

A Special Issue for the 25 years of *Encyclopaideia*

Daniele Bruzzone*^a

Massimiliano Tarozzi^b

^a Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Italy)

^b Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna (Italy)

Published: May 30, 2023

With this special issue of *Encyclopaideia* we are happy to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the first issue of the journal. It contains the contributions, extensively revised, that were presented during the seminar held in Bologna, on 15 October 2022, in the Sala Rossa of Palazzo Marchesini. The purpose of this event was to bring together the various generations of scholars in education who have shaped the history of the journal, along with other friends and scholars who share its ideals and cultural agenda, with a view to jointly reflecting on the deeper meaning of the purpose of education. It seemed crucial to us that, while continuing to offer an esteemed service in the domain of academic journalism, *Encyclopaideia* should reaffirm its calling as a space for analysing and studying current questions in education; all while remaining firmly committed to the phenomenological requirement to understand, through the different ways that educational experience is given to us, the “eidetic core” that makes an experience *educative* in the first place.

The journal, and still before it the Enciclopaideia group (without ‘y’), have been characterized since their inception by a spirit of open exchange that is not prejudicial or ideologically driven, given that dialogue is the very essence of thought. Piero Bertolini’s lesson, which remains current and highly generative in its effects, reminds us that all forms of self-centeredness “imply or lead to a perilous isolation that will impoverish even the best ideas and the most courageous experiments” (Bertolini, 2001, p. 61). In the face of the ongoing crisis in our disoriented world, the temptation to stake out reassuring, and in a certain sense controllable, chunks of reality for ourselves represents a constant risk to which even researchers are not always immune. In contrast, the choice of posing radical questions constitutes an attempt to rediscover a basis for shared meaning and the direction in which it can lead us.

Faithful to our tradition of critical discussion of key current pedagogical issues, we have decided to celebrate this quarter of a century in a way that is not affected and purely congratulatory but with an intellectual work of reflection on a key theme for contemporary educational theory. A theme on which the phenomenological perspective provides an interpretative and critical edge: the hegemony of measurement and accountability in educational processes and policies that have increasingly drained the very meaning of educating people. A theme that the Enciclopaideia group has historically analysed since the 1990s, but which has taken on a particular shape, within the current neoliberal discourse.

The philosopher of education Gert Biesta, invited to Bologna for the occasion, provided the main impulse for the discussion. Since we were familiar with his work on the limits of education in the era of what he acutely called *learnification*, we started from there. It is a well-known work (Biesta, 2009) to the international public but never published in Italian. We are therefore pleased to present it here for the first time translated by Chiara Montà.

* ✉ daniele.bruzzone@unicatt.it

Acknowledging the predominance of accountability regimes, measurements, comparisons, and rankings in educational settings and in the policies that regulate them, Biesta invites us to reflect on one of the crucial questions of the educational discourse: that of the purposes of education, which seems to have disappeared from the current pedagogical agenda.

The papers of this issue comment and develop the provocations launched by Biesta in his introductory article and further elaborate on the crisis of the emancipatory mandate of formal education that echoes the loss of the very meaning of education.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the the Institute for Advanced Studies, which hosted the event in its prestigious venue, and the UNESCO Chair in Global Citizenship Education, which supported the organization of the event. But especially we would like to thank the *Encyclopaideia*'s friends whose intellectual passion has contributed to stimulate a debate that is now more necessary than ever.

References

- Bertolini, P. (2001). *Pedagogia fenomenologica. Genesi, sviluppo, orizzonti*. Firenze: La Nuova Italia.
- Biesta, G. J. J. (2009). Good education in an age of measurement: on the need to reconnect with the question of purpose in education. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 21, 33–46. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-008-9064-9>