusion in the context of University teaching-learning.

A first consideration concerns the denomination that the services take in the various Universities: in some instances – although limited in number – a scarce attention towards the language adopted in the last years in accordance with people with disabilities emerges. In fact, in several cases expressions like "handicap carriers" were recorded used to specify the target of some SDDA. Furthermore, a deeper research carried out beyond the consultation of the pages dedicated to the services for disabilities, highlights how, at times, the specific SDDA links do not show important