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# Early school leaving: for a pedagogy of orientation

## Abstract

In light of the sudden transformations of today's society, characterized by instability of values, economic and production difficulties, job insecurity and traditional networks of belonging, the orientation of young people and in particular of all those who belong to the most fragile groups, becomes a "orientation across the board".

With this contribution we want to highlight the significant anthropological and pedagogical value of the orientation for an effective contrast of the dispersive phenomenon and the possible solutions to promote an effective integration-inclusion process.

**Keywords:** *early school leaving, orientation, inclusion.*

## School dropout: what meaning?

Under the expression "early school leaving" all those phenomena of slowing down, interruption of school paths and any failure to achieve the final qualification are included. In fact, according to UNESCO, this term indicates "phenomena" that lead to a slowdown and an interruption before the achievement of the final qualification, in the path of children within secondary school (Passalacqua-Ribis- Zecca, 2020, pp. 147–165; Girotti, 2006)[1].

At the end of the sixties (think of the Barbiana School) the term selection was used to talk about the same phenomenon, with the intent of the school to help certain children, let's say those coming from medium-high socio-cultural contexts and to reject the children of families deprived economically and culturally. It must also be said that the socio-economic-cultural deprivation of families has been and is often the cause of school hardship, fueled by a school which, despite the relevant legislation and the declarations of principle, is still unable to fulfill today to that task assigned by the Italian Constitution: to enhance young people all to avoid discrimination and social inequality. The school, therefore, homologous, conforms and ends up enhancing the differences as Illich had lucidly grasped that, in the 70s, demanded the depolarization of society (Illich, 2019).

Early school leaving is certainly a vast and complex phenomenon, which only partially the indicators and data of statistical revelations represent. In the socio-pedagogical literature a series of expressions have been used to indicate this phenomenon such as: failure, selection, school mortality, evasion, failures, neo-literacy (Bertolucci-Batini, 2016).

The semantic choice is never neutral and is relative to ideological options and more or less unaware prejudices in reading the phenomenon. If we refer to realities such as abandonment and evasion, our thinking runs to the student's responsibility, while for other realities, such as rejection, repetition, the action of the educational institution is called into question. Then there are other elements that outline the complexity of the phenomenon identifiable in the various forms of disaffection with the education system: from intolerance, to boredom and detachment, from participation in school life. These different degrees of "estrangement" from the education system and its rules amplify the phenomenon of dispersion, trespassing into discomfort and deviance and therefore recovery and prevention no longer only affect teachers and school, but invest the entire social fabric.

The meaning of the "early school leaving" phenomenon therefore includes a "early school system", therefore not only the dispersion of users, but also of didactic resources, learning outcomes, school organization, collaboration of institutional networks present at a territorial level, with the aggravation of a total disorientation that loses sight of the route to follow. Then believing in

man and in the positivity of his multiple dimensions is the prerequisite for "orienting" disoriented society. But precisely this trust must be returned to the school by culture and to society by the school. What is opposed to the realization of these conditions hinders the possibility of future civilization. «Pedagogy needs the future, to imagine what will happen tomorrow, not so much to predict […] but to plan, to prepare with the intention of living in this way not a 'sleepy' present, but a present full of meanings that allows to go beyond the immediate» (Santelli, 1987, p. 310).

## The drop out between education and anthropology

The multifactorial character of early school leaving has now been acquired, which certainly cannot be the only object of statistical analysis, but which calls into question the emotional-affective-relational dimension of children, the organization of teaching, educational strategies, the orientation, the dynamics of the territory, interinstitutional collaboration, but above all pedagogy as a science of education, supported by an ethical-philosophical anthropology from which it cannot ignore in order to deepen what is most important in existence and thus be able to carry out an effective work in care for the formation of the personality of young people, at the same time preventing what can distance, separate, deviate (Bruni, 2019, pp. 103-122).

It is not possible to develop a pedagogical reflection without first focusing on a vision of the human. Maritain strongly emphasizes the link between education and anthropology and thus expresses himself: «If the aim of education consists in helping and guiding the child towards his own human perfection, education cannot escape the problems and difficulties of philosophy, because it assumes by its very nature a philosophy of man, and first of all it is obliged to answer the question posed by the sphinx of philosophy: "what is man?"» (Maritain, 2001, p. 63).

With regard to traditional and modern education, Mounier affirms that neither of the two pedagogical conceptions satisfies what is the fundamental need of the person, that is, to transcend the individuality of each towards the personal riches of commitment in the situation of existential concreteness, in a relationship of relationship with the world and with men. The task of

education is not to «do but to arouse people; by definition a person awakens with an appeal and does not manufacture himself through training» (Mounier, 1962, p. 521).

Education is a necessary premise for a personalist philosophy that teaches how to think and know how to live and which indicates an orientation in preparing the ground to encourage the formation of harmonious, integral, free and creative personalities. Mounier writes «Education must prepare the ground. Today too often reduced to the superficial distribution of knowledge and the consolidation of the social divisions or values of an agonizing world, it must break it with these dead schemes to elaborate the formation of the total man, offered equally to everyone, who leaves each one free of his last prospects, but prepare for the common city balanced men, fraternally prepared with each other for the profession of man» (Mounier, 1961, p.234).

Action is a "do", an "act", education must not be limited to an authoritarian imposition of formal knowledge, but must instead start from the boy in which to raise the person: education is not a simple to do, but to act, and then to contemplate and acquire values.

To believe that education consists in helping the educable subject towards human perfection implies the need to extend this perspective to the wider sector of care, to that famous Don Milani's I care which means precisely taking charge with the aim of helping and guiding a person to a better condition than he or she is in. All this applies to each and every one and even more to students in difficulty and who are in any case in an uncomfortable situation as happens precisely in the phenomenon of early school leaving.

In Maritain's incipit the attention falls above all on the dynamics which invests education and which presupposes two fundamental moments: that of the analysis of the situation and that of the focus of a destination, the latter perceived as due in order to transform for the better the situation of people in difficulty which therefore requires an intervention of help and guidance, and therefore of an empathic love during the path of existence, the lack of which can produce many ailments and damages among which the most serious is «the loss of happiness: the death in us of the certainty that life can be happy for us and that it reveals to us every day that aspect for which being is sweet. This is a result of the greatest importance for pedagogical anthropology, but

perhaps it must be said simply for any well-understood educational action that wants to be adequate and effective» (Bellingreri, 2011, pp. 130-131).

Pedagogy in carrying out its essential task of training man to transform him into a continuous dynamic of improvement, precisely because, as Gennari says, «the training (*Bildung*) of man is always a transformation (*Umbildung*)» (Gennari-Kaiser, 2000, p. 36) it cannot escape the problems of philosophy, that is, he cannot avoid considering the situation of the man he is in, and which, in the case of the student involved in the phenomenon of early school leaving, is a condition of deficiency, nor can he avoid precisely to specify the lack or form of discomfort, to refer to a destination towards which to lead the person in difficulty, assuming it as a due good. In order not to fall into misunderstanding: a pedagogical theory always arises from a philosophy with whose principles it identifies itself, nor can it be otherwise; but pedagogical art or paideitic ability remains the test of that philosophy and the pedagogical theories that it can suggest. A philosophy does not often have an immediate response, and therefore becomes recognizable only after a silent gestation brings it to light, over time.

So the entry of an idea into history has its second or third generation feedback, in the mentality that it has been able to arouse, in the occurred extension and diffusion of the effects at the time of our, not infrequently late, recognition. The impact with these consequences should make us open our eyes to the principles to which a philosophy or a conception of life refers.

Returning to the analysis of the phenomenon of early school leaving, our reflection cannot avoid questions such as: are the children dispersing or is the school dispersing them? Do boys abandon or are they abandoned? And again: will young people who still manage to complete the study course find work? It is now known that the phenomena of dispersion, abandonment and school mortality are growing and reaching very high percentages in certain areas of the peninsula, aggravated, in recent times, by the massive phenomenon of immigrant pupils (Sani, 2017, pp. 168-188).

There are no tools and methods to intervene and to remedy a situation that has a long-lasting and historical impact on our society. The pre-adolescent-adolescent emergency cannot leave us indifferent, especially in consideration of the fact that society, through its educational realities, does not seem to give

answers as regards prevention, let alone as regards promotion in continuity and significance.

It is necessary that the society, indifferent and deresponsible for most of its educational tasks, gives signs of recovery, attention, awakening for education and education.

The phenomenon of dispersion is one of the main contradictions of modern education and training systems which, despite good intentions and declarations of principle, cannot guarantee the completion of studies and the pursuit of learning and training standards. This is an epochal challenge that affects generations of students, families, teachers, the whole society. Already more than twenty years ago Delors (1996) in the UNESCO framework (International Commission on Education), presented the phenomenon of dispersion in essential terms: education is a fight against exclusions[2].

In Italy the phenomenon of early school leaving has been the subject of attention since the 1980s also through experimental projects (Benvenuto – Bettoni, – Boldi, 1993), as well as by the European Union (through the European Social Fund) and also it can be said that the extent of this phenomenon has not produced the expected results.

## School-family: together to guide

The French sociologist Durkheim defines the school as a social microcosm, since it identifies the so-called first "socialization agency" in it. In fact, the school class is often, for the boy, the place of the first exit from the family environment. In it different forms of socialization can be achieved, from traditional ones, which focus on the subjects of study and on the result of individual students to progressive ones, which instead favor the autonomy of students and the work of cooperation and collaboration. The school plays a fundamental role in the processes of differentiation and in the growth of identities; in fact, it allows the boy to free himself from the emotional identification of the family, promoting his autonomy and making sure that he assimilates the values and norms of society, facing each other on them and thanks to them. The constant comparison with peer groups also stimulates reflection on egalitarian elements, as well as acceptance and approval. The socialization process is also more extensive today over the years thanks

to the gradual expansion of education, which has led to an increase in the average life time allocated to education, for which the contribution of school education, and the relationships accomplish, the development of personal identity is undoubtedly of considerable importance.

In order to participate profitably in a social structure, it is necessary to develop some particular attitudes, such as the ability to control one's actions and instincts and the ability to obtain recognition and success thanks to a rational and adequate behavior to the specifications situations. Ultimately, it emerges how the active participation of students in schooling processes brings with them different attitudes, ranging from enthusiastic acceptance to the systematic rejection of curricular proposals: in any case, the students make themselves interpreters of the contents received, which they rework in form autonomous and diverse, often leading to negotiations and convergences, but sometimes to struggles and contradictions.

The whole school in particular that of compulsory has an important orientation function in that it prepares for the decisive choices of life, and precisely with its unity and progressive disciplinary articulation, it intends to favor the orientation of pre-adolescents towards subsequent studies through non-folded educational experiences. on themselves but open and stimulating, aimed at arousing the pupil's curiosity and making them test their skills. It is no coincidence that primary school and first grade secondary school are often defined with the expression «basic and orientation school»[3], thus intending to draw the attention of school operators, in particular teachers and managers, to related issues. to the future of the students, or to the obligation to activate all those possible initiatives for the development of a personal identity and, at the same time, of a capacity to allow students to be directed and study commissioned to their own aptitudes, precisely to avoid that in the future these boys are dispersed or who immediately abandon the course of study because they do not feel motivated or involved.

The reforms introduced in the school in recent years have rekindled the interest around the notion of "orientation", qualified scholastic if referred to the basic school and "professional" if inherent in the secondary school. The notion of orientation was already present in the official text of the programs for the state middle school (DM 9-2-1979), where it was

considered «orientation because it favors the initiative of the subject for its own development and puts it in a position to conquer your entity [...] through a continuous training process»[4].

A work of effective orientation for minors cannot ignore the intrinsic link between them, family and education: the family is the first place in which one "has to" educate. If responsibility is the figure before parenting (Jonas, 1993, 50) education, together with caring, sustenance and orientation, is among the tasks in which parental responsibility is implemented, distinguishing itself from the others for being the highest and the most complex in particular when it is declined as moral education. As Rawls writes, «The succession of generations and the need to teach moral attitudes (however simple), to children is one of the conditions of human life» (Rawls, 1989, 379).

A condition that shows more and more its complexity with the succession of the stages of the development of the moral self and the related interaction between family and society. Through education, the family becomes the link between the private, intimate sphere of affections and the public sphere of conventions, of the rules of social life: it prepares, directs social life and at the same time receives and sifts the messages that society, through the various educational agencies, send to the son. First place of education, the family is also a place where education is given elsewhere returns to find corrections and denials, to be strengthened or diminished. The verification also takes place in the opposite direction: the teachings received in the family environment are in turn examined by the other educational agencies of the formal ones such as the school, of the informal ones for example like the peer group or the media.

The different family models have an evident impact on the stimuli that are given to the boy in the direction of education and training; the same relationship between parents and children tends to change based on the reference social values. In fact, it is possible to find that the value of economically and culturally deprived classes seem to direct children towards behaviors that are not very useful for social mobility. Therefore, to increase motivation towards school learning, it would be necessary to modify the same educational models, in the direction of self-esteem and the need for success, acting on the family in terms of training and construction paths and urging young people the need for success also at inside the school (Vedder, 1991).

We think that among the parental educational models, what can facilitate and encourage good orientation is certainly an authoritative style that leads parents to be firm and decided on rules and obligations, specifying the need through dialogue and reasoning and thus stimulating a authentic comparison and a good communication relationship. We must avoid the repressive style and also the indulgent and permissive one that can generate rebellious attitudes and aggressive behaviors, thus not facilitating the achievement of personal autonomy, awareness and responsibility. It is true that numerous studies on educational and parental styles have shown that there is no social determinism that definitively affects the school future of the children. However, it can certainly be considered that if family and school socialization methods tend to converge, the chances of a good school success are much better (Vermigli, Travaglia, Alcini, Galluccio, 2003).

Collaboration between school and family can be a fruitful experience with regard to guidance. The teacher must first propose himself as an educator, open to the contributions of others and flexible in the project of meeting with the other. In educational work, the partnership between school and family is important for orientation, also to avoid the phenomenon of dispersion and because it summarizes at the same time the essentials of the educational approach and concerns education with and through families which can lead to appreciable results also in the same relationship between minors and their parents as the latter are invested with specific knowledge and skills regarding their child.

The orientation aims to achieve the students' ability to develop a personal life project, consolidating their personal decision-making power based on awareness of their resources and possibilities. The activities related to the formation of a culture of orientation develops precisely in the context of complementary and integrative initiatives that create further extracurricular training opportunities and spaces to enrich the umama and civil growth of the students. This training between school and family, if it is actually based on collaboration to encourage the choices and orientation of children not only in the school environment but also for the working future of young people, can truly constitute a powerful means of contrasting early school leaving[5].

It is important to start by rethinking both the role of the family and that of the school with a view to including and therefore a weapon of contrast to the dispersive phenomenon by rethinking the responsibility for the educational task of parents today, shifting the axis of our reflection from this which is transmitted and received to those who transmit and receive: from an ethics of the third person who discusses what is good or what should be, to an ethics of the first person who questions the virtues of the moral subject, because virtue is not something innate but something that is acquired through exercise in daily life. It is precisely from virtue, according to Aristotle, to be a «disposition for which man becomes good and for which he fulfills his function well» (Aristotele, II, 6, 1106 a 14-24), a disposition that is not born neither by nature nor against nature, but which is perfected through habit (*Ibid.*, II, 1, 1103 a 14).

The continuative character of virtue, its being "habit of life" precisely as a stable quality of the soul, is closely linked to education, in particular to those first moments of education for which the family bears responsibility. All this is not a small thing, Aristotle writes «The difference between being used immediately, from an early age, in one way rather than another; on the contrary, there is a huge difference, indeed it is everything» (*Ibid.*, II, 1, 1103 b 20).

So it is important to be educated and oriented from an early age and by the family and by the school because this educational co-responsibility can produce school success. In fact Aristotle writes again: «We must be guided in a certain way, immediately, from an early age [...], to enjoy and suffer from what is convenient. Right education, in fact, is this» (*Ibid.*, II, 3, 1004 b 11).

Certainly it may seem provocative of virtue today in a society that is always connoting itself as "liquid" (Bauman, 2008).

Bringing the virtues back to the center of the intrinsic relationship between family life, school life and education may seem like an arduous undertaking in our time as it is a clear counter-trend compared to a world where the dominant sign is the breaking up of time, of the identity of the subject , of relationships, however, is a challenge that school, family and society cannot fail precisely to combat phenomena that are increasingly accentuating such as early school leaving, abandonment, marginality and socio-cultural disadvantage.

Making a speech today of the "return to virtues" can be an important space to rethink what it means to love, then it can take on the meaning of denunciations of the current nonsense to which the concept and even before the experience of love appear to be delivered. It means going beyond the fragmentation of love into emotions, fleeting feelings and giving the minor the dignity that belongs to his being among the highest, if not the highest, predispositions that belong to the human condition. Only in love understood in this sense can all good relationships find fulfillment and therefore acceptance of the other, justice, respect, goodness, understanding, all the values that can serve an effective work can easily find space orientation and inclusion.

In this way, the boy will not experience frustrating situations in different areas (family, classmates, school) and will be able to avoid a low level of self-esteem and a corresponding school discomfort. In fact, many socio-psycho-pedagogical researches have shown that the subject who experiences a problematic situation from the point of view of self-esteem will not be able to express their potential and will live the school as a source of unease. These results seem to go in the same direction as Monteil (1997) said who does not speak specifically of school self-esteem and proposes the term "school self-scheme", linking it to the student's ability to face the difficulties that arise during the school life. This "scholastic self-scheme" is formed, according to the author, on the basis of the school's successes or failures. Those who demonstrate school distress in the area of themselves have a lower level of school self-esteem and encounter greater difficulty at school. Self-esteem, in fact, plays a fundamental role for the learning abilities and also for the strategies that the student puts in place for the purpose of school success, which instead can become unsuccessful if the sense of self-esteem is poor and therefore stronger is the risk of dispersion (Mancini, 2017, pp. 83–89).

Hence the need for pedagogy, and also the special one, to take care not only of people with disabilities but also of those problematic subjects who although possessing cognitive abilities in the norm, are unable to adapt to the usual canons of social coexistence that are established in the usual training agencies (d'Alonzo, 2016a) and that generally escape educational attention and therefore require special pedagogical intervention capable of satisfying

their individual needs. Therefore the commitments and initiatives relating to the reception and orientation of the pupils must be coherently included in the educational objectives of the schools taking into account the concrete needs represented by the students. These initiatives must encourage and encourage: the enhancement of the culture that young people are bearers of; the development of attitudes and abilities to continue learning and adapting to changes; knowledge of the civil, social and political context of the territory; the development of a widespread culture of legality and ethical behavior; the organization of activities to motivate the unmotivated at school (d'Alonzo, 2017a), for an effective fight against school failure and early school leaving; a richer educational educational context that transforms the school into a center of cultural, social, sports and leisure activities for students; the connection between pre-school and post-school reception initiatives for attending minors.

Ultimately, the school orientation, must itself, as a permanent training process, at the service of all students, and in particular of problematic subjects, to help them consolidate that maturity capable of putting them in a position to make the best choices of life and work, exercising personal and responsible autonomy. The right to orientation must in any case be spent throughout life and must always be ensured with attention to students precisely on the basis of articles 4, 34, 35 paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the Italian Republic and also with reference to articles 11/74, 11/75, 11/76, 11/89 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the Union. Precisely on the basis of these principles, of the laws, of the national and European regulations that implement them, services and guidance services are recognized to every citizen throughout his life for the full development of his personality in educational activities, training, professional and work.

School and family must collaborate in the orientation project which must mean reorientation to bring the problematic children back to school classrooms, otherwise to quote Don Milani, «If you lose them (the most difficult children) school it is no longer school. It is a hospital that treats the healthy and rejects the sick» (Don Milani, 1967, p. 35).

We must return to educating in the most authentic sense of caring for and cultivating the humanity of minors. And this requires a profound

reconsideration of being a family, of doing school, of building university life. Even before believing that it is urgent to invest in school, knowledge and research, it is necessary to believe in the new generations, ceasing to look at them with a contempt that immediately identifies them with something negative. A change is needed that rethinks education and training in order to bring the adults back to the ability to dream and desire the relationship with the children, as perhaps happens in wanting to generate them and in considering them an invaluable gift. For this reason it is necessary to start again from adult education.

Without paying attention to the existential and internal situation of adults, the conditions will be lacking for them to be given back the concrete educational responsibility that invests them anyway and then every perspective on education today will remain abstract and wishful thinking (Meirieu, 2007).

## Orient to integrate and include

The work on orientation is a fundamental factor on the prevention of early school leaving, given that dropouts are often related to a sense of loss compared to one's position and to an ability to see the real opportunities offered by the school and training circuit. The work that must characterize the educators must be of "accompaniment" between teacher and learner, between those who accompany and those who are accompanied towards an educational goal (Gennari, 1995), to get to know the child better. Not everything comes to light of him. Beyond the transparencies, which the face, the word, the gesture communicate, there are vast areas of shadow, often indecipherable for the boy himself. A fundamental pedagogical lesson is drawn from this. The meeting with the minor always remains wrapped in a mysterious reality that often requires a delicate and careful work of deciphering. Janusz Korczak, heroic jewish-polish educator finished with his boys in the Nazi death camps, wrote: «The child is a parchment completely covered with minute hieroglyphics, of which you can only decipher a part» (Korczak, 1978, p. 28). This statement sounds like an invitation to discretion, to respect his experience and his educational needs, without pretending to know him exhaustively, almost a prelude to the desire, aware or not of being able to exercise some form of domination over him.

«The pedagogy of accompaniment [...] is recognized within a varied repertoire of practices, such as orientation to choice, study support, educational consultancy, expert coaching in the professional world, etc. Each of these practices is characterized by its own epistemological identity which, in our opinion, is recognized within a macro-common denominator: the pedagogy of personalism, open to a philosophy of practice and careful to take care of the other (*I care*), i.e. those who are disoriented and unable to cope with difficulties (*crisis counseling*), those who need a guide to make a choice (*supporting counseling*), especially in the most delicate and crisis phases of their life cycle (*developmental counseling*)» (Pagano, 2014, p. 526).

Adolescence, which is often characterized by confusion and loss of reference points, is the moment when the problem of self-construction and the connection between personal and professional identity becomes more urgent. The educator must be able to make an impact through an empathic relational dynamic, paying attention not only to the social context of the young person, but above all to the vital world of his person.

Each person, as such, embodies a multiplicity and complexity of sensations, feelings, emotions, aspirations that make up the specific, thus contributing to creating its uniqueness and unrepeatability. Beyond this «*poprium*", however, there is a patrimony of needs, needs and expectations common to all men, inherent in the human species, as they are strictly connected to the very nature of the person, in the totality of his dimensions. Being aware of the existence of these needs and of the fact that the full realization of the person passes precisely through their satisfaction is a fundamental step in the process of knowing oneself and others. Real awareness, acceptance and self-respect as a person, in fact, can help the path towards self-knowledge, acceptance and respect for others as a value (Kohut,1980, pp. 234–244).

Proceeding in the work of identifying the fundamental needs by stimulating, as always, the pupils to the analysis and reflection on their experiences, on their experiences, on their behaviors, can certainly help to prevent the phenomenon of dispersion, failure and abandonment school. In fact, asking pupils in difficulty to identify facts and moments in which they have experienced and experienced negative and uncomfortable situations, frustration, sadness, boredom, inviting them to highlight, beyond the reasons

linked to each individual fact, the elements of the which they missed or felt most deprived of, puts the educator in a position to know the needs that gradually emerge and that can be fundamental materials, which cannot be renounced because they are tied to survival itself, but also not material, but certainly equally fundamental, since their satisfaction derives the quality of life and interpersonal relationships and are those spiritual needs that can be identified in self-esteem (Miceli, 1998)[6] in love, understanding, affection, security, freedom, emotional intelligence and which have a significant impact on school performance. The knowledge of these needs would allow the educator to activate educational training courses and teaching strategies that should aim primarily to increase the sense of self-esteem, predisposing precisely those in difficulty towards positive interpersonal relationships, at the same time urging the free and creative expression of their potential and the improvement of their living conditions, all essential prerequisites to prevent the phenomena of early school leaving, failure and early school leaving (Vermigli, 2002, p. 4) .

In light of the sudden transformations of today's society, characterized by instability of values, economic and production difficulties, job insecurity and traditional networks of belonging, the orientation of young people and in particular young immigrants and all those who belong to the most fragile, becomes an "all-out orientation" (Marostica, 2008, pp. 75–101)[7].

In this situation of confusion and disorientation, «the professional educator has an extraordinary ability to adapt to the individual case (individual or group), therefore to be as flexible as possible, despite the clarity of the general guidelines that give consistency and value to his same action. That's why I like to say that the professional educator must be able to dialectise the perspectives of science and art that were once considered alternative, but that instead should be considered strictly related, so much so that the one would lose all its meaning and all the its value if it refused or even if it underestimated the other» (Bertolini, 2003, pp. 728–729).

This type of social transformation requires young attitudes that identify an opportunity for educational and training growth in change, rather than negative conditioning. In order to be effective, for the purpose of a productive contrast to the phenomenon of dispersion, the school orientation activity should revolve

around the two fundamental objectives: "knowing" and "knowing how to be". The "knowledge" area must cover all useful information and knowledge in the educational field such as general information on the territory to which it belongs and its resources, those concerning the training offers of higher institutes, as well as information on the courses alternatives between training and work. To achieve the goal of "knowing how to be", it is necessary to work with young people, individually or with the class group, to develop the empowerment that allows them to make constructive choices and more suited to the development of their personality. Empowerment is a reinforcement strategy in the school for those with poor academic performance. In this sense, it is appropriate to promote a positive relationship climate that allows each young person to acquire their own interests, needs, values, potential and attitudes of their cognitive and emotional-emotional styles.

And it is generally used in organizational development strategies and is decisive in the processes that concern the development of responsibility and potential. The most important empowerment in the school context is certainly the cognitive one, aimed at strengthening the mental abilities of the subject. Promoting cognitive empowerment interventions means aiming to restructure beliefs about learning and to change bad study habits. «Empowerment means acquiring a personal sense of power, in order to feel responsible for one's own learning» (Pazzaglia, Moè, Friso, Rizzato, 2004, p. 9). The student must be able to motivate himself even after the failure and develop the self-monitoring skills of knowledge. Empowerment allows you to control the motivational processes, which are then the basis of cognitive development and the metacognitive ones that allow you to control and regulate the learning activity, promoting the perception of mastering the situations in the different circumstances of present life and future life (*Ibid*). These strategies are very useful especially in moments of discouragement and after school failures that often depend on the social contexts in which you find yourself living and working (Fiorentino, 2005, pp. 75–80).

Favoring a positive, relaxed and empathic[8] relationship climate can mean, encouraging pre-adolescents and adolescents, especially if immigrants, to a relational openness that would allow them to tell their experiences, their needs, their attitudes and ambitions; and also to know their difficulties which,

if they are not overcome, lead to an early school leaving and therefore not an easy insertion in our society both from the point of view of work and of the integration process. At this point, the reference to a pedagogy that tends to connote itself as a science of man as being educable and as "ars educationis" cannot be ignored, two dimensions that are no longer opposed to each other but which are well combined in the perspective of a new humanism towards which we are moving. Vico writes: «Humanity is going through a revision and planning phase. Revision of what has been, of what pedagogy has known or not been able to elaborate (...) planning in view of a fairly decisive recovery of all that concerns the great possibilities for a new humanism, without excessive trauma, or differences with what western civilization (...) has built over the centuries» (Vico, 2002, p. 6).

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# Endnotes

1) About 63 million adolescents between 12 and 15 years of age are denied the right to education, according to the new joint report prepared by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and by UNICEF (thanks to funding from the Global Partnership for Education) „Fixing the Broken Promise of Education for All: Findings from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children" launched today during the Education World Forum held in London from 18 to 21 January 2015. Cfr. https://www.unicef.it/doc/6035/scuola-secondaria-nel-mondo-63-milioni-restano-fuori-dalla-aula.htm.

2) But as early as 1972 UNESCO spoke of early school leaving referring to „the incidence of school dropouts and dropouts on a country's system" (Cfr. UNESCO Étude statistique sur les déperditions scolaires, B.I.E, Paris).

3) Cfr. Indicazioni Nazionali per il Curricolo della Scuola dell'infanzia e del primo ciclo di istruzione D.M. 16/11/ 2012, n. 254.

4) Cfr. Testo ufficiale dei Programmi per la Scuola media statale D.M. 09/02/1979.

5) Cfr. K. Scannavini, „Analisi e strategie di intervento per il contrasto alla dispersione scolastica", Save the Children Italia Onlus, Testo disponibile al sito http://images.savethechildren.it/IT/f/img_pubblicazioni/img147_b.pdf.

6) For a deepening of the need for self-esteem for effective school learning cfr. Miceli, 1998.

7) In the last decade, there have been numerous normative references and programmatic documents that the Ministry of Education, University and Research, in harmony with the objectives and community strategies (Europe 2020), have wished to give importance to the theme of orientation for a fruitful teaching-learning process and also for the purpose of contrasting early school leaving. About that cfr. MIUR (2009) – *Linee guida in materia di orientamento lungo tutto l'arco della vita*; MIUR (2014) – *Linee guida nazionali per l'orientamento permanente*; MIUR (2017)- *La dispersione scolastica nell' A.S. 2015/2016 e nel passaggio nell' A.S. 2016/2017*; MIUR (2018b) – *Una politica nazionale di contrasto del fallimento formativo e della povertà educativa.*

8) Empathy expresses the fundamental need for personal recognition, and it is a need that students who are in a state of unease in particular need because authentic empathy allows them to be recognized and loved in their own unique personal world. Empathy, therefore, certainly constitutes an anthropological and pedagogical truth and referring to the *Cogitor ergo sum*, (I am therefore thought I exist) satisfies the need to be recognized in being, to be as a person (cf. P. Ricoeur, 2005, pp. 213–221). „*Cogitor ergo sum*" is the expression used by H. U. Von Balthasar, 1991, p. 69–71 and 237–254.