

## INTRODUCTION

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[...] the teacher [...] should not merely teach students what they are better at by nature; instead, the teacher should promote what is good about every individual [...].

Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *The arts of reading and writing* (Institutes of Oratory, Book 10). Ed. by J. Fernández López. Collection "Nuestros Escritores". Logroño, Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 2013, p. 81.

These words by the notable pedagogue and rhetorician from Hispania Quintilianus present the monographic issue entitled **Reading as social pedagogy and education**. This Roman teacher, one of the best professors of rhetoric of the ancient world and educator of the nephews of Domitian, considered that learning was available to everybody, and a good that generally benefited everyone. And hence, in our third millennium, reading, understood as a tool for learning, is also a vital element for all people without distinction to achieve development and inclusion in society. From this innovative and disregarded scope that considers reading as an integral part of social pedagogy and education, we offer pioneering approaches and perspectives in this monographic issue.

Reading is a tool that opens education to life, a window becoming a door because it can be crossed and, this way, help the comprehension of

the world; it is a thrilling adventure, and endless possibility to help each other, in the same way social pedagogy does (Caride, Gradaïlle & Caballo, 2015). This science runs parallel to the enrichment provided by texts. The reading practice belongs and is destined to all individuals, allowing us to understand ourselves and understand each other, making us participants of coexistence. Its inherent pedagogical quality recovers *paideia*, and its appropriate didactical approach reconquers the social entity immersed in our environment.

This twofold dimension that reading presents from the pedagogical and social education angle offers, hence, a dual extent: readers themselves, as personal and social catalysts, and social educators, as factors for a required training work. We note then a double movement, centripetal and centrifugal at the same time. The issue lies in the assessment of the importance of reading as a dynamizing and inclusive social agent, both from the internal and external perspective, that can be considered complementary. According to Caride, Gradaïlle & Caballo (2015), applied to the field of social reading, we agree that "a good part of theoretical, methodological and practical options of social pedagogy and education will hardly be understood if we do not base them in the synergies generated [...] between the social dimension of education and the pedagogical mission of society" (2015: 10).

In the current monographic issue, we provide a series of researches focused on this scarcely

explored area of work, conforming a space for reflection raising proposals, presenting challenges and leading to solutions for the “reading-social education” pairing. School today, a microcosm of society, needs answers regarding the multiplicity of forms, interests, ideologies... raised in the field of social reading practices. This issue is born in this space for innovation, that occasionally generates uncertainty. It contains six complementary and needed contributions that concisely tackle diverse topics, as the incursion of the commercial formats of reading that face the canonical ones, the importance of the reading that is nurtured in the streets, the concealment of women from the literary scene, the importance of reading in this globalizing period, the training of social discursive practices to students of distant geographies and the possibilities of reading from the relational perspective. These studies bring us closer to a society directly related to classrooms and reading practices.

The content of each contribution is detailed below. The **first article** analyzes the situation generated by the current literate practices, characterized by the hybridization of traditions, genres and topics; a context that needs the promotion of a social literary education in order to show intertextual and intermodal keys and consequently train expert readers. These new reading and cultural actions renders obsolete the academic ones, hence the important role of social education. There is tension between the prevalence of classic *literate culture* and the consumer goods that turn the reading canon into a sales list. Social education preserves literary heritage, sets out a cultural competence that enables the identification of “literary successes” as what they really are: global marketing products. The educator must find a formula that reconciles inclusive culture and quality culture in order to develop critical judgement, because the relevant aspect of reading is its power for personal and social development.

The **second contribution** offers a novel study of urban spaces as places for cultural creation. The importance of these contexts in the formation of readers is essential from the social perspective, and breaks with the traditional school models, less inclusive. This way, public places enable the dynamization of reading practices and the display of these products without copyright restrictions, conforming showcases that prove the need of bringing books and related manifestations to the streets, which act as a bridge between the official or canonical culture and the particular creation of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that contributes to social and equitable enrichment of literate culture, in other words, to the promotion of readers. Some of the tools used are metro libraries, book dispensers,

performances, etc. This new and extensive practices also include graffiti or social action groups, performances that have barely been studied as social phenomena.

In this field of reading as social pedagogy and education, we could not forget the canon of authors listed in school textbooks in literary education –**third article**–. The model implemented in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the minimal changes performed in school curricula, subject to the political vagaries of the moment, leave out a valuable list of women that must be brought to light. This contribution offers a detailed analysis, on the basis of the textbooks used in bacalaureate, of the presence, or rather, absence of female writers (mainly poetesses) in these manuals. Reading and social formation of these textbooks display a fake, biased and patriarchal canon that cuts off literary knowledge as a whole and consequently impoverishes the model of egalitarian literary education. This absence is still transmitted to new generations and seems paradoxical in a society that stands for equality, an inherent principle of social pedagogy.

The **fourth research** analyses the place of literary reading nowadays, emphasizing in the need of developing a critical interpretation of the surrounding world, a look towards “the other” that trains people and denounces prejudices regarding diversity. The importance of reading as a commitment of citizens and social engagement are values that must be developed in these literary practices. In this context of formation, the reading habits and the canon of the future professionals in education are analyzed as key strategies. The paper ends with the defense of the relation of literary, reading and social education in the different educational stages.

The **fifth article** offers an investigation in the context of ELE (Spanish as a second or foreign language) implemented in Italian students during the 2016-2017 school year, and compiling Text linguistics, Discourse Analysis on Gender, Intercultural Pragmatics and Social Pedagogy. This didactic proposal is structured around the treatment of gender stereotypes through the grammatical phenomenon of the feminization of the designation of professions in Spanish, and calls for the promotion of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), specifically teaching how to analyze and interpret linguistic schemes performed in the sociocultural field and that determine the linguistic use. An inclusive approach including social construction, grammatical learning and the development of the intercultural pragmatic discursive competence is applied.

The last and **sixth study** provides an in-depth analysis of reading education as a field that

develops its actions in the complexity and in the production of multiplicity. The dynamizing and critical role that reading has from a socio political perspective lies in the discovery of new intellectual and methodological forms that show the ways of thinking and practicing reading education through educational techniques and strategies that promote, likewise, other problems of literacy, schooling and construction of citizenry.

This cause bringing us together is a challenge that expresses the need for further research in order to provide new studies and teaching methodologies that encourage the attitude and sensibility towards a more balanced society, a “society that

must be read and consequently interpreted” by everyone. In sum, this set of studies on the axis “reading-educational value on society” allowed us to appreciate, a fortiori, the importance of the educator, as well as the student and the society in order for habits, values and personal development as a whole to be suitable and contribute to social growth in this turbulent 21<sup>st</sup> century, characterized by the rapid access to not always reliable information.

Aurora Martínez Ezquerro  
Aitana Martos García

## References

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