



**1. Early school leaving** is not a sudden event. It is announced by numerous failures

**because**

*In our opinion*

The adolescent discomfort **sometimes** manifests as school discomfort.

The school discomfort **often** develops school failure.

The school failure **mostly** becomes early school leaving.

## 2. Preventing

early school leaving,  
means therefore  
starting from the  
fight against school  
failure.

In this course we are interested in the  
school failure during the age of  
adolescence

*irregularities in the  
attendance*

*interruptions*



*non-admission to the  
following school year*

## 3. Our starting point

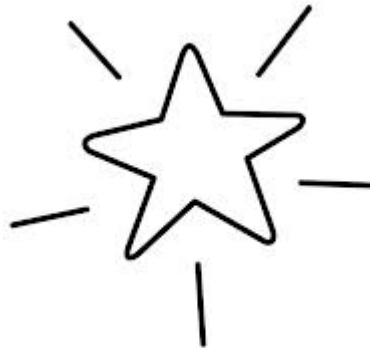
The school failure is a symptom of inadequate perception, processing and maturation of their emotional vicissitudes typical of this age.



## 4. Risk Factors

**CULTURAL:** the low level of education in the family of origin, of a cultural poverty that creates low expectations with regard to education and school success

**PERSONAL:** young people's experiences influence their attitudes towards the educational institution

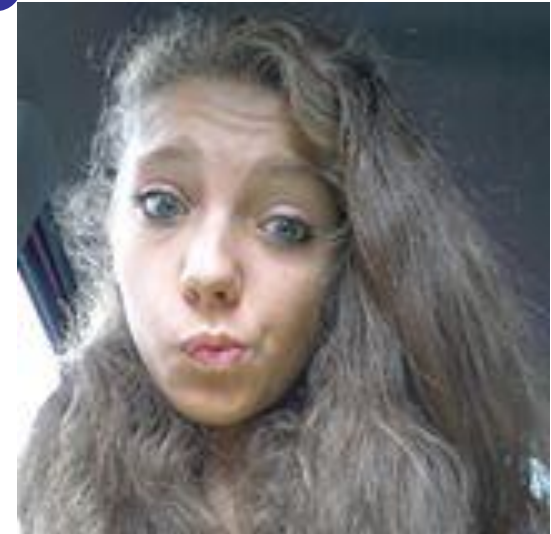


**ECONOMIC:** The low economic and professional position of student's parents

**EDUCATIONAL:** teaching organization, sometimes still managed in a poor communicative and relational context

## 5. The age

But the key to understanding the phenomenon of early school leaving, is the age: the disorientation characterizing adolescence, an extremely delicate period of "transition" to adulthood, makes teenager more sensitive to the risk factors.



Failure at school can therefore be considered as a manifestation of adolescence disturbances , in which the disorientation becomes in the school experience, intolerance and resentment to the training context.

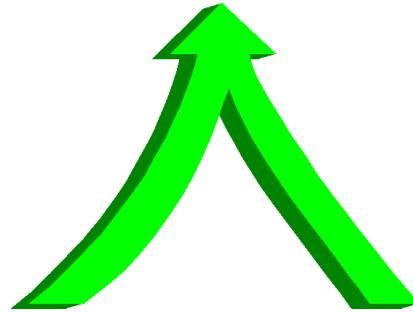
## 6. School suffering

What many teachers define as "laziness", actually is the most obvious symptom of a much deeper problem: "school suffering". School and its activities are seen as unnecessary, not in synchrony with competencies being useful also in everyday life.



The suffering is a parameter that should be taken into account in order to identify the subjects being most at risk of school leaving

## 7. Dropping out from studies is a **missed opportunity** on a personal level as well as a loss of economic and social potential for the European Union as a whole



**Individual Level:** Early school leaving make people more vulnerable to the risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion and affects for life their income and welfare as well as their and their children's health. In turn, their children are less likely to succeed in school.

For the **economy and society**, the high school dropout rates have long-term effects on the development of society and on economic growth.

## 8. At the European level

global policies against early school leaving try to focus on three levels: **prevention, intervention and compensation**



**Prevention** has the purpose of avoiding the conditions that can lead to the school leaving.

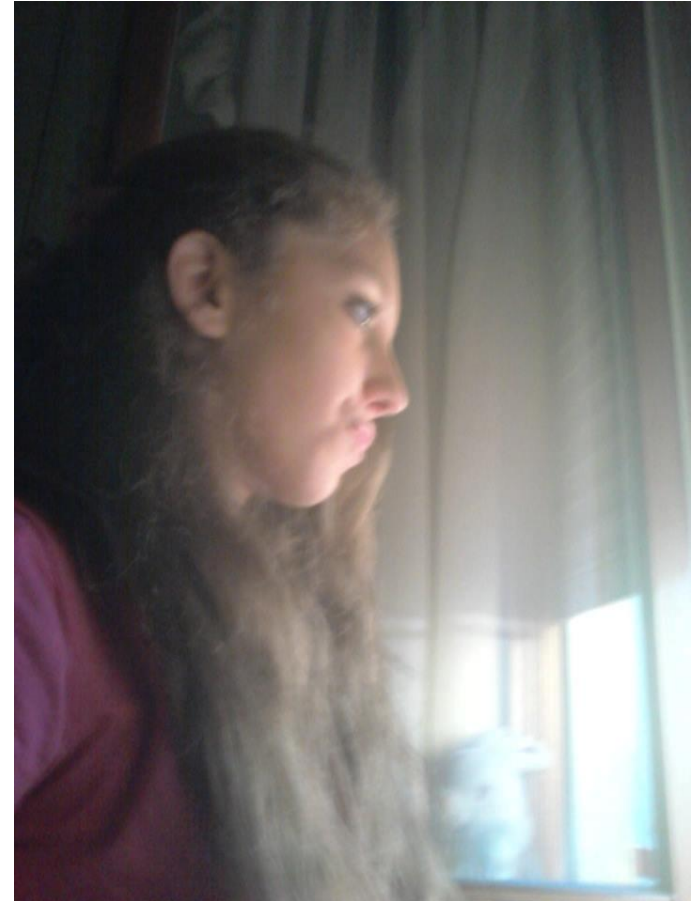
**Intervention** aims to address difficulties emerging at an early stage trying to prevent these to lead to early school leaving.

**Compensatory measures** offer the opportunity to those who have dropped out to go back to an education and training path.



## 9. Our intervention perspective

The idea motivating this course is that behind school failure, behind early school leaving there is always an emotional discomfort that it can slow down the development and psychological maturity of the teenager.



## 10. Rehabilitation space

But independently of the reasons there is a possible rehabilitation space in the interpersonal relationship between teacher and student.



# 11. Adolescence

Adolescence is characterized by an evolutionary transition, and such transition is the developmental basis for unstable school adaptations. Transition, from Latin *transire* (nominative *transitio*) "a going across or over", refers to a situation of instability in search of adaptation (adult identity).



## 12. Indifference

The teenager defends himself with **indifference**. She/he uses a defense mechanism that leading the young to perceive the reproaches as harmless or irrelevant to them.

When that does not happen, when the failure becomes humiliating it damages their relationship with parents, their personal pride, their life quality, their relationship with friends and teachers and ultimately their future possibilities for themselves

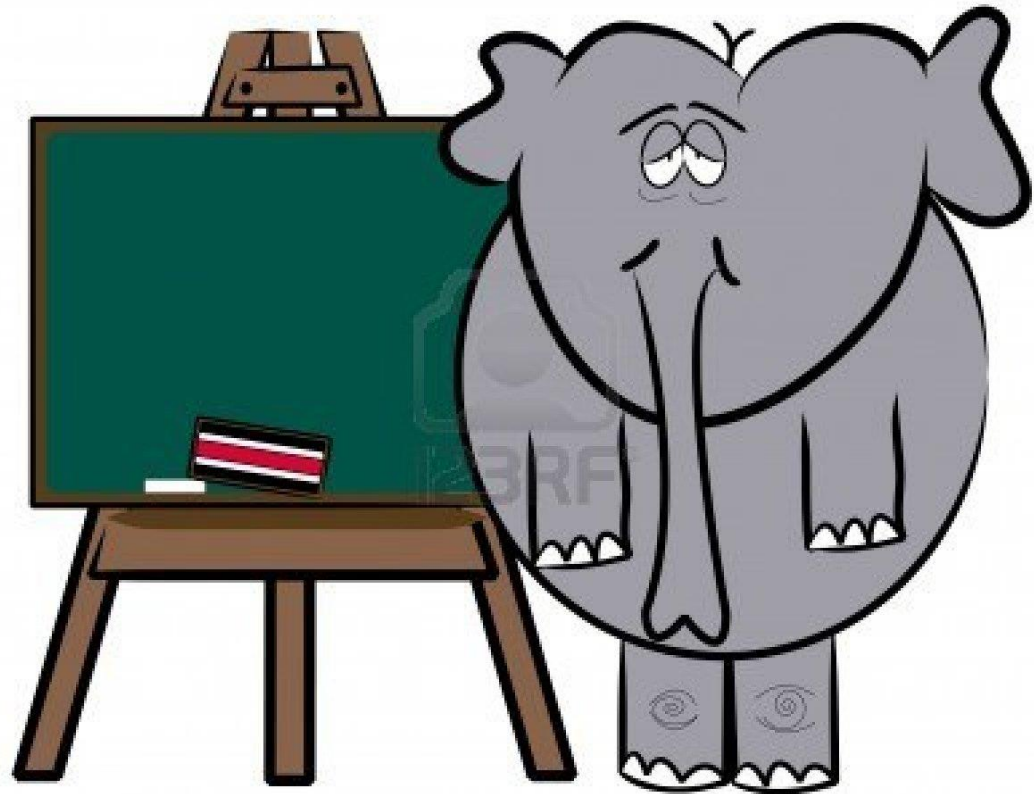


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# 13. Teacher's task is not easy

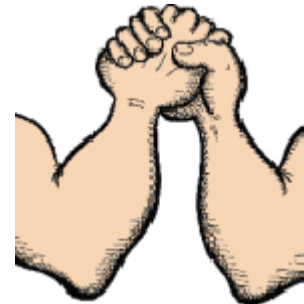
Teachers must be a sensitive mentor with interpersonal skills appropriate for dealing non-coherent and illogical behaviours of the students, but arising from the adolescent age and from their transition efforts to adulthood.



# 14. Adolescent

## internal (evolutionary) needs

- **the acceptance of a sexed body**
- **separation from parents**
- **the construction of a personal moral code**



# 15. What can school do for to help teenager?

To listen and incorporate in its educational aims the adolescent/student's evolving needs.



# 16. Challenges

Adolescence is the age of the challenges. Through the challenge / test, the teenager learns to become an adult. Teacher's tasks are:

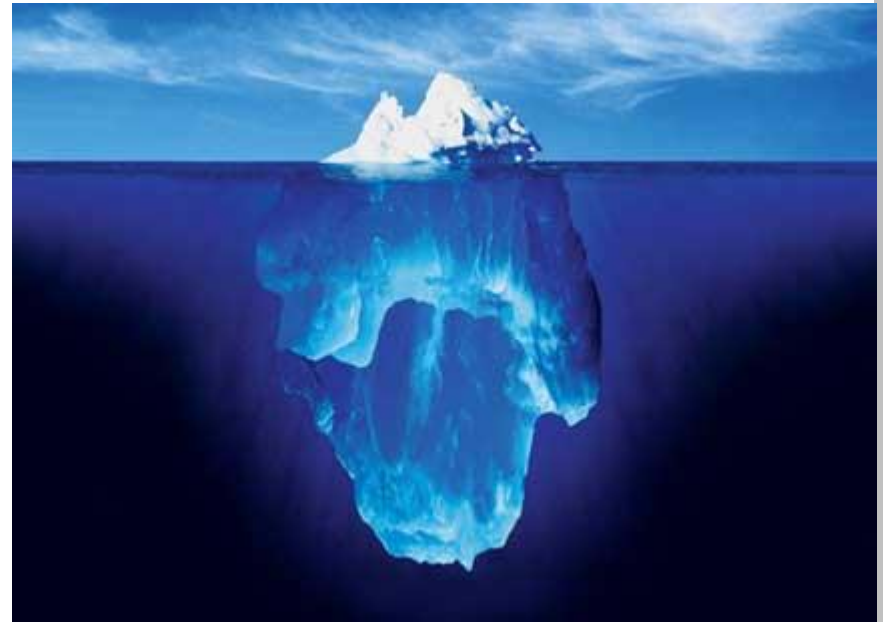
- to help the adolescent to process and overcome their oppositional behaviors,
- to help the students understand that his behavior can be a "test" to find his/her own identity





# 17. Iceberg

The adolescent discomfort sometimes manifests as school discomfort. The school discomfort often develops school failure and school failure mostly becomes early school leaving. So, Early school leaving is the final result of a long process



## 18. Low self-confidence

- A low self-confidence level can lead also to self-blaming feelings.
- They push the teenager to eliminate the problem by cutting it at the origin, with leaving school



prolonged and justified absences  
negative votes  
failures  
relationship difficulties  
repeated years  
difficulty in integration

# 19. An operational perspective

Autobiographical method requires:

- A physical space - the laboratory;
- A certain time, with a beginning and an end.
- Rules: the most important is the suspension of judgment



## 20. Working with young people through autobiography ..

means giving them the opportunity to express themselves, exchange ideas, and to operate the journey inside themselves which will help them to ask themselves questions, to make analyses, to look for answers, and finally, with difficulty, to find the answer they think is the most appropriate.



## How to prevent early school leaving? We do not know it.

**But** we can give you **some suggestions**. These arise from focus groups conducted with teachers. The suggestions are organized into three categories:

- Ideas/values to be conveyed
- Attitudes to be assumed
- Behaviors to be adopted



## Ideas/values to be conveyed

- Make the student understand that, fortunately, he/she is a free person in a free country, but, precisely for this reason, he/she must comply with their context rules and State laws.
- Introduce subjects as an opportunity for their personal growth and for their integration into society, in which each of us must play a role through a freely chosen activity
- Make them understand that any role, and not only managerial or political ones, has its own importance and its usefulness to our common life
- Make them acquire the self-esteem required to actively live in society giving their intellectual or operational contribution depending on their personal attitudes, opportunities, space and time
- Make them feel important because he/she is able to do (some things) and by doing (them) gains confidence, competence, desire to keep on improving themselves and their group
- In order to let them gain self-esteem, a student needs to feel loved, sought, gratified (and never humiliated) by the context he/she lives in: family, peers, teachers

## Attitudes to be assumed

- make the student understand he/she is "equal" to others as person bearing rights and duties and that their diversity means uniqueness
- Note any change in clothing, hairstyle, habits and give appropriate advice, respecting their freedom of choice
- Use kindness, tact, good manners, appropriate timing, discretion to conquer (and preserve) student's trust
- Offer them your willingness to listen and your cooperation also outside school, especially if he/she has few friends
- Do not put them in the position of "not being able to perform" a task: to help them, advise them, suggest them rules and strategies. Do not ever make them feel alone, embarrassed, uncomfortable
- Do your best to make their mates have positive feelings for them: liking, kindness, respect and therefore work together to achieve the goal "keeping them among us is good"
- Get to know well their family environment and observe, even in its details, their behaviour in the classroom
- Facilitate their relationship with peers by partnering them with a good mate-tutor able to stimulate them and to make them commit in the small group within which he/she has to find confidence and liking

## Behaviors to be adopted

- give positions of trust to the subject being at risk of dropping out (such as the task of keeping school locker and class library tidy, distributing sheets, writing on the blackboard)
- give them (through personal programming) tasks he will have to be able to carry out and do not limit praises for the work done
- Try to know their personal problems through confidential talks, and help them solve them. Do not ask too many questions, but just wait for them to talk of their own free will after having been motivated
- invite them to write their thoughts and insecurities to their teacher, by promising to "keep the secret", and giving them some useful advice
- Ask who and what he/she doesn't like in school and invite them to describe their ideal school he would appreciate with regard to structure, personnel, organisation and training programs
- Invite them to memorize short texts, in prose or poetry, in order that he/she can gain confidence in his mental skills; and do not fail to gratify them. In the case of group works choose them (or make their mates choose them) as group spokesman and final speaker of a written text (he/she will choose themselves a collaborator – a mate in their liking)
- Leave them free to leave the room not only to relieve themselves, but also to enjoy a "breath of freedom", after a "secret" understanding with the teacher.
- in group games entrust them responsibility and organization tasks, and with choices and rewards (e.g. keeping scores, being the leader, and so on)
- Get their help in selecting games, group activities, books to be read, outdoor activities listening to his opinion and comparing it with that of their mates