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On the pedagogy of work and teaching student`s orientation

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O pedagogice pracy i nauczaniu orientacji ucznia

Abstract: Effective orientation teaching also operates at a metacognitive and metaemotional level with intentional actions aimed at developing a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and personal motivations necessary for the individual to manage his or her educational and work experience with awareness. We can also say that the ability to choose, decide and self-evaluate must presuppose learning processes centred on research pathways that involve the active involvement of pupils, also through teaching strategies projected towards research-action, problem solving and laboratory work. The teaching approach in question also enables pupils to develop soft skills such as problem solving, the ability to work in a team, respect for timetables and work organisation.

Schools today must pay greater attention to the tutorial function, which is central to the teaching profession, and this function must be expressed through support for the individual and through counselling activities on very sensitive issues such as health, affectivity, morality and spirituality, all constituent dimensions of the person.

In this sense, it would be desirable for each school's educational offer to include cultural guidance services on the meaning of work, and on the ways and opportunities for pursuing it, without neglecting the possibility of organising tutoring, counselling and coaching services in schools. The challenges of globalisation call for a new culture of work, which is why it is necessary to create a new work ethic that is neither servile nor alienated, but genuinely human, so that the dignity of the worker is protected and respected in any social context.

Keywords: student's orientation, education, work pedagogy.

Streszczenie: Skuteczne nauczanie orientacji działa również na poziomie metapoznawczym i metaemocjonalnym poprzez celowe działania mające na celu rozwijanie zestawu wiedzy, umiejętności, postaw i osobistych motywacji niezbędnych do świadomego zarządzania swoim doświadczeniem edukacyjnym i zawodowym. Można również powiedzieć, że umiejętność wyboru, decydowania i samooceny musi zakładać procesy uczenia się, skoncentrowane na ścieżkach badawczych, które obejmują aktywne zaangażowanie uczniów, również poprzez strategie nauczania projektowane w kierunku badań-działania, rozwiązywania problemów i pracy laboratoryjnej. Omawiane podejście do nauczania umożliwia również uczniom rozwijanie umiejętności miękkich, takich jak rozwiązywanie problemów, umiejętność pracy w zespole, przestrzeganie rozkładu zajęć i organizacja pracy.

Współczesne szkoły muszą zwracać większą uwagę na funkcję wychowawczą, która jest kluczowa dla zawodu nauczyciela, a funkcja ta musi wyrażać się poprzez wsparcie dla jednostki oraz działania doradcze w bardzo wrażliwych kwestiach, takich jak zdrowie, uczuciowość, moralność i duchowość.

W tym sensie pożądane byłoby, aby oferta edukacyjna każdej szkoły zawierała usługi poradnictwa kulturowego dotyczące sensu pracy oraz sposobów i możliwości jej wykonywania, nie zaniedbując możliwości organizowania w szkołach tutoringu, doradztwa i coachingu. Wyzwania globalizacji wymagają nowej kultury pracy, dlatego konieczne jest stworzenie nowej etyki pracy, która nie będzie ani służalcza, ani wyobcowana, ale prawdziwie ludzka, aby godność pracownika była chroniona i szanowana w każdym kontekście społecznym.

Słowa kluczowe: orientacja ucznia, edukacja, pedagogika pracy.

Intruduction

«A phenomenon such as early school leaving, which highlights with greater clarity the undefined and often uncertain contours of the social system, but also of the world of education, can be tackled through a correct and articulated guidance activity that presupposes a re-modulation of knowledge, skills and contents in function of the identification of new epistemic codes and new hermeneutic keys [...]. Well-structured guidance is continuous and non-directive and for this very reason it is able to prevent dispersion. In primitive societies it was the family, based on the needs and customs of the community, that dictated and managed the future of young people according to standardised criteria; today, in the globalised and post-modern world, it should be the school that puts the individual pupil in a position to choose and to prefigure his future in complete freedom»¹.

Guidance, which is one of the main purposes of the school, is particularly complex and demanding. For this reason it must be planned with the collaboration of families and other educational agencies in the area. In recent years, many schools have shown a growing interest in educational activities aimed at guidance, activities that have long been marginalised, often reduced to simple information on the various high school courses². On the contrary, we believe that, in a society like ours, which is strongly linked to technology and therefore to 'specialisation', guidance is a necessity, as well as a duty, as a guarantee of awareness and realism. There is also a need for schools as a whole to regain credibility and trust on the part of families, since as an institution they do not merely provide 'cultural tools', but also encourage the educational process by making pupils capable of assessing themselves and the world around them and thus of making autonomous decisions. It can be said that in the last years of the third millennium there has been a particular interest in orientation and education for work also at a regulatory level. In fact, the Resolution of the Council of Europe of 18.05.2004 refers to guidance as those activities that contribute «to enable citizens of all ages, at any time in their lives, to identify their capacities, competences, interests, to know how to make decisions on education, training and employment, as well as to manage their personal life

¹ S. Salmeri, "La pedagogia tra criticità e istanze di cambiamento: la dispersione scolastica", in M. Pellerone (a cura di), *Rischio di dispersione scolastica e disagio socio-educativo. Strategie e strumenti di intervento in classe*, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2015, p. 85.

² Per un primo approccio in prospettiva pedagogico- educativa si veda la voce "orientamento" in J. M. Prellezo, C. Nanni, G. Malizia (a cura di), *Dizionario di Scienze dell'Educazione*, LAS, Roma 1997, pp. 776–778; cfr. G. Flores d'Arcais (a cura di), *Nuovo dizionario di pedagogia*, Paoline, Cinisello Balsamo 1987, pp. 874–879.

paths in training activities, in the professional world and in any environment where they acquire and/or exploit such capacities and competences»³.

This approach is maintained in the strategies of the European Union for the achievement of the objectives of "Lisbon 2010" and "Europe 2020", which postulate permanent guidance⁴ as a right of the citizen to support the processes of choice and decision-making. In fact, we are moving according to economicist priorities due to the exasperation of the objective of economic growth and the needs of the labour market; however, alongside the labourist aims, the value of cohesion, social inclusion, prevention and contrast of marginalisation is affirmed. At a national level, from the Miur Guidelines of 2009 to those of 2019⁵, moving from the European directives, the urgency of supporting the citizen is affirmed, in all phases of the evolutionary cycle, in order to put him in conditions to:

- identify their own interests, skills, competences and attitudes,
- manage and plan their learning and work experiences in accordance with their life goals,
- make responsible decisions about education, training, employment and their role in society.

However, the school is not the only subject involved, hence the need for significant interaction with families, local authorities, public and private associations and the world of work, in order to work in a network, agree and share common objectives and actions. The diagnostic-informative approach aimed at managing the transition between school, training and work is overcome and a transversal guidance model is affirmed, which goes back to the 1979 Middle School Programmes, which is defined as guidance, precisely because it encourages the subject's initiative for his own development and puts him in a position to conquer his own identity in the social context through

³ Cfr. Risoluzione del Consiglio d'Europa del 18.05.2004.

⁴ Cfr. L. Girotti, *Progettarsi. L'orientamento come compito educativo permanente*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2006.

⁵ Cfr. *Linee guida dei percorsi per le competenze trasversali e per l'orientamento*. Adottate con decreto 774 del 4 settembre 2019.

a continuous training process. The process pervades all disciplines and starts from the first years of schooling in the primary and nursery school segments (in this regard, it is enough to remember that the so-called OR.M.E. Project - Guidance in Nursery and Primary Schools - was launched in 1997/1998), based on the assumption that the formation of citizens capable of developing their own life project must be achieved from the outset with responsible choices based on a mature awareness of their own inclinations and possibilities. All this is based on the conviction that school is a collective and shared experience, because it is precisely in contact and confrontation with others that pupils build their personal and cultural identity and thus their objective awareness of their own abilities, their own volition, but also their own limits. It can be said that in all segments of schooling, teaching activities, while promoting the learning of specific disciplinary contents, contribute to increasing knowledge of oneself and of social reality, to developing processes of knowledge, growth and individual and collective learning, to strengthening the different abilities to cope with reality, to facilitating the transfer and exchange of skills within concrete training and professional paths.

Schools must therefore perform an orientation-formative function, which is one of their institutional tasks, and this function presupposes a rethink of the classic content-transmissive teaching models, favouring active and cooperative learning processes in which one does not learn the disciplines, but learns through the disciplines. The school curricula themselves must also be oriented towards a transversal perspective, aimed at enabling young people to self-direct, so that they can develop the ability to draw up life and work projects, thus enabling them to choose and decide independently and in line with the analysis of their interests and aptitudes. Effective guidance teaching⁶ also operates at a metacognitive and meta-emotional level with intentional actions aimed at developing a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and personal motivations necessary for the individual to manage their training and work experience with awareness and effectiveness. In addition to basic disciplinary skills, it is necessary to pursue the possession of transversal competences

⁶ Cfr. A. Argentino, Per una didattica orientativa/orientante. La formazione come scelta consapevole, Ancia, Roma 2016.

to learn to learn, plan, act autonomously and responsibly, solve problems, identify connections and relations, acquire, decode and interpret information, choose and decide. Of course, teaching all this is not easy, given the structural and infrastructural changes that have altered social and production systems, but also the development of the individual. In this sense, Pombeni's statement that «the evolution of the problem of orientation is parallel to the development of human society' is worthy of support»⁷.

It is a question of prioritising education in personal planning, pursuing the acquisition of the ability to be critically active with regard to problems, to channel energy towards objectives, and to make people responsible for their commitments. We can also say that the ability to choose, decide and self-evaluate, which is closely linked to esteem, confidence and security, must presuppose learning processes centred on experimental and research paths and which in any case involve the active involvement of pupils in the design and development of study curricula, also through teaching strategies and methodologies geared towards action research, problem solving and laboratory work. The teacher, as a facilitator of learning, according to the non-directive model of Carl Rogers⁸, should carry out an orientative tutoring exercise that accompanies the learning experience of all students, guaranteeing those in difficulty and at risk of dropping out, support and personalised help with the aim of preventing failure.

Methodological strategies to promote orientation activities

Tutoring serves to support the development of transversal skills, the reinforcement of motivations, the emergence of latent potential, to help overcome critical moments or problematic situations. In this regard Pagano

⁷ M.L. Pombeni, Orientamento scolastico e professionale. Un approccio socio-psicologico, Il Mulino, Bologna 1990, p. 11.

⁸ The orientation, the tutoring, the empathic I care consist above all in offering to the young person what can help him to find again in himself, to produce from himself the psychic energies to become able to orientate himself autonomously in the path of the life, Rogers, in this regard, writes that the ultimate aim of a "therapy centred on the client" is to make him, thanks to the empathy of the therapist, able to help himself, conquering and expressing self-confidence and "unconditional" esteem. (cfr. C. R. Rogers, *Un modo di essere. I più recenti pensieri su una concezione di vita centrata-sulla-persona*, Psycho, Firenze 1993, p. 13 [1980]).

writes: «The pedagogy of accompaniment [...] can be recognised within a varied repertoire of practices, such as choice orientation, study support, educational consultancy, expert accompaniment in the professional world, etc. Each of these practices is characterised by its own specificity. Each of these practices is distinguished by its own epistemological identity which, in our opinion, can be recognised within a macro-common denominator: the pedagogy of personalism, open to a philosophy of praxis and attentive to taking care of the other (I care), that is, of those who are disoriented and unable to cope with difficulties (crisis counselling), of those who need a guide to make a choice (supporting counselling) especially in the most delicate and crisis phases of their life cycle (developmental counselling)»⁹.

The exercise of this function facilitates individual and group dynamics, guides learning processes, assists in individual training and facilitates interpersonal relationships. It would be a mistake to attribute specialised connotations to the tutoring function, attributing it to external experts or internal figures with particular skills. Rather, it should be part of the ordinary experience and cultural and professional background of every teacher who teaches by providing guidance and provides guidance by teaching. In attacking the phenomenon of early school leaving, which is closely related to that of school failure, one cannot disregard the professional identity of the teacher who must know how to manage the crucial moments of the pupil's socio-affectiverelational development, which concern the complexity of the adolescent crisis. Schools today should pay more attention to the tutorial function, which is central to the teaching profession and must not be at all secondary to the transmission of knowledge and the promotion of disciplinary learning. This function must be expressed through the facilitation of individual and group dynamics and as an essential support to the person and counselling activities on very delicate personal issues such as sexuality, health, affectivity, morality, spirituality, all constituent dimensions of the onto-axis reality of the person.

⁹ R. Pagano, Per una pedagogia dell'accompagnamento. Un' indagine fenomenologicoermeneutica sugli adolescenti in terra Jonica, in A. Uricchio, L'emergenza ambientale a Taranto: le risposte del mondo scientifico e le attività del polo "Magna Grecia", Collana Studi del Dipartimento Jonico, Cacucci, Bari 2014, p. 526.

Moreover, school guidance cannot be reduced to the psychological dimension of self-knowledge, but «must extend to a social and cultural projection, with reference to the community to which one belongs, to social and professional identity, to historical memory, to shared values and to work ethics»¹⁰.

Tutoring must therefore include actions of approach and knowledge of the world of work that in high schools find a structural place in the School-Work Alternation courses, already provided for by Article 4 of Law 53/2003 and consolidated and strengthened by the so-called "Good School" Law no. 107/2015¹¹.

Alternation teaching makes it possible to achieve complementarity between the different approaches to learning with precise educational aims to be pursued in the design of alternation courses:

- realising flexible and culturally and educationally equivalent learning modes by allowing the connection of classroom training with practical experience,
- to enrich the training acquired in the school and training courses with the acquisition of skills that can be used in the labour market,
- to encourage the orientation of young people in order to enhance their personal vocations,
- to create a synergy between school and training institutions, the world of work and civil society,
- linking the educational offer to the cultural, social and economic development of the territory.

The proposed teaching method stems from the awareness that in the educational sector, today more than in the past, there is a need for pupils to experience different times, places and types of learning. In fact, the

¹⁰ Cfr. Linee guida Nazionali per l'Orientamento permanente – Nota del Miur n. 4332/2014.

¹¹ With Law 107/2015, this type of training becomes an essential component of the school curriculum and a compulsory number of hours is envisaged for the activation of alternance experiences for students in the second two years and last year of higher education. A certain number of hours of on-the-job training is indicated for each school system: 200 hours in high schools and 400 hours in technical and vocational institutes. In this sense, Italy is the first European country to have extended the alternance methodology to high schools and has surpassed, in terms of innovation, even Germany, which was the forerunner of this didactic-training practice, applied only to technical and professional institutes.

implementation of alternation favours the transition from a type of learning anchored to individual disciplines to a method that, instead, supports the value of learning gained in more differentiated contexts, formal and otherwise. The teaching approach in question also enables pupils to develop *soft skills*¹² such as: setting and solving, problem solving, ability to work in a team, respect for schedules and work organisation; all useful skills for entering the relevant professional sector. It is clear that the training and educational potential of the alternance pathway can be considerable, provided that careful school work is done and a compulsory number of hours is envisaged with regard to the activation of alternance experiences for students in the second two years and last year of upper education. In fact, if it is well planned and implemented, work experience can represent a dynamic innovation with respect to traditional didactics and can encourage new ways of designing the curriculum, as well as preparing for effective integration into the world of work, thus emphasising the cultural and educational dimension of work¹³. In this way it is possible to recover the formative and creative dimension of work¹⁴, including physical, material and manual work which, while qualifying the curricula, facilitates orientation activities by opening up to the territory and its production dynamics.

Education at work for a new pedagogy

The work experience system has called into question the relationship between young people and work, which is a particularly important problematic issue on which controversy and various judgments are thickening. According to

¹² M. Tucciarelli, *Coaching e sviluppo delle soft skills*, La Scuola, Brescia 2014; cfr. P. Sharma, *Soft Skills Personality Development for Life Success*, BPB Publications, New Delhi 2018.

¹³ This is also the direction taken by the apprenticeship scheme, redefined by Article 43 of Legislative Decree no. 81/2015, known as the Jobs Act, for which, starting from the second year, part of the school course of education and vocational training can be carried out in a company. In this case, the employer who signs the contract signs a protocol with the training institution in which the student is enrolled.

¹⁴ Cfr. G. Bertagna, "Luci e ombre sul valore formativo del lavoro. Una prospettiva pedagogica", in G. Alessandrini (a cura di), *Atlante di pedagogia del lavoro*, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2017, pp. 49–85.

the Constitution, ours is a Republic founded on work, but this foundation appears fragile, since work is considered a commodity by economic theories. It is true, however, that in an ethical-anthropological vision work must also be seen in terms of meaning¹⁵; in fact the foundation of the constitutional dictate is the freedom of the person who works, the person who, thanks to work, makes economic, social and human progress possible. Let us even say that our existence depends on work, which has always been the backbone of the evolution of civilisation. In order to understand the objective and subjective causes of the lack of education for work, we must adopt a more comprehensive point of view than the one that attributes the causes to economic determinisms. If the problem of education for work is how to configure the social relationship between young people and the labour market, in the context of the more general context in which this relationship is found (family, school, social fabric)¹⁶, then it is clear that there is a need to improve the human and professional qualities of young people leaving school and university also for an effective insertion into the world of work. Therefore, the youth-work relationship is both the structural cause of the very existence of the youth category and the arbiter of the survival of post-industrial society and its integration.

The existing separation between school and the labour market is still denounced today, but with a particular focus on the demand for labour, which is always considered a decisive variable with respect to marginalisation in relation to work itself, and therefore the cause not only of the high unemployment rate but also of the phenomenon of dropping out of school due to even unstable insertion in a precarious job that ends up being relegated to the meshes of the invisible economy. It can be said that young people's orientations and expectations are moving in three fundamental directions: there is a growing preference for self-employment; expectations are growing for more creative work; preferences are growing for a more balanced work-life

¹⁵ Cfr. F. Totaro, "Lavoro ed equilibrio antropologico", in Id. (a cura di), *Il lavoro come questione di senso*, Eum, Macerata 2009, pp. 308–310.

¹⁶ Cfr. P. Donati, *Il lavoro che emerge. Prospettive del lavoro come relazione sociale in un'economia dopo-moderna*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2011.

relationship in terms of time and transactions. Education for work must focus less and less on pedagogy based on habitus and must, on the other hand, aim at a more reflective socialisation on the part of the young person. Today there is a need to focus on those educational methods that aim to develop both autonomy and the ability to cooperate with others. It is necessary today to educate people in personalised work in order to help them clarify the reasons for and aims of their professional project and the training it requires. In other words, it is necessary for work to be valued in terms of its ethical meanings and expressive values, understanding that material needs cannot be separated from human meaning and ethical and social goals¹⁷.

I think that we need to educate young people to learn work as a meaningful relationship with themselves, with others and with the world. And all the educational and socialising agencies, from the family to the school, from businesses to professional associations and political-administrative institutions, must commit themselves to this, precisely to give new meaning to work and its new organisational forms. In fact, the new anthropological paradigm of education should be based on three fundamental points: the culture of work; staff training; and organisational structures. What is lacking in work education are above all relational aspects, and it is here that the educational emergency is felt most acutely. Even the professional vocation today must no longer be conceived as an instrument of success, but as self-realisation in full integration with others, and only in this sense can it be characterised as a pedagogy of work for inclusion and can also be characterised in a triadic and relational programme of significant educational importance: humanising work, humanising oneself in work and humanising others through work¹⁸.

In fact, it can be said that work is not only a relation to things, but it is a relation of the subject who performs it and a relation to others. In fact, the

¹⁷ Unfortunately, neo-capitalism has not only continued to support the progressive separation of the spheres of the life of the spirit, already highlighted by Max Weber, but has ensured that the economic sphere, having become the canon of the others, has imposed 'its own one-dimensional narrowness, indifferent to any consideration other than accounting'.

¹⁸ Cfr. *La sfida educativa. Rapporto-proposta sull'educazione*, a cura della Comitato per il progetto culturale della CEI, Editore Laterza, Roma-Bari 2009, p. 38; cfr. anche R. Iafrate, R. Rosati, Riconoscersi genitori, Erickson, Trento 2007, pp. 100–102.

paradigm of *homo oeconomicus* and *homo consumens*¹⁹ aimed only at gain, profit at all costs and consumption, has failed in its objectives because the greedy accumulate for themselves, do not share with others and absolutize finite goods, with a relapse of dissatisfaction and unhappiness, not recognising the goods of gratuitousness, i.e. those relational goods whose obligation derives from the bond that unites men, yet these goods, as Zamagni writes, are extremely important for the need for happiness that everyone carries within²⁰.

The challenges of globalisation call for a new work culture and a new work pedagogy. This is why it is necessary to create a new work ethic that is neither servile nor alienated, but genuinely human, so that the dignity of the worker is protected and respected in any social context. In fact, Bertagna writes: «Servile work [...] rather than a way of asserting oneself is rather a systematic expropriation of oneself, it is a denial of the person who performs it, reduced exclusively to an instrument and machine for the purposes, uses and fruits that are only others»²¹. It is therefore necessary to promote a model of education for work that respects the dignity of the worker and at the same time does not prevent the young person from expressing his or her inner richness and the possibility of interpersonal and enriching relationships. This is why for years it has been proposed to overcome the crisis in work training through lifelong learning and alternating school and work. Hence the importance of creating links between training and work, not least to sustain motivation to learn something new and to foster professional curiosity. This is why it is necessary for the family and the school to provide educational guidelines and outline prospects for work integration,

¹⁹ It can be said that life is reduced to consumption, so choosing what to consume is the only freedom we are allowed, the only one presented as desirable. It is no coincidence that Bauman spoke of 'homo consumens' to indicate this stage of our anthropological transformation (cfr. Z. Bauman, M. Magatti, *Homo consumens. Lo sciame inquieto dei consumatori e la miseria degli esclusi*, Erickson, Trento 2007).

²⁰ Cfr. S. Zamagni, *La crisi economico-finanziaria come crisi di senso. Il ruolo della società civile*, p. 14; in http://www.webdiocesi.chiesacattolica.it/cci_new/documenti_diocesi/69/2012-06/16-75/Zamagni.pdf; cfr. anche M. Prodi, *Per una nuova umanità. L'orizzonte di Papa Francesco*, Cittadella, Assisi 2018, pp. 55–58.

²¹ G. Bertagna, "Luci e ombre sul valore formativo del lavoro. Una prospettiva pedagogica", in G. Alessandrini (a cura di), *Atlante di pedagogia del lavoro*, FrancoAngeli, Milano p. 55.

not reducing themselves to a purely emotional role. In fact, if children are brought up from an early age mainly on consumption and entertainment, it will be difficult for them to develop the skills and motivation for a workoriented life plan during their adolescence, while only learning to escape will prevail, so that work too will be seen and experienced as an escape. This is why child labour has been banned below a certain age (in Italy under 16, which is the age corresponding to compulsory schooling). It is therefore necessary to combat early school leaving, which is a breeding ground for child labour and is still a worrying phenomenon in Italy. In this sense, it would be desirable for the educational offer of each school to include cultural orientation services on the meaning of work and the ways and opportunities to pursue it, without neglecting the opportunity to organise *tutoring*, *counselling* and *coaching services* in the schools themselves, which, in this sense, have methodologies that have already been tested and therefore have possible repercussions in the field of orientation and education for work.

I believe, therefore, that it is necessary to go beyond the simple didactic vision of teaching and to deepen also and above all the relational and affectiveemotional aspects. This need is felt urgently, especially by those teachers who are more sensitive to the educational needs associated with growing existential disorientation. In this sense, schools can be a powerful opportunity to prevent youth discomfort.

The attitude of guidance, tutoring and support in the educational relationship starts from the common experience that every person deeply desires to receive and live precise messages such as esteem, attention, benevolence. In fact, if for long periods or inadequately, educators do not offer young people the opportunity to experience positive relationships, it is possible that their behaviour and, in part, their future development will be mortified, reverting to insecure, destructive, apathetic or bored forms²².

In conclusion, it can be said that teachers who intend to present themselves to their pupils as positive models of behaviour provide stimuli

²² Cfr. G. R. Patterson, *Living with Children: New Methods for Parents and Teachers*, Research Press: Champaign, Illinois 1976.

for the acquisition of confidence and, at the same time, autonomy²³; they provide a wide variety of learning opportunities, stimulating creative and independent thinking, but at the same time they offer protection, fair rewards and satisfactions, open ways of reasoning, using encouragement as a basic model in which everyone experiences confidence in themselves and in others. This is a challenge that goes beyond the study of affectivity-cognitivity or individualisation-socialisation relationships, that goes beyond the very scientific conceptions and didactic approaches of teaching to the broader sphere of existential choices and ethics.

²³ Cfr. T. Gordon, *Teacher Effectiveness Training*, P. Veiden, New York 1974.

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