

STUDI E RICERCHE

Educazione, Formazione, Orientamento alla carriera o Consulenza

Education, Training and Career Guidance or Counselling

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Nel testo viene esaminato il tema dell'orientamento formativo in stretta connessione sia con le dinamiche legate alla crescita psico-relazionale dei ragazzi e delle ragazze, sia con gli scenari socio-economici attualmente interessati da una profonda crisi internazionale.

L'orientamento, inteso come pratica educativa volta allo sviluppo di competenze trasversali e specifiche da applicare nella soluzione di problemi di varia natura e complessità, si rivela un efficace setting per formare soggetti consapevoli delle proprie attitudini e responsabili nel compiere le scelte che riguardano il loro futuro. La progettazione e la conduzione delle attività orientative richiede, non da ultimo, il coinvolgimento di figure professionali (insegnanti e educatori) adeguatamente preparate e in grado di accompagnare, soprattutto i giovani e le giovani in difficoltà, in percorsi finalizzati, in primis, alla maturazione del senso di empowerment e di fiducia nelle proprie capacità e, in secondo luogo, all'individuazione di settori lavorativi in cui sperimentare le abilità e le conoscenze acquisite in ambito scolastico e in situazioni di carattere informale e non formale.

This paper examines the theme of guidance education and training in close connection with both the dynamics associated with the psycho-relational growth of boys and girls, and with the current socio-economic situation which is marked by a deep international crisis.

Guidance, interpreted as an educational practice which aims to develop transversal or cross-disciplinary and specific competences so as to apply them in problem-solving of different types and complexity, appears to be an effective setting for the education and training of individuals who are aware of the own aptitudes and are responsible in making choices which are related to their future. The planning and the execution of guidance activities requires, not least, the involvement of suitably prepared professional roles (teachers and educators) who can accompany, above all young boys and girls who are going through a difficult period, along paths with finalised objectives, in primis, aimed at the maturation of the sense of empowerment and of confidence in one's own abilities and the knowledge acquired in schooling and in informal and non-formal contexts.

Parole chiave: Formazione, orientamento scolastico e formativo, genere

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1. SCHOOL AND CAREER GUIDANCE OR COUNSELLING

The central role currently attributed to the role of counselling is undoubtedly due to the complex nature of the economic and social systems which influence the labour market and our individual lives at different levels. These demand continuing updating of our competences and the ability to continuously (re)adapt to changing situations¹.

¹Cfr. R. FORNACA, *Dall'agorà al mercato mondiale. Dinamiche formative e scolastiche*, ETS, Pisa, 2009; F. CAMBI, *Abitare il disincanto. Una pedagogia per il postmoderno*, UTET, Novara, 2006; L.

In addition to social and situational factors, the effective management of the counselling process throughout one's lifetime is also determined by the resources that the individual can draw on at different points during the evolution of such an experience. These resources are the guiding competences which need to be continuously developed in order to work and live in a globalized society. Whiston e Oliver² hold that rapid changes leave a lasting impact on one's life and that the technological changes modify the work environment in a drastic manner so much so that in current times which are always more and more technologically developed, concepts such as individual work and personal career could become obsolete.

Awareness of this fact calls for a deep reflection on didactics (didattica di intervento) in all learning and training contexts from the school to the university, and highlights the need to develop learning paths aimed at the ability to manage and guide one's self in relation to change so as to build life and professional projects³. Between the ages of ten and twelve many girls and boys begin to develop an idea of the self which reflects their needs, desires, hopes and values, and not only reactions to others. New relational models continuously change the idea of self which during this period gives a strong sense of self-reliance and stability⁴. The world of those entering adolescence continues to expand and includes an enlarged community which goes beyond the group of peers. Adolescents must face complex situations such as the differences in values of their peers and that of their parents, while, at the same time, they being to develop wider ranges of interests such as for example politics, moral and religious issues. For the teenager, the number of possible identities multiplies and the need to find one's self becomes impellent⁵.

With the onset of early adulthood new experiences become layered. Having the competence to guide one's self means that one is able to analyse one's available personal resources so as to realize one's own project, using competences that

GALLINO, *Globalizzazione e disuguaglianza*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2002; U. BECK, *La società globale del rischio*, Asterios, Trieste, 2001; Z. BAUMAN, *La società dell'incertezza*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1999.

²S.C. WHISTON, L.W. OLIVER, "Career counseling process and outcome", in W.B WALSH, M.L. SAVICKAS (Ed.s), *Handbook of vocational psychology: Theory, research, and practice*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ, 2005.

³P. de MENNATO (Ed.), *Progetti di vita come progetti di formazione*, ETS, Pisa, 2006, p. 13; si veda anche L. FABBRI, *Comunità di pratiche e apprendimento riflessivo. Per una formazione situata*, Carocci, Roma, 2007; R. BIAGIOLI, "L'Orientamento come progetto di vita", in S. ULIVIERI (Ed.), *Insegnare nella scuola secondaria. Per una declinazione della professionalità docente*, ETS, Pisa, 2012.

⁴S. I. GREENSPAN, *L'intelligenza del cuore*, Mondadori, Milano, 1998, p.103.

⁵Cfr. R. BIAGIOLI, *L'orientamento formativo*, ETS, Pisa, 2004; R. BIAGIOLI, "L'orientamento diacronico-formativo per la costruzione del progetto di vita", in S. ULIVIERI, G. FRANCESCHINI, E. MACINAI (Ed.s), *La scuola secondaria oggi. Innovazioni didattiche e emergenze sociali*, ETS, Pisa, 2008.

matured in other situations, being able to recognise one's 'strengths' so as to acquire the new competences needed, as well as being able to identify ways to overcome obstacles, and identify objectives to be achieved based on real motivations, make decisions, identify targets, plan one's own development concretely and autonomously. As Law⁶ states, in order to understand the genesis of interactions for the future of adolescents, it is necessary to concentrate on their personal intentions in their respective communities. The exchanges between the individual and the surrounding environment play a decisive role: the interactions exercise their influence on the behaviour of individuals through the mediation of the meanings built together. The influences of the environment are perturbations which lead to changes and transformations of the make-up and the individual, thus, interacts constantly with the environment. What matters is that one has learning environments and tools which can support integration, connections and the relations between different kinds of knowing. The sum of competences and Knowledge leads to the development of individual autonomy in learning and in the way one relates to reality, thus, in the process of Knowledge and of training, the knowledge system of an individual takes root and develops in relation to reality. Knowledge is not processed in an abstract manner, but stems from real life experience and is both dynamic and flexible. The community exercises its own influence as far as what is expected of the individual to whom family or peer group values are transmitted as well as behind-the-scenes actions, reference models and information⁷. Young people are ill-at-ease with the new modern society they find before them; they no longer find a behaviour model in adults and they lack meaningful communicative exchanges which would help them to grow and mature. This can lead to at-risk behaviour as well as attitudes which include self-inflicted injuries, vandalism, isolation and solitude, and eventually to different forms of violence such as petty crimes, vandalism, together with extreme behaviour which is apparently senseless⁸. The risk of being ill-at-ease, or unbalanced, or feeling malaise, in each and every man-environment interaction, in all their dimensions, is profoundly worrying. This being said, there are numerous re-balancing homeostatic processes at hand which can heal and re-establish the sense of well-being in an individual and in the social context. For an individual undergoing learning and training the relationship within the peer group – so long as this is a positive constructive one - is fundamental. Such an individual should

⁶B. LAW, *Community Interaction: A "Mid-range"*. *Focus for Theories of Career Development in Young Adults*, "British Journal of Guidance and Counseling", N. 9, 1981; si veda anche P. BARONE, *Pedagogia dell'adolescenza*, Guerini, Milano, 2009.

⁷A. DI FABIO., *Manuale di psicologia dell'orientamento e career counseling nel XXI secolo*, Giunti, Firenze, 2009, p. 160.

⁸ Cfr. I. LOIODICE, *Non perdere la bussola. Orientamento e formazione in età adulta*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2004.

develop a series of cognitive and social abilities which enable one to understand and use the useful information for one's own personal and social well-being, demonstrate a sufficient ability to influence and control one's self as regards resources and the environment, and also have the ability to select learning opportunities which allow one to develop positive and effective forms of behaviour. This entails the creation of an environment that favours a learner-centred planning and promotional approach, in an environment which is, at one and the same time, interpersonal, of daily social life, communicative and cultural⁹.

The first and foremost guidance at school is an educational relationship which is able to pay attention competently to the mental ecology level of the learners, to their implicit knowledge, to the sense directions in which each individual registers what one learns at school¹⁰. The space of the relationship is thus to be interpreted as the learning and educational reflection space on the learning processes, a co-constructed space in which there are the conditions to promote new meaningful attributions.

The task of the school is to identify the gift for learning and then develop it, or better, capture and value the gift identified in the student, and strengthen it through the development of individualized learning paths.

In the "Linee guida nazionali per l'orientamento permanente" (National Guidelines for continuing guidance) of 19th. February 2014 reference is made to the European documents related to guidance, stating that it is an ongoing right of each individual in order to guarantee access to continuing learning, greater mobility for young people, better course quality, and the acquisition of competences needed for specific types of employment, a greater creative, innovative and entrepreneurial mentality.

When one speaks about counselling it is important to remember the constructs related to counselling that is to say the psychological variables which are involved in the definition of this process. These include the aptitude that is the natural disposition of an individual for a specific activity, artistic field, or discipline. The School is central to the counselling process since it promotes counselling activities. From a strictly scholastic perspective, the emphasis is on the acquisition of base and transversal competences, foreign language learning, the increase of knowledge and learning levels in the workplace, the permeability of qualifications, the use of ICT, the presence of teachers who can train and motivate, and the integration of educational systems¹¹. The need for professional

⁹Cfr. M. CONTINI, *La comunicazione intersoggettiva fra solitudini e globalizzazione*, nuova ed., ETS, Pisa, 2011; A. GRAMIGNA, *Manuale di pedagogia sociale scenari del presente e azione educativa*, Armando, Roma, 2003.

¹⁰ P. PERILLO, *Pensarsi educatori*, Liguori, Napoli, 2012; A. COSENTINO (Ed.), *Filosofia e formazione*, Liguori, Napoli, 2002.

¹¹ G. DOMENICI, *Manuale dell'orientamento e della didattica modulare*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2009.

types of figures within the system such as "counselling tutors" is stressed, as is the specific training of teachers because counselling activities need to be supported by system functions such as assistance and training of operators, promotion of quality, research and development, so as to ensure the effective interventions for users, and the management activities of analysis, ideation, planning, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation with a view to network development¹². One of the factors which scholars such as Porter e Cohen¹³ agree to highlight is the importance attributed by teachers to their own actions as educators in anticipation of student change; the latter seems to carry quite an importance as regards the maturation of self-efficacy¹⁴ and, consequently, all the learning processes put in place by the teacher, including those related to choice and counselling. As an educational practice, counselling cannot and indeed must not only involve the sole teacher but must be broadened to include the class council. Thus, what is necessary is teamwork, in which each single subject teacher contributes in a meaningful way to the sharing of the practices needed to achieve effective learner counselling. In the same way, it becomes necessary to propose experimental research as a method so that learners can develop awareness of the importance of formulating hypotheses which then need to be verified through experience. Lastly, teachers, but more in general schools, are requested to open up to external stakeholders, that is to cultivate experiences which enable learners to relate to the surrounding reality.

In point of fact, just as the tutorial function is, counselling didactics is an operational tool for the teacher in the classroom which is linked to individual accompaniment and the monitoring of learning paths with specific reference to the promotion of success in learning. The teacher carries out this tutorial function by becoming a multiplier of learning resources, supporting individual and/or group dynamics, guiding and facilitating learning processes, intermediating between training institutions and society. As such, each teacher has a tutorial function with respect to learners and must make use of the subject-matter/discipline from a counselling perspective to support each learner in his/her development of self-consciousness, awareness, relational, cognitive and metacognitive resources, and decision and choice competences. Those aspects which assume the meaning of professional competences in educational care¹⁵ are

¹²Cfr. L. MILANI, *Collettiva-Mente. Competenze e pratica per le équipe educative*, SEI, Torino, 2013.

¹³M PORTER, L. COHEN, "Personal Causation and Locus of Control: An Analysis of Selected Teacher Characteristics and Their Relations to Student Achievement", *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association*, New York, 1977.

¹⁴A. BANDURA, *Self-efficacy: The Exercises of Control*, Freeman, New York, 1997.

¹⁵Cfr. V. BOFFO, *Relazioni educative: tra comunicazione e cura. Autori e testi*, Apogeo, Milano, 2011; M. CONTINI, M. MANINI (Ed.s), *La cura in educazione. Tra famiglie e servizi*, Carocci, Roma, 2007; L. MORTARI, *La pratica dell'aver cura*, Bruno Mondadori, Milano, 2006.

also related to the opportunity to enable the consolidation of emotional/affective components since experiential learning also means being able to face instability, which is one of the characteristics of modern society¹⁶.

Improving the quality of learning throughout schooling coincides with the objective of raising the educational threshold in Italy and is a condition that promotes greater access and better results in secondary and tertiary education¹⁷. Schooling must encompass base knowledge, know-how and experiential practices, life-skills and relations competences, cooperation in the realization of the educational project of families: It must also develop cooperation between institutions for the development of the social competences of active citizenship, so as to positively achieve the realization of better human capital in terms of the knowledge-base and maturity. Federighi¹⁸ states that the replanning of the learning supply offered by educational systems is a necessity and demands a study of the changes which the new phases of globalization produce, and the identification of abilities which will permit young people to live, work and improve this world.

2. LIFELONG COUNSELLING AND TRAINING

According to ISTAT sources, in Italy the school dropout phenomenon is the highest for young people who neither study or work (22.1% in 2010), the so-called NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training): the school-workplace transition appears to be easier in countries in which there is greater integration with the labour market, such as Holland, Denmark, the UK and Germany.

Italy holds the school dropout record: more specifically, it appears that 17% of students dropout of school too early thus generating more than two million young people who neither study or work. In this way, the whole section of lower secondary education falls short of the socio-economic needs of the country.

These dropouts remain hidden, as do their experiences and training needs¹⁹, unless there are particularly serious reasons for which they become 'visible' or surface for a social intervention such as assistance or rescue. Moreover, it must be added that the disorientation which emerges after the moment of having

¹⁶ Cfr. A. GRAMIGNA, M. RIGHETTI, *Diritti umani. Interventi formativi nella scuola e nel sociale*, ETS, Pisa, 2005.

¹⁷Cfr. ALMALAUREA, *XV Indagine sulla Condizione occupazionale dei laureati*, 12 marzo 2013.

¹⁸ P. FEDERIGHI, *PhD: Internazionalizzazione e globalizzazione nell'alta formazione*, "Pedagogia Oggi", 1/2014, p. 34.

¹⁹S. GUETTA, "Lasciare la scuola non significa smettere di formarsi. Spunti di riflessione contro la marginalità educativa", in E. CATARSI (Ed.), *Cultura del lavoro e obbligo formativo*, Del Cerro, Pisa, 2004, p. 142.

made the choice is collocated in social, cultural and work contexts which are already of themselves marked by a widespread sense of uncertainty and unpredictability for the future and for how one will be able to adapt to it. In this way, lower secondary school becomes a place where selection takes place for the better students who will go on to enrol in a lyceum, for those who do less well who will go on to technical institutes, and those who fair badly who will go to vocational schools, thus removing qualified students from the vocational sector in which employers lament the lack of competences which the sector badly needs. In the same way, this situation can be found at University-level where young people who are competent in the subject-matter, fall short at the life-skills level, such as for example the ability to work in groups or submit an assignment within the time limit. The ISTAT Report for 2013 on school dropouts and the pattern of enrolment for new university students (i.e., freshers) highlights the drop in the number of enrolments which over the past nine years has witnessed a 17.5% reduction. Of course these data need to be interpreted keeping in mind a number of possible reasons and, most certainly, they are the result of the combined effect of the demographic decline, the reduction in adult enrolments, the worsening of the employment conditions of graduates, the growing difficulties of many families to sustain the direct and indirect costs of university education, together with a right-to-education policy which lacks a lot. Therefore, the fight against school and university dropout is a priority for Italy, also in terms of the contribution it can make to social mobility. For example, what emerges from the data provided by the Economic and Social Observatory of Treviso²⁰ is that enterprises want people who are curious and able to work in teams wherein they can demonstrate their individuality and enrich the group with their individual contributions. A professional personality which begins to develop when learning (with the alternation of study and work so as to discover how theory and practice rely on each other), which is able to link one's own 'mastery' with the rest of the world (we are in the "We-Economy"), and has the curiosity or interest in deepening one's knowledge and ability, is able to look around oneself and find new routes outside of the box²¹.

Precisely because of the complexity and the vastness of the school dropout phenomenon, the issue is under scrutiny by Europe. Indeed in the European context, the number of training intervention proposals which view the use of counselling as a best educational practice, is on the increase. Not alone this, many countries have adopted counselling strategies which have been successful in their schools at all levels and in all classes. When we speak about counselling

²⁰M. BARAZZUOL, *Le future professioni e i nuovi scenari economici*, Osservatorio Economico e sociale di Treviso, 2013.

²¹Dati Istat ed Eurostat, Roma, aprile 2013.

and training all life long, at a European level the reference document is "Lifelong Guidance Policy Development: A European Resource Kit 65", which was developed by the *European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network* (ELGPN). This network is promoted by the European Commission (EC) DG for Education and Culture with the objective of providing assistance to the EC and EU member states, as well as to neighbouring countries in the context of the *Lifelong Learning Programme*, so as to develop European cooperation on lifelong guidance in the education and labour sectors²². Currently, the ELGPN is working on the diffusion and promotion of instruments developed in the past to strengthen guidance policies at national and local levels. Hence, the European network is involved in the development of proposals which define mechanisms and support structures for the implementation of priorities, identified by the Resolution of 18th. May 2004, to strengthen policies, systems and practices in the area of lifelong guidance throughout Europe. The workplan of the network was developed around four themes identified in the resolutions adopted in 2004 and 2008, that is: encourage ongoing acquisition of abilities related to work guidance, facilitate citizen access to guidance services including the accreditation of previous learning derived from experiential knowledge, encourage cooperation and coordination mechanisms in the development of policies and guidance systems among the different national, regional and local stakeholders, develop evidence-based quality mechanisms for the definition of policies and systems. One aspect which is highlighted in the document is that which refers to giving citizens the opportunity to learn to make important educational and work-related decisions and also know how to manage one's career path. All students should obtain these competences during the compulsory schooling years. Furthermore, it is necessary to extend guidance throughout one's lifetime, especially for those subjects at-risk of social exclusion such as those students who fail to complete compulsory education, language minorities, people with disabilities, migrants, and the unemployed²³. Education should help to transform these students who are coming to grips with becoming student-individual experts who want to learn, who know how to do so in a strategic manner and who, in their own highly individual and flexible way, are well prepared for lifelong learning²⁴.

²²Cfr. M. COSTA, *Pedagogia del lavoro e contesti di innovazione*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2011.

²³Cfr. T. FRATINI, *Esclusione, emarginazione, integrazione sociale. Nuove prospettive pedagogiche*, ETS, Pisa, 2012; M. R. MANCANELLO, "Le espressioni del disagio adolescenziale: il fenomeno del bullismo e i possibili metodi di intervento nella scuola", in S. ULIVIERI (Ed.), *Insegnare nella scuola secondaria...*, *op. cit.*; S. ULIVIERI (Ed.), *L'educazione e i marginali. Storie, teoria, luoghi e tipologie dell'emarginazione*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze, 1997.

²⁴Cfr. M. BALDACCI, F. FRABBONI, U. MARGIOTTA, *Longlife-longwide learning. Per un trattato europeo della formazione*, Bruno Mondadori, Milano, 2012.

In concrete terms, this is a matter of helping subjects who are in education and training to make the right choices for themselves and for their own future, as well as for the community in which they live. Specifically for this reason guidance cannot be separated from education and training²⁵.

Nowadays guidance takes on much broader meanings, valencies and directions and seems to include reflection on the concept of complexity. The guidance system outlined wants to move towards an integrated education and training approach at each level of intervention so as to share a theoretical-methodological reference model. The centrality of education and training is not a reference model *per se*, rather it emerges from the people involved and their socio-cultural growth need/s²⁶.

3. GENDER GUIDANCE AND THE EMPLOYMENT CRISIS

Managing the course of one's life is an objective which stems from the identification of an active role in the configuration of a change and on the constructive history of one's identity and the discontinuity of the self²⁷. Developing constructive paths to guidance thus implies reflecting upon the dynamics of identity construction, on paths of a cultural nature which nourish, more or less implicitly, the experience of the individual they define, on the system of constraints within which individuals are educated and trained. This imaginary world is closely linked to the dreams, wishes, expectations of young people as regards their future life²⁸. The future, as a separate and autonomous category from the past and the present, is a modern day construct, which refers back to the way in which individuals experiment and process the course of events of one's life at a subjective level²⁹. In the not too distant past, in the world of women there was a direct and early passage between two stages of life: that of infancy and that of adulthood. Girls were destined to quickly become young women, in time mothers of baby girls marked by the same destiny³⁰. In the past few years, the enormous social, cultural and economic changes which have taken place in our society have contributed to the redesign of young people's identity, defining it always more frequently as a generation in crisis. By definition, youth is a stage in life in which the

²⁵Cfr. M. BALDACCI (Ed.), *La formazione dei docenti in Europa*, Bruno Mondadori, Milano, 2013.

²⁶S. ULIVIERI, "La formazione, un impegno per il futuro", in M. CORSI, S. ULIVIERI (Ed.s), *Progetto Generazioni. Bambini e anziani: due stagioni della vita a confronto*, ETS, Pisa, 2012, p. XX.

²⁷Cfr. W. R. BION, *Apprendere dall'esperienza*, Armando, Roma, 1972.

²⁸ C. ALBANESI, S. LORENZINI (Ed.s), *Femmine e maschi nei discorsi tra compagni di classe. Il focus group nella ricerca sul genere in adolescenza*, Clueb, Bologna, 2011.

²⁹Cfr. N. ELIAS, *Saggio sul tempo*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1986.

³⁰Cfr. S. ULIVIERI (Ed.), *Le bambine nella storia dell'educazione*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 1999.

identity of the individual takes shape and is remodelled and, notwithstanding this, the historical moment in which we live, which is characterized by economic, as well as value and identity uncertainties, sharpens and amplifies this condition of precariousness and indefiniteness³¹. Contemporary culture no longer recognizes in social life the rites of passage to adulthood, there are no longer ceremonies or collections actions or gestures which bear witness to the adolescent the recognition of the trials/tests (s)he is overcoming³². Beck³³ states that the constant social transformations have modified our current view of the importance of love, marriage, family and privacy. Nowadays women can be mothers, professionals, housewives, career women, who are single, who sometimes have all these characteristics together, or who acquire them and lose them in rapid succession. It is not surprising that the imaginery world of boys and girls is still heavily steeped in gender stereotypes and that, still at the beginning of the second millennium, when making their life choices young women constantly keep in mind their future role as professionals, but also as mothers and wives³⁴.

Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that still today women remain in a hybrid situation, so as to say, in which their own lives and the life that does not exist weave together in a contradictory way³⁵. The social, economic, and cultural environment determine the information and the individual aspirations of affirmation, it conditions realism since it limits aspirations from the economic point of view and it indicates how to activate them. Persistence in shared feelings and in the social community still interferes in the representation and choice of professions and of social collocations which become a man or a woman, those not ladylike, those which demand ability to make decisions and choices, those which demand an investment in terms of time and work which are not compatible with a family role³⁶. Hence it is an important element for the choice of studies and university faculties³⁷. Today we are living, above all, in a moment of objective socio-economic crisis which is generating a sense of great pessimism as regards the future of work and this pessimism is quite tangible. Added to this, is a complete

³¹Cfr. Z. BAUMAN, *La società dell'incertezza*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1999.

³²Cfr. A. VAN GENNEP, *I riti di passaggio*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 2012.

³³Cfr. U. BECK, *La società globale del rischio*, Asterios, Trieste 2001.

³⁴I. BIEMMI, "Genere e generazioni. Nuovi percorsi di progettualità femminile", in M. CORSI (Ed.), *La ricerca pedagogica in Italia*, Pensa MultiMedia, Lecce, 2014; I. BIEMMI, *Educare alla parità. Proposte didattiche per orientare in ottica di genere*, Edizioni Conoscenza, Roma, 2012.

³⁵U. BECK, *Costruire la propria vita*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2008; N. BELLÈ, *Genere: il costo umano della flessibilità*, Meattini ed., Arezzo, 2006.

³⁶Cfr. F. MARONE, *Narrare la differenza. Generi, saperi e processi formativi nel Novecento*, Unicopli, Milano, 2003.

³⁷B. MAPELLI, G. BOZZO TARIZZO, D. DE MARCHI, *Orientamento e identità di genere*, RCS, Milano, 2001, p.250; R. BIAGIOLI, *Orientare al femminile: nodi teorici e proposte didattiche*, in "Studiorum Educationis" n. 2, 2003.

absence of horizons and expectations which are obstacles to creativity and entrepreneurship. On reading the ISTAT annual report related to employment one finds that in Italy the return on educational investment is still low, despite the fact that a degree, much more than a diploma, is becoming a kind of insurance against the growing difficulties of the labour market. In employment terms, the advantage of holding a third-level qualification compared to a second-level one is greater and more evident in Italy than in other countries, for both young men and young women. The economic crisis we are going through seems to have also heightened the importance of social class in the probability of finding better employment opportunities, especially for graduates. Even if for women the dual image is reposed, employment remains for them a space to be conquered, a central point of reference for the self, for one's growth and for one's own self-realization³⁸.

With regard to female employment, despite its greater hold in times of crisis, the quota of women employed in Italy remains much lower than that in other European countries and is concentrated in the tertiary sector. Unemployment can no longer be tackled as a question of mere economic contingencies but we are faced with a radical transformation of the meaning of employment both in its objective, as well as its subjective aspects³⁹.

Youth unemployment – between 15 and 24 years of age – according to ISTAT sources, in 2013, reached 38.7% of the workforce for that age-group and the unemployed amounted to 10.9% of the overall population of the same age. The documentation related to unemployment per age and study qualification confirms that in the employment entry-phase, all young Italians, graduates included, find greater difficulty than their counterparts in other countries. On the other hand, during one's working lifespan, a degree is a positive investment against unemployment even if in Italy this is less the case than in other countries. In the 25-64 age-bracket, the most recent documentation states that degree-holders enjoy a higher rate of employment of more than 12 percentile points compared to diploma-holders. The propensity to employ graduates grows significantly based on the size of the enterprise and the degree of internationalization as well as the innovative nature of the same. For example, in 2010, the quota of new registrations for first year students in the Human Sciences and Education, sectors often taken as examples of surplus supply, was 19% in Italy against an OECD average of 21%, and 23% in Germany.

³⁸Cfr. B. DE SERIO, "Orientamento di genere ed empowerment", in I. LOIODICE (Ed.), *Orientamenti. Teorie e pratiche per la formazione permanente*, Progedit, Bari, 2009.

³⁹V. IORI, "Lavoro e differenza di genere", in L. FABBRI, B. ROSSI (Ed.s), *Pratiche lavorative*, Studi pedagogici per la formazione, Guerini, Milano, 2010.

Marta Nussbaum⁴⁰ states that it is necessary to invest in young people, allocating greater resources for their education and training, with an emphasis on knowledge and competence. Improvement in the quality of learning in schooling is a concurrent objective with that of raising the educational threshold in Italy; it is a condition which encourages greater access and positive results in second and third-level education. All this helps us understand the need for guidance which, apart from all kinds of fulfillment, induces one to reflect upon one's own life project path as a fluid concept, almost a journey of the individual from one state to another⁴¹ in which knowing how to act means bringing to light the systems used, the series of the assumption underlying the ways in which experience is constructed. In other words, this means that there are no longer aims and certainties for young people and that some advantages of the youth phase become, at one and the same time, vague and contradictory. Beck states that for young people life is becoming a daily problem of action, preparation and representation of the self. It is necessary to stress the development of a common life concept in boys and girls, in which the different areas of future life become themes. In other words, it is a question of exercising an active, explicit and reconstructive doing which sharpens research methodological competences and learning, and which corresponds to the dynamics of knowing one's self⁴². The increased difficulty of entry into and permanence in the world of employment, together with flexibility and the precarious nature of professions are stimulating the emergence of new individuals to guide, and, in terms of the function of guidance, the need to forestall the period for the development of self-awareness in the individual. This is an essential activity if each one is to acquire tools and instruments as well as the ability to be able to use them when making choices. It is a matter of helping individuals in education and training to make the right choices for themselves and for their futures, as well as for the community to which they belong. It is only in the recognition of the plot of one's own biographical continuity that the abilities to face discontinuity are formed: education and training must assume the value of self-guidance as a guiding thread which induces constant reflection upon one's experiential horizon⁴³. The negotiation and the ongoing reconstruction of experience, the process through which it is rethought under the same conditions of action, places the individual who exercises such functions in the centre, and sim-

⁴⁰Cfr. M. C. NUSSBAUM, *Creare capacità. Liberarsi dalla dittatura del Pil*, Raffaello Cortina, Milano, 2012.

⁴¹Cfr. A. CAMAITI OSHERT, *Passing. Dissolvere le identità, superare le differenze*, Castelvecchio, Roma, 1966.

⁴²A. CUNTI, *Aiutami a scegliere*, Carocci, Roma, 2008, p. 48.

⁴³Cfr. S. ULIVIERI S., R. PACE (Ed.s), *Il viaggio al femminile come itinerario di formazione identitaria*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2012; R. PACE, *Identità e diritti delle donne. Per una cittadinanza di genere nella formazione*, University Press, Firenze, 2010.

ultaneously, at the limit of one's own experience⁴⁴. In this way, the activation of a reflective, critical, rational thought constitutes, the main instrument for the construction of an educational development with a guiding importance, when this translates into the ability to knowingly transform the ways through which one interprets the experience, to produce schemata with new meanings and to activate autonomous decisional dynamics⁴⁵.

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⁴⁴E. FRAEUNFELDER, V. SARRACINO (Ed.s), *L'orientamento*, Liguori, Napoli, 2002, p.65.

⁴⁵F. LO PRESTI, *Educare alle scelte*, Carocci, Roma, 2009, p.78.

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