

Officina 2021: Futures for Education and Europeaness



Report of the virtual discussion table on the subject of:

Inequalities and stereotypes in textbooks and educational resources

28th April 2021

Participants:

Adriana Valente, Valentina Tudisca (CNR-IRPPS, coordinators), Irene Biemmi (Unifirenze), Angela Biscaldi (University of Milan), Giovanna Cipollari (EAS), Silvia Caravita (CNR-IRPPS), Marika De Acetis (Zanichelli), Daniela Donisi (ITIS G. Armellini of Rome), Antonella Festa (Liceo Vittorio Emanuele of Lanciano), Giordana Francia (CISP), Alessandro Fusacchia (Chamber of Deputies), Adelaide Gallina (University of Turin), Maura Gancitano (Tlon), Gianluca Gatta (Migrant Memories Archive), Marina Imperato (Ministry of Education), Paolo Landri (CNR-IRPPS), Paolo Monella (Sapienza University of Rome), Monica Smoljko (Crispi Primary School of Rome)

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE:

Adriana Valente, Valentina Tudisca, Claudia Pennacchiotti, Elisa Butali (Cnr-Irpps)
Antonio Di Nallo (DGSIP-MI)
Elena Gaudio (DGOSV-MI)
Marina Imperato (DGOSV-MI)
Alessia Vaglivello (USR Lazio)
Maya Prince, Noah W. Sobe (Futures of Education, UNESCO)

The virtual table has been recorded and is visible at <https://www.officinaed Formazionefuturi.it/>
The table was conducted in the framework of the European OLA Erasmus plus project

During the virtual discussion of April 28th 2021, different aspects were tackled: national and international research projects, educational and editorial practices, ministerial guidelines and the current [draft law on the promotion of diversity and the fight against stereotypes in textbooks](#). The above-said legislative proposal, in particular, envisages the production of guidelines on diversity and inclusion, the training of the players involved in the educational process, including publishing houses as well as the establishment of a National Observatory. The virtual discussion table also dwelled upon the UNESCO recommendations [regarding textbooks inclusiveness](#) and [Open Educational Resources](#). Different experiences, that deeply enriched the discussion, were outlined throughout the entire virtual discussion table, from which have emerged various points that it is possible to highlight here below:

The textbook is endowed with authority, but this can lead to an uncritical use. It should always be kept in mind that it is also a product of cultural industry, reflecting relations of power and its asymmetries, with a double function: that is, to affect individual development and guarantee cultural reproduction of society.

Still today textbooks convey stereotypes that generate discrimination, even through lack of representations, linked especially to: ethnocentrism, allochronism, gender, "right body", sole family model, representation of migrations, often faced with an eighteenth-century utilitarian approach (western), and LGBT+. The stereotype often seems to re-propose an anachronistic culture, but probably the symbolic to which it is connected is still a shared value. The delay in didactic transposition, which is, in other words, the time lapse between innovation (scientific, social, philosophical) and its appearance in textbooks, is neither fixed nor neutral, but strictly functional to the values rooted in the social fabric.

In addition to detaching from one-off stereotypes through a critical look at images and texts, a stereotyped way of thinking must be recognized and abandoned. As a matter of fact, it is necessary to get used to, and make learners getting accustomed to, the confrontation with complexity, the necessity of asking questions. It is also crucial to abandon simplifications, the fear of facing the error, the distrust in the learners' abilities so that one should always resort to a systemic approach, to challenge canons and to codified knowledge. Abandoning evolutionary narratives that lead to think that there are more or less evolved peoples, and replaced them with a comparative approach, enhancing at the same time the element of interdependence and co-responsibility.

Open educational resources can contribute to gaining awareness of stereotypes through a process of co-building knowledge with different social players. On the contrary, free but proprietary digital resources risk reducing the issue of stereotypes to corporate policy issues, jeopardizing the guarantees of data protection. Alongside the "traditional" teaching, laboratory experiences centered on expressive modalities linked to the body should also be promoted.

The emphasis on performance evaluation restricts the access possibilities to complexity. It is necessary to find ways in which each learner can develop their own personality, from a trans-disciplinary point of view as well.

It is essential that all social players do their part, families included. Among the publishing houses, Zanichelli has adopted a self-regulation code on stereotypes.

It is not useful to seek the ultimate cause of the presence of stereotypes in textbooks: the authors who write them, the publishers who publish them, the teachers who choose them. We need to recognize the presence of stereotypes within ourselves.

It is necessary to re-evaluate the relationship, the interdependence. The metaphor of triangular inequality prompts us to reflect: sides that are too short cannot create a meeting area.

Biographical notes of the participants

Irene Biemmi

Researcher at the Department of Education, Languages, Interculture, Literature and Psychology (FORLILPSI), University of Florence. Her research areas concern gender issues in education with particular reference to the critical analysis of teaching materials, teacher training and guidance. In this field she has conducted studies and research published in various volumes, including: "Sexist education. Gender stereotypes in primary school books "(2017); "Gender cages. Sexist traditions and educational choices", with Silvia Leonelli (2016). Together with Barbara Poggio and Stefano Ciccone, he directs the collection of scientific studies "Questions of gender" for Rosenberg & Sellier publishing house in Turin. She curates the series of illustrated books "Sottosopra" for the publisher EDT-Giralangolo (Turin), dedicated to the elimination of gender stereotypes in childhood.

Angela Biscaldi

Associate Professor at the Department of Social and Political Sciences, University State of Milano. She teaches *Cultural Anthropology* for the Degree in Social Sciences for Globalization and *Social History of the Media* for the Degree in Communication and Society. She is board member in Doctoral Programme, Philosophy and Human Sciences. Her research focuses on ethnography of communication, with particular emphasis on the performative, agentive and indexical aspects in everyday educational practices. Her latest publications: *Antropologia dei social media. Comunicare nel mondo globale* (Carocci 2019); "Una settimana senza social. Per un'educazione digitale" (San Paolo 2020); "Ethnography. A Theoretically Oriented Practice" (Palgrave, 2021).

Silvia Caravita

Graduate in Biological Sciences. Researcher of the CNR, she carried out her activity at the Center of Neuroembriology in the University of Rome "La Sapienza", the Institute of Sciences and Technologies of Cognition, where she coordinated the Department of Learning and Educational Contexts, and, as associate Researcher, at the Institute for Research on Population and Social Policies. She was responsible for national and European research projects and visiting professor at foreign institutes. She held positions in international scientific associations and with journals. Her research work has concerned the processes of building scientific knowledge, the factors that contribute to their evolution, and the conditions that influence them in formal and informal educational environments.

Giovanna Cipollari

Graduate in law, qualified to teach human sciences, letters and legal-economic subjects, she has held the following roles: professor of literature; IRRE Marche researcher; Head of the CVM-ESCI sector, for

the training of ToTs (Trainers in Service) on didactical research of Intercultural Education / Research coordinator Action on the revision of curricula in an intercultural key/scientific coordinator of International Seminars on World Citizenship/scientific coordinator for CVM of European projects: "Critical Review of the historical and social disciplines for a formal education suited to the global society" and "Get up and goals! – Global Education time".

Marika De Acetis

She works at Zanichelli editore publishing house in the Higher Education Department and is the coordinator of the "10 in parità" gender equality working group. With a PhD degree in Molecular Biology and a solid background in school publishing, she currently takes care of Science textbooks for Higher Education students.

Daniela Donisi

At present professor at Secondary school and College (i. e. High School), she taught in all grades from nursery school to college. She published articles on school magazines with "Giunti Editore" and collaborated with Research institutions and cultural associations. She designed and managed interdisciplinary projects complementary to the curricular activities, encouraging any activity promoting the principles of an active and inclusive school, strictly connected to real life, kept as a refuge of oneself identity, lived as a workshop of Community life. She collaborates with magazine "Scuola dell'Infanzia" (Giunti Editore), with "Scuola Popolare di Musica di Donna Olimpia", with "Assessorato all'ambiente del Comune di Fiumicino" and with "Centro Culturale Saint Louis de France".

Antonella Festa

Feminist, blogger, writer, translator of classical and modern languages. She is also a teacher of literary subjects at the secondary school "Liceo Classico" of Lanciano where she studied. She created the project *Un altro genere di poesia* about women writers from the origins to the Renaissance. Curator of the essay *Né d'altri son che mia*, written by her students, printed by Carabba, 2017. She co-translated *Le nuove forme di guerra e il corpo delle donne* by Rita Segato, in *La linea del genere*, Ombre corte, 2018. In 2019 she wrote *Appunti di una precaria dal supercarcere*, a diary of her experience in prison where she taught as a temporary teacher, printed by Nuova Gutenberg. Member of the *Società italiana delle Letterate*, she writes for the *Letterate Magazine* and she collaborates with a school group for the magazine *Leggendaria*, for the page *Cara Prof.*

Giordana Francia

Director of the Geographical Area Italy and the European Union of CISP (International Committee for the Development of Peoples), an NGO founded in 1983, with headquarters in Rome. CISP has been implementing humanitarian aid, rehabilitation and development projects in over 30 countries in: Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, and Eastern Europe. Its areas of intervention are right to social and economic security; health, access to water and environmental remediation; rights of children, adolescents and young people and environmental improvement; support for public policies for social cohesion and civil society. In Italy and Europe CISP carries out projects of information, training and Global Citizenship Education, in formal education, with schools and teachers, and

non-formal education, involving young people, civil society, local authorities, grassroots associations/informal groups.

Alessandro Fusacchia

Italian member of Parliament and of the new parliamentary group FacciamoECO – Federazione Verdi Italiani, co-founder of Movimenta, a new Italian political organization, and a novelist. He is currently serving in the Chamber of Deputies as a member of the commission on Culture, Science and Education and has established the Inter-parliamentary group on AI. He previously served as: Head of Cabinet at the Ministry of Education, University and Research, Special Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Economic Diplomacy and to the Minister of Economic Development for European Affairs, Youth and Innovation. Official at the EU Council dealing with global economic governance. He worked for the Prime Minister's office as part of the G8 team and for the Ministry of International Trade. He taught at LUISS in Rome and at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris. He co-founded RENA, association for youth empowerment.

Maria Adelaide Gallina

Researcher in General Sociology at the Department of Philosophy and Educational Sciences, she deals with issues related to educational contexts and processes of interaction between school and society, in particular she studies forms of deviance, such as bullying and physical addiction and behavioral. She taught in primary school. Among his publications we remember *Dal bullismo al cyberbullismo. Strategie socio-educative* (FrancoAngeli, 2019), *L'illusione in una sostanza. Storie di vita e rappresentazioni di dipendenza* (FrancoAngeli, 2019), *Dalla debolezza alla dipendenza. Comportamenti a rischio e uso di sostanze tra adolescenti e non solo* (Carocci, 2013), *Dentro il bullismo. Contributi e proposte socio-educative per la scuola* (FrancoAngeli, 2009).

Maura Gancitano

Writer, philosopher and founder of Tlon, a school of philosophy, a publishing house and a theater bookshop. She deals with gender equality, diversity and inclusion, digital public spaces and cultural communication, and collaborates with numerous universities and institutions. She wrote several books with Andrea Colamedici, including "La Società della Performance" (Edizioni Tlon 2018), "Get rid of the good girl. Eight Stories to Bloom" (HarperCollins 2019) and "Take it with Philosophy. Personal Flowering Handbook" (HarperCollins 2021), which is being translated in various countries. She leads the School of Philosophy and Audible Club podcasts on Audible. She was the testimonial of the law proposal against gender stereotypes in school books first signed by the Honorable Alessandro Fusacchia.

Gianluca Gatta

PhD, anthropologist and co-founder of AMM - Archive of migrant memories. He is currently working as Principal Investigator of AMM for the Horizon 2020 project "ITHACA. Interconnecting Histories and Archives for Migrant Agency: Entangled Narratives Across Europe and the Mediterranean Region" (coord.: Univ. of Modena and Reggio Emilia). Has taught at the Universities of Kobe (Japan), Calabria,

Naples “L’Orientale” and “Federico II” and carried out fieldwork in Lampedusa, Rome and Naples. His research interests are: migration and production of illegality; third places and sociability; migrant voice, memory and subjectivity. Among his publications are: «Self-narration, Participatory Video and Migrant Memories: A (Re)making of the Italian Borders» (2019); «‘Half devil and half child’: an ethnographic perspective on the treatment of migrants on their arrival in Lampedusa» (2018).

Marina Imperato

Schoolhead at the Ministry of Education - General Directorate for Laws - where she deals primarily with high school courses and state exams. Graduations at ‘Orientale’ (NA) in Modern Foreign Languages/Literatures and in Modern Literature, PhD in Historical Linguistics at the University of Pisa, Master in Public Managerial Practice-MP2 at the University ‘Federico II’ (NA). Author in academic journals, editor of the Latin dictionaries Nuovo Campanini-Carboni and Nomen, and of the etymological apparatus of the GI Greek dictionary, with wide international experiences in academic and educational fields. She has dealt a multi-year training activity mainly on issues concerning leadership and school organization, internationalization of education, the promotion of education in disadvantaged areas, alongside an intense editorial activity and as a conference participant.

Paolo Landri

Senior Researcher and delegated by the Director for the unit of Fisciano (SA) of the Institute of Research on Population and Social Policies at National Research Council in Italy (CNR-IRPPS). His main research interests concern educational organizations, professional learning and educational policies. Recently, he has published *Digital Governance of Education. Technologies, Standards and Europeanization of Education*. London: Bloomsbury (2018) and *Educational Leadership, Management, and Administration through Actor-Network Theory* (Critical Studies in Educational Leadership, Management and Administration). London: Routledge (2020). Currently, he Co-Editor in Chief of the European Educational Research Journal (EERJ) <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/eer>

Paolo Monella

Researcher (type A) in Latin and Digital Humanities at Sapienza University of Rome and DH responsible for the PAGES Project. PhD in Classics (Palermo 2006), lecturer in Classics at UCLA (2004 and 2007/08), post-doc fellow in Digital Humanities at the Accademia dei Lincei (2012). Lecturer in Digital Humanities at the University of Palermo (2008-2021); DH curator at ALIM (since 2013); visiting scholar at the Venice Centre for Digital and Public Humanities at Ca' Foscari (2019/20); coordinator of the UAN IT support group (since 2018); AIUCD Board member (since 2021). He published on classical mythology, Latin literature and digital scholarly editions (DSEs). Editions: Urus Beneventanus, "De nomine" (2016); Romualdus Salernitanus, "Chronicon" (2020); Priscian's Ars, books 11-13 (ongoing). Home page: <http://www.paolomonella.it>

Monica Smoljko

Born in Rome on 11/2/1963, she has a degree in Pedagogy. After several years of work in different contexts, she has been a primary school teacher for over thirty years, permanently in Rome for 22 at the Crispi school located in the Monteverde district. She teaches humanities (Italian, History, Art and Music) in a full-time school. In the school she has always held various institutional positions. She has

two children and over the years she has cultivated various interests: study of piano, opera singing (she sang in a choir for many years) and flamenco, which she still dances today.

Valentina Tudisca

PhD in physics with a two-year master in Science communication, she is a researcher at the Institute for Research on Population and Social Policies of the National Research Council of Italy, where she works in the group [Social studies of science, education, communication](#) on the relations between science, politics and society, participating in national and European projects. Her research interests include: science communication, relationships between evidence and policy-making, representations of migrants in the mass media and in textbooks, connections between science and art. She uses participative methodologies to involve social actors in her research activities. In parallel with her research, she has collaborated with a range of magazines such as *Sapere*, *National Geographic Italia* and *OggiScienza.*, winning 3 national science journalism awards.

Adriana Valente

CNR-IRPPS research director, jurist and sociologist, coordinator of Officina Educazione Futuri, she is the scientific director of the research group [Social Studies of Science, Education, Communication](#), which heads international projects on: relations between science, policy and society; education and participation in the scientific debate; representations of migrants in textbooks and media. University courses and scientific publications: <https://www.irpps.cnr.it/staff/adriana-valente/> The “Developing and Evaluating Skills for Creativity and Innovation” project was recognized as Best Practice by MIUR and by the Italian agency for European projects Erasmus Plus INDIRE. Among ongoing projects: “Integrated Content and Language via a Unified Digital Environment” and “The Global Science Opera Leverage Students Participation and Engagement in Science through Art Practices”.