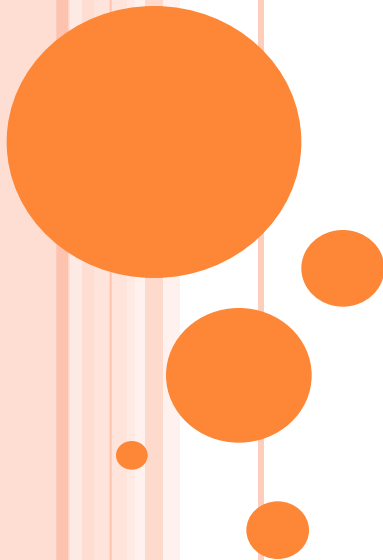


ENCOURAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING WEAKNESS

A narrative-autobiographical approach
in adult education

Margherita Toma



TWO WEAK CATEGORIES

- **Migrants and people with a migration background**

Suffering from prejudice and segregation in the labour market, often due to low education, low skills and their ethnic origins.

- **Ageing workers**

Experiencing more difficulties both in entering and remaining in the labour market, due to prejudice on their physical and mental efficiency.



Training and lifelong-learning activities are key tools in the empowerment of these two categories



THE PERSONAL AND INDIVIDUAL FACTOR

- People experiencing professional and educational weakness often face also **a lack of self-esteem**, self-confidence and life projectuality.
- *Traditional training processes* are characterised by a **unidirectional** and impersonal passage of information and knowledge, with **no attention to the individual**.
- The need of **increasing self-esteem**, **self-confidence** and of stimulating **life projectuality** is the *revolutionary factor* of the autobiographical approach.



THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL APPROACH

- The *autobiographical approach in education* consists in **leading the participants to narrate themselves**, their own personal histories, **their own identity, social and working context.**
- *It is a pedagogical method which aims at capturing the subjectivity, the vitality, the peculiarity of the individual, as well as his learning, transformation and self-expression paths. (L. Formenti, La formazione autobiografica)*



A DIALOGIC DIMENSION

- The strength of such an approach is to **directly involve the participants**, who become **active subjects of their own training/learning**.
- The **relation** between trainers and trainees is not unidirectional, but rather **dialogic and circular**.
- The mentor becomes a '**facilitator**' of the learning process, which is actually shaped by the participants.



WHEN IS THIS METHOD USED?

- The *narrative-autobiographical approach* can be applied to different typologies of training and recipients:
 1. Training of **weak categories** within educational and professional orientation and re-orientation activities.
 2. Training of **mentors**, in order to provide them with new educational tools and training processes.



METHODOLOGY

An effective **training process** mainly requires:

- **Active involvement** of the trainee;
- Identification of specific **needs**; **capacities** and **aspirations**;
- Achievement of **new skills and tools** in order to build new life projects.

The **narrative-autobiographical approach** is characterised by three main phases:

- **Self-narration**;
- **Self-recognition**;
- **Self-reinvention**.



NARRATION: MODALITIES AND TOOLS

Self-narration can be expressed through:

- Interview or **verbal** narration;
- **Written** narration;
- **Video** narration;
- Photography and **image** narration;
- **Drawing** and **painting** narration.

And *can be*:

- **Spontaneous** or **generated**;
- **Continuous** or **occasional**;
- **Self-oriented** or open to a **public**;
- On significant **events** or on the **entire life**.



THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL APPROACH — OBJECTIVES

- Enhancing the **analytical and reflection capacities** on one's own role and skills.
- Developing a more solid and continuous **self awareness**, as adults, as workers and as individuals.
- Increasing **self-esteem** and **self-confidence**.
- Investigating one's own capacity in **analysing difficulties** and **solving relational problems**.
- Developing a greater **capacity of reinvention** at a personal and professional level.

