

THE CULTURE OF INTEGRATION FOR PREVENTING MARGINALISATION

Santina Portelli

Work instruments:

Lecture on the topic

Life experiences of the lecturer

Life experiences of the students

Film “Gaby, una storia vera” [Gaby, a true story] by Luis Mandoki, USA, 1987

Panel discussion



I thought of this topic for our encounters in light of some observations.

It is my opinion that we often seem to consider “the culture of integration” well-assimilated, strengthened by decades of past experience between the “special” school and the “Normal” school and therefore we often proceed, in any education field, to propose: innovative didactic instruments, futuristic aids, sophisticated computer programmes for children students and disabled adolescents.

But in the experience I have had of supervising various operators, I have discovered that there are children and adolescents who are abandoned in the classrooms, with individual programmes only in theory, lacking physical assistance, vague school relationships, disabled students that refuse the use of the computer and other aids, refusing even wheelchairs and having to be carried, or parents who don’t forbid the son to use a wheelchair: “because if he uses it he could get used to it” and I wonder: “how come?”

I would like to confront this topic thinking of “the culture of integration” NOT as an acquired culture, but as an ever-updating and ever-enriching cultural movement which makes us think of the **CONCEPT OF INTEGRATION**, of the motivation behind the need for a culture that educates us and is part of our life experience, to the point of becoming **PREVENTION OF MARGINALISATION**.

Integration is a word that I have known since adolescence and over the years I have understood its importance.

INTEGRATION is a difficult word in its entirety, it can become an abused word, rhetorical word, if it is not understood in its amplest meaning.

For us disabled people it is a key word, that can mean **THE END OF MARGINALISATION**, “a new era is beginning”, or “they accept us for who we are”, I could give pages and pages of examples.....but..... I’ll stop here.

Usually the word **INTEGRATION** is coupled with marginalised, disabled and so on, therefore the binomial disability and integration is common practice, especially in the educational, clinical, social, religious and other fields.

Generally we refer to people who have “something less” than others, in their physique, their intellect or their social status: who are therefore considered “not **INTEGRAL**” compared to a socially recognised valid model, of one’s own historical period.

This way of thinking is also common to educated, knowledgeable people, but who adhere to cultural and social prejudice they are not liberated from.