



PREAMBLE

The “social” and “cultural” turns, as well as the “material turn”, have had a remarkable impact on the historiography of education, significantly changing its paradigm, method, sources and objects, often overshadowing the traditional approach to the discipline that entails the exclusive study of the history of ideas and theories. In view of these radical changes of the last fifty years, we can now ask how the history of educational ideas might be rethought for nowadays, epistemologically and methodologically, both in research contexts and in university teaching courses. This rethinking of the traditional objects of historical research in education will inevitably also involve the Classics. Appropriately contextualized in their time, the Classics have always provided an opportunity for scholars to study a specific cultural period, to retrace the development of the history of education through ideas, theories, doctrines, and even educational practices.

Indeed, the Classics reveal an interdisciplinary blend of theory and practice, philosophical and scientific thinking, educational science, psychological and sociological knowledge, history of institutions, social history, history of educational practices and history of culture. On this specific theme, we collected, selected and published contributions that investigate the meaning of the Classics within research pathways, their formative value in teaching courses or their proposed inclusion in a new conception of the history of educational ideas that is not exclusively chronological, but thematic and integrated into a cultural and social framework. We welcomed contributions that investigate the relationship between the Classics and educational historiography. The aim of this special issue of *Orbis Idearum* is to highlight how, both in terms of under in what conditions and for what purpose, we can use the Classics today as a privileged voice in the history of ideas, and how these prestigious voices can help us plan an educational future that is not merely a

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repetition of the past – from the point of view of an outdated *historia magistra vitae* – but that draws inspiration from that past, for an effective critical construction of new contexts and future educational scenarios.

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