Inclusive education in Italy: challenges and developments

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Agenda

- European and international contexts
- What is inclusive education?
- The Italian context the policy of *integrazione* scolastica
- Towards inclusive education. What can we learn from the Italian experience?



AFTER SEVERAL ATTEMPTS, FRED BEGINS TO REALIZE THAT COOKBOOK RECIPES FOR INCLUSION JUST DON'T WORK.

International framework

- Council Resolutions concerning inclusion of children and young people with disabilities into mainstream systems of education
- UNESCO Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action in Special Needs Education (1994)
- UNESCO Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education (2009)
- European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education reports
- UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
- World Report on Disability (WHO, 2011)

World Report on Disability (2011)

 Ensuring that children with disabilities receive good quality education in an inclusive environment should be a priority of all countries. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) recognizes the right of all children with disabilities both to be included in the general education systems and to receive the individual support they require (see Box 7.1). Systemic change to remove barriers and provide reasonable accommodation and support services is required to ensure that children with disabilities are not excluded from mainstream educational opportunities. (World Report on Disability, 2011:205)

What is inclusive education?

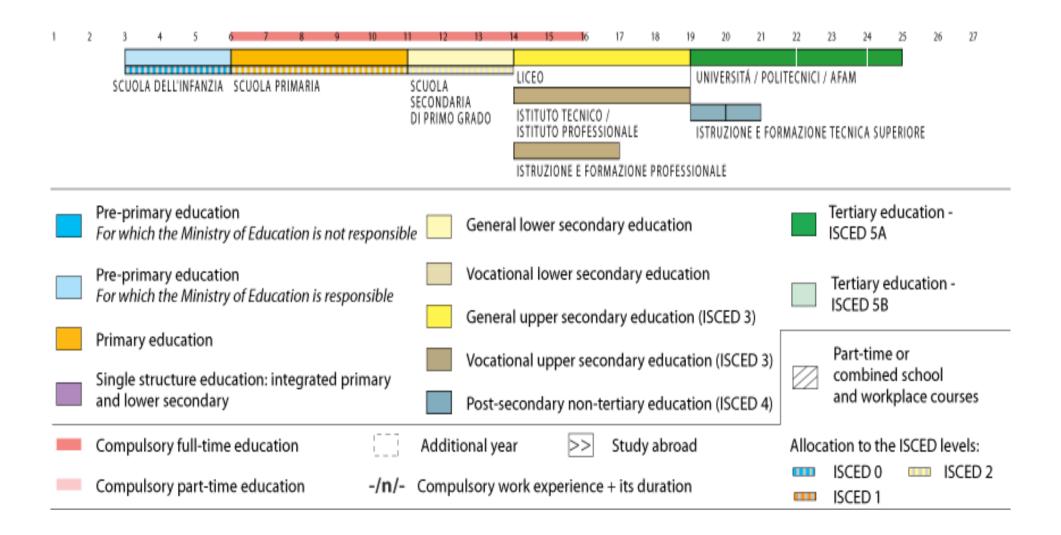
- Different interpretations:
 - The process of mainstreaming learners with disabilities in regular classrooms
 - The process of mainstreaming all learners at risk of exclusion (wider range of learners: special educational needs, ethnic minorities)
 - The process of safeguarding 'basic education' to all (non-European countries – Education for all)

Inclusive education(2)

- The process increasing access/presence,
 participation and achievement of all learners in the process of learning
- The process of re-structuring the education system in order to meet the diversity of the student population
- The process of fighting exclusion and all forms of discrimination and remove all barriers (attitudes, policy, practice, environment and resources)

Inclusive education (3):

- It requires a systemic change (transformation of the education systems)
- It does not concern only learners with disabilities but how the education system is organised to meet the requirements of all learners
- It does not lose sight of individual requirements and impairments but focuses on the structural and social factors that may determine 'special needs'



Source: Eurydice 2012

Inclusive Education in Italy

The policy of *integrazione scolatica* (school integration)

- Innovative and progressive policy
- All students are educated in the local 'mainstream' classrooms and schools (Law 517/1977)
- Special classes and schools were dismantled
 School integration is not a synonym for inclusive education

Historical and cultural factors that promoted integration in Italy

- Social factors: internal migration; political activism (trade unions, students, voices of parents and disabled people's associations)
- Religious factors: values of the Catholic Church
- Political factors: end of Fascism and the enactment of the Constitution charter (1948)
- Pedagogical factors: Constructivism, the work of Piaget, Dewey, Vygotskij, learning requires different stimuli, environment impacts on learning

Integrazione scolastica policy (legislative steps)

- 118/1971 facilitating integration of learners with disabilities into regular classrooms and schools
- 1975 : Falcucci experimentation (research)
- 517/1977 integration of learners with disabilities into regular schools (primary and lower secondary)
- 215/1987: *integration* in upper secondary schools (14-19 years)
- 104/1992: Framework Law
- Presidential Decree 1994 establishing the role of local health units

Integrazione scolastica (2)

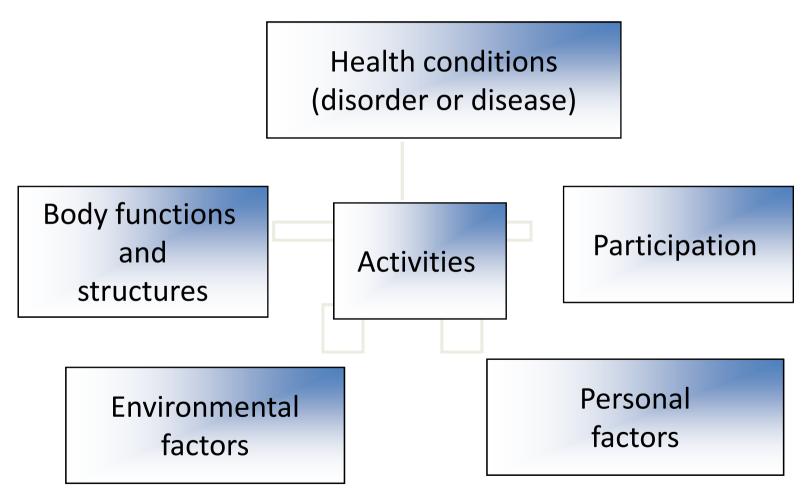
- 17/1999: access to University
- 68/1999: targeted employment
- 328/2000: Local services to learners in schools and local agreements (networking)
- 289/2002 International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF, WHO 2001) and Presidential Decree 19/05/2006
- Law 179/2010 on Learning difficulties (Dyslexia)

ICF (WHO 2001)

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health:

- belongs to the family of the International Classification tools published by the WHO (ICIDH, 1980; ICIDH -2, 1993; ICD -2, 1992/94).
- provides a scientific basis for studying health and health related states and conditions
- establishes a unified and standard language
- conceptualises disability as multi-dimensional dynamic interaction between health conditions and environmental and personal factors
- determines persons' eligibility for certain facilities

Bio-psycho-social model of disability (ICF, 2001)



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Statementing procedure

- Medical diagnosis (medical doctor; eligibility based on ICD; ICIDH; ICF manuals)
- Functional diagnosis (medical doctor; it identifies potentialities in the following areas: cognitive, sociorelational; sensory; linguistic; motor; neurological; psychological; autonomy)
- Functional Dynamic Profile (multidisciplinary team; developments in the short and long terms)
- Individual educational plan (multidisciplinary team; curricular and extra-curricular activities; information about teaching and learning methods, rehabilitation and socio-educational activities)

What happens in schools?

1. 'Additional' human resources

Support/Specialised teacher, learning support assistant or teaching aid, ancillary personnel (personal hygiene and mobility)

2. 'Additional' material resources

Technical aids (i.e. machine to write in Braille, assistive technology), services (i.e. local transport)

- 3. Reasonable adjustments and accommodations (more time for exams, interpreters, ICT support)
- 4. Individual Educational Plan (IEP): differentiation of teaching and individualisation of learning (links with the classroom curriculum/programme), rehabilitation, extra curricular activities.
- **5. Collaboration** with the local community (networking with service providers, social care, local health units, associations, other schools, resource centres)

What can we learn from the process of *integrazione scolastica* in Italy?

Strengths of the policy of integrazione

- Anti-discriminatory legislation and policy
- Dismantling all forms of segregation (placement matters)
- De-institutionalization is a priority
- School principal's beliefs and teachers' attitudes
- School ethos that celebrates diversity (school development plan - integration team)
- Differentiation of teaching and individualisation of learning for learners with disabilities is the norm
- Collaboration between mainstream and support teachers, with families and learners
- Networking with local actors/bodies (local health units, local educational boards, service providers, associations)

Total number of disabled students in regular state classrooms (Ministerial source)

Years	Learners with disabilities
1994/1995	114.239
1999/2000	130.146
2000/2001	132.646
2001/2002	142.774
2002/2003	156.009
2003/2004	161.159
2007/2008	170,696
2009-2010	184,245
2010/2011	208.521

Integration today: some challenges

(source: Canevaro, D'Alonzo, lanes and Caldin 2011)

- 90% of teachers are in favour of integration
- 75% of teachers disagree with special/differentiated classrooms
- 65% of teachers report that integration is not effective for learners with disabilities (!)
- Above 80% of the IEPs are made and used by support teachers only

Challenges (2)

(source D'Alessio, 2011)

- The practice of delegation (support teachers are the only teachers responsible for learners with disabilities)
- Integration is often taking place in special units within the mainstream settings (mixed tracks 54.8%; only within the mainstream classroom 39.5%; always outside the mainstream classroom 5.7%)

Challenges (3)

(source D'Alessio, 2011)

- Integration has misunderstood the means (mainstreaming learners with disabilities) for its ends (changing the way in which schools are organised)
- It focuses on the functioning of the learner with disabilities and how to compensate for it leaving education systems unchanged
- It is still an issue of 'additional' resources (conditional type)

Challenges (4)

- Integration is still embedded in a medical conceptualisation of disability (deficit lies in the learner)
- We need to move from the norm-deficit-need paradigm (homogeneity of learners; abilism; compensation) to 'difference' paradigm

Theoretical frameworks

 Theoretical premises impact on the way in which a policy is implemented at a local level

Aspects	Special needs education	Integration	Inclusive education
Focus	On the individual deficit (in segregated or in mainstream settings)	On the provision of additional support (adaptation, adjustment, resources) that can be provided to the individual within mainstream settings	On the transformation of the structures (systemic change of pedagogy, assessment and curriculum)
Theoretical model	Medical/clinical model of disability. A within-the-child approach to disability	A mixture between medical model, psychological model and social model	Human rights approach. All learners have the right to be educated in the local school without the need of being labelled or categorised as needy or different.

Aspects/issues	Special Needs Education	Integration	Inclusive Education
Actions/interventions taken	Assistance and specialist support provided for the individual (in segregated or mainstream settings)	Compensation for the individual deficit (rehabilitation or economic benefits). Specialist support is provided within the mainstream setting	Reform of teaching and learning, and the organisation of mainstream schooling in order to respond to the totality of the student population
Disability is considered as:	Individual deficit and a personal limitation	Interaction between the environment and the person	Form of exclusion and discrimination experienced by people with impairments as a result of the way in which society (and schooling) are currently structured.

Aspects/Issues	Special Needs Education	Integration	Inclusive Education
Decision making process	Professionals as the main decision makers	Professionals, parents and sometimes pupils with SEN are involved.	The role of disabled people is central (issues of advocacy, self-determination and empowerment – see the UN Convention 2006). Disabled people have a voice in the policy-making process (see for example the Agency initiatives: Young Views on Special Needs Education, 2003 and Young People's Views on Inclusive Education, 2007)

Taking an inclusive turn

- The development of inclusive education requires:
 - Fighting against all forms of discrimination and exclusion (macro and micro exclusions)
 - Removing all barriers to presence, participation and achievement
 - Teacher education for Inclusion
 - Strengthening the capacity of the mainstream school
 - Involving people with disabilities in the process of change

Taking an inclusive turn (2)

Organisation of systems of support

Individual level: modify the way in which pedagogy, assessment, school organization, curriculum are organized

School level: flexibility of the school organisation, co-operation between teachers, visionary leadership

Community level: networking and partnerships

Individual level

- create small groups in the classrooms (not streaming or tacking) but mixed ability grouping
- promote collaboration among peers and also ensure that this is happening at the level of school teachers
- use differentiated materials (audio-visual support; practical examples) and at different level of competences (learners start at different levels, learning is not progressive and linear)
- problem-solving activities (not repetitions of text book this will produce disaffection to schools)
- dealing with mistakes and errors as part of the learning assessment for learning, port-folio, self-assessment (not marking)
- Involve learners in the decision of what to do/study- personalized learning for all students (not just for individual children with disabilities)
- Personalised learning for all students

School level

- Flexible school organisation: break with the traditional idea of schooling (groupings based on learning not on age)
- collaboration between different stakeholders
- ethos and moral values to be shared by all staff
- visionary leaders that support innovation
- provide teachers with time to reflect about their teaching and exchange information with colleagues
- celebrate the work of teachers and other local actors
- involve parents and learners

Community support

- schools are not the only responsible bodies for the education of learners
- create partnerships and collaboration at a local level
- Formalise the support provided by public, private and voluntary bodies/organisations

Key principles for inclusive education

(adapted from Key principles for Promoting Quality in Inclusive Education, 2009)

Values

 Inclusive education concerns a wider range of learners that those identified as having disabilities. It is concerned with re-structuring the education systems to meet the requirements of all learners. Involvement of all stakeholders (including people with disabilities in the decision making process)

Key principles for inclusive education

(adapted from Key principles for Promoting Quality in Inclusive Education, 2009)

Policy

 Legislation that promotes inclusion (integrated legislation; covering all sectors; alignment with international agreements; a rights approach) - policy makers from the educational, health and social sectors need to cooperate-policy that widens access, participation and achievement for all learners ensuring that all teachers are educated and trained in the area of inclusive education and disability (mainstream and specialist teachers alike) - ensure funding is provided for school development and innovation to support inclusion - flexible resourcing systems based on the organizational needs rather than learners diagnosis

Key principles for inclusive education

(adapted from Key principles for Promoting Quality in Inclusive Education, 2009)

Practice

responding to learners' voice - teacher's values and attitudes - All teachers should develop skills to meet the diversity of student population - School leaders should support and celebrate diversity, have an inclusive ethos and value diversity among staff and learners, encourage collegiality and support innovation and collaboration with other school leaders and relevant stakeholders- Interdisciplinary services, work closely with service providers across and between different services and sectors (health, social, employment, leisure, voluntary)- work with other schools (federation and cluster of schools)- work with families

Choose the underpinning question

Is the student right for the school?

Or

Is the school right for the student?

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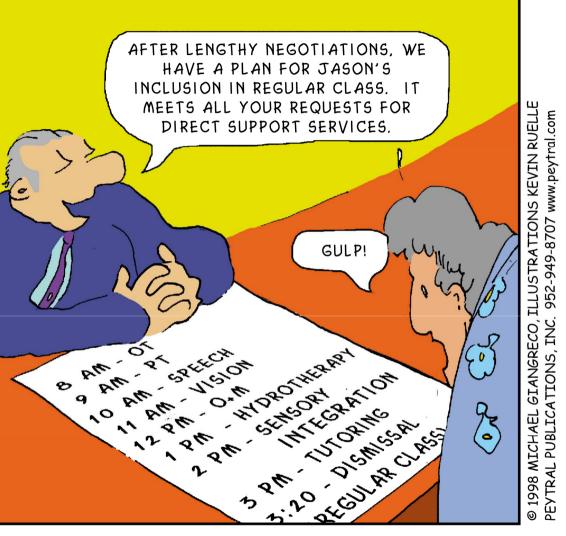
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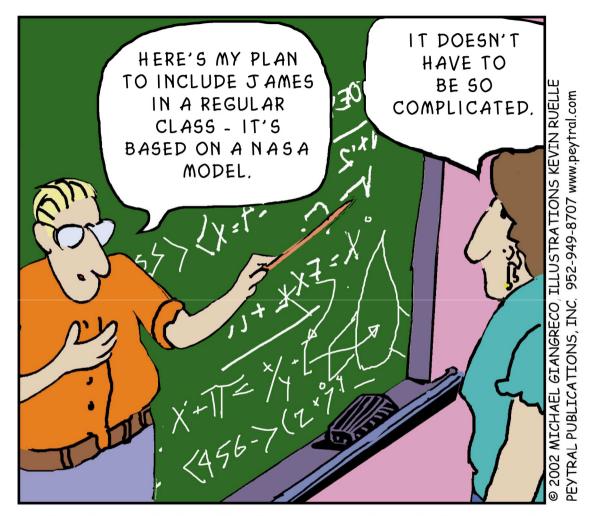


PRINCIPAL
JONES FAILS TO
RECOGNIZE THE
CONTRADICTION
IN TERMS.

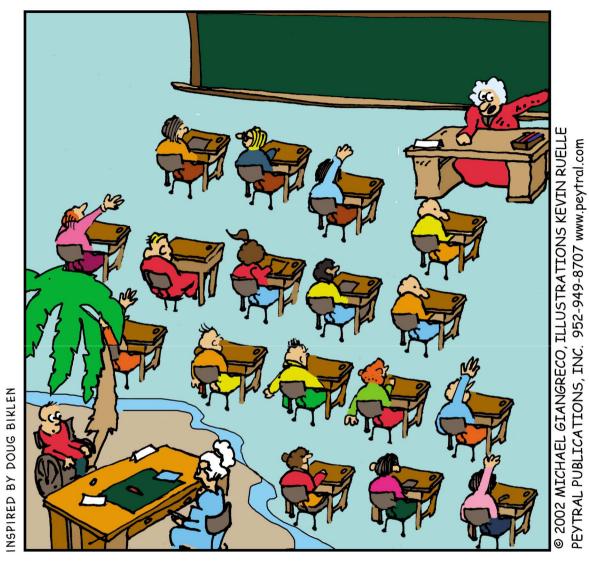
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JASON'S MOTHER HAS A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH THE OLD SAYING: "THE ONLY THING WORSE THAN NOT GETTING WHAT YOU WANT IS GETTING WHAT YOU WANT."



FRANK LEARNS THAT INCLUSION DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ROCKET SCIENCE.



ISLAND IN THE MAINSTREAM

MRS. JONES AND MRS. COOPER ARE STILL TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHY FRED DOESN'T FEEL LIKE PART OF THE CLASS.

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INCLUSIVE SCHOOL IN AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT (OR SUPPORT FOR LEARNING)

SCHOOL SUPPORT

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

PEDAGOGY
CURRICULUM
ASSESSMENT
PERSONALISED LEARNING
UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR
LEARNING

ORGANISATION FLEXIBILITY LEADERSHIP FAMILIES NETWORKING
PARTNERSHIPS
RESOURCE CENTRES

Human rights, equity, justice, democracy [...]