

Editorial

When the logic of strength prevails, what kind of school can educate for the future?

The sleep of reason produces monsters (Goya)

At the close of every school year, and again at each new beginning, it is worthwhile to pause and reflect.

As we look at our children and students, as both adults and educators, we inevitably find ourselves returning to those questions that have no definitive answers.

Education requires an openness to a vision of the future — but how can we imagine it?

How can we help each person become the best version of themselves in this moment?

What kind of school is needed to build a future that allows everyone's hopes to be fulfilled?

These are questions we cannot avoid answering, because they guide our daily actions. Yet, at the same time, such answers are open, as they continually evolve in dialogue with the reality we are living in — a complex reality, in a challenging time.

The logic of strength prevails over the strength of reason

In an increasingly dramatic way, at the international level we are witnessing wars that involve defenseless populations. There are no reasons that can justify such violence, which is dehumanizing not only for the victims but also for those who inflict it. The “strength of reason” — embodied in international law and in the dignity of every human being — is replaced by the “logic of strength”, where words lose their truth and distort reality, where human value becomes instrumental, and where one's future is imagined as domination over others.

Some of these scenarios may seem distant, yet others are not. Even when the media report on politics or news in our country, conflict and others' annihilation seem to be the normal and legitimate way to deal with difficulties or disagreements.

The contexts closer to our daily lives do not offer a truly different picture. Less dramatically, perhaps, yet even in our everyday interactions we often witness the same logic of overpowering others. Competition has become the prevailing metaphor of relationships: there are winners and losers; the other is an enemy, an opponent to be defeated, surpassed — no matter the cost.

Violence breeds violence, nothing but violence

Regardless the context, the underlying logic seems unchanging, though the scale and severeness of the phenomena may vary. For those who hold an educational role it is not only necessary to understand and analyze the

situation, but also to grasp its implications for their own actions. It is an illusion to believe that such dynamics remain external to us. What is at stake is the quality of our educational relationships, their future orientation. The prevalence of the *logic of strength* casts a shadow over a future no longer directed toward building reciprocity and positive interdependence — a future of inclusion, where each person is recognized and valued — but rather toward one of opposition, exclusion, and separation. A future without winners, built upon dehumanizing relationships, and grounded in the failure to recognize our shared humanity.

Violence — from the most brutal to the seemingly invisible — produces only more violence, never justice or well-being. This holds true not only for the *losers*, but also for the *winners*. When the logic guiding society and individuals — both internationally and locally — relies on force and violence as means to resolve conflicts and regulate relationships, what is ultimately lost is the very possibility of remaining human.

Educating in a stubborn and contrary direction

To give in to this logic implies losing the very sense of education, transforming the school into an institution that reinforces inequality instead of cultivating the ability to think critically and responsibly — for oneself, for others, and for the ecosystem in which we live.

Buber placed the *dialogical principle*¹ at the heart of the quality of the human experience: only within relationships that recognize the other as another self — as a *you* — each person has the possibility of becoming human, of recognizing themselves, and of fully developing their potential. When this does not happen, the other — once a *you*, with a face, a name, a story — is reduced to a *thing*, an *it*, an enemy to be destroyed, whether in war or in competition. Yet there are no true winners, for the same loss of humanity occurs also for the self. The challenge, then, is to become and remain human. This is possible only within relationships that acknowledge our shared humanity, that refuse to let the *logic of strength* prevail over the *strength of reason* to dominate or subjugate others.

It is no coincidence that UNESCO sees in education the possibility of promoting a *new humanism* and of *reimagining our shared futures*², capable of confronting injustice, poverty, pandemics, and the climate crisis. Published in 2021, the document takes on even greater significance today, in light of the recent international situation, where the only apparent logic seems to be the force of weapons, power, and wealth.

Education is the key to building possible futures that foster opportunities for happiness and growth for all. It is an arduous task that may seem utopian, yet to give up on it would mean abandoning hope for a future in which no one is excluded.

Becoming and remaining human may seem difficult in a world where even words have become violent, where discussions grow polarized and turn into destructive disputes.

Education and schooling must, instead, go steadfastly against the prevailing current — challenging the dominant logic that shapes both the international scenario and interpersonal relationships.

1 M. Buber (1993), *Il principio dialogico e altri saggi*, San Paolo, Milano.

2 UNESCO, *Re-immaginare i nostri futuri insieme: un nuovo contratto sociale per l'educazione*, in https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379381_itq.

A school for learning to live

Educating and teaching are verbs that belong to the future. They require a horizon in which to find their meaning: helping every child to become human. Within this strive lies the possibility for every adult to remain human, in the search for words and experiences that can lead to a “good” life for everyone.

To withdraw into the mere transmission of reassuring knowledge, without helping students to think, to construct meaning, and to question themselves, would be a betrayal — both for them and ourselves.

An editorial is not meant to be exhaustive; its purpose is to offer prompts for further reflection. In this regard, we suggest two readings.

Reading Morin can offer rich insights — in particular his *Teaching to Live: A Manifesto for Changing Education*³. The Author entrusts the school with the task of teaching how to live, not as the transmission of notions or rules to be applied, but as an invitation to understand in order to become human: “Every truly human development must involve the joint growth of individual autonomy, community solidarity, and the awareness of belonging to the human species” (p. 102).

Another valuable perspective can be found in Mortari’s most recent work, *At School: The Art of Educating*⁴, which emphasizes ‘care’ as the essence of education: “To educate is to take care for the other so that they may learn to take care of life” (p. 13). In light of current global challenges and of a school system focused exclusively on students’ professionalization, Mortari argues that it is necessary to rethink the educational offer from the perspective of a new humanism, where schools become workshops of meaningful experiences and laboratories of humanity. Schools are called upon to regain the awareness that every act and every moment acquires value only when they reflect the sense of education as an act of care.

Choosing is necessary

Like any form of violence against others, war puts pressure on a school that aims to promote life competences by educating active, aware, and responsible citizens rather than just impart knowledge. Indeed, war undermines the profound meaning of education because it plants seeds of dehumanization that, in more or less striking ways, poison the individual existence, preventing people from flourishing in their potential: there is no possibility of growth and a good life when someone is oppressed and denied.

These are indicators that contribute to a feeling of helplessness, which regrettably and unavoidably leads to an increasing indifference. The community dimension, with its feeling of respect and awareness of others, is lost in favor of individualism and immediate benefit, where relationships are instrumentalized. Like all types of violence and injustice, whether systemic or ordinary, war breeds hate and devastation, rendering the present unlivable and the future unfriendly. Education loses its ethical significance and is reduced to manipulation and brainwashing in the absence of the promise of justice,

³ E. Morin (2015), *Insegnare a vivere. Manifesto per cambiare l'educazione*, Raffaello Cortina, Milano.

⁴ L. Mortari (2025), *A scuola. L'arte di educare*, Mimesis, Milano.

fairness, and future vision⁵.

Yet, when we meet another person's gaze, when the relationship becomes an opportunity for mutual recognition, we feel called to responsibility – despite everything.

Therefore, education has an essential ethical dimension in its orientation towards the future, in its desire for a good life animated by passion for care, for the flourishing of humanity, in the hope of justice and happiness for all⁶. The ethical dimension is constitutive of education and is fundamental to the school experience itself, for both teachers and students. Knowledge cannot be the ultimate goal, but it becomes a tool to develop independent thinking and promote conscious and responsible citizenship competences⁷.

Educating, as parents or teachers, brings with it the responsibility of building a culture that critically recognizes dehumanization and enables imagining a future of coexistence characterized by a new humanism.

What is the purpose of school? What aims should school pursue?

We must choose and continue to respond and act in the school daily experience with the stubborn confidence that the future quality is not given and is also conveyed in words and small gestures that manifest in the relationships within our classrooms.

Be the change you want to see in the world (Gandhi).

We continue this Editorial by highlighting the contents of the present volume: the stimulating reports in the “Reviews” section, the interesting contributions in the “Experiences and Reflections” section, and the depth and richness of the scientific articles included in the “Research” section, which are briefly presented below.

The article by Valentina Pappalardo and colleagues analyzes the role of school autonomy and the use of funds under the Law 440/97 in promoting innovation and inclusion in Italian schools, highlighting the importance of systematic documentation as a tool for monitoring and improving education provision.

Michelina Valenza and colleagues present the results of an exploratory study conducted with experienced support teachers and students attending the Specialization course for the support of students with disabilities investigating their self- and collective efficacy in relation to the development of inclusive practices in schools.

5 On this topic see contributions available on our website: *I dilemmi posti dalla guerra: un approccio educativo attraverso il debate* (<https://ricercazione.iprase.tn.it/article/view/388>); *La guerra nella letteratura per l'infanzia e l'adolescenza. Un'opportunità di riflessione profonda e condivisa* (<https://ricercazione.iprase.tn.it/article/view/228>); *La realtà drammatica della guerra: come interloquire con i giovani? Una strada percorribile con l'ausilio della settima arte* (<https://ricercazione.iprase.tn.it/article/view/229>); *Cinema per pensare e far pensare. Rassegna cinematografica ragionata di film in tema di guerra* (<https://ricercazione.iprase.tn.it/article/view/282>).

6 See for example: L. Mortari (2015), *Filosofia della cura*, Raffaello Cortina, Milano; L. Mortari (2019), *Melarete. Vol I Cura Etica Virtù*, Vita e pensiero, Milano. See contributions available on our website: *Philosophy and Politics of Care* (<https://ricercazione.iprase.tn.it/article/view/440>); *Il Manifesto della cura* (<https://ricercazione.iprase.tn.it/article/view/441>); *Educare all'etica delle virtù: il progetto MelArete per la scuola dell'infanzia* (<https://ricercazione.iprase.tn.it/article/view/170>).

7 In this regard, it is important to note that the reference for the national guidelines for both the first and second cycles are the Recommendations on European key competences of 2006 and 2018. The most recent European Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning (2018/C 189/01) is available at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0604\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0604(01)). For further information on these recommendations, see also EU JRC documents: 1) *LifeComp. Quadro europeo delle competenze chiave Personali, Sociali e dell'Imparare ad Imparare*. IPRASE has translated and made available such document on our website: <https://ricercazione.iprase.tn.it/issue/view/41>; 2) *GreenComp - Il quadro europeo delle competenze in materia di sostenibilità*. at: <https://op.europa.eu/it/publication-detail/-/publication/bc83061d-74ec-11ec-9136-01aa75ed71a1>.

Riccardo Sebastiani analyses how Artificial Intelligence (AI), integrated into innovative teaching methodologies and guided by conscious educational leadership, can contribute to the construction of sustainable, inclusive and transformative learning environments. Through a mix of quantitative and qualitative techniques, the perceptions and challenges of sustainable educational strategies are investigated.

Starting from the assumption that teachers' implicit ideas influence the type of training needed to support real changes in teaching methodologies, Laura Landi presents the initial version of a tool aimed at outlining teacher profiles based on their idea of knowledge (transmitted vs self-constructed) and learning (individual vs social process).

Enrico Orizio and Katia Montalbetti report on a collaborative research project among various local authorities on the experience of parents with children aged 0-6. The study pays particular attention to the educational challenges faced by parents, the reasons behind their decision to use (or not) 0-6 services, their perceived support, and their needs in terms of local childcare provision.

Martina Rossi and Giulia Pastori illustrate the results of a study giving children a voice on the meanings and forms of "learning" at school. The qualitative research followed the methodological framework of student voice and participatory research, giving primary school children the opportunity to express their views.

Debora Aquario and Giorgia Perin investigate representations of assessment in a primary school class using Photovoice, a methodology that combines images (photo) with words (voice). The methodology captures creativity, stimulates participation and promotes change by asking participants to take photographs that highlight their point of view.

Finally, Tommaso Reato and Monica Fedeli present a research that develops and analyzes place-based writing practices in secondary schools. In particular, the study explores adolescents' experience with poetic-metaphorical writing as an opportunity to give voice to their encounter with places and nature.

Claudio Girelli and Maria Arici