Abstracts

Educating a Sense of the Possible
Jerome Bruner

For let us never forget that the human race, Homo sapiens, has no in-nate repertory for survival. We create our own means of survival through education and the sharing of culture. Our "acts of meaning making", as I like to call them, are both individual and collective. Human beings not only construct meaningful realities, but they are capable of creating al-ternative forms of meaning in any given situation in which they find themselves. In consequence, the human condition is such that we humans often find ourselves considering alternative versions of reality, often in competition with each other - both within society at large and within our own minds. And it is this richness of alternative meanings that makes us, at one and the same time, the most fanciful, the most searching, the most powerful, the most quarrelsome, and the most unpredictable species on the face of the earth. One conclusion that follows from all this is that any system of education needs to pass on to the young not simply knowledge and know-how from the past, but it must also transmit a lively sense of what is possible for us to construct for the present and for the future on the basis of what we now know. Education must cultivate a lively sense of the possible, cultivate ways of meaning making appropriate to the pre-sent and useful in constructing the shape of the future.

Key words
Education, society, reality, interpretation, narrative literature.

The Evaluation of Scientific Research in France and in the United Kingdom
(La valutazione della ricerca scientifica in Francia e nel Regno Unito)

Emma Nardi

The practice of the evaluation of research, which the Italian Committee for the Evaluation of Research (Civr) requested of all Italian universities, was a turning point and, in some respects, a disorienting factor because for the first time there arose the need to take systematic decisions regarding the selection of research products enabling each university to present itself in a more competitive manner. To be fully justified, university autonomy must be regulated by an evaluation system that accounts for the two institutional tasks of universities: teaching and research. The evaluation of teaching was started some time ago by the National Committee for the Evaluation of the University System (Cnvsu) by collecting the opinions of students actually attending university. What is more problematic, however, is the definition of a procedure enabling the evaluation of the products of research not only at national level, but also within the same university. The article focuses on the issues still open in this regard and provides an interpretation that considers not just the solution adopted by Roma Tre University, but which also takes into account – as elements of feedback – the practices for evaluating research adopted in two countries that differ a great deal between them on these issues: France and the United Kingdom.

Key words
Higher education, research evaluation, quality assurance, France, United Kingdom.

The future of e-assessment
Chris Whetton

The view taken of literacy in this paper is that it is a construct which changes over time, keeping elements of the past, but introducing new aspects constantly. In a time of rapid technological change, these new elements of literacy are introduced rapidly, and everyday and business usage is generally in advance of the curriculum and of teachers' knowledge and ability (or willingness) to teach the newer forms of literacy. Nevertheless, older forms of liter-

acy such as the enjoyment paper based literature continue to be prevalent. Since assessment practices reflect the knowledge and skills required by the curriculum and the nature of school organisation and pedagogical practice, how assessment operates in 2015 will be closely determined by society's overall view of literacy requirements in education at that time. Before discussing issues related to assessment, two possible futures are described in this article to set the scene for debate on the nature of e-assessment in 2015.

Key words
E-assessment, United Kingdom, literacy, reliability, validity.

Education for Democratic Citizenship: Rhetoric and Reality. A Council of Europe Study
(L'educazione alla cittadinanza democratica: la retorica e la realtà. Uno studio del Consiglio d'Europa)

Bruno Losito

Education for democratic citizenship is considered a strategic objective of educational policies in all European countries. The importance of this objective is recognised in official policy statements undersigned at international level, in national education legislation and in school curricula. Notwithstanding this, the gap between declared policies and actual practices is still wide in most European countries. This article deals with these issues in the light of a study on policies for education for democratic citizenship conducted by the Council of Europe, and presents its conceptual framework, methodology and main results. The study shows a picture characterised by some challenges and a risk. The challenges concern, in particular, teacher training, evaluation and the democratic and participated running of schools. The risk is of a "rhetoric" of education for democratic citizenship that will not lead to the construction of conditions enabling its actual development, both as regards student learning and as regards the progressive democratisation of school systems and of individual schools themselves.

Key words
Education for democratic citizenship, educational policies, formal education and non-formal education, participation, curriculum.

Needs and Solutions for Better University Teaching
(Esigenze e soluzioni per una migliore didattica universitaria)

Antonella Poce, Tiziana Testani

Evaluating the quality of university teaching and establishing the strengths and weaknesses of higher education is a necessary step in the direction the Italian university system has taken to adapt its teaching offer to the needs highlighted by higher education throughout Europe in recent years. To this end, it has become necessary to acknowledge the new needs shown by all the actors of the system and to adopt new solutions to implement increasingly more effective assessment methods. The use of new technologies to improve university teaching is a fundamental way to try to solve the problems that Italian universities, in particular, have to face. Overcoming the difficult challenge of increasing the number of university graduates without giving up the quality of education, for example, is an objective that can be achieved only by overhauling traditional teaching methods. Starting from an assessment of the quality of teaching, the article goes on to illustrate the reasons leading the Research Unit of Roma Tre University to undertake an experimental programme within the Experimental Pedagogy and Docimology course, which envisages supplementary teaching activities carried out through e-learning.

Key words
E-learning, assessment, pedagogy, higher education, accountability.

When a Graph Is Not the Same as Ten Thousand Words. Problems of Integration When Studying Texts with Figures.
(Quando un grafico non vale diecimila parole. Problemi di integrazione nello studio del testo con figure)

Gisella Paoletti

Many texts, hypertexts and multimedia also ask the reader to consider visual information in the form of diagrams, graphs and tables. An illustration, graph or animation accompanying a text is thought to have a positive effect on the understanding and memorising of information and thus to be useful in schools and in other environments. Unfortunately, many factors can reduce the benefits thought linked to figures – first of all, the inadequate or even lack of student

processing of the figures themselves. Hence the need to stimulate the processing of figures and the integration of textual and visual information – a productive, but often tiresome, task – through actions that could increase student arousal and attention. This article reports the result of a study that attempted to stimulate text-graphics integration. We asked our subjects to reprocess the contents of a newspaper article containing a text and six diagrams by using one of two different techniques: writing a summary or drawing a graph. The analysis of the students' notes and of their results in a learning test provided us with information on the usefulness of the two strategies for integrating information.

Key words
Reading comprehension, graphics, pictures, knowledge telling, learning strategies.

Preliminary Field Analysis for Sample-based Surveys
(Lo studio di contesto per le ricerche campionarie)

Nadia De Felice

Thanks to the financial support of the *Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio*, a Monitor has been set up in the Republic of San Marino in order to assess the population's cultural profile. The Monitor concluded an initial survey last April, enabling a comparison of the Republic's population profile with those surveyed by the Oecd in most of the industrialised countries during the 1990s. In particular, the survey aimed to assess whether, and to what extent, the regressive trend in literacy was also to be found in the San Marino population. The survey design, however, was significantly different from that of other surveys carried out so far: it took life expectancy growth into account, and thus the presence of a section of the elderly population still with useful skills for social life and for the production system, and also the extending of the school education period. The Monitor's aim is to provide useful data for decision-making in order to achieve the objective established by Unesco of assuring lifelong learning opportunities for everyone.

Key words
Lifelong learning, San Marino, illiteracy, sampling techniques, survey.

The Tempus Trast Project. A Distance Learning Network on Assessment in Ukraine
(Il progetto Tempus Trast. Una rete per l'istruzione a distanza sulla valutazione in Ucraina)

Gabriella Agrusti

The article illustrates the three-year Tempus/Tacis project "Trast. True assessment. Distance learning network for teachers". The project is currently in its initial stage and is carried on thanks to the cooperation between Italy, Ukraine and the United Kingdom (the project leader is *Roma Tre* University). The main aim of Trast is to favour the introduction of evaluation methods and procedures, based on the more recent and shared theoretical grounds, in school and university education practices in Ukraine, by setting up specific education itineraries aimed at teachers and school heads. The project thus has a triple approach: besides envisaging widespread informative actions (publications, consulting services and the cataloguing of the main emergencies in the sector) and educational actions (distance and face-to-face learning courses, seminars on specific topics), there will also be the development of e-learning, by setting up networked cooperation between the various actors involved in the process (national and international experts, exponents of academic circles and of the school system, administrators and civil society). The network could become the basis for the foundation of a national Ukrainian association on evaluation issues, with aims similar to the project's ones, and namely, to spread and consolidate an evaluation culture in that country.

Key words
Tempus programme, assessment, distance learning, network, teachers.