

CALL FOR PAPERS

Dossier monografico «Rivista di Storia dell'educazione» n. 2, 2018:

COMPARATIVE RESEARCH IN EDUCATION: current trends at national and European level, and global prospects for development

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Comparative research in the field of education is currently witnessing a number of trends and positions that reveal the rude health of a field that, over recent decades, has been able, by building on established traditions, to seize the opportunities offered by a changing cultural, social and political environment, both in Europe and around the world. It is a field marked by lively dialogue whereby comparativists – typically reflecting their own national traditions – revisit the epistemological and methodological basis of their research and experiment with new approaches.

From the very beginning, comparative education has grappled with questions of purpose and method. It began as an empirical science, its function the discovery and comparison of data. As the field developed, particularly during the second half of the twentieth century, it became necessary to refine the scope and methods of investigation in order that the scientific rigour of the field be recognised. Here, to address problematic issues - such as the degree to which the research carried out actually belongs to the field of pedagogy - a degree of theoretical clarification seems necessary. In particular, it is important to reflect the nuances of meaning attached to terms like comparative education and comparative pedagogy in different languages; indeed, we might even begin by considering the distinctions between these very designations. Indeed, the thematic nuclei of investigation risk drifting too far into sociological, ethnographic or psychological research, and losing sight of the true subject matter of this field of comparative research, which is to say pedagogy and education, with all the distinct significance that these two terms bring with them in Italian. It is necessary, therefore, to evidence the capacity of comparative education to arrive at an increasingly comprehensive and articulated definition of pedagogical and educational phenomena in terms of their place, but also in terms of time and culture.

Over time, and in the years following the Second World War in particular, the focus of comparative education has been pluralised and diversified. Alongside the traditional comparison of school systems – for the most part considered in terms of nation states – comparative research has addressed educational methods, problems and practices, and considered questions of theory, policy and the nature of different education systems. This, however, has undermined both the use of the state-nation as the unit of comparison, and the “melioristic” scope of the research itself, a characteristic that is tied to the idea of *transfer*, which today is understood in terms of *translation* and *transformation*.

In terms of research methodology, Bereday’s classic model has been much revisited but never replaced. Subdivided into four phases, it is based on the criteria of comparability – or *tertium comparationis* – as the primary principle by which the data collected are considered. In more recent times, however, Bereday’s model has been joined by a variety of quantitative methods – that attempt to arrive at a nomothetical understanding of universally applicable educational principles – and qualitative methods, wherein a single case is considered in idiographic terms. From this current debate, there seems to arise the need for studies that recognise both the historical and cultural evolution, and the ethnographic nature of the places in which they are carried out, firstly as a means of remedying the so-called “historical amnesia” that has afflicted many recent studies, and secondly

as a response to a number of issues that have been made all the more pressing by the phenomenon of globalisation and the relationship between macro and micro realities.

Contributions may make reference to one of the problems indicated, highlighting the national tradition in which they are situated and attempting to outline trends and potential for development for comparative research in an Italian, European or worldwide context.

Contributions will be received in English

KEY THEMATIC AREAS:

- The epistemology of comparative education and its methodological development.
- Comparing pedagogical theories and educational methodologies in different national contexts.
- Comparing educational policies and practices, as applied in different contexts .
- Comparing school systems in Europe and around the world.
- Comparative writings by Italian authors, in the form of descriptive and travel writing, on the subject of non-Italian education systems and authors from other countries, from the unification of Italy to the present day.
- Comparative writings by non-Italian authors on the subject of Italian authors and aspects of schools and education in Italy, from the unification of Italy to the present day.

OPERATIONAL INDICATIONS AND DEADLINES

The deadline for submitting proposals is 31 January 2018. The authors must present a short *abstract* in which to briefly describe the context of the article and to articulate the subject matter of the article, taking care to indicate the methodology used, the type of sources and a succinct reference bibliography (no more than 10 titles). The *abstract* should be directed to the CIRSE Secretariat, to the attention of prof. Gianfranco Bandini: segreteria@cirse.it ; (and for knowledge to the curators of the dossier, at: angelo.gaudio@uniud.it ; carla.callegari@unipd.it).

By 28 February 2018, the outcome of the preliminary assessment and the acceptance or not of the proposals will be communicated.

The deadline for delivery of accepted texts is set for 31 July 2018.

Accepted authors must first register on the magazine platform (<https://www.rivistadistoriadelleducazione.it/index.php/RSE/login>).

The proposed text will then be uploaded directly to the journal's platform according to the instructions (<https://www.rivistadistoriadelleducazione.it/index.php/RSE/about/submissions>).

Any text will be submitted to an anonymous peer review, according to the magazine's standards.

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