

The challenge of building a more human world: Towards a pedagogy of insertion

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Introduction

I should like to thank the organisers of the session for having invited me to this conference dedicated to a theme which is very close to my heart.

In my professional practice as University lecturer at Lyon University 2, I am faced with this perpetual question: how can we attempt to give a place to the most fragile?

How can we promote real equality of opportunity?

How can we avoid sacrificing to the surrounding elitism and to the cult of efficiency?

How do we respond to this challenge of building a more human world through a pedagogy of insertion?

To understand what is at stake in putting forward this fundamental right, which questions the relation between education and insertion is not an easy task.

Several difficulties will have to be overcome

The first will be to avoid the pitfall of moral indignation leaning on a logic of denunciation of the difficulties encountered by the students being submitted to the process of exclusion.

The second difficulty belongs to the territory of representation of the subject. I did not want to focus uniquely on a Franco-French vision of the problem of insertion and exclusion so I prefer to give a more global dimension in which all the participants here present can find themselves.

At the same time it would be completely illusory to wish to do honour to the universal dimension of the subject by trying to build up a global anthropology of education.

My much more modest proposal will in fact be influenced by one context and by my personal experience.

The third difficulty concerns the methodological field of analysis to try to locate among the factors of exclusion those which are connected to economic and social phenomena and those which are specifically incumbent to the mechanisms developed in the school.

Finally when we tackle the problem of exclusion in the school environment, we are confronted with a kind of impasse, so strong are the games of ideological rhetoric.

For some it is the school which is no longer taking on the role of integration and so that is at the root of the process of exclusion, while for the others who set themselves up as defenders of the school, it is the opposite: the school is just the container for this social exclusion.

So this ideological posturing which leads to accusing in turn the school, society, the family and the economic model does not in my opinion allow us to present the problem in all its complexity.

On the one hand we cannot make the school the only place where education occurs. So I have not envisaged the relation school/family/society in a conflicting way but rather in the nature of a shared responsibility.

On the other hand we cannot reduce the process of insertion to a single professional insertion.

Insertion covers very different trajectories in time and space. It concerns the whole cycle of the life of the person whatever his conditions of life, his personal situation, his history, his cultural background.

The problem of insertion goes back to a process of « belonging » which makes the person a citizen, an adult responsible for his choices in life and his system of interpreting the world.

So it is a wide vision set in a re-vamped space/time which I have given priority to in order to grasp this question of insertion in education.

Finally to complete the methodological arrangement of this communication it is through an analogy with environmental rights and the problem of sustainable development that I have considered the relation between education and insertion.

And it is on the basis of a paradox that the reflection can go on.

Among the fundamental rights, the right to the environment has been imposed as a political priority since the year 2000. Not a day passes but we are reminded of the principle of precaution and our individual and collective responsibility before the fact of global warming and the preservation of the environment.

But in a very strange and paradoxical way, the right to education which is also written into the commitments for the third millennium has not had the same echo in the media. The different international conferences which followed each other, invoking the necessity of constructing the right to education for all remained within the circle of the initiated.

It is a real challenge to be raised in order that the right to an education for all be the object of the same individual and collective realization as that which took place for the right of the environment (1)

This realization of a right to education for all supposes a paradigm change in the very conception of insertion. It is on a new ecology of insertion that I invite you to reflect together (2)

The First Part: a right to education for all still to be confirmed

1) Education, instruction, formation: what are we talking about ?

Education is the *most global concept of those which concern the formation of the human person.*¹ it is not simply a matter of a transmission of knowledge or the attribution of competences. The demands of education go well beyond a simple instruction which designs a process of transmission of knowledge and supposes a hierarchical relation between a teacher and a student. In the same way we need to distinguish between education and the act of teaching which refers to the learning method. If the latter is an integral part of the concept of education it constitutes a particular approach within it however, for it is inscribed in a formal framework connected strictly to the school. Concerning the concept of formation which is widely used today, it is at once that which in its original meaning closest to the idea of education but also that which can be most easily diverted.

Formation today serves often to designate the way in which someone acquires one or other competence, we talk a lot about professional formation or qualifications. It brings an individual towards a predefined function, social or professional.

Education does not aim solely at the establishment of competence but rather at deep aptitudes connected with knowing how to be: In this sense education aims at *learning how to be*², and not only knowing or having.

The main issue in education is the issue of development, both individual and collective, inscribed into the heart of Humanity.

Education allows the individual to understand what is around him but also to make judgements, to have a clear and critical regard on reality and to act from within.

¹ Vieillard-Baron Jean-Louis, *Qu'est-ce que l'éducation ?*, Montaigne, Fichte et Lavelle, Ed. Vrin, coll. Pré-textes, 1994, p. 9.

² Titre du rapport d'Edgard Faure en 1972.

The aim of education is to make individuals actors in their own destiny, thus more responsible and more free. It is the issue of the ethic of Nicomaque which makes prudence the end of education.

« Education is the point at which we decide if we love the world enough to take on the responsibility for it » says Hannah Arendt

It is also with education that we decide if we love our children enough not to throw them into our world, nor to abandon them to themselves /.../ but to prepare them for the task of renewing the world together »

Over and above the individuals, the aim of education is to develop peoples. In education individual and collective destinies cross over and mix

2) Education and development : the meeting of individual and collective destinies

Since the nineties, under the influence of works of economists like SEN, a new consensus appeared within the international community on the fact that economic and human development could no longer be dissociated. On a strictly quantitative approach from the PNB, other indicators of development were formalised such as that of IDH. (indicator of human development).

The IDH rests on three fundamental components: expectation of life, level of education and level of life. A country whose rate of illiteracy is very high or which presents a weak average rate of schooling (TBS)³, cannot be considered as a developed country.

It is not a matter here of detailing the manner in which these different indicators are calculated but of raising the fact that education is really an essential component of estimating human development.

No one contests any more the connection between education and development. On the other hand situations of famine, sanitary catastrophes and the instability of political are largely correlated to the level of education of the populations.

If education is a fundamental right for humanity, its effectiveness is slow in becoming a reality.

3) Education, a fundamental right for humanity

The right to education is progressively obvious in the collective international awareness. Affirmed for the first time in 1948, in article 26 of the DUDH⁴, it became from that moment an integral part of all the economic, social and cultural rights.

article 26 : *« 1. Everyone has the right to education. Education must be free, at least in what concerns elementary and fundamental education. Elementary teaching is obligatory. Technical and professional teaching ought to be generalised; access to superior studies must be open in full equality to all according to their merit. 2. Education must aim at the full expansion of the human personality and to the reinforcement of respect for human rights and fundamental liberties. It must encourage understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and all racial or religious groups, as well as the development of the actions of the United Nations to maintain peace... »*

³ The gross rate of schooling is the total of the number of students in a specific degree of learning, whatever their age, expressed as a percentage of the population having the right and the legal age for entering school at the same degree of learning in any given year. Other indicators, more pertinent, are prioritised today, such as the rate of completion of a primary cycle which gives the number of children having access to the last year of the primary to the number of children in total. We shall come back in a more precise way on the different indicators of education in the course of our work.

⁴»

The right to education will be re-affirmed in the International Pact relating to economic, social and cultural rights (PIDESC) adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1966 : article 13 of this Pact.):

« 1. The States taking part in this present Pact recognise the right of every person to education. They agree that education must aim at the full blossoming of the human personality and the meaning of his dignity and to reinforce respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They agree besides that education must put every person in a position to play a useful role in a free society, favour understanding, tolerance and friendship between all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups and encourage the development of the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

2. The States forming part of this present Pact recognise that with a view to ensuring the full exercise of this right:

- a) Primary teaching must be obligatory and accessible freely to all;
- b) Secondary teaching, under its different forms, including technical and professional teaching, must be generalised and made accessible to all by all appropriate means and notably by a progressive installation of free education;
- c) Higher education must be made accessible to all in full equality, according to the capacities of each one, by all appropriate means and especially by the progressive installation of free education;
- d) Basic education must be encouraged or intensified, to every possible extent, for persons who have not received primary instruction or who have not completed it;
- e) It will be necessary to actively pursue the development of a school network at all levels, to establish an adequate system of bursaries and to improve in a continuous fashion the material conditions of the teaching personnel.

3. The States taking part in the present Pact commit themselves to respect the freedom of parents and if need be the legal guardians, to choose for their children other establishments than those of the public authorities, but in conformity with the minimal norms which can be prescribed or approved by the State in the manner of education, and to see to the moral and religious education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

4. No part of the present article must be interpreted as undermining the freedom of individuals or moral persons to create and direct teaching establishments with the reservation that the principles set out in paragraph 1 of the present be observed and that the education given in these establishments be conformed to the minimal norms which can be prescribed by the State. »

One defining observation of the juridical obligations would be added to this article in 1999, following on from the development of the norms on the right to education for all elsewhere and the growing urgency of putting it into practice at a world level.

The Convention relating to the rights of the child, adopted in 1989. confers a constraining force to this right to education notably in articles 28 et 29⁵. **« Article 28**

⁵ Convention relating to the Rights of the Child (CDE), articles 28 and 29 :

d) They make school and professional information and direction open and accessible to all ;
e) They take measures to encourage the regularity of school frequentation and the reduction of the rate of abandonment of School.

The States take all the measures necessary to watch over school discipline to see that it is applied in a manner compatible with the dignity of the child as a human being and in conformity with the Convention.

2. The States taking part favour and encourage international cooperation in the domain of education, notably with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy in the world and to make easier access to scientific and technical and to modern methods of teaching. In this regard it is particularly taking into account the needs of the developing countries.

Article 29

1. The participating States agree that the education of the child must aim at :

- a) Favours the blossoming of the personality of the child and the development of his gifts and his mental and physical aptitudes, to the extent of their potentials ;
- b) Inculcate into the child respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and principles consecrated in the Charter of the United Nations ;

The participating States recognise the right of the child to education, and in particular with a view to ensuring the exercise of this right progressively and on a basis of equal opportunities:

- a) They make primary teaching obligatory and free for all ;
- b) They encourage the organisation of different forms of secondary education, as much general as professional, making them open and accessible to every child, and taking appropriate steps such as installing free education and the offer of a financial aid in case of need ;
- c) They ensure access for all to higher education according to the capacities of each, by all appropriate means

From now on the right to education constitutes a heavy constraining obligation for the States, in the name of respect for the dignity of children. Thus a certain number of means of putting this right into practice are defined and the issues concerning education connected to the dignity of the child and the place that he must find within society are set out in article 29.

In this context the World Declaration on Education for All (DMEPT) was adopted in March 1990 within the framework of the conference in Jomtien.

This declaration affirmed the absolutely essential character of the promotion and guarantee of the right to education, the need for its 'universalisation', and it determined objectives and a *Framework for action to respond to the fundamental needs*

The strategy of Lisbon defined by the European Union in 2000 made knowledge an issue for major economic development for the coming 15 years

The 'universalisation' of fundamental education and the quality of this education are put forward as some of the major challenges for our time, the aim being to develop the partners at a world level, among all the actors invested in this essential mission for humanity.

Children, adolescents and adults have to acquire a level of education sufficient to take their individual and collective destiny in hand.

4) The right to education, a fundamental right for humanity, still to be confirmed

In spite of all the declarations of principle, the right to education still remains very virtual in numerous regions of the world. The needs concerning education are immense so many are those who are excluded from it. We can still count 880 millions of illiterate adults in the world, and 113 millions of children who do not go to school.

But behind these global figures, we need to take into account very contrasting situations according to the regions of the world. Sub-Saharan Africa is particularly disadvantaged in its access to education. If the process of illiteracy continues, the demographic growth also goes even more quickly: which by a simple mechanical fact increases the number of adult illiterates. The latter passed from 133 millions to 144 millions between 1990 and 2004. Only

c) Inculcate in the child respect for its parents, for its identity, its language and cultural values, as well as respect for national values of the country in which it lives, of the country from which it originates and different civilisations from its own ;

d) Prepare the child to assume responsibility for life in a free society, in a spirit of understanding, of peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes and friendship between all peoples and ethnic, national and religious groups, and with the people of native origin ;

e) Inculcate in the child respect for the natural environment.

2. No part of the present article or of article 28 will be interpreted in such a way as to undermine the freedom of persons physical or moral from creating and directing educational establishments, on condition that the principles set down in paragraph 1 of the present article e respected and that the education dispensed in these establishments be in conformity with the minimal norms that the State will have prescribed »

Only 61% of adults know how to read and write. There exist besides other strong geographical disparities between the rural zones and the urban zones, the interior and remote zones

In the same way, we need to take into account the distances between the underdeveloped children and the others, and the differential treatment between the boys and the girls, who continue to be victims of a strong discrimination in access to education.

The Forum of Dakar – given a lot less media coverage than the conference of Johannesburg on sustainable development- it was brought together in 2000 and defined six great objectives to be realised before 2015. The different actors by right at EPT committed themselves to develop and improve education for infants, to universalise primary teaching for 2015, to adopt educative programmes to situations of life, to improve literacy by 50% for 2015, to guarantee equality of the sexes in primary and secondary education, and to improve the quality of education. Each of these demands must give place to programmes of action depending on partnerships between the different regions of the world and between all the public and private actors engaged in educative missions.

If the countries of the South are particularly affected by the process of exclusion with regard to educative matter, the countries of the North are not safe for all that either. The numerous works undertaken by sociologists show that the trajectories of access to education are not the same for all.

The work still to be done to make effective the right to education and to eradicate all the sources of exclusion is immense. One track that I propose to explore with you consists in promoting «an ecology of insertion » as a new paradigm for education.

This exploratory step will be the object of my second part

Second Part : Towards «an ecology of insertion » a new paradigm for a renewed educative project ?

This idea « of an ecology of insertion » rests on three great convictions :

- The taking into account of diversity, as the first given data of the educative project
- The question of inequality and diversity: two facets of insertion
- An ecology of knowledge and culture as foundation of the educative project

1. Taking into account diversity as a lever for ecology of insertion

This ecology of insertion is inscribed in a context of a fragmented and very complex society which imposes a revision of the classic vision of the educative project which was conceived in the framework of the republican school.

And it is around this idea of taking into account diversity that the most significant rupture is undoubtedly situated

In France the Republican model was firstly a teaching system founded on a uniform vision of education which had as its project to make the child into an adult citizen of the Republic.

The whole educative project of the Republican School, secular and obligatory has unceasingly only glued together cultural, linguistic or regional differences to respond to an ideal and uniform vision of the French nation

The problem of insertion in this context was conceived in a logic of uniformity, with as its end an exclusion from the system for all those who could not enter into the pre-established mould.

The differentiated pedagogy advocated by prophetic educators such as Montessori or Freinet were applied only in a sporadic manner. In reality as far as the school was able to play its role as social lift, the consensus on its capacity to propose a unique model of social integration has been the object of quite a wide adhesion on the part of society.

But from the moment when the failure of the system turned out to be a sociological fact on which from now on had to be taken into account, it has been impossible not to be aware of the very diversified character of expectations, profiles and situations of life of the young people engaged in the educative system.

The failure of the social lift joined to a very marked persistence of social inequalities which could not arrive at a gluing together of an educative system of equality has led to a breaking up of the myth of uniformity as a vector for insertion.

The awareness of the need to bring to perfect differentiated educative pathways according to the personal situation of the students, and a fine analysis of the reality of the process of exclusion has been worked on in a concomitant manner.

The process of exclusion can intervene in the three dimensions of the educative relation according to whether one puts oneself in the place of the educator, the student or the third party who represents the different spaces in which the student has to evolve.

The mechanism of exclusion can result from the act of learning itself which is in any case unequal. It can come from teachers, parents, students themselves, modes of selection and modes of evaluation.

The processes of exclusion are expressed in different subtle forms and are often insidious: Elitist schools founded on the criteria of success, selection, social, cultural or religious affiliation. On the other hand, poverty, ethnic origin, religion, disability, sex and belonging to a minority group are factors which can limit access to education and bring about processes of exclusion.

If taking into account the diversity of the students, as a preliminary to the pedagogy of insertion is imposed progressively into the new consultation for the educative project, its translation into facts is not always an easy choice.

In the first place a permanent hesitation comes to light between two visions of diversity: lone which consists in taking into account diversity to make of it a pivotal element for insertion, while the other more directed on the notion of equality of opportunity leads us to think of diversity as a potential weakness which we have to integrate into the pedagogical project..

It is around this debate on positive discrimination (affirmative action) that this tension between these two visions of insertion is centred.

2. The question of inequality and diversity: two facets of insertion

« The challenge of living together » is a key question for the educative project when the question of insertion is asked.

How can we make a society, to avoid ghettos and inward looking identities and allow each one to have the right to be welcomed, to have a place which is his own.

How can we combine equality of opportunity which supposes a minimum of demands to allow the greatest number to get access to a n honourable level and the prevention of exclusion which supposes the respect for the rhythm of learning of the weakest?

The fight for equality and the fight against exclusion refer to different pedagogical models and are based on a representation of the very function of the educative project This invisible

frontier between these two who are on the inside,, perfectly integrated and socialised, those who are on the margins and those and those on the outside is subtle and subjected to the dictate sometimes of a teacher, of a norm or a programme which determines the landmarks and the limits of what is considered to be in conformity with or on the contrary in rupture with a system of representation of the model.

The methods of evaluation put into practice play a real determining role on this point. We can imagine a model of evaluation based on a Darwinian method of selection of the strongest or on the other hand an evaluation based on the criteria of "benevolence" and based on the gamble of trust.

The right of each one to be welcomed and recognised in an educative community, a pedagogy of relationship, and of otherness are attitudes which, in my point of view, favour the dynamism of insertion.

A pedagogy of recognition of diversity which allows for the giving of each one the feeling of existing within a class, in a group, in an educative community is a mission at the heart of the ecology of insertion

To be recognised for one who exists in one's identity, one's history, one's weaknesses, supposes the development of a pedagogy of 'rootedness' in a history, a culture, which re-shapes a renewed vision of the educative project.

3. A «sustainable education » pivot of the pedagogy of insertion

By analogy with the great awareness on the problem of the environment, I should like to develop the idea of a sustainable education based on a new « ecology of knowledge and competence »

This ecology of knowledge and competence is along the lines of an environment which would break with the surrounding individuality which, to my point of view is killing the pedagogy of insertion.

We see very well that insertion is an immense human chain which causes multiple partners and actors to intervene.

This ecology of education, a factor of inclusion and no longer exclusion would be a school of connectedness, a school open to many partners, a giving school, a school of relationships, of not expecting a return for service

This « ecology of education" would be a school looking to the long term which would dare to break with the cult of the immediate and the culture of end of term results which falls on one like a cleaver.

It would be along the lines of a less stressful time-table for the students, more respectful of the rhythms of learning and of maturation.

A sustainable education would be one which would break away from a system of learning knowledge which is too scholarly and segmented in order to work at the acquisition of the mechanisms of being able to learn well and to think well .

This learning, completely rooted in a pedagogy of complexity would be in line with a rupture with the model of specialisation of knowledge and the myth of the reasoning technique which gives the illusion that there is a simple answer to a complex question.

This pedagogy of insertion would aim at restoring the real cultural dimension of the educative project which is not reduced to a system of pieces of knowledge but which completely integrates the dimension of knowing **how to be and how to act.**

This pedagogical posture of putting the human being in relation with the world which surrounds him would give a significance to the fundamental dimensions of culture often mutilated by a disconnected academic vision of ways of living, singing, thinking, dreaming

or doing sporting activities. This ecology of insertion must be integrated into an anthropological dimension to give back meaning to fundamental practices of humankind like nourishing oneself, clothing oneself, communicating.

In the same way the new approaches to education will have to completely integrate the impact of the internet which is laying out a new mind-map.

Without sacrificing to the instrumental and technical vision, we must take this technological revolution into account which defines a new geography of insertion and exclusion. It also re-configures the act of teaching to give back all meaning to the educative project.

This pedagogy of insertion perceived in a global vision and completely connected to the environment of the young in all their dimensions is an integral part of the notion of the project seen on an immediate time-scale but also deliberately set into a projection into the future.

To work at the arrival of a more human world by developing a pedagogy of insertion would be able to rely on an ethical posture in several dimensions

A pedagogy of humility to break with the model of performance and being all powerful

A pedagogy of complexity to reinvest in the humanist culture of learning well.

A pedagogy of identity and 'rootedness' to re-connect the educative project to its anthropological dimension which integrates all the components of a culture.

A pedagogy of recognition to set the project into the memory and give it meaning

A pedagogy of otherness to break from the surrounding individualism.

A pedagogy of diversity to make of difference a richness

A pedagogy of hope

« Hope is connected, or not yet, to the dawn to come » says Ernst Bloch

We cannot see the future, but only let it happen. I think that to invest in this ecology of education yet to be invented, still to be formalised is a track to be followed taking up the challenge of constructing a more human world.