



Cap sur l'école inclusive
en Europe



Resource sheet

The great pedagogues

Section of the module / R

It is almost impossible to draw up an exhaustive list of researchers and pedagogues who contributed to move forward, in their own way, the legislation on disability at school.

We present in the chapter educational resources a fairly wide panel that goes from Comenius (XVIIth Century) to contemporaries.

Among these great teachers we find two common characteristics:

- the desire to move away from standardized teaching.

This "ready-to-wear" is not effective when addressing students with Special Needs Education (SEN) who require "tailor-made" education.

Experimentation before theoretical notions, observation to discover the student's personality, work on something concrete to arouse children's interest, respect for their personalities, transversality of learning through educational projects, are common features of these alternative pedagogies, which have shown their effectiveness for all students.

- the unshakable conviction of the educability of all children, which is in all respects in line with humanistic philosophy



Comenius, his real name **Jan Amos Komenský** (1592-1670), from the Kingdom of Bohemia (now Czech Republic), philosopher, grammarian and pedagogue, devoted his life to improving educational methods.

He is considered the father of modern education; Jules Michelet nicknamed him “Galileo Galilei of Education”. His modernity already pushed him to innovate in teaching by introducing the use of images and resorting to fun activities.

He particularly distinguished himself by saying that girls had the same intellectual abilities as boys, which was at that time an iconoclastic position; he also engaged in favor of students in difficulties, for better support by the education system.



Jean-Baptiste de La Salle (1651-1719), French ecclesiastic canonized in 1900 who was an innovator in pedagogy. He founded the Institut des [Frères des Écoles chrétiennes](#) (Institute of Brothers of Christian Schools), dedicated to the education of poor children.

Noting a shortage of teachers of value, he founded in Reims a seminary which constituted a real teacher training college, a major innovation at that time, especially since this congregation was composed exclusively of lay people.

His pedagogy is based on two equally innovative principles: the lesson is not given individually (as it has been the case so far) but collectively in a class and one learns to read in French and not in Latin. These innovations profoundly changed pedagogy in France (and elsewhere).

Other notable innovations due to De La Salle: teaching provided at primary school was completely free in the schools he had founded, which was a considerable social progress that no government had considered before him. He organized evening and Sunday classes for young workers; he focused its teaching on the needs of the world of work, which facilitated the employability of young people. The foundation of knowledge was: reading, writing, calculating, drawing, the exercises supporting this theoretical teaching were inspired by concrete cases in the trade and craft industry.



Jean Itard (1774-1838), French physician specialized in deafness and special education. Convinced of the educability of all children, he became famous for his experience on "the wild child of Aveyron".

He is the founder of [Child psychiatry](#). His work on the demutization of the deaf and the reeducation of stuttering gave him worldwide fame.

Author of numerous scientific works in several fields of medicine, otology, audiology, phoniatriy and neurology.

Through his experiences on educability of the disabled, he contributed to change attitudes about disability.



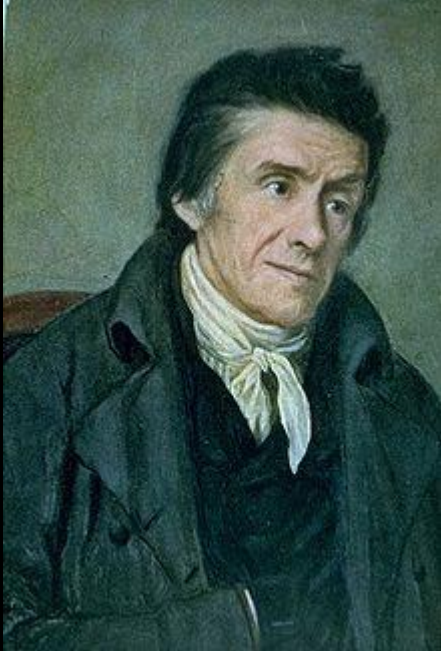
Édouard Séguin (1812-1880), French pedagogue, at the origin, in France then in the United States, of the education of mentally handicapped people. Close to Itard, who took him down this path, he gained renown for his work in favour of children with cognitive disorders.

Around 1840, he created the first private school in Paris dedicated to the education of the intellectually handicapped. In 1846 he published "Moral Treatment, Hygiene and Education of Idiots". This book is considered the first systematic manual on the special needs of children with intellectual disabilities.

In the United States, he created several schools specializing in mental disability.

He devised kinds of Lego games that allowed students to confront complex situations and test their intelligence.

His teaching methods inspired, among others, Maria Montessori who developed them for the benefit of all students. She declared about Edouard Seguin that he had "the merit of having a complete system of education for deficient children".



Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827), Swiss pedagogue, educator and thinker, also a pioneer of modern pedagogy.

Between 1804 and 1824, he founded various institutes for young boys and girls (segregated), but also an institute for deaf-mutes and an institute for poor children.

His pedagogy introduces a graduation in learning: concrete before abstract, near before distant, simple before complicated. He advocates proceeding slowly and gradually.



Janusz Korczak (1878-1942), his real name **Henryk Goldszmit**, is a Polish physician-pediatrician, educator and writer. Before World War II, he was one of the most famous figures of childhood pedagogy. He left his name to posterity for his pedagogical work, his children's literature, and his commitment to children's rights.

He is also famous for deliberately choosing to be deported to Treblinka with Jewish children from the Warsaw ghetto, which he was caring for in an orphanage.

From a pedagogical point of view, he is part of the lineage of contemporary great pedagogues or those who preceded it like Pestalozzi, Freinet, Montessori, Decroly, Deligny, Makarenko ...

He contributed to the progress of active pedagogy and of the new school.



Ovide Decroly (1871-1932), Belgian pedagogue, neuropsychiatrist physician and psychologist, committed to a profound reform of teaching by advocating a global teaching method including reading and writing in all disciplines taught and not isolating them in disciplines apart.

As early as 1901, he became chief doctor of an "abnormal" children's laboratory-clinic, which Decroly described as "irregular" children because he refused to use the terms "abnormal" or "disabled". To be able to continuously observe the behavior of the children, he demanded that this establishment would open in his own house. "Irregular" children coexisted with the three children of Decroly, which is already a form of inclusion. His pedagogy was inspired by a scientific and individualized analysis of child's psychology. It is based on the experimentation that precedes the theory, but also on the need to take into account the external factors (social and natural) of one's environment. Decroly therefore advocates the project approach that offers the child activities that interact with his environment so that he can develop as an individual and as a social being.



Fernand Deligny (1913-1996), French socio-cultural educator and animator, became one of the major references in special education. He opposed the isolation of autistic, delinquent and difficult children in asylum.

He experimented with alternative places dedicated to special education, apparently close to children's places of life.

Former teacher, he early shows a major interest in problem children (delinquency and psychic disorders). Inspired by new pedagogies and close to Freinet's ideas, he designs teaching methods away from the classic line of school, based on putting children in situation, in order to confront them with reality and thus to arouse pupils' interest.

Author of "This Kid", a book, then a film, which demonstrate that community life is beneficial to children with autism.



Maria Montessori (1870-1952), Italian physician and pedagogue, known worldwide for the educational method that bears his name, Montessori pedagogy.

Maria Montessori conceives education not only as a transmission of knowledge, but also and especially as a means of natural development of the child, which results in the development of its environment according to the characteristics and needs of its age.

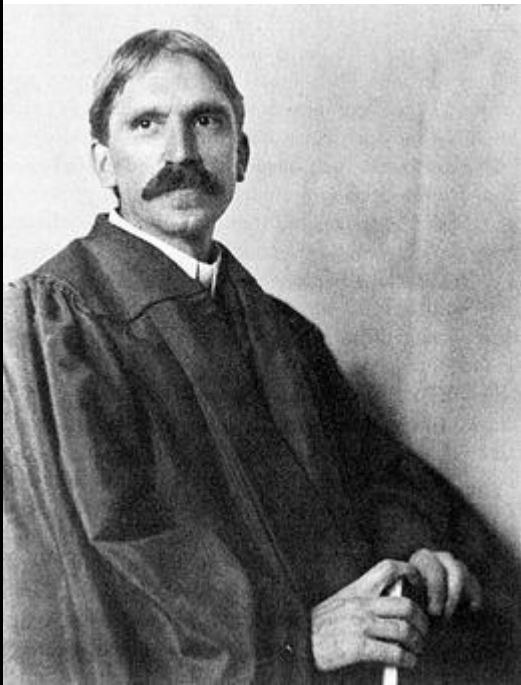
Her method is based on knowledge and respect for the psychological laws that influence the child's development. It is a so-called open education method that starts from the observation of the child.

From 1900, she became interested in so-called (at the time) abnormal children. She said about them: "I had the intuition that the problem of these deficient children was less medical than pedagogical ...". And, relying on the work of Itard and Seguin, she took care of the handicapped children to whom she taught how to read, to write and to whom she passed examinations (with success) at the same time as with "normal" children. . Maria Montessori was therefore at the forefront of inclusive education.



Célestin Baptistin Freinet (1896-1966), French school-teacher who developed, in network with other school-teachers, teaching methods using children's free expression: free text, free design, inter-school correspondence, printing and school newspapers, surveys, cooperative meeting, self-correction, life books, schedules etc.

The Freinet method, which still has many followers today, has inspired most alternative teaching models. Freinet deliberately broke with "official" teaching methods, which he considered too much oriented towards abstract knowledge and giving too much importance to intellectual performance. This disagreement is such that Freinet left the French national education in 1934 to found his own school. For him "school must take children as they are, from their needs, their real interests, even if they are sometimes in contradiction with the educators' social habits or ideas, to put at their disposal appropriate techniques and tools adapted to these techniques, so as to allow life to freely amplify, widen, deepen and specify in all its integrity and originality". The child is considered as a plant that the teacher must surround with all possible care so that it develops in a harmonious and effective way. Knowing the child and arousing his interest in learning are at the base of his method.



John Dewey (1859-1952), American psychologist and philosopher who became a reference in the current of new education. His conception of education has influenced teaching techniques, not only in North America but around the world.

His method is based on "hands-on learning", which consists in placing the student in a situation of actor in activities of an educational nature. For him, educating is to reconcile apparently contradictory dualisms: reason and passions, the physical and the mental, the spirit and the action, the psychological and the social, the individual and the society, students' aspirations and school programs, theory and practice, etc.

Education involves the pedagogical exploitation of experience through two fundamental principles: "continuity" and "interaction" between man and the world around him. These two principles are sifted through logic and psychology.



Philip Henry Nicholls WOOD (1928-2008), born in Cardiff (UK), a researcher in rheumatology, epidemiologist, health services researcher, sociologist, philosopher and innovator, was at the origin of the first International Classification of Disability (ICIDH).

Presented to WHO in 1975 and adopted in 1976, this classification was published in English only in 1980 because of international misgivings and disagreements.

Yet Wood's work has been the basis of the UN Convention on Disability.

The list proposed here is not exhaustive, but it is impossible to list all researchers and pedagogues who, in their own way, made progress legislations on disability at school.

Among these pedagogues we find a common characteristic: the desire to move away from standardized teaching.

This "ready-to-wear" is not effective when addressing students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) that require an education tailored to each one of them.

Experimentation before theoretical notions, work on the concrete to arouse the interest of the children, the respect of their personalities, the transversality of learning by means of educational projects, are common characteristics of these alternative pedagogies, which showed their efficiency for all students.