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on Adult Learning and Continuing Education



**Entrepreneurship and Adult Education:  
a new spirit of innovation, creativity and critical thinking**

edited by Vanna Boffo and Mauro Palumbo

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# Editorial

Talking about entrepreneurship is complex and uncommon in studies of adult education and in adult education itself, and it is even rarer to associate entrepreneurship with continuous learning.

Wishing to highlight a theme that is anything but predictable and at the same time very current, represents a challenge for the dissemination of culture in the world of education and learning. Therefore, at the centre of reflection that links the articles of this new edition of Epale Journal, now in its second year of publication, lies the idea of innovation which is accompanying the development of our Western society. Although facing a sea change which we are experiencing with disarming carelessness, we wanted to challenge tomorrow and think about a theme for the future. How can we build “entrepreneurship”, how can we think “entrepreneurship”, where can we implement “entrepreneurship”, why should it be brought out from the narrow sphere of economic productivity and the market? This meant interpreting a category that is central to our lives but which, thanks to the history of the twentieth century, has been left on the side-lines and is openly and reductively seen as a category for profit.

Instead, the sense of our issue is all about having questioned a new way of interpreting a concept brimming with outdated meanings. But history moves on, societies evolve, and even thinking about past categories must allow us to look beyond. Then entrepreneurship is connected with intrapreneurship, with human and personal development, with learning, with transversal and strategic skills. This seemed to us a rich journey through the growth of humankind in contact with the evolution of its education and with extreme care over personal and social growth and development, of citizenship. What roads were taken to speak of entrepreneurship/intrapreneurship? Multiple and wide-ranging, broad roads to access knowledge for the wellbeing of humankind in the varying contexts in which we lead our life.

First of all, the definition: is it difficult to define just what entrepreneurship is, and then, what is intrapreneurship – doing business perhaps? The varied rich articles pose this problem and with their varied and diverse solutions some important ideas may emerge. Back in 2006, the spirit of entrepreneurship was already among the eight key competences for the adult citizens of Europe. The category kept evolving until it became important to outline the necessary skills for social life, citizenship, and education, for the development of wellbeing in an ecological sense.

With a direct bearing on this category, recalled on multiple levels, are the skills and learning/education. The articles mainly tackle this second major theme. Skills, skills assessment, soft and strategic skills are placed at the centre of the learning process. The education and training dimensions are substantiated by skills, learning in prison, with migrants, at school, with adults, at adult education centres: they cannot help being filled with programmes featuring transversal skills and not simply cornerstones

to achieve adequate learning outcomes. Without skills we have no connection with the world of work, without skills we cannot say we train individuals who will find themselves in the most varied professional contexts.

As always, the number of articles is balanced between theory and practice. Interesting good practices encourage experiments with initiative/intrapreneurial pathways in learning contexts. Creativity, reflectivity, educational innovation, process and product, beckon from the living voice of researchers/practitioners.

As always, we have tried to stimulate a debate early on, important to broaden our reflective views.

In what way can skills be achieved through the usual learning pathways? How much does the educational method, workshop or seminar, affect the acquisition of knowledge related to skills? How much do we know, as educators, knowing how to educate, at any level, about being intraprising, about being enterprisingly capable, to reflect more on ourselves than others?

These and other questions emerge from the dense articles we are presenting, content that adult education is beginning to pick up the gauntlet of and for the 21st century.

*Vanna Boffo and Mauro Palumbo*

# The third sector and new frontiers of work. The role of strategic skills

Paolo Di Rienzo <sup>1</sup>

## Keywords

Strategic Skills, Voluntary Work, Skills-Based Education, Informal Learning, Validation Of Skills.

### Abstract

*This article discusses the theme of strategic skills, both from the point of view of educational processes, and of their recognition in the context of the vast complex of working activities attributable to the third sector. Reference is made, in part, to the results of a research project carried out at the National Third Sector Forum, which testify how the construct of competence represents the key to describing and analysing work in the third sector. Strategic skills, in particular, constitute resources which are crucial for the innovation of organizational systems and question the fundamental role played by education and the procedures to recognize skills.*

## 1. Introduction: Lifelong learning, skills and certification

The subject of this article refers to the theme of strategic skills in the context of business processes and education programmes developed by the National Third Sector Forum (henceforth also NTSF), as emerges from the results of a research project. This research sought to reconstruct the concept of strategic skills, to study the relevant education and their acquisition within the contexts of formal, non-formal and informal learning, in order to validate them as resources of the executives and managers of the NTSF.

The theme is included among the studies pointing to recognition of the value of experience, particularly among adults, as a resource for learning, also through the rediscovery by individuals in education of knowledge and skills, often tacit, acquired in the various contexts of life and work (Di Rienzo, 2012; Reggio & Righetti, 2013). In effect, the project finds its premises in the change strategies proposed by the lifelong learning model (Alberici, 2008; Morgan-Klain & Osborne, 2007) within the meaning shared by the European Union, in particular upholding the importance of valorizing and certifying learning wherever it has been acquired, especially in so-called 'non-formal' and 'informal' learning (CEDEFOP, 2016).

It is therefore a topic of great interest and crucial importance, since it places at the centre learning, education, and procedures to elicit skills, considering them key to the development of individuals, in civil, social, sustainable and inclusive ways (Di Rienzo, 2014). Moreover, the topics covered by the research lie at the heart of the 2030 Agenda adopted by the United Nations on 25 September 2015 concerning the definition of the objectives of sustainable development.

In particular, as regards the certification of skills, the following documents adopted by the European Union can



be identified as the salient steps:

- Common European Principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning (2004).
- Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012).
- European Guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning (2016).

The universities and the NTSF represent two subjects which, each with their own specific skills and respective responsibilities as defined within their institutional and legislative framework, can work together to create an Italian system to certify skills.

Moreover, this assertion descends from the provisions present in the Italian legislative framework that has been constituted in recent years, which can be represented as follows:

- Provisions on the reform of the labour market in a perspective of growth (Law no. 92 of 28 June 2012);
- Policies for lifelong learning and guidelines for territorial networks (Joint Conference of State and Regions, Agreement no. 154 of 20 December 2012);
- The first Italian Report referencing qualifications to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) of 21 November 2012;
- National Qualification Framework (Legislative Decree no. 13 of 16 January 2013);
- Definition of the general regulations and essential levels of performance for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning, and minimum standards of service of the National Skills Certification System, pursuant to Article 4, paragraphs 58 and 68, of Law no. 92 of 28 June 2012, (Legislative Decree no. 13 of 13 January 2013);
- Strategic guidelines for lifelong learning services and the organization of territorial networks (Joint Conference of State and Regions, Understanding no. 76 of 10 July 2014);
- Definition of an operational framework for the recognition at a national level of regional qualifications and related skills in the context of a national framework of the educational, training and professional qualifications referred to in Article 8 of the Legislative Decree of 16 January 2013, no. 13 (Interministerial Decree of 30 June 2015).

The National Third Sector Forum is the main body representing the non-profit world in Italy. It was set up on 19 June 1997 and is a Social Partner recognized by the Government.

It has been joined by 77 major national organizations of second and third levels for a total of over 97,000 territorial headquarters. On the basis of an agreement compliant with the national one, over the years, 18 regional Forums and around 60 territorial Forums (provincial and local) have been set up, representing civil society active nationwide.

The members of the Forum are supporters of a society of solidarity, which is secular and pluralist, convinced that constant protection of fundamental rights and common goods, quality of life, the environment, and social relations are at the basis of Italy's economic development.

The main objective of the National Third Sector Forum is the promotion of activities and experiences which citizens, autonomously organized in associations, realize nationwide through programmes that guarantee social justice, subsidiarity, and sustainable development.

## 2. Strategic skills from education to validation. New frontiers of work in the NTSF

In the broadest sense, it should be noted that the nature of learning and education in adulthood are the subject of a Copernican revolution, since we are in the presence of extremely complex challenges linked to the increase in inequalities when it comes to access to education, and to the cultural and competence profile and employment/employability of the adult population (Frabboni & Pinto Minerva, 2003; Loiodice, 2004).



This raises a question on the value and strategic function performed by skills of a complex nature – and by the consequent processes to develop these – which refer to the ability for reflection, the proactive dimension of thinking and critical thinking, rather than focusing on instrumental skills and techniques which, although important, are often seen in terms of a literacy more often responsive to needs linked to the realities of society's market.

In this perspective, the conceptual category of strategic skills for lifelong learning finds substantial grounds seen as the capacity to mobilize a wide spectrum of models of knowledge and action in a significant way (Alberici, 2008; European Union, 2006). This concept lays emphasis on the reflective nature of human action, on the ability of individuals to structure cultural behaviour in a global dimension of life characterized by learning potential (Beck, Giddens & Lash, 1999). It must therefore be stressed how important it is to build a multiplicity of roads for learning as a condition to spread the ability to learn and to develop reflective thinking. It is important to foster forms of learning that surpass the purely functional dimension in the direction of capability development (knowledge, ability and skills) to bring meaning to one's own and others' actions and to the context inhabited (Bruner, 1990).

The research in question presents itself as an intervention designed and conducted by the Qualitative Methodology Workshop for Adult Education (MetQualFa) of the Department of Educational Sciences at the University of Rome "Tre" and is located within the framework of approaches by competence, of quali-quantitative methods and some recent regulatory devices for the creation of an Italian system of identification, validation, and certification of skills and learning acquired in formal contexts.

With this framework in mind, the research was geared to the concept of strategic competence and the importance this assumes, for the quality of the processes implemented, in particular in the activities realized and coordinated by the Third Sector Forum.

In what sense we can support the peculiarities of the concept of competence, specifically strategic competence, within the NTSF?

This question found a first incomplete response in the recognition by the International Labour Organization (ILO) of voluntary work as a job, which resulted in the legitimacy of the concept of competence within the NTSF: a context which, by virtue of the characteristics of organizational flexibility and adaptability to the needs of the market in addition to being based on technical skills in the strict sense, in the continuous attempt to respond to new needs, tends to develop new frontiers of work, introducing innovations among professional figures and strengthening skills, particularly transversal/strategic ones, of workers and volunteers (Guidi, Fonović & Cappadozzi, 2017; Michelini, Musella, Ragozini & Scalisi, 2016).

On these bases, the research obtained confirmatory results as regards the significance, for the executives and managers of the NTSF, of the areas of strategic skills postulated, on the basis of the latest studies by the sector (Aubret, Gilbert & Pigeyre, 1993; Gherardi, 1998; Le Boterf, 1994, 2008, 2010; Ryken, 2007; Viteriti, 2018):

- managerial and leadership skills;
- personal and social skills;
- collective team and network skills;
- change management skills;
- communication management skills.

The challenges that the NTSF is called to face, in particular in the direction of sustainability and social inclusion, as has been mentioned, require strategic skills across the many different working environments present therein. For education, as the main lever of innovation and the development of skills, the question remains to respond to these challenges.

In the research project, educational activities were implemented to develop the approach by skills (Bresciani, 2012) and procedures to elicit them (Di Rienzo, 2012), in order to comply with the convergence of principles expressed in



the recent third sector reform, the promotion of a society not based solely on knowledge, but geared to increasing social cohesion, participation, and active citizenship.

In this respect, the education pursued the following objectives:

- promoting the acquisition and development of principles, theoretical elements, and knowledge to manage organizational and educational processes based on skills;
- empirically defining and developing methods and tools for the identification and validation of strategic skills and learning acquired in particular in non-formal and informal learning.

planning and education that recall the approach by competence and highlight the crucial role of the educator seen as a guide and facilitator of the learning process. In this sense, the education becomes a vehicle to valorize skills acquired anywhere, and a powerful tool of empowerment for third sector operators.

### 3. Conclusions

The description of the research and the analysis of its results highlight the importance of making use of skills to innovate the organizational processes of the NTSF, particularly as regards education and procedures to elicit skills. On the general level of the results, it can be stated that:

- the construct of competence is the key to describing and analysing work in the third sector and, in primis, that of the executives and managers of the NTSF;
- Given the nature, quality and importance of the problems and processes which question both the work and the skills of the third sector, it is appropriate to gear the governance to the strategic skills of the executives and managers of the NTSF.

This position is confirmed by the results of the quantitative survey from which emerges the importance attributed to education, on the one hand, and, on the other, the importance of consistency in educational experiences in informal learning, which require recognition and validation.

Even on the basis of the research results obtained, it is plausible to argue that the development of an approach by skills represents a cornerstone to redesign the essential elements which characterize the organizations and educational processes designed for adults. This approach has proven to be effective and to be positively correlated to innovation in organizational processes as well as the quality and flexibility of the actual learning processes. In particular, the design and development of devices for the analysis and recognition of past learning and the 'skills portfolio' tool, are proving very interesting for the implications of application that they could have in the context of organizational innovations (Di Rienzo, 2014).



## Notes

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# Skills assessment and intrapreneurial competence

Paolino Serreri <sup>1</sup>

## Keywords

Skills Assessment, Intrapreneurship, Professional Project.

## Abstract

*This essay sets out to reflect on skills assessment as a method of self-analysis which adult individuals can use to develop a work project, and shows how this, when adopted to support a path of reflection on one's self, a professional project and life, is directly linked to the development of intrapreneurship competence.*

## 1. Introduction

Before diving into the conceptual and practical “territory” of the interrelations between the construct of skills assessment and that of intrapreneurship competence, in order to focus on the contribution of the former to the development of the latter, it is opportune to clarify the basic assumptions of the two constructs from which we begin. This is because these are concepts and constructs around which various meanings proliferate, in turn the fruit of a welter of practices, often heterodox (this applies especially to Italy and Skills Assessment), not always supported by strong theoretical grounds.

## 2. Skills Assessment

In the footsteps of Lévy-Leboyer (1993), Joras (1995), Selvatici and D'Angelo (1999) and Alberici and Serreri (2009) we intend by ‘skills assessment’:

a method of assisted self-analysis of one's own knowledge, skills and aptitude; as well as the interests of an adult individual – who is crossing or is tackling a work transition – in order to develop a work project (which can be a first entry or a return to the world of work), a professional development project (vs. career development); or again, a project to create an autonomous enterprise.

As can be seen from the terms highlighted, the emphasis of this definition falls on the words self-analysis (also if assisted by an expert), adult individual and project.

The concept of self-analysis presupposes and implies the willingness of an individual to rebuild his or her wealth of skills through a reflective revisitation of their own experience and their whole legacy of skills however they were acquired (for this reason the accent falls on the adult individual as the bearer of experiences of a certain substance); it presupposes and implies the willingness of the individual to self-activate; to become involved in the process of mobilization/valorization of his or her own resources, both internal (knowledge, skills, interests and aptitude) and external (context: the labour market, the organization belonged to, social and territorial networks, etc.). Above all, it presupposes a person with a sense of self-efficacy; who thinks of him/herself as an individual and, as such, acts taking the reins to construct his or her project; bringing into play in this way, what Boutinet (1996) called an appropriate project conduct. Where by ‘project conduct’ is meant conduct geared to giving sense to the activities that the project itself anticipates; a conduct that pivots on an individual's aware autonomy; of an individual who is creative and open to innovation. Furthermore,



skills assessment, developing according to a markedly procedural approach, divided into stages and times, increases the basic project capacity of the individual/beneficiary from various points of view. In this regard, Zannad and Alves (2012), in the footsteps of Clavier (2002) wrote:

“The beneficiary may undertake a skills assessment and develop a professional project for a variety of reasons: to define a direction or goal; to anticipate or to focus better on a socio-economic reality; to contain uncertainty; to find his or her road; to strengthen self-confidence, and so on. Here we can see all the ambivalence, versatility and richness of the assessment: if the competence responds to the ‘upstream’ logic (inasmuch as it matures and is, if we might say so, ‘incarnated’ in past experiences), the project is designed ‘downstream’ and refers to the field of possibilities. The skills assessment mixes hot and cold: the passivity of the legacy and the initiative of the will; the singularity of competence and the multiple space of the project; retrospective logic and the logic of perspective; self-knowledge and the search for meaning; the desire to act (mobilization of energies and resources, aptitude development), passivity (the legacy of experience) and risk.” (Zannad & Alves, 2012, p. 107-108)

In short, understood in this way, skills assessment – with all its complexity; with the entire gamut of its profiles and functions and all its theoretical/practical facets which denote it as a guidance tool for the maturation and education of adults – appears to us as “fuelled” by strong transversal values clearly directed towards pro-activity. Values that feed on reasons, research and attribution of sense, of the will to act (which includes, and at the same time transcends, the willingness to do), of potential to be developed and interests to be cultivated and thus education, especially “maturative” education. These are values which we will find at the foundation of intrapreneurship competence and which feature the same kind of training for intrapreneurship and the development of intraprising skills, as we propose to argue here below.

### 3. Intrapreneurship competence

The literature available in English on intrapreneurship competence and on intrapreneurial/entrepreneurial training is not very abundant and is mainly confined to studies of a psychological and social psychology kind in particular (Caggiano, 2012; Battistelli, 2001, 2003; Battistelli & Odoardi, 1995). The same applies to initiatives and activities of entrepreneurship training. Which – if we exclude managerial training programmes which also contain training in entrepreneurial skills – are sporadic and mainly carried out at university. This, in the face of a European framework, meaning by this term the EU, which instead dedicates growing attention to this theme, at the level of both policy guidelines and studies. The development of the entrepreneurial capacity of citizens and organizations has been one of the key objectives of European policies since the beginning of the 2000s.

In 2006, the European Commission identified the “spirit of initiative and entrepreneurship” as one of the Eight Key Competences needed to live and act in the knowledge society. In May 2018, in the new version of the Council Recommendation concerning the key competences for lifelong learning, there was talk of entrepreneurial skills tout court. With this semantic reworking, the Recommendation meant by ‘entrepreneurial competence’ the ability to act on the basis of ideas and opportunities and transform these into a value for others. This is based on creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, initiative and perseverance, as well as the ability to work in a collaborative way in order to plan and manage projects which have a cultural, social and commercial value. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, for its part, has made a contribution to expanding the concept of entrepreneurial/intrapreneurial competence by proposing a semantic modification of the term undertake to be understood as the ability to “act on ideas and opportunities, transforming them into value for others, a value that can be cultural, economic or social”. The entrepreneurial/intrapreneurial competence thus defined is divided by the JRC study into three areas: the area of ideas and opportunities (comprising, inter alia, vision, creativity, ethics, etc.; the area of personal resources (comprising, inter alia, the



sense of self-efficacy, motivation and perseverance, the mobilizing of resources, etc.); the area defined as into action, (comprising, inter alia, taking the initiative to plan and manage, tackling uncertainty and risk, etc.). To conclude on this point, we can already say that the contact areas and synergy between intrapreneurship competence thus defined and the skills the assessment works on are visible to the naked eye, almost by overlapping, as we intend to clarify in the notes which follow.

#### 4. The contribution of skills assessment to intrapreneurial competence

The most evident contribution, even though it may appear less meaningful under the profile of the method's epistemology, comes from the practical outcomes of various assessments (i.e., from projects developed to conclude these assessments). In fact, there is no scarcity of instances where the beneficiary has developed a real project to create an autonomous enterprise (as in the case of assessments made of mobile workers with qualifications of a middle-high level who have set up small self-employed businesses, especially in the third sector) or as in the case of assessments made of young people with atypical contracts from which start-ups were born.

The most meaningful contribution comes, instead, from the values of the assessment itself as mentioned earlier; values of the transversal type which are the same ones that feed intrapreneurial competence as such. In particular, we can identify four conceptual and operative cores from which we can more easily identify the contribution of skills assessment in the development of intrapreneurship competence.

Briefly, these are:

- **The Project:** the “keystone” of a skills assessment is the final project. An assessment without a project cannot be called an assessment, even if it has been performed following the relevant methodology, instrumentation and procedure. In the same way, there can be no talk of an intrapreneurial activity that is not preceded by and based on a project;
- **The Vision:** the skills assessment gives the beneficiary a restructuring of his or her vision as a preliminary operation or as co-essential to the finalization of the project. Every sound project is always inscribed within a broader vision, within a framework of well-identified rules and values (ethical). Vision and ethics are also key to the construct of competence according to the model developed by the Joint Research Centre which we mentioned earlier;
- **Self-efficacy, Motivation and Empowerment:** the skills assessment, by leveraging the structuring force of narrative-biographical and reflective thought, gives the beneficiary a growth in motivation, producing a tangible effect of empowerment through a broadening of the horizon of his or her possibilities, which are illuminated by a new light. In this way, the individual is better able to recognize as an opportunity for him-herself facts and events that occur outside of him-herself, which would otherwise remain unvoiced. As we have seen, self-efficacy, motivation and empowerment play a crucial role within the complex construct of intrapreneurial competence as it is defined by the aforementioned Joint Research Centre which, not by chance, places these at the centre of the area of personal resources.
- **Self-activation:** the first act of a skills assessment is designed to assess an individual's voluntary membership of a pathway and, above all, his or her willingness to become involved, to engage in the reconstruction of the legacy of personal resources and in an active search for external resources of context through which to achieve the development of a socially anchored sustainable project. Also in this case, self-activation, fostered and sustained by the skills assessment, draws an area that overlaps the one defined ‘into action’ by the repeatedly mentioned model developed by the Joint Research Centre.



## Notes

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<sup>2</sup> The most widespread expression is Entrepreneurial Competence. We, in the footsteps of Bacigalupo (2018), prefer that of Intrapreneurship Competence, even though for now this only circulates in restricted circles, since it heavily underscores its formative aspects – which are the ones that most concern us within the framework of these notes – and because it is mostly protected from the ideological resistance of those who reject it because it approaches the concept of competitiveness, just as this is affected by the neoliberalist economic policies typical of the “turbo-capitalism” in this first glimpse of the millennium.

<sup>3</sup> In skills assessment the value of attribution of sense plays a crucial role and is understood in the broad sense of which Weick spoke (1997), namely, seven properties of sensemaking: with sensemaking as a process based on the construction of identity; a retrospective process; a founding process (people often create part of the environment they cope with); a social process (compare the attention to the social substrate which constantly models interpretations and interpreting); a continuous process; one centred on selected information; plausible, i.e. with a strong pragmatic value.

<sup>4</sup> Acting is to be understood in Weber’s sense of “action that is rational with respect to the objective” (Weber, 1961).

<sup>5</sup> Merely by way of example, and without any attempt to provide exhaustive information, indeed apologizing in advance for any omissions, we can recall the courses of Valeria Caggiano at the Department of Educational Sciences of the University of Rome “Tre”; the recent testing of the manual *EntreComp into Action* (Joint Research centre, 2018) to help teachers develop entrepreneurship in the young, coordinated by Valeria Luppi of the University of Bologna with a thousand young people between 18 and 29; as well as the research, documentation and training carried out by the Italian Association of Teachers and School Leaders (ADI).

<sup>6</sup> This is an important research centre located in various countries of the Union, including Italy.

<sup>1</sup> For a complete understanding of the whole conceptual framework only partially described here, see Bacigalupo (2018) and the Joint Research Centre (2018) referred to above.

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# Prison education and training in entrepreneurship: a space to think “otherwise”

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## Keywords

Education, Prison, Workshop,  
Enterprise

### Abstract

*Starting from a reflection on the experience of the adult education centre CPIA5, regarding the educational pathways offered at the prison of San Vittore - Di Cataldo, we would like to highlight the centrality of the workshop choice to promote awareness, empowerment, and a sense of initiative. Developed on different levels (awareness, orientation, professionalization), the workshop approach helps fragile individuals to interweave and harmonize different dimensions of themselves (body, cognition, emotion) and to bring forth a renewed bond with experience: thanks to original interconnections the prisoners can extend their horizon of possibilities and embark on new directions.*

## 1. Introduction

The word enterprise (from the Latin ‘take from between’) means choosing a thing from among two or more, and making it one’s own; in fact, the meaning alludes to a ‘taking it between your hands’, and hence a taking with courage, confidence and determination. In a context of vocational education and training in prison this term is extremely crucial and paradigmatic: in a closed space, where the chance to choose seems to have ended, it is possible to promote open educational pathways where the people can be put in a position to review their life history, expand their experiential field (Bertolini & Caronia, 1993), discern new perspectives, and choose a road that really is more suited to themselves. The basic education pathways and the professionalizing courses in prison have precisely this objective: they begin from a reading of the resources and needs to concretely orient future action, exercising possibilities of choice and diligent expression. It is no real enterprise the one that starts from a flattening into a single dimension or the one that forces existing dynamism: taking the initiative and getting moving in a creative way requires the ability to explore new possibilities and to interlink different life experiences.

## 2. Putting down roots in experience: the sense of the educational offering in prison

In highly complex contexts, where diverse components interact and have an influence, the risks of simplification on the one hand, or complication on the other are very high: both of these energies accentuate unique readings and ways of explaining a situation which is creating divisions and antagonisms that are often artificial. The prison institution accommodates complex paths and takes on paradoxes, contradictions and the ambivalences of every society on a daily basis. The education inside prisons carried out by the CPIAs (adult education centres) sets out to assume the synergistic function of the various actions, as well as proactive and supporting ones. Prison education is driven by training and by interweaving internal and external synergies (Lizzola, Brena & Ghidini, 2017): in particular, the CPIA becomes a privileged place to combine educational activities and to strengthen pedagogical intentionality around the activities offered in prison (Maurizio, 2017). The intuitions and nodes of the recent Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Justice head precisely in this direction and hinge on two orientations to be exploited among operators and teachers: introspective ability and foresight, knowing how to look inside and the ability to look beyond, in a delicate balance of assuming and accepting a reality and constructing projects.

Data from the Department of Prison Administration on pathways of education and training (year 2016-



2017) attest that out of the total prison population more than one third regularly sign up for educational courses of the first and second levels, without considering several other education activities – especially the professionalizing ones, carried out by territorial educational bodies in a network with the CPIAs. As can be seen from the tables, the scholastic percentage success rate increases with the level of education, passing from 35% on average at the first level to 57% at the second. This is partially due to the increasing motivation, also in view of qualifications which are more portable in the world of work, but also in the concrete expansion of the educational offering which becomes possible with greater mastery of Italian. In general, it is necessary to work to counter the fragmentation of the pathways and to assume a global vision of the projects in which the educational offerings are increasingly corroborated in the treatment programme.

In fact, prison students, through an appropriate use of language and knowledge, can access areas of themselves and reality previously unknown or kept in shadow, and, in addition, try out new ways of behaving and of experiencing gestural expressiveness, the body, the relationship with objects, spaces, others: in this way they can “free up” new communication channels and gain access to original dimensions of sense.

The educational experience – centred, as we shall see, on the workshop approach – is therefore a complex response to a complex scenario: it enables multiple senses and different dimensions of the person and is divided into several levels which are interwoven.

### 3. Bearing structure: educational success and the workshop option

A stay in prison appears to make prisoners passive and adherent to the institution, with an excessive need for company and a partial sacrifice of independence. Starting from a multidimensional multifactorial vision of development, the objective of the workshops in a prison is a reactivation of human potential in all its facets: cognitive, emotional and motivational. Those attempting the hazardous road of social reintegration need to restore an image of themselves which is positive and independent. The paradigm of the teaching workshop manifests itself in an effective attempt to abandon the approach of reproducing knowledge to make room for the reconstruction, rediscovery, and reinvention of knowledge in order to generate abilities and skills.

The key player at the workshops is the adult prisoner, an active and aware protagonist, who asks for and seeks meaningful answers to his or her needs: beyond being the subject, an active and responsible promoter, he or she is also the object. Knowing how to manage the information coming in, to acquire, organize and effectively reformulate data and knowledge from different sources as quickly as possible is one of the most requested ‘soft skills’ in working environments. Enterprise and the spirit of initiative may improve through the use of lateral thinking, that way of thinking which seeks new perspectives and points of view which are alternatives to examine a problem, innovative visual perspectives that can shatter habitual perceptual frameworks. The proposals are always administered in small working groups in order to improve team work and effective communication, as well as encouraging assertion. For prisoners, the awareness resulting from a metacognitive path with a focus on a personal learning style can become an important moment to clarify the reason for some difficulties at school in the past, thereby raising their self-esteem and overcoming the frequent conviction of being unintelligent and therefore only fit for tasks of little social value. The adoption of a workshop methodology which focuses on boosting learning processes with a view to preventing and containing any deterioration or a return of illiteracy falls into a virtuous inclusive path of rehabilitation, which enhances the value of the human capital of deviant individuals (Cardinals & Craia, 2016) guiding them to understand their ability to do, to be, to possess self-determination.



#### 4. Extension of the possibilities: the educational offering of the San Vittore - Di Cataldo Prison

The educational offering of CPIA5 at the San Vittore Prison consists of two large areas of intervention: the institutional courses and those of expansion. The institutional activities include literacy courses: Four-month (two weekly lessons of 3 hours each) and intensive (four weekly lessons of 3 hours each); as well as those at the first level (see the Guidelines for the transition to the new regulations in support of organizational and didactic autonomy of provincial centres for adult education, Official Journal no. 130 of 8 June 2015, Ordinary Supplement No. 26). [In Italian] Expansion is accomplished through two core approaches: workshops and projects. The workshops draw on expressive/artistic and motor subjects, and are designed by choosing the objectives from among the final skills of First Level courses. This allows the attendance of prisoners who will take the First Level examination but also those who will not take the exam but can obtain a certificate of competence and undertake a course which is part of the treatment. All the educational activities are structured as a workshop, which is highly suitable for prison education. As has been said, workshop activity makes individuals operative in constructing concrete products and in formulating abstract concepts, puts them at the centre of the learning activity, gives the learners the possibility to gauge their own capabilities and to be inspired to co-design the programme. It is difficult to reinvent a new self even when we are able, since “in prison we learn the fear of darkness gain” (Torchio, 2015). The best way to learn is through the use of the prisoners’ body: the brain structures logical thinking on the pathway and activates the relevant evaluations in itinere and the body acts in tune with the project and is activated to realize it. The workshop activity is like a ballet, a reciprocation of action and reflection. The body acts and the brain processes a reflection on the ongoing action. It is a continuous cycle whose object is basically the individual. At the end of the pathway the workshop approach only makes sense if we know ourselves a little better, if it uncovers a potentiality of oneself never known or forgotten. Ultimately, the object of the workshop approach is an awareness of what one is, of one’s own limits and what one could become by acting to overcome these limits. A second function concerns the more strictly educational aspect. The workshop approach is the preferred tool for developing skills (Castoldi, 2011), since it consists of operational proposals (activities, intertwined with lessons of a traditional type which act as a ‘cement’); encourages cooperation between students; has as its objective the attainment of a product, whether practical or conceptual, and favours the influence of dialogue on the lessons and self-reflection on individual actions, developing a critical spirit in relation to the objects and ways of learning. Lastly, in prison education, there is a frequent need to split the lessons into units which last for the time of one or two encounters, since the attendance of prisoners always fluctuates. The workshop approach enables the creation of complex pathways, split into short core schemes complete in themselves, made up of a certain number of tasks which interlink in composing the overall framework of the pathway.

#### 5. From the roots to the branches: a comprehensive look

The whole structure to expand the educational offering moves with a view to giving students the possibility to choose which path to take and what levels to explore. Leveraging the desire to get moving and proceed to self-determination, by concretely trying out other roads. The educational project of CPIA5 in Milan inside the prisons follows a pyramidal pattern, divided into three levels, which are strongly intertwined (Figure 1).



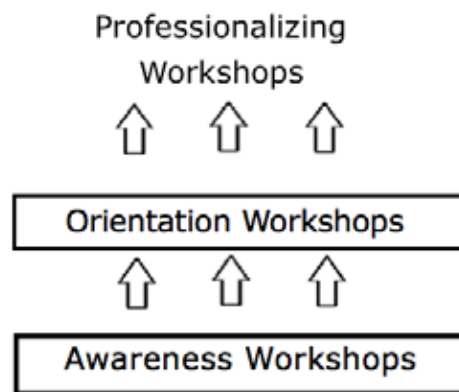


Figure 1 - Educational Planning of CPIA5 Milan (our own processing).

The basic level comes as Awareness Workshops which stimulate reflection and empathy and give students the opportunity to communicate and express themselves through activities such as: role-playing games, creative writing, expressive reading, drama, etc. This dimension is indispensable and is always present, also at higher levels, where it may be obvious or covert.

The workshops of Pre-Professional Orientation are at an intermediate level, in them the students begin to try out work activities and to meet experts from the world of work; they may carry out studies that orient them to choices on ways to dig deeper, in other words, develop professional choices for future reintegration. In this case, these are short courses of a professional or artisan kind and intensive seminar proposals in which students can glimpse the possibility of further investigation in the future.

The third level are the Professionalizing Workshops, organized with local education agencies which support Second Level education pathways. In this organizational dimension, the workshops became meeting places for individuals in the network of lifelong learning and structures that follow up prisoners in the process of social reintegration.

The CPIA5 is moving in this direction by trialling, in close connection with the network, different workshops which range from the expressive area (multilingual reading, decoration, etc.) to ones of guidance (mental gymnasia, building of artefacts, etc.) to the vocational area (barman, bicycle repairperson, etc.). At the Beccaria juvenile detention facility, we have been working on this in teams for many years, trying out Proximity Workshops, in other words, in close collaboration with the criminal area outside and strong links with the surrounding territory. There are two guiding principles in the educational offering of the workshop kind: the further involvement of prisoners in the planning phase, and the personalization of the educational interventions, with great flexibility and an ability to grasp the emerging needs. If prisoners embark on an educational path interweaving these levels they can construct a profile in which, alongside the 'soft skills' (self-review, communication, expression, resilience, etc.) also 'hard skills' are developed, taking dreams and desires in hand and transforming them into concrete portable plans.

## 6. Conclusion

"If the eye is not used, it cannot see; if the skin is not touched, it cannot feel; if a man cannot imagine, he is defunct," wrote Danilo Dolci (1970). Enterprise is based on imagining another possible self. Prison education aims in this direction. The delicacy of this work lies the ability to accept, re-elaborate and support whatever emerges: the formative figures – teachers, educators and experts in professional areas – are called upon to carry out solid teamwork so that the stimuli arising from such experiences are not lost and do not remain fragments of mosaics never assembled.



## Notes

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# Developing entrepreneurship through Design Thinking: a new frontier for adult education

Carlo Terzaroli

## Keywords

Entrepreneurship; Design Thinking; Entrepreneurship Education.

### Abstract

*This essay revolves around the construct of entrepreneurship (Moberg et al., 2014) as a key category to generate value at economic, cultural and social levels. Through a terminological survey, designed to bring order to the vast galaxy of definitions (Erkkilä, 2000; QAA, 2012), we shall take a closer look at the dimension of entrepreneurship education (Lackéus, 2015) in its links with the educational process at university level. In this framework, the Design Thinking method (Dunne & Martin, 2006) fits as a common approach in the international arena for the construction of programmes targeting entrepreneurship. If many experiences currently follow a positioning that is mostly extra-curricular, future prospects are directed towards an 'embedded' setting capable of making teachers the central nucleus for skills development (European Commission, 2014; Lackéus, 2015).*

## 1. The construct of entrepreneurship

The theme of entrepreneurship education has been hotly debated in the educational field for some time. Some positions strongly criticize an alleged excessively economic shift in education, seen primarily as the result of a vested interest of certain groups (Sin & Neave, 2016). But just what is meant by the category of entrepreneurship?

"Entrepreneurship is when you act upon opportunities and ideas and transform them into value for others. The value that is created can be financial, cultural, or social" (Moberg, Baslund, Fosse, Hoffman & Junge, 2014, p. 14).

This definition, drawn up by the Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship, places the concept of value in a new light for studies on education in adulthood. Moberg et al. (2014) argue that the result of action on opportunities and ideas aims not only at generating profit, but also an improvement in the social and cultural conditions of the context. Developing tools to create value, then, means educating people, citizens and workers who can innovate their surroundings, making a positive contribution and responding to emerging needs.

In the wake of this, other approaches and movements, largely also linked to pathways of entrepreneurial education, have developed in recent decades. The foundations naturally refer to the pedagogy of John Dewey (Dewey 1951, 1963, 2014), later taken up by approaches such as Kolb's Experiential Learning (Kolb 1984), Lave & Wenger's Situated Learning (Lave & Wenger 1991) up to the recent developments of Service Learning (Jacoby, 2015).

The many roads to arrive at dealing with this dimension have generated a huge range of definitions. The two most frequent come from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in the United Kingdom which distinguishes between:

Enterprise Education, defined as the process of acquiring skills in idea generation;

Entrepreneurship Education, namely, those paths designed to provide knowledge, skills and the aptitude necessary to apply these abilities in the real-world context of creating a new business (QAA, 2012, p. 2).

Of different origin, instead, is the term used in the United States, which speaks exclusively of Entrepreneurship



Education (Erkkilä , 2000). Other researchers have used the concept of Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education which includes both points of view but may perhaps prove difficult to use in practice. In this discussion, Erkkilä proposed to combine the terms in Entrepreneurial Education (Erkkilä ,2000) to contain both of them. Instead, in northern Europe, most of the talk is about Entrepreneurial Learning, emphasizing the learning dimension and development within the education process (Lackéus, 2015). Aware of this vast literature, definitely far from unequivocal at a terminological level, here we have chosen to use the American meaning since, given its inclusiveness, is more able to express the complexity of the sphere. In fact, in view of the very recent spread of the theme to the Italian teaching-educational context (Piazza, 2015; Morselli, 2016; Costa & Strano 2018) we have opted for an interpretation open to both the vast field of the creation of start-ups, and the fledgling one of services for employability and enterprise (Yorke, 2006; Moreland, 2006; Boffo, 2018; Boffo & Fedeli, 2018).

## 2. Teaching 'about', teaching 'for', teaching 'through' entrepreneurship

Instead, what deserves a specific illustration is the aspect of teaching, the element through which the real forms of implementing projects and programmes are substantiated. In this regard, Martin Lackéus identifies three approaches:

- *teaching about*,
- *teaching for*,
- *teaching through* (Lackéus, 2015, p. 10).

As the author makes abundantly clear:

- "Teaching 'about' entrepreneurship means a content-laden and theoretical approach aiming to give a general understanding of the phenomenon. It is the most common approach in higher education institutions (Mwasalwiba, 2010).
- Teaching 'for' entrepreneurship means an occupationally oriented approach aiming at giving budding entrepreneurs the requisite knowledge and skills.
- Teaching 'through' means a process based and often experiential approach where students go through an actual entrepreneurial learning process (Kyrö, 2005). This approach often leans on the wider definition of entrepreneurship and can be integrated into other subjects in general education, connecting entrepreneurial characteristics, processes and experiences to the core subject." (Lackéus, 2015, p. 10)

What seems of interest in the third educational level is the expanded vision of the concept of entrepreneurship, which goes beyond knowledge ('about') or knowledge and skills ('for'). In fact, the last level is substantiated in an "embedded approach of teaching 'through' entrepreneurship [that] can be relevant to all students and on all levels of education." (Lackéus, 2015, p. 10) Taking into consideration the opportunity to build an embedded approach (Federighi, 2009; Boffo, 2018) may have potential spin-offs in the dissemination of an approach to entrepreneurship for each scope and level of study. This is a procedural vision in which entrepreneurship education does not exclusively target venture creation, but is open to all areas of work, citizenship, society, of the whole of life.

On this trajectory lies the work of Martin Lackéus, who has developed a unified and progressive model to incorporate the multiple tasks in a structured system, including multiple phases with different objectives.



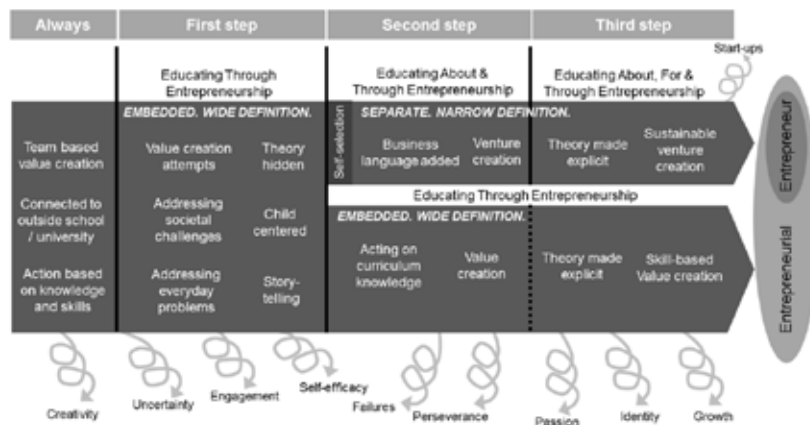


Figure 2 - A unified progressive model to develop entrepreneurship (Lackéus 2015: 25).

A further model has been developed in recent years in work by the European Commission, resulting in the project EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (Bacigalupo, Kampylis, Punie & Van den Brande, 2016; McCallum, Wiecht, McMullan & Price, 2018). What does this consist of?

“EntreComp is a comprehensive, flexible and multi-purpose reference framework designed to help you understand what is meant by entrepreneurship as a key competence for lifelong learning and to be able to use this in your work. It is intended to support and inspire actions to improve the entrepreneurial capacity of European citizens and organisations and was launched in 2016 as part of the New Skills Agenda for Europe” (McCallum, Wiecht, McMullan & Price 2018, p. 13).



Figure 3 - The three areas of the EntreComp Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (McCallum, Wiecht, McMullan & Price, 2018, p. 13).

On a first, more general level, three main areas are identified:

- *Ideas & Opportunities;*
- *Resources;*
- *Into Action.*

The fifteen petals which describe these areas represent the skills through which to substantiate the concept of entrepreneurship and are given here in detail:



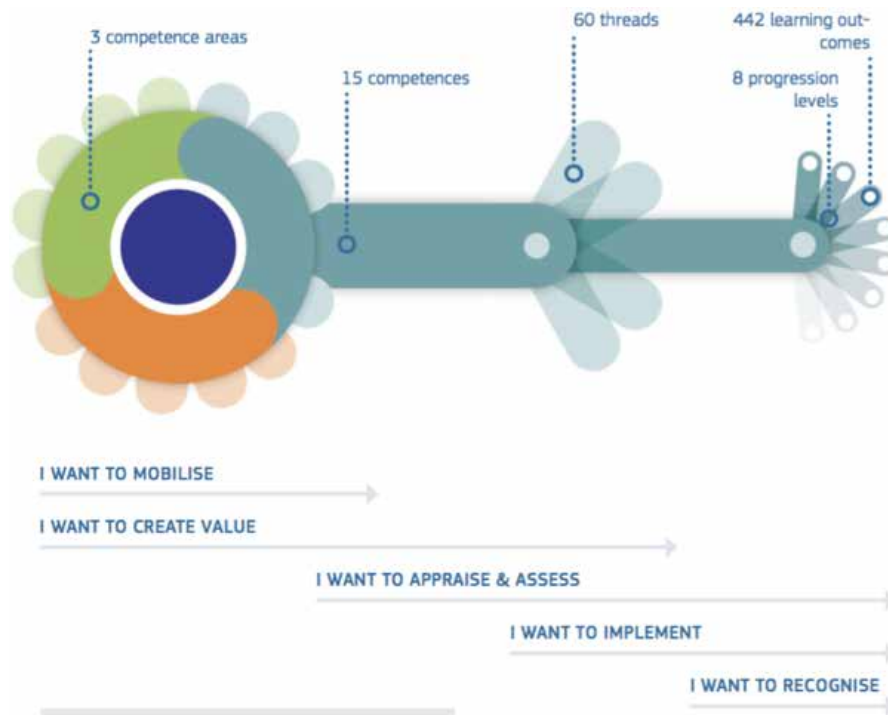


Figure 4 - Overall Description of the EntreComp framework (McCallum, Wiecht, McMullan & Price, 2018, p. 21).

The model can then be further expanded, going on to identify, for each skill, the specific behaviour that can identify and lead to real possession of the capacity to enact the skill. For example, the items that make up creativity include being open and curious, the development of ideas, the definition of problems, the designing of value and being innovative. In further depth, each of these is associated with learning outcomes through eight progressive levels, from the basic one, to intermediate, advanced, and expert. As McCallum et al. have underlined: "...this sense of progression is important when considering the development of a learner over time, the different starting points of learners or exploring to create a coherent entrepreneurship education pathway..." (McCallum, Wiecht, McMullan & Price 2018, p. 18). An overall look at the framework therefore allows us to monitor how it is possible to progressively go into depth in defining the elements that make up entrepreneurship.

### 3. Design Thinking as a method for Entrepreneurship Education

Design Thinking came originally from industry. The term "design", in fact, can at first impact mean many things: creating artefacts, planning new industrial features; it may relate to problem-solving activities or represent a way of thinking, reflecting and creating meaning. In fact, it has spread throughout managerial contexts in order to develop creative solutions linked to the needs of both users and customers (Buchanan, 1992; Dunne & Martin 2006; Liedtka & Ogilvie, 2014).

There are many definitions and descriptions of what the Design Thinking method represents today. Among these we can quote the definition of David Kelley of the Institute of Design at Stanford University:

"...it's a method for how to come up with ideas. These are not just ideas, but breakthrough ideas that are new to the world, especially with respect to complex projects, complex problems. That's when you really need multidisciplinary teams ... and you really need to build prototypes and try them out with users" (Camacho, 2016)

Some researchers within the European project D-think, have painstakingly explained the strong correlation between entrepreneurship and Design Thinking (Nielsen & Stovang, 2015):



The entrepreneurial spirit and mentality are increasingly important in working life. The help to achieve objectives and to try new things. There are many similarities between Design Thinking and entrepreneurship. In addition to creativity and innovation, there are also other points in common between Design thinking and the entrepreneurial spirit, namely:

- The focus on the creative resolution of problems;
- The search for new ideas and the recognition of opportunities in the environment;
- The focus on addressing uncertainty.

In some way, entrepreneurs are applying Design Thinking, even if unconsciously, when they move through a creative process of problem-solving, or when seeking new opportunities and challenges. By going more deeply into the dynamics and power of Design thinking as a process, and of its tools, entrepreneurs can improve in engaging in and facilitating innovation processes (Tschimmel, Loyens, Soares & Oraviita 2015, p. 15).

The concept, modelled by Stanford University and then taken up by many players around the world, can be represented by the following figure:

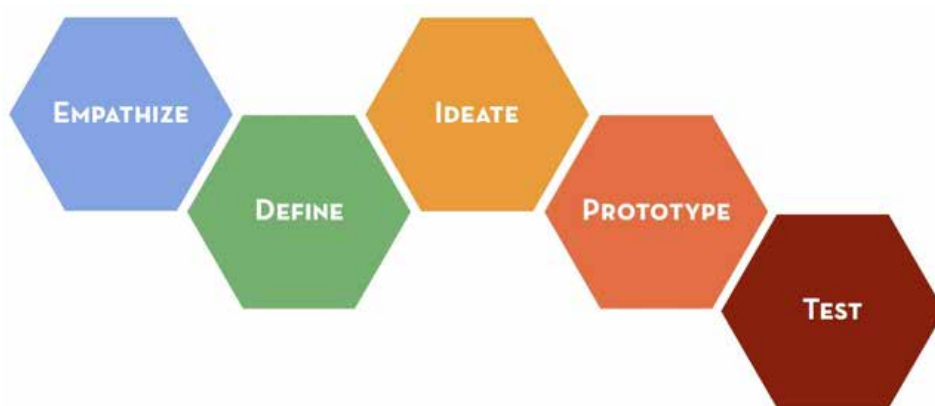


Figure 5 - Model of Design Thinking developed by the d.school of Stanford (<https://dschool.stanford.edu>)

This division consists of five phases defined as follows (Nielsen Stovang, 2015):

- Empathize, focuses on understanding the needs of the persons involved, by actively watching and interacting with the context identifying oneself with the experiences of the participants;
- Define, concerns the adoption of a point of view from the empirical results that have emerged, to have a clear problem in front which represents the challenge to be resolved;
- Ideate, intends to explore a wide range of innovative solutions, through targeted tools, to subsequently convey a keystone idea;
- Prototype, seeks to transform ideas into a concrete form, giving substance to the characterization of the product/service in a way that is increasingly specific so as to also allow users to interact with them for better empathy;
- Test, that phase in which feedback is sought from users to improve the prototype and solution identified and secondly to bring out new needs that require a response.

The theme which remains open however, behind all the methods and projects, involves the effectiveness and impact of these programmes on skills and on the creation of new business projects (Fayolle, Gailly & Lassas-Clerc, 2006). We are not only questioning whether the field of entrepreneurship is becoming vaster, but whether there are any signs of growth and progress also with respect to the impactful challenges it invokes. If the last decade has shown a progressive definition of the debate, as we have also observed in the terminological



dimension (QAA, 2012), the scientific community still has a long way to go on the research side (Fayolle, 2007; Gibb, 2007; Fayolle & Gailly, 2008; Dal, Elo, Leffler, Svedberg & Westerberg, 2016). However, we still have to dig deep regarding the factors preceding success (or failure) or the predictive items (Bruyat & Julien, 2000).

#### 4. Conclusions

The contribution which entrepreneurship education can offer the future of adult education relates not only to the construction of programmes and pathways, but the adoption of a new educational paradigm. As stated in the document of the European Commission *Entrepreneurship Education: A Guide for Educators* (2014): “teachers cannot teach how to be entrepreneurial without themselves being entrepreneurial” (European Commission, 2014, p. 10). The point of view is therefore turned on its head. It is not a question of merely defining a new method, or an innovative way of conceiving teaching. Entrepreneurship education calls into question the latest roots of education, its sense of category at the service of the social transformation of the world. Dealing with innovation today, in such a rapidly-changing context (Ito & Howe, 2017), is to prepare the future of the human community through tools, templates and projects that can respond quickly and effectively to the challenges of history. And it is here that education looks to tomorrow, in a new location at the centre of the changes in the world of work and society as a whole.



## Notes

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<sup>2</sup> By service learning is meant “a form of experiential Education in which the students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to achieve desired outcomes. Service Learning is the permanent landscape of Higher Education” (Jacoby, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> David Kelley is the founder of IDEO, an agency of design and innovation which operates worldwide. He also founded the Hasso Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford University, known as “d.school”. His main contributions have focused on the methodologies of ‘human-centred design’ and ‘design thinking’.

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# The challenge of lifelong learning in adults and for adults

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## Keywords

Lifelong Learning, Life Skills, Good Practice

### Abstract

*From the OECD Skills Strategy Diagnostic Report (2017) it emerges that "Italian workers have low average levels of skills" (p. 2). Later, it is specified that this data refers to "over 13 million adults" (p. 12). In our country, in particular, 39% of 25-65 year-olds have low levels of literacy and/or numeracy proficiency, compared to an OECD average of 15.5%. In addition, the Education and Training Monitor drawn up by the European Commission (2017) regarding the situation in Italy, shows a significant gap between the data recorded in 2016 on the participation of adults in lifelong learning of 8.3%, and that of the EU average of 10.8%.*

*These, therefore, are alarming figures for Italy, both in terms of low basic skills and the poor participation of adults in educational activities.*

*The risks which this state of things may lead to concern various aspects: potential social exclusion, impoverishment of personal life, poor economic growth. From this scenario comes the strategic role of adult education, the only tool to raise the levels recorded..*

## 1. Introduction.

To improve the situation in the field of education, the wish is that our country should come as close as possible to the common objectives laid down by the Europe 2020 Strategy, including: "helping at least 40% of the people aged between 30 and 34 years to obtain a tertiary qualification" (European Union, 2010).

The challenge consists in the implementation, by schools, of teaching/learning processes that encourage attendance, i.e. that are 'enjoyable', stopping students identifying study with drudgery. Laying the foundations for learning-to-learn means making attendance of school interesting, geared to putting into practice the conjunction between creativity-diversity-identity. A pathway of education for adults which succeeds in this aim is really working towards inclusiveness and setting the foundation for lifelong learning, as the result of the initiative of learners who invest in themselves.

## 2. The development of creativity and the valorization of diversity: possible tools to incentivize adult learning

As stated by Frabboni and Scurati (2011), the scholastic institution is, in the current complex situation, the only "formal system" which is intentionally educational and, for this reason, has a duty to respond better to diversified cultural needs. Specifically, an education programme aimed at adults only makes sense if it differs from the corresponding daytime course, aimed at younger students with other requests. Adult learning features specific requirements, to do with work, family and cultural heritage, which must find the right conjunction with the offering of the school system from the point of view of both organization and content. Taking into account that in the pathways of adult education the total number of hours is partially reduced with respect to daytime courses, it follows that also the cultural setting should focus on the key contents, in order to better steer the teaching-learning process. This makes it even more necessary to have schools which



focus in a fresh way on a teaching workshop approach, with a greater probability of achieving its educational mission. The proposal of culture in an experiential form, for example, through artistic-expressive activities, would encourage the attendance of school by adults who choose to return to the educational circuit and who have already experienced failure at school.

For these reasons, pursuing “feeling good at school” in adult learning becomes a priority objective, even better if inspired by “culture as a catalyst for creativity”, according to the contents of Regulation (EU) No. 1295 of the European Parliament and Council establishing the Creative Europe programme (2014-2020) (European Union, 2013). It is necessary to valorize the divergent thinking of students, encouraging the vision of culture as a form of opening.

The creativity of learners can only emerge by capitalizing on individual, expressive, or cultural diversity as the case may be. Opening to the new means interpreting pluralism as a key to reading modernity: in this case, knowledge is the fruit of an encounter between the members of a heterogeneous group, strengthening the individual and social educational process. Given that the last OECD report (2017) suggests that a significant number of non-autochthonous students attend adult education courses, it must be said that the sociability is completed by their presence, equally useful because it allows everyone to become better acquainted with their diversity and to open a debate on what we have in common and what distinguishes us (European Union, 2013).

Gardner (1995) explored the theme of diversity in each individual’s way of seeing things, claiming that this is also detectable within one and the same person. Here then is unity in diversity. In *Identità e diversità due concetti complementari*, Cavalieri (2005) stated: “The diversity of cultures, the diversity of individuals from one another [...] cannot be understood from a simple principle of unity, from a soft plasticity moulded by cultures depending on the circumstances. [...] Each individual’s commitment is as if enclosed in a deep knot that keeps unity tightly bound to diversity” (p. 50).

Intercultural education is the pedagogical-didactic translation of what has been expressed so far, whose very name contains the dialogical possibility and is the correct cement between players with distinctive cultural diversity.

Interculturality allows awareness of different ideals due to ethnic origins, and is the first step in recognizing human dignity. The usefulness of differentiation between peoples not only predisposes the knocking down of cultural barriers, but helps overcome perverse policies which tend to distinguish between hegemonic cultures and subcultures. Hence, it seems useful to recall a few legislative acts which protect respect for every ethnic group, including Art. 3 of the Italian Constitution, Law no. 903/1977 and the Decree-law no. 76/2005 for the educational success of the non-autochthonous..

### 3. A creative experience in the field

An education project for adult learners, of an artistic-creative kind, was implemented at the “Aterno-Manthonè” secondary school in Pescara, during the school year just ended. The experience was aimed at preventing possible failure at school, combining creativity with individual diversity through culture. The title given was *The wellbeing of knowledge... at the theatre or cinema*, and contained the ultimate goal, i.e. incentivizing the pleasure of knowing. A project born to enter the open contest *Libriamoci. Giornate di lettura nelle scuole 2018* (Sferra, 2018), with the spirit of strengthening the ability to read aloud among the students as a form of sharing. Following the indications of the European Recommendation, the project sought to help “understand messages of different genres [...] and of different complexities, transmitted using different languages” (European Union, 2006). Excerpts from texts were used, including: *Novecento*, by Baricco, and *1984*, by Orwell, which the students read first in class groups and then at a plenary, to put themselves to the test and to interpret the passages chosen with greater expressiveness. In particular, the second text was also



read in English, in a bilingual teaching activity.

There was also the benefit of a collaboration with theatre actors who guided the students in interpretative reading workshops. The programme aroused lively participation among the students, autochthonous and otherwise, perhaps because it was different from the usual school lesson, and proved to be a good way to approach reading even for the many who are not usually interested in it. Of significance were their written comments, including this one: "The project arouses greater interest in us towards the pleasure of reading aloud, because in this way we know better what we are saying and we try to move the people listening to us." After having encouraged the adult learners to visualize the settings and characters, it was proposed to watch the respective films, a means of reflecting better on what had already been learned. In relation to Novecento, the learners attended a cinema screening of *The Legend of 1900*, by Tornatore, and, for the other passage read, watched *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, by Radford.

This was followed by a focus on theatre, used as an extraordinary methodology to teach adults, leveraging their creativity and expression of diversity. After an interpretative reading of the last act of the play *La Locandiera* by Goldoni, because of the enthusiasm it aroused, it was decided to stage the work with the help of an expert. The group of actors was born by arranging open classes, 'mixing' students from the fourth year.

The exercise of creativity was the driving force: participants volunteered to play one character rather than another, they 'lived' Goldoni's work and grasped the contents in a fun way. It was a way to "learn to study oneself" (Benedetti, 2018, p. 9) and put oneself to the test, even more so because the performance of the play took place as part of an event for the whole institute (Sfarra, 2018).

Also intercultural education was fulfilled: the relationship with others was enriched by the presence in the classes of both native and non-native students. In this way an educational dialogue was facilitated (European Union, 2018).

#### 4. A creative experience in the field

Since an adult education programme incentivizes lifelong learning, it seems vital to encourage original identity (Jung, 1979) which, despite its uniqueness, strengthens relationships with others. Through the lens of culture, school interventions aimed at recognizing diversity seem useful as the right/value of all individuals, in order to be able to 'be themselves' (Tenuta, 2001).

The experience in the field described seemed to condense what was mentioned in paragraph 2 on the pedagogical and regulatory plane, regarding a functional approach to be followed in the education of adult learners. Its successful application was confirmed by the passionate participation of the students and their continuous request to continue tackling other experiences of similar artistic and cultural interest.



## Notes

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## Book Reviews

### **Employability & Competencies**

Boffo, V. & Fedeli, M. (eds.) (2018)

Florence: Florence University Press

**Gaia Gioli**<sup>1</sup>

“Employability & Competencies” edited by Vanna Boffo and Monica Fedeli helps explain and appreciate, from an epistemological and methodological point of view, how the result of three years’ research within the PRIN EMP&Co. project “Employability & Competencies” (PRIN2012LATR9n) – to which the title makes an explicit reference – pursued the goal of creating operational models that could help university decision makers to implement educational and training services and strategies aimed at improving success at university, by involving the students, by supporting the acquisition of disciplinary, transversal and strategic skills to assist them in carrying through a project and in joining the workplace.

The volume is divided into two parts, the first presents the results of the PRIN EMP&Co. research, the second the practices implemented by the teaching community nationwide. Both are split into four chapters and five core themes (just as there were five research units in the PRIN EMP&Co. project) which correspond to: 1) that of Teaching, which, in addition to representing the first mission of Italian universities, has always been an important part of scientific research. Here it is split into participatory teaching, linked to the constructs of learning-centred teaching, of personalised learning, the student voice and work-related learning; 2) that of university internships as a practice which, by impacting the education of students, can promote effective job placement; 3) that of guidance, i.e. educational counselling focused on the needs of the individual and necessary for planning one’s life, and that of the calling, as a vocation during university studies towards a job which is a source of satisfaction, pleasure and significance (career.calling) and not simply a means of subsistence (job), conditioned by the figure of the mentor and individual passion, by

the academic environment, by family and friends; 4) that concerning the category of employability, studied through the mapping of transitions. This core theme, although found at the conclusion of each of the two parts, in fact represents the macro-category which allows interpretation of other chapters, in other words, reading the higher education “chain”. Employability, which the reader should not understand literally here, is linked to the possession of skills and competence to search for a job, but also as a process in and of higher education that can enable students to acquire all those capabilities that allow them to learn to live, to “get by in life”, creating bridges and activating networks that help the rapport with the world of work for an entire lifetime.

Against the background of the volume, there is the ethical approach of the researchers who, over the years, have questioned the contribution that higher education can make to the employability of graduates, on the counselling their students need, on the practices which can be implemented to support them, on the tools which can equip them to prepare for their career. “How can we innovate the teaching and learning in higher education in our traditional context? How can we listen to the needs of the students and connect them with those of the labour world? How can we promote work-related teaching and learning in our courses? How can we manage the transitions from the university to the labour market, how can we train the faculty to respond to these new challenges and students to be active and engage them during college?” (p. XI).

These are the questions which the volume answers and which find a response in the final messages which we shall try to summarize below: 1) The scientific and pedagogical community as a community of education scientists can and must work together towards a common goal, namely, to train men and women, citizens and politicians to participate in collective life; it must grant work and working practices their pedagogical-educational value – that legitimate directional ability of the life of individuals, and therefore avoid keeping education and training separate from work but functionally connected to it.

2) In the same way, the community must collaborate and treasure past experiences to renew itself and profoundly overhaul the university institution in a perspective of lifelong learning and learning organization. As the original title of the PRIN project says: "Designing innovative curricula for personalized learning paths, build skills for employability, enhance talents to create new skills. Positive strategies in Higher Education to support young adults during their employment as a response to socio-economic crisis and as a citizenship action," time, the perception of need, and disruptive change necessarily lead to evolution through innovation. Only by doing so can the university become a mature, responsible and reliable institution which, by listening and dialoguing with the world of work, can learn and be able to take care of its students.

### Note

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**EPALE**  
Electronic Platform  
for Adult Learning  
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