

The 1<sup>st</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of the JOURNAL [SCUOLA DEMOCRATICA](#) will be hosted at the [University of Cagliari](#) (Italy), **June 6 through 8, 2019**, by Scuola Democratica, [Centro Interuniversitario per la Ricerca Didattica](#) (University of Cagliari and University of Sassari), [Il Mulino Editore](#).

The Conference stands as an opportunity to present and discuss empirical and theoretical works from a variety of disciplines and fields covering education. The focal theme of the Conference is a trend currently affecting many countries invested by processes of globalization: the advent of what Colin Crouch called «post-democracy» ([check Keynote speakers list](#)). Organizers, promoters and partners of the Conference wish to invite educators, teachers, researchers, scholars, academics, scientists, professionals, experts and policy makers to join the conversation and bring the disciplines towards a more integrated set of alliances by:

- promoting a trans and inter disciplinary discussion on urgent topics;
- fostering debates among experts and professionals;
- diffusing research findings all over international scientific networks and practitioners' mainstreams;
- launching further strategies and networking alliances on local, national and international scale;
- providing a new space for debate and evidences to educational policies.

We invite you to submit abstracts for your presentation at the **track session**:

### A.01. Character Skills for Democratic Life

Convenors: Andrea M. Maccarini (Università degli Studi di Padova, [andrea.maccarini@unipd.it](mailto:andrea.maccarini@unipd.it))  
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Keywords: **Character skills; socio-emotional skills; democratic life; pluralist societies.**

Research in social sciences and humanities has shown increasing attention on the need of students to be helped to cope with a challenging and fast-changing environment, drawing on resources of 'character', or – in a more psychological language – on social and emotional skills. The two different semantics have sometimes been integrated, as in J. Heckman's work, by the formula of 'character skills'. International research is currently exploring the relevance of such competencies for learning processes through formal education and beyond. Most studies deal with the ways one specific competence is produced by various educational programs, or how character skills become relevant for some particular educational outcomes. For example, researchers have been interested in how grit, curiosity, or growth mindset improve learning of a single subject discipline.

Without neglecting the relevance of such studies, we want to approach this theme from a different angle. We are interested in the importance of character skills for peaceful and cooperative relationships within complex plural societies. In other words, the problem is if and how the democratic quality of social life represents one of the life outcomes that can be meaningfully connected to character skills. Such a connection has a long tradition in social science, especially in the US, since the classical work of Tocqueville, and through R. Bellah, to J.D. Hunter and D. Porpora. In the present context of resilient nationalisms, the decline of historically known channels of élite formation, and emergent processes of post-democratization in various regions of global society, such an issue seems increasingly timely.

Overall, the panel wants to explore the hypothesis that character skills can contribute positively to a healthy democratic life. Various spheres of action from working environments to civil society, to educational institutions themselves, are involved. Contributions dealing with the emergence of such competencies in the school context, as well as in other socialization agencies, are welcome. Empirically oriented papers will have priority, but reflections over conceptual frameworks are also welcome. Finally, it may be useful to spell out a few questions, which help to identify some core issues we would like to deal with. What social and emotional skills are needed to sustain democratic life in pluralist societies? Are there any actual behaviors or attitudes that characterize a healthy civil

society, for which a connection with character skills can be highlighted? What is the moral ecology of schools that is conducive to the construction of those skills? What is the fate of cultural heritages in the transformation of educational systems, and how do they contribute to produce character skills that help to increase civic and democratic values?

## ABSTRACTS SUBMISSION

### HOW TO SUBMIT

Abstracts should be submitted by **February 28, 2019** ([check Dates and Deadlines](#)).

Abstracts should be edited in the **template form** ([click to download](#)) and then submitted via the [submission platform](#).

Please do not submit your abstract by e-mailing it to the Convenor(s) of the track session you chose. Convenor(s) will receive submitted abstracts automatically from the [submission platform](#) and they are going to reject all the abstracts sent to their e-mail addresses.

Abstracts should include:

1. Title (limited to 20 words in UPPER CASE);
2. author's name and surname, institution and email address;
3. five keywords;
4. abstract's text (limited to 500 words).

- The presenting author can submit **only 1 abstract** at the Conference.
- You may be co-author of a second, third ...*n*<sup>th</sup>... submitted abstract only in case you are not the submitter of this latter.
- Submitters that are accepted for oral presentation will be permitted to give only **1 oral presentation**.
- The submitting and presenting author must be listed as the first author in the [template form](#).
- Please note the submitting author will receive all correspondence about the abstract so we advise that the submitting author details that are entered are the same details as those of the presenting author.
- Abstracts may not be edited/updated after final submission. You are welcome to bring an updated abstract onsite with you at the Conference.

Before you begin, please prepare the following information:

- Abstracts must be allocated to a specific track session and therefore you have to select and report track session's code and title in the [template form](#). For a complete listing of track session please [click here](#).
- Abstract layout in the [template form](#) has the following sections: Methods, outcomes, references. However, suggestions are not obligatory. Word count is affected by inclusion of references.
- Convenors and the Scientific Committee will review all submitted abstracts. Notification regarding abstract acceptance and scheduling will be sent to the submitting author
- Please note, if your abstract is accepted for oral presentation, the presenting author will be permitted a maximum of 20 minutes oral presentation in the program.

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