



L-Università ta' Malta
Faculty of Education



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR INCLUSION
AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

SIPes
Società Italiana
di Pedagogia *speciale*



INTERNATIONAL SIPES CONFERENCE

GLOBAL LEARNING, INCLUSIVE FUTURES.

Embracing Diversity
Through Education.



2026 CONFERENCE
PROGRAMME

Scientific Advisory Board

Prof. Colin Calleja, Prof. Catia Giaconi, Prof. Paola Aiello, Prof. Maurizio Sibilio,
Prof. Nicole Bianquin, Prof. Fabio Bocci, Prof. Noemi Del Bianco, Prof. Donatella Fantozzi, Prof. Daniele Fedeli, Prof. Andrea Fiorucci, Prof. Tamara Zappaterra, Prof. Antioco Luigi Zurru, Prof. Erika Marie Pace, Dr Jonathan Borg, Dr Louis J. Camilleri, Dr Lorena Montesano

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Conference Compère

Dr Jonathan Borg



Day 1: Thursday, 9 April

Aula Magna

09:00 – 10:00 | Welcome Addresses

Prof. Frank Bezzina, Rector Designate, University of Malta
Prof. Colin Calleja, Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Malta
Prof. Catia Giaconi, President, Italian Society of Special Pedagogy (SIPeS), Italy
Prof. Paola Aiello, Director, Department of Humanities, Philosophy and Education, University of Salerno, Italy
Prof. Maurizio Sibilio, President, Italian Federation of Education Research Associations (FERE), University of Salerno, Italy
Hon. Julia Farrugia, Minister for Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector

10:00 – 10:45 | Keynote Speech: Prof. Paola Aiello, Director of the Department of Humanities, Philosophy and Education, University of Salerno; SIPeS Vice President

ENACTING INCLUSIVE AGENCY: BUILDING EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITIES FOR INCLUSIVE FUTURES

10:45 – 11:15 | Coffee Break

11:15 – 12:45 | Round Table 1 – VOICES IN DIALOGUE FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Chair: Louis J. Camilleri

Karen Buttigieg, Roberto Dainese, Diana Carmela Di Gennaro, Josanne Ghirxi, Rhoda Garland, Oliver Scicluna

12:45 – 14:15 | Lunch Break

14:15 – 15:00 | Keynote Speech: Roselyn Cason Marcus, Global Director, Senior Talent Attraction and Affinity, McKinsey and Company

HOW WORKPLACES CAN BE MORE INCLUSIVE OF DIVERSITY

15:00 – 16:30 | Round Table 2 – BUILDING INCLUSIVE PATHWAYS FROM EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT

Chair: Gregory Michael Ellul

Kendrick Bondin, Clayton Micallef Grimaud, Erika Marie Pace, Francesco Peluso Cassese, Stefania Pinnelli, Shawn Pisani

16:30 – 17:00 | Coffee Break

17:00 – 18:00 | Closing Reflections – FROM DISCUSSION TO INSIGHT: PERSPECTIVES FROM ACADEMIA

Chair: Colin Calleja

Andrea Fiorucci, Marinella Muscarà, Elena Tanti Burlo, Phyllisienne Vassallo Gauci

20:00 | Conference Dinner @ Rampila Restaurant, No.1, St John's Cavalier Street, Valletta



Day 2 – Friday, 10 April

08:30 – 09:00 | Welcome Coffee

09:00 – 09:45 | **Keynote Speech: Dr Rosa M. Colon-Kolacko**, CDM, MBA, SHRM-SCP; President and Founder Global Equity Learning (GEL) and Need Humans, Tufts School of Medicine Adjunct Professor, Department of Public Health and Community Medicine; Visiting Researcher, Center for Health and Business Department of Bentley University

MEASURING IMPACT OF HUMAN-CENTRIC LEADERSHIP, TEACHING, AND INCLUSION EXCELLENCE IN MALTA EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION LEVERAGING AI

10:00 – 11:45 | Breakout Session 1

Session Title: Inclusive Pedagogies for Belonging and Learning (I)

Chair: Prof. Margaret Mangion

Level 1 Meeting Room Number 101

Title of Presentations:

1. Artistic Practices and Digital Tools for Inclusion in Lower Secondary School
Presenting Author: Dr Margarita Bogdanova
2. Blossoming Minds: A Local Qualitative Study on Enhancing Children’s School Wellbeing Through Nature-Based Outdoor Activities
Presenting Author: Ms Yasmin Marie Cachia
3. Embodied Education and Transformative Inclusion: The “ECS Grammar” for Rethinking School, Participation, and Well-being
Presenting Authors: Prof. Paola Damiani and Prof. Chiara Gentilozzi
4. Futures of School Knowledge and Inclusive Pedagogies
Presenting Author: Dr Emanuel Mizzi
5. Implications of Creative Pedagogies as Relational Practice among Students with Intellectual Disabilities: Themes Informing Inclusive Education
Presenting Authors: Prof. Margaret Mangion and Prof. Leonie Baldacchino

Session Title: Leadership and Governance for Inclusive Education Systems

Chair: Dr Jonathan Borg

Level 1 Meeting Room Number 102

Title of Presentations:

1. Leadership in Inclusive Processes: Comparing Perspectives between School Principals and Middle Leaders.
Presenting Author: Dr Michele Formica and Dr Flavia Capodanno
2. Participation and Equity: The Interconnections Between Teaching and Educational Leadership
Presenting Authors: Dr Stephania Rossi and Dr Margherita Giombi
3. The Key Role of Distributed Leadership for Inclusive Education Systems
Presenting Author: Dr Barbara Baschiera
4. Between Regulatory Reform and Living Practice: The NUPE 2 Project as an Inquiry into Inclusion and Equity in Primary School
Presenting Author: Dr Donatella Visceglia
5. A Critical Analysis of Leadership Theory, Policy and Practice through the Lens of Teacher Diversity and Inclusion
Presenting Author: Dr Manuela Heinz
6. Middle Leaders for Inclusion in Complex School Systems: A Comparative Study between Italy and Malta
Presenting Authors: Dr Flavia Capodanno and Dr Jonathan Borg



Session Title: Teacher Education and Professional Identity (I)

Chair: Prof. Annalisa Morganti

Level 1 Meeting Room Number 103

Title of Presentations:

1. Artificial Intelligence and Teacher Professional Development: Effects of Self-Coaching on the Implementation of Integrated Instruction for Students with Autism
Presenting Author: Dr Francesco Del Sorbo
2. Who is the Teacher Today? Developing Professional Identity for Inclusive Agency in Initial Teacher Education: Italy and Malta Compared
Presenting Author: Dr Rossella D'Agostino
3. Emotional Competence in Teaching Professionalism: The Role of Tinkering Pedagogy in Training
Presenting Author: Dr Vincenza Barra
4. Future Support Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Mnemonic Strategies in Visual Impairment
Presenting Authors: Dr Giovanni Petrillo and Dr Davide Saggese
5. A European Alliance for Teacher Training between Inclusion and Digitalisation
Presenting Authors: Prof. Annalisa Morganti, Prof. Alessia Signorelli, Dr Francesco Marsili and Dr Luigi Fenza

Session Title: Digital Transformation and Inclusive Futures (I)

Chair: Dr Michele Domenico Todino

Level 0 Meeting Room Number 2

Title of Presentations:

1. Discovering Cypriot Traditions: An Edugame for Intercultural Learning
Presenting Author: Dr Anna Rescigno
2. Measuring Attitudes Toward AI in the School Context: An Empirical Study Using the GAAIS Scale in the Marche Region, Italy.
Presenting Authors: Prof. Aldo Caldarelli, Dr Marco Iommi, and Dr Arianna Santoro
3. Pedagogically Mediated Artificial Intelligence for Socio-emotional Learning in Autism Spectrum Disorder
Presenting Authors: Dr Lucia Campitiello and Dr Marco Caruso
4. Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Special Educational Needs: A Comparative Analysis of Italian and Japanese School Systems.
Presenting Author: Dr Davide Perrotta

Session Title: Reframing Inclusion in Global and Mobile Societies

Chair: Prof. Arianna Taddei

Level 0 Meeting Room Number 3

Title of Presentations:

1. Between Inclusion, Compensation and Segregation: Narratives on Migrant Students' Access to Basic Vocational Education
Presenting Author: Dr Alevtina Ivanova
2. Teaching in Multicultural Primary Classrooms: Teachers' Perspectives from Iran and Germany
Presenting Author: Dr Zahra Sadat Mohajeri
3. More Than a Score: Students' Voices on What Intelligence Really Means
Presenting Author: Prof. Şehnaz Nigar Çelik
4. Rethinking the Individualised Education Plan (IEP) from a Cross-Cultural Perspective: Inclusive Policies and Practices for Migrant Students with Disabilities
Presenting Author: Dr Francesca Oggiano
5. Reframing inclusion through social pedagogy: L2 education, care practices, and migrant trajectories in mobile societies.
Presenting Authors: Dr Sara Pellegrini
6. Special Pedagogy, Challenges and Pathways for Quality Education in Mozambique
Presenting Authors: Prof. Arianna Taddei and Dr Ilaria D'Angelo



Session Title: Disability, Neurodiversity and Inclusive Educational Culture (I)

Chair: Prof. Diana Carmela Di Gennaro

Level 0 Meeting Room Number 4

Title of Presentations:

1. "Us and Them" – Why is Being Together so Difficult? Psychosocial Mechanisms of Devaluing "Others" as Inhibitors of Inclusive Education
Presenting Author: Prof. Ewa Wysocka
2. Beyond Disability-Only Accessibility: UDL 3.0 and the Repair of Epistemic Injustice in Higher Education
Presenting Author: Mx Barbara Centrone
3. Committed to Inclusion? The Structural Invisibility of Students with Dyscalculia in Germany
Presenting Author: Prof. Amalia Lavinia Rizzo
4. Deafness and Structural Vulnerability: Rethinking Linguistic Accessibility
Presenting Author: Dr Alessandra Faggiotto
5. Disability and Neurodiversity in Movie Representations. A “Critical Observatory” on Cinema as an Analyser of the Socio-political-cultural System with Regard to Inclusive Processes
Presenting Author: Dr Leonardo Tantari
6. “Children with High Cognitive Potential and Giftedness Aged 6 to 11: Results of a Research Study”
Presenting Author: Dr Rebecca Belforti

11:45 – 12:15 | Coffee break

12:15 – 13:45 | Parallel Practical Workshop Sessions

Workshop 1: *Inclusive Learning by Design: Constructivist Strategies that Center Student Voice and Engagement.*

Level 1 Meeting Room 101

Dr Bruce Marlowe

Professor of Educational Psychology and Special Education, University of South Carolina Beaufort, USA

Workshop 2: *Who is the Learner You Seek to Include?*

Level 1 Meeting Room 102

Prof. Christine A. Johnston

Let Me Learn, Rowan University (professor emeritus), USA

Mr. Joel T. Johnston

Let Me Learn, USA

Workshop 3: *Belonging by Design: Creating Inclusive Performances of Understanding*

Level 1 Meeting Room 103

Dr Ann Gaillard,

Acacia University, USA

Workshop 4: *The Let Me Learn Process®: Critical Considerations for More Inclusive Practices.* Level 0 Meeting Room 2

Ms Susan Grixti

Ms Valerie Salerno

Ms Tania Farrugia

Let Me Learn Centre - University of Malta, Malta

Workshop 5: *Building a Thriving and Inclusive Learning Environment. Embracing the Growth of Malta Population from 40+ Countries.*

Level 0 Meeting Room 3



Dr Gifford Rhamie

Executive Director, Race to Excellence, UK

Workshop 6: From Initiative to Ethos: Sustaining Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Global Education. Level 0 Meeting Room 4

Dr Ann Palmer

Executive Director, Race to Excellence, UK

13:45 – 15:00 | Light Lunch

15:00 – 16:45 | Breakout Session 2

Session Title: Teacher Education and Professional Identity (II)

Chair: Prof. Filippo Dettori

Level 1 Meeting Room Number 101

Title of Presentations:

1. The Inclusive Teacher in the Secondary School
Presenting Author: Prof. Filippo Dettori
2. Training Future Teachers in Inclusive Education: Challenges and Opportunities. Experience of the University of Malta and the University of Burgos
Presenting Author: Dr Eva M. Garcia-Terceño
3. What Shapes Attitudes and Preparedness for the Inclusion of Students with Specific Learning Disorders? The Role of Inclusive and General Teaching Self-Efficacy
Presenting Author: Dr Angela Lombardo Pontillo
4. What are we Missing in Initial Teacher Training in Inclusive Education?
Presenting Authors: Prof. Annalisa Morganti, Prof. Angeles Parrilla Latas and Dr Samantha Mulloni Martinez
5. “It Doesn’t Fall within my Remit”: Professional Identity Development and Teacher Commitment for Inclusive Collective Agency
Presenting Authors: Prof. Erika Marie Pace and Dr Ida Esposito

Session Title: Digital Transformation and Inclusive Futures (II)

Chair: Dr Giuseppina Rita Jose Mangione

Level 1 Meeting Room Number 102

Title of Presentations:

1. AI4COMMUNICATION: an adaptive AI based AAC system for inclusive education
Presenting Authors: Dr Anna Rescigno and Dr Lucia Campitiello
2. Augmented Reality and Learning Outcomes in Students with Mild Visual Impairment: Evidence from a Cross-Over Study
Presenting Authors: Dr Luna Lembo and Prof. Stefania Morsanuto
3. Brain-Computer Interfaces for Disorders of Consciousness: Advancing Digital Transformation toward Inclusive Neurorehabilitation
Presenting Author: Dr Mariagrazia D’Ippolito
4. Digital Technologies and Inclusive Pedagogy in Multigrade Classrooms: Evidence and Future Tensions from a National Survey of Italian Teachers
Presenting Authors: Dr Giuseppina Rita Jose Mangione and Dr Lydia Zampolini
5. Digitalising Education or Digitalising Students? Rethinking Screens in Early Literacy and Learning
Presenting Author: Prof. Igor Ž. Žagar

Session Title: Teacher Education and Professional Identity (III)

Chair: Prof. Elisabetta Ghedin

Level 1 Meeting Room Number 103

Title of Presentations:

1. School Selection, Meritocracy Beliefs and Attitudes Toward Gifted Students: A Mediation Analysis with Italian Teachers
Presenting Author: Dr Francesco Marsili



2. Sustaining Inclusion in Higher Education: Professional Wellbeing, Burnout, and Inclusive Practice
Presenting Author: Dr Damian Spiteri
3. Teacher Education and Creative Thinking: Preliminary Results of a Systematic Review of the International Literature
Presenting Author: Dr Naomi La Manna
4. Promoting Teacher Well-Being: Burnout Prevention in Pre-Service Teacher Education
Presenting Author: Dr Antonio Giannone
5. Teachers' Well-Being and Professional Collaboration in Inclusive School Contexts: A Pedagogical Reading of Co-Teaching as a Relational Device
Presenting Author: Prof. Elisabetta Ghedin

Session Title: *Inclusion Beyond School*

Chair: Prof. Fausta Sabatano

Level 0 Meeting Room Number 2

Title of Presentations:

1. Concept Maps in Higher Education: An Exploratory Investigation into their (Ab)use in the Learning Process of Students with SEN
Presenting Author: Dr Raimondo Enza Manila
2. Cross-Cultural Adaptation and Psychometric Comparison of the Spanish and Italian Versions of the Vinegrad Plus Questionnaire
Presenting Authors: Dr Alessandra Maria Straniero and Dr Lorena Montesano
3. Faculty Development, Higher Education and Inclusion: Suggestions from a Study on Teacher Agency
Presenting Author: Dr Chiara Gentile
4. Inclusive Outdoor Contexts and Teacher Training: The Role of Adventure Playgrounds in Special Education
Presenting Authors: Dr Miriam Galloro and Prof. Teresa Iona
5. Reclaiming Bildung for Inclusive Futures: Formation, Dignity, and Learning Beyond Instrumentalism
Presenting Author: Ms Karen Buttigieg
6. The Culture of “Zero Risk” as an Invisible Barrier to Outdoor Education for All: A Study in Marginalised Contexts.
Presenting Authors: Dr Cristina Promentino and Prof. Fausta Sabatano

Session Title: *Evidence-informed Practices and Innovation in Inclusion*

Chair: Prof. Nicole Bianquin

Level 0 Meeting Room Number 3

Title of Presentations:

1. The Break that Makes or Breaks You: School break Experiences in Maltese Secondary Schools
Presenting Author: Stephanie Bugeja
2. Cognitive-Motor Practices and Inclusive Settings: A Systematic Review on ADHD and Executive Functions
Presenting Authors: Dr Gian Marco Rosato, Dr Marcus Pingitore
3. Implementation Champions and School Readiness for Evidence-based Practice. A Pilot Study on Attitudinal Change and G-ESDM Adoptability
Presenting Author: Dr Emanuela Zappalà
4. Inclusive Processes and Teaching Practices: Validation and Extension Prospects of an Observation Tool from Primary to Secondary School
Presenting Author: Dr Donatella Visceglia
5. Towards an Embodied Cognition-based Approach to Teaching Mathematics: A Research Project for the Integration of Generative Ontology, Enactive Cognition and Enabling Pedagogy
Presenting Authors: Prof. Nicolina Pastena and Dr Antonio Cuccaro



6. The Teacher with Instrumental Function for Inclusion as "Ally" of Persons with Disabilities: Theoretical Framework of Qualitative Research
Presenting Author: Dr Maria Antonietta Maggio

Session Title: Inclusive Pedagogies for Belonging and Learning (II)

Chair: Dr Louis J. Camilleri

Level 0 Meeting Room Number 4

Title of Presentations:

1. Non-linear Didactics in Mother Tongue Teaching: An Exploratory Study of Italian Primary School Teachers' Perspectives
Presenting Authors: Dr Andrea Monaco and Dr Rita Colace
2. Outdoor Education and School Well-Being: Emerging Models and Research Directions
Presenting Authors: Dr Giorgia Peluso Cassese and Prof. Stefania Morsanuto
3. Rethinking Peer Tutoring in Higher Education through the UDL Guidelines 3.0: A Professional Development Pathway to Promote Inclusive University Cultures
Presenting Author: Dr Andreina Orlando
4. Spaces that Shape Learning: Innovative Learning Environments between Participatory Design and Inclusion
Presenting Author: Dr Maria Grazia Verbicaro
5. Voices Spoken in the Cracks: Listening to the Literacy Experiences of Students with Intellectual Disability in a Maltese Secondary School
Presenting Author: Dr Amanda Schembri Muscat
6. Negotiating Double Exceptionality within the Family-School-University Network: An Exploratory Case Study
Presenting Author: Prof. Stefania Pinnelli

17:00 – 17:45 | Book Launch – *Malta Review of Education Research (MRER)* at 20

17:45 | Drinks at the Foyer



Day 3 – Saturday, 11 April

09:00 –09:45 | Keynote speech: Dr Alistair De Gaetano, Chairperson of the Malta Autism Advisory Council

FIXING THE SYSTEM: INCLUSION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THOSE IT IS MEANT TO SERVE

09:45 – 10:15 | Coffee Break

10:30 – 12:00 | Breakout Session 3

Session Title: Digital Transformation and Inclusive Futures (III)

Chair: Prof. Şehnaz Nigar Çelik

Level 1 Meeting Room Number 101

Title of Presentations:

1. Rethinking University Studies in The Era of AI: Qualitative Evidence derived from Experiences with a Montessori Chatbot
Presenting Author: Dr Rosa D'Angelo
2. Virtual Reality for Adolescents and Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Systematic Review in Progress
Presenting Authors: Dr Marcus Pingitore and Dr Gian Marco Rosato
3. Education, Culture and Intercultural Dialogue in Primary Schools for an Inclusive Future
Presenting Author: Dr Margarita Bogdanova
4. "Rete-Onlife": a Digital Platform for Developing Life Plans for Adults with Disabilities
Presenting Authors: Prof. Annalisa Morganti and Dr Luigi Fenza
5. Balancing Technology and Learning: Digital Detox Experiences and Effective Learning Processes Among Medical Students
Presenting Author: Prof. Şehnaz Nigar Çelik

Session Title: Rights, Wellbeing and Transitions

Chair: Prof. Elena Bortolotti

Level 1 Meeting Room Number 102

Title of Presentations:

1. Circle Singing to Promote Participation, Disciplinary Competences, and Wellbeing: An Empirical Study in Higher Education
Presenting Author: Dr Alessia Tomei
2. From School Survival to Student Agency: Participation, Voice and Self-Determination in Primary School
Presenting Author: Dr Grzegorz Kozdras
3. Human Rights, Well-being, and Participation: The Pedagogical Challenge of the Life Project in the Wake of the Italian Reform (Legislative Decree 62/2024)
Presenting Author: Dr Antonella Perrotta
4. Job Inclusion and Life Project: Outcomes of an Erasmus+ Experience for Young People with Fragile X Syndrome
Presenting Author: Dr Alessia Tomei
5. The desire compass: A survey on guidance pathways for students with disabilities
Presenting Author: Dr Filomena Izzo
6. Transitions and Life Planning: Voices from Students, Families, and Teachers in Inclusive Contexts
Presenting Author: Dr Lucia Borsini



Session Title: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education

Chair: Mr Jefflyn Grech

Level 1 Meeting Room Number 103

Title of Presentations:

1. Strengthening Inclusive Education in Early Childhood: Research Tools and Frameworks from the European Project EDUSKILLS+
Presenting Authors: Dr Francesco Marsili and Prof. Alessia Signorelli
2. When small gestures speak: How children build peer communities in a superdiverse ECEC setting in Norway
Presenting Author: Ms Frimannslund Marit
3. Referral Pathway in Childhood and Adolescence. Analysis and Description of “Good Referrers” Based on the Results of an Exploratory Survey in the Roman Hinterland.
Presenting Author: Dr Virginia Benedetti
4. Teaching with the heart: The vocation of a special education teacher. A narrative study
Presenting Author: Ms Macarena Andrea Saavedra Olguín
5. Inclusive Practices in Maltese Childcare Settings
Presenting Author: Mr Jefflyn Grech

Session Title: Disability, Neurodiversity and Inclusive Educational Culture (II)

Chair: Prof. Nicolina Pastena

Level 0 Meeting Room Number 2

Title of Presentations:

1. From Policy to Practice: Tensions and Pathways in Inclusive Education Systems in Spain and Italy
Presenting Author: Prof. Rosa M. Rodriguez-Izquierdo
2. Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities in Poland in the Context of Global Learning: Challenges and Future Directions
Presenting Author: Dr Przemyslaw Eugeniusz Kaniok
3. Promoting the Inclusion of Neurodiversity: Study Skills and ADHD in Lower Secondary School Promoting the Inclusion of Neurodiversity: Study Skills and ADHD in Lower Secondary School
Presenting Author: Dr Marianna Valente
4. Invisible Barriers and UDL-Oriented Inclusive Design in Specialist Support Teacher Education: A Mixed Methods Study
Presenting Author: Prof. Rosa Sgambelluri

Session Title: Teacher Education and Professional Identity (IV)

Chair: Prof. Alessandro Romano

Level 0 Meeting Room Number 3

Title of Presentations:

1. From Automatic Judgments to Reflective Practice: Exploring Inhibitory Processes in Inclusive Teacher Education
Presenting Author: Dr Carmine Sessa
2. Making Multigrade Didactics Visible: the PLURITEC Project for the Development of Good Teaching and Organisational Practices
Presenting Authors: Dr Giuseppina Rita Jose Mangione and Prof. Alessandro Romano
3. Music and Artificial Intelligence in the Construction of the Future Special Education Teacher’s Professional Identity: Results of an Exploratory Study
Presenting Author: Dr Alessio Di Paolo
4. Narrative Construction of Teacher Identity and University Tutoring: A Case Study in the Primary Teacher Education Degree
Presenting Author: Dr Donatella Visceglia

12:15 – 12:45 | Looking ahead: Concluding Reflections

Colin Calleja, Catia Giaconi, Paola Aiello

