

# Editorial

Why create this journal? Although we are part of a recent barely international scientific community, still with a low level of “critical mass”, we are faced with the fact that a substantial part of the research undertaken remains either as “grey” literature or its dissemination is restricted to groups of researchers that are closer to the respective subject. The main aim of this journal is to bring UI&DCE<sup>1</sup>'s scientific production to the fore, via a first-line publication and diffusion capable of enhancing further discussion among researchers both within and outside the Unit. We opted for a bilingual edition (in Portuguese and English) as a strategic move to internationalize our research activity, helping to promote interchanges that make networks and projects surpassing the internal scope of the UI&DCE and crossing national borders not only viable, but also sustainable and visible. This first publication, in electronic format, will feed other editorial initiatives already underway (“*Coleção de Ciências da Educação*” — “Educational Sciences Collection”, and “*Coleção de Cadernos*” — “Booklets Collection”). The importance we attribute to the incentive to publish corresponds to a research idea, understood to be a knowledge-producing activity, via a method that is permanently subject to peer review and transformed into communicable knowledge.

This journal is clearly a publication in the field of Educational Sciences. However, this does not mean that it is less aware of the epistemological weaknesses and hybridity inherent to this field. Educational Sciences are understood to be part of a

broader field — that of social and human sciences, the limitations of which are the result of historical and social factors, found both within and outside the social field of research practices. We will work on the tension between the unity of the social and the diversity of its scientific approaches, therefore refusing the reduction of Educational Sciences to an extension of its pre-existing subject areas, on the one hand, and also refusing the pretension to settle frontiers and identities which become obstacles to knowledge through the impossible definition of *one* method and *one* object. This position regarding educational sciences also means a clear separation from pedagogy, which is the expression of a Professional knowledge with an inevitable prescriptive component.

The title chosen for the journal also requires a brief explanation. Human beings are the only beings in the universe constantly searching to get more knowledge about it, which is inherent to his survival and the affirmation of his humanity. As an inquisitive being, he is condemned to learning and self-interrogation. It is a permanent and never ending task, which implies questioning results and always beginning again. Knowledge production takes different forms, among them being scientific knowledge. This kind of knowledge is distinct from other kinds of knowledge because it is systematic and because of a conscious and explicit use of a method, which is permanently subjected to meta-analysis, both individual and collective. Scientific work is a constant search for truth through a knowl-

edge which is always provisional and conjectural, empirically refutable. The recognition of the need for this constant recommencement is historically illustrated by the rediscovery of theories which had been ignored in their time and were later brought to light (as in the case of the heliocentric theory of Aristarchus), or the rediscovery of visionaries who anticipated today's problems (Ivan Illich is one example). It is from these characteristics of scientific work that it is possible to compare the human adventure in the search for knowledge with Sisyphus fate of incessantly restarting the same task. In the case of science, there must be relevance and sense for whoever does it.

The social relevance of the results of scientific work supposes: that the primacy of theory should be completed with a parallel and a continuous dialectical relationship with the empiric level (each edition of the journal is organized into thematic dossiers in which the empiric dimension of the research will be a relevant aspect); that any special-

ized approach to a theme should be linked to (instead of ignoring) the great problems we have been facing (we will try to link the specialized research with reference to global problems which avoid the sterility of a fragmentation of knowledge); the clear communication of complex ideas which is the opposite of the formulation of trivia in a deliberately confusing and obscure language (we will seek to motivate the advancement of clarity, simplicity and precision).

It is only under these conditions that we can imagine the researcher, as has actually been suggested by Albert Camus, less as an “absurd hero” and more as a “fortunate Sisyphus”.

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Translated by Robert G. Carter

1. T.N.: UI&DCE — Unidade de Investigação e Desenvolvimento de Ciências da Educação (Educational Sciences Research and Development Unit of the University of Lisbon).