

COMPARATIVE RESEARCH IN THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN ITALY OF 15-20 YEARS OLD

Luigino Binanti
University of Salento-Lecce (Italy)

I. POLICY STRUCTURES AND PARTICIPATION

Lots of important developments in recent years have affected the way schools function. The most important one concerns the explicit striving of the Italian Government to decentralize and deregulate.

From an administrative and financial point of view, overall responsibility lies within the Ministry of Education represented, at a local level, by regional and provincial education offices.

Regions can delegate certain responsibilities to the provinces and municipalities.

From school year 2000-2001, all schools have *autonomy* in the field of administration, pedagogy, research, experimentation and development.

As a result of this rational policy, schools have greater responsibility within the framework of the existing laws and regulations.

An analysis of this deregulation policy shows, however, that this new strategy results in an increase in the autonomy of schools: they were given a greater responsibility for the design and execution of their own financial, material and staff policies than before. Furthermore, schools are obliged to provide a 'school handbook' (P.O.F. Piano dell'Offerta Formativa) providing parents with information about the school's particular approach to education and its effectiveness.

It is the fundamental document of the cultural and planning identity of the school; it must be consistent with the general and educational objectives of the various kinds and branches of study established at national level. It must reflect cultural, social and economic requirements of the local reality, taking into consideration the local planning of the educational offer. The *POF* includes the different methodological options, including those of minority-groups.



This strengthening of the control on 'output' has intensified the pressure upon school to be publicly accountable for the quality of education they provide. Thus, the pursuit of deregulation harbours contradictory tendencies: the centralisation with regard to contents (product autonomy) is accompanied by an increase in material, financial and staff-related autonomy (process autonomy).

Moreover, the present policy of deregulation threatens to put schools in a tight spot: while financial risks are being devolved upon them, they are, at the same time, expected to comply with all sorts of strict qualitative demands.

COMPULSORY FULL-TIME EDUCATION

Law 53 of 2003 for the reform of education and training system has progressively extended compulsory education from 8 to 10 years. However, it aims at widening and redefining the concept of compulsory education and training to ensure the *diritto-dovere* to education. This ensures the right to education and training for at least 12 years or until students obtain a qualification within 18 years of age. Such right relates to the first cycle of the education system, including primary and lower secondary education, and to the second cycle including the *Licei System* (system of upper secondary general education) and the *Education and Vocational Training System*, as well as the *Apprenticeship System*. (see graphic 1: il Sistema Scolastico).

Another important reform is about the *school-job alternation* which implements training in the second school cycle, either in the *Licei System* or in the *Education and Vocational Training System*, to provide students not only with basic knowledge, but also with skills aimed at meeting the labour market requirements. According to the education and training *diritto-dovere* lasting 12 years, 15-year old students can carry out their whole training from 15 to 18 years of age through the school-job alternation.

ONGOING DEBATES AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The debate is actually focused on the *reform of the educational and training system*, from scuola dell'infanzia to the university. Law of 28 March 2003, no. 53, issued under delegated power foresees a three-year non compulsory scuola dell'infanzia, a first school cycle including five-year primary school and three-year scuola secondaria di primo grado and a second cycle including the sistema dei licei (5 years). According to the above mentioned Law, the study path still lasts 16 years and is completed when students are 19 years old.



The education system includes at present what follows:

<i>Scuola dell'infanzia</i> (non-compulsory)	For children between 3 and 6 years of age
<i>Primary education</i>	For children between 6 and 11 years of age
<i>Scuola secondaria di primo grado</i>	For children between 11 and 14 years of age
<i>Upper secondary education</i>	Made up of different kinds of schools and, generally, for students from 15 to 19 years of age

Access to both university and non-university higher education is reserved for students after passing the State examination *esame di Stato*.

Vocational training courses are run by local authorities and can be attended by people who have reached 15 years of age.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

A real change in educational system structure, has resulted from the Law 15th March 1997, no. 59 and with the following delegated decrees which granted Regions, Provinces, Communes, Mountain Communities all the roles and administrative tasks currently performed by the state bodies, with the exception of a number of responsibilities relating to specific areas (e.g. foreign affairs, defence, finance, public order, justice, scientific research, university education, school curriculum and regulations, general organisation of the school system and legal status of school personnel, etc.).

In brief, whereas, in precedence State Administration (central and peripheral) performed all function with the exception of those expressly assigned to the Regions and other Local authorities, with the above mentioned law the latter now perform all administrative functions with the exception of those reserved to the State.

According to Law Decree no. 112 of 31 March 1998, in the field of education the State remains still responsible for the tasks and functions which concern the criteria and parameters for the organisation of the school system, its evaluation, the functions relating to the determination and allocation of financial resources debited to the State budget and for the allocation of staff to schools.

To the Regions instead is delegated the planning of the integrated formative offer, a combination of education and vocational training, the programming of the school network on the basis of provincial plans, the fixing of the school calendar, contributions to non state schools, and vocational training.

Finally, to the Provinces, in relation to upper secondary schools, and to the Communes, in relation to schools of lower levels, are delegated the functions concerning



the establishment, the aggregation, the amalgamation and the closing down of schools, the suspension of lessons for serious and urgent reasons, the setting up of school collegiate councils, control and vigilance, over them, including their dissolution. These rules are still in force, awaiting measures for the implementation of Constitutional Law 3/2001 foreseen by Law of 5 June 2001, no. 131.

Autonomy regulations (approved with Presidential Decree no. 275 of 8 March 1999) have transferred to schools important administrative and managing functions of the educational service, as well as high responsibility tasks such as definition of curricula, widening of the educational offer, organisation of school time and classes, etc., within the frame of general branches valid at national level.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AT NATIONAL LEVEL

The reorganisation as far as the education sector is concerned, is structured in two levels:

- Ministry at national level.
- *Uffici scolastici regionali* at regional level.

At a national level, the Ministry manages and supervises management general offices and is responsible for the results of the implementation of the Minister's stance.

The *Uffici scolastici regionali* are autonomous centres with administrative responsibility; they have residual state functions which have been transferred neither to the Regions nor to the schools (for example: the determination of the number of the schools' staff, the recruitment and school staff mobility); furthermore, they have functions related to the relationships with the Regions, local authorities, universities and formative agencies. They can be present also at provincial and sub-provincial level through the centres for administrative support to schools, called *Centro Servizi Amministrativi* (CSA).

On the basis of what mentioned above, the new institutional and organisational framework presents, on the one hand, the schools at the centre of the educational system which act as autonomous subjects, with legal personality and their own cultural, teaching, planning and management abilities; on the other hand, the central administration loses its traditional management peculiarity and becomes a lighter structure, responsible for stance, planning, co-ordination, support, monitoring and verification.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AT REGIONAL LEVEL

The offices responsible for the State school administration are the *Ufficio Scolastico Regionale* and for the Regions the Regional Administration Departments called *Assessorati*.



The *Ufficio Scolastico Regionale* is a peripheral office at general management level of the state administration of education. It has its own administrative responsibility and is subdivided according its functions and territory requirements; the *Centri Servizi Amministrativi* - CSA are present at the provincial or sub-provincial levels.

The *Assessorato alla Pubblica Istruzione dell'Amministrazione Regionale* (Education Office of the Regional Authorities) has responsibility, above all, for school assistance to students at all the levels of education including University. On this matter, the Education Office is responsible for the provision of funds and services to students through the Offices for the Right to Study which deal mainly with students' housing, canteens, grants, preventive health care, cultural and sport events . Furthermore, the *Aziende per il Diritto allo Studio* (Education Office of the Regional Authorities) have responsibility for planning the integrated educational offer which includes general education and vocational training; school network planning, based on provincial plans; school calendar determination; funds destined to non-state schools. It is also responsible for vocational training.

From the whole set of regulations, it emerges that the responsibility of the Regions includes interventions aimed at a first placement in the world of work, including higher technical-vocational training, vocational specialisation and requalification, in-service training, etc. These interventions relate to all formative activities aimed at obtaining a qualification, a higher qualification diploma or a credito formativo but they don't lead to an academic qualification, even evidence can be provided and used towards the attainment of academic qualification.

These are the main responsibilities of the Regions concerning education and vocational training; they can be delegated to Provinces and Communes on the basis of a trend which reserves to the Regions functions of guidance, planning and monitoring and fewer and fewer managing functions.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AT LOCAL LEVEL

In Italy, the local administration includes Provinces and Communes, which have responsibilities in different areas and levels of the education system.

The Ministry of Education has no Communal offices. *Comune authorities*, often representing small residential communities and limited areas are comprehensively distributed throughout Italy and have their own or regionally or provincially delegated responsibilities for the performance of functions and services needed for the operation of schools and to ensure young people school attendance. Welfare measures include: free transport to school, canteens in or outside educational establishments which are free or subsidised, depending on the economic circumstances of families, supply of purchase vouchers for textbooks and financial grants. This issue is regulated by general regulations laid down by the State and by Regional laws. In order to improve the management of



services, small Communes often join together as consortia or associations of Communes. Art. 139 of Legislative Decree no. 112 of 31 March 1998, issued in accordance with law no. 59 of 1997, has given new tasks not only to the Provinces but also to the Communes about public education. It is worth while mentioning the institution, the aggregation, the fusion and the suppression of the scuole dell'infanzia, primary and lower secondary schools, the organisation plans of networks of schools and, in general, the same powers of the Provinces concerning the schools mentioned above.

School Autonomy provides also that schools can adjust the curricular teaching time defined at national level, increase the educational offer with optional subjects and activities taking into consideration the local cultural, social and economic requirements.

It also allows schools to promote “network agreements” concerning didactical, research and experimental activities; purchase of goods and services; temporary exchange of consenting teachers. Furthermore, schools, individually or associated by means of a network, can draw up an agreement with public or private Universities, with organisations, associations or agencies operating on the territory; moreover, schools can also make special arrangements with voluntary associations and organisations of the private social sector.

The Ministry of Education lays down a general frame to which school autonomy must refer in order to assure the uniformity of the Italian educational system. In fact, the Ministry of Education establishes the general objectives of the educational process; the specific objectives of learning relating to pupil skills; the subjects of the minimum national curriculum and their annual teaching hours; the total annual compulsory timetable of curricula; standards related to the service quality; general criteria for pupil assessment, for the recognition of study credits and for the recovery of study debits; general criteria for the organisation of study paths of adult education.

CONSULTATION INVOLVING PLAYERS IN SOCIETY AT LARGE

All participants in social life can take part in organi collegiali to a different extent and with various roles.

National level

The *Higher Education Council* guarantees the uniformity of the national education system and offers technical and scientific support to the government on the subject of education. It puts forward proposals and expresses binding opinions on the following items: determination of the school staff's policy; regulations of the Ministry of Education on the matter of evaluation of the education system; objectives and standards of the education system established at national level; minimum national curriculum for the different kinds of schools; general organisation of education. Furthermore, the Council,



also on its own initiative, can express its opinions on bills concerning education and holds cognitive enquiries on the situation of specific education sectors.

Regional level

The *Consiglio regionale dell'istruzione*, is consistent with the reform of the administration structure of education, which established the *Uffici scolastici regionali* as peripheral bodies of the Ministry of Education.

Local level

The *Consigli scolastici locali*, upon agreement with the Regions and the local authorities, can have their seat in the peripheral offices of the Ministry of Education, in schools or suitable structures supplied by the local authorities, where a secretary's office is set up, and hold office for 3 years. Local authorities provide for the constitution, control, supervision and dissolution of the *Consigli scolastici locali*.

METHODS OF FINANCING EDUCATION

Educational, organisational, research, experimentation and. A relevant innovation is that such funds are destined to educational, training and guidance activities in general, without any constraints.

Some contributions can be provided by Regions, local bodies and private organisations. Such funds are destined to the implementation of projects supported by funds with specific allocations. As far as acceptance of donations and inheritance are concerned, authorisations of acceptance have been abolished.

The State is responsible for school funding both for educational and administrative purposes. Regions have to provide directly, but more often under delegated power, services and assistance to students (canteens, transportation, textbooks for primary schools, aid to the less wealthy, social and health assistance) out of their own budget and they also have to finance plans for the building of schools. Provinces and Municipalities can be delegated by the Region to provide assistance and services and their function is that of providing for school heating, lighting and telephone connections, maintaining school buildings.

The first one (FFO) is made up of financial resources which were distributed among approximately ten budget items until 1993. These financial resources converged on a single budget item, which is subdivided into three parts:

- 1) a basis share, related to the "historical" transfer (corresponding to the amount received by universities in the previous years);



2) a “re-balance share”, to be divided according to criteria related to the standards of the production costs per student and to objectives of research re-qualification;

3) a share destined to “programme agreement” among universities and the Ministry of Education University and Research.

Compulsory contribution within the limits set out by the regulations in force and autonomous financing (voluntary contributions, activities’ earnings, surplus, profits derived from the alienation of properties, liberality acts, considerations for contracts and agreements) have to be added to these revenues.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

Up to school year 2003-2004, secondary education included lower education (or *scuola media*, lasting three years) and *upper secondary education*; this latter was subdivided into four types of educational orders: schools offering classical and scientific education, artistic education, and technical and vocational institutes. Law no 53 of 28 March 2003, established the subdivision of the upper secondary education and training system (secondo ciclo) into the *sistema dei licei* (artistic, classical, economic, linguistic, music, scientific, technological, human sciences) and the *sistema dell’istruzione e della formazione professionale*.

Transition from the *sistema dei licei* to the *vocational training system* and vice versa, will be allowed as well as transition to and from *apprenticeship* starting from 15 years of age. A state examination is foreseen at the end of each school cycle after which it will be possible to enter university or non university higher education, whereas admission to the fifth year allows entrance to *Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore (IFTS)*. Students who have accomplished the vocational training system will be admitted to the university.

Awaiting the relevant legislative decree, the *scuole secondarie di II grado* will keep functioning according to the old system as far as programmes and subjects timetables are concerned; however, schools will be able to implement their own organisation, teaching, research and experimentation flexibility foreseen by the *Piano dell’Offerta Formativa (POF)*, whereas the *scuola secondaria di primo grado* already works according to Legislative Decree 59/2004.

ONGOING DEBATES AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The debate is focused mainly on the hypothesis of reform of the secondo ciclo schools, in particular on the relationship between education and training paths and on the possibility to pass from one path to the other, as well as on the early choice required at the end of the primo ciclo and on the position of technical education.



GENERAL UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

According to the system still in force, but for a short time, general upper secondary education includes *liceo classico*, *liceo scientifico* and *liceo artistico*. It is regulated by “Gentile” Law of 1923, with the adjustments provided since then to timetables, teaching programmes and the already mentioned Consolidation Act no. 297 of 16 April 1994. The mentioned rules will stop being in force as soon as the legislative decree foreseen by Law no. 53 of 28 March 2003 for the regulation of the *sistema dei licei* and of the *istruzione e formazione professionale* will be issued.

VOCATIONAL UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

Vocational upper secondary education includes *istituti tecnici*, *istituti professionali* and *istituti d'arte*. This education sector was subject to deep changes in the last decades; these changes affected mainly Istituti tecnici and Istituti professionali which lost their strong professionalising nature. Their programmes have been gradually modified towards the fostering of cultural subjects and contents and to the detriment of the time destined to practise. This process diminished the previously strong difference between general and vocational upper secondary education.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

General Upper Secondary Education

The education offered by *licei classico e scientifico* aims at preparing to university study. Education offered by *liceo artistico* aims at art teaching, independently from its industrial applications.

Vocational Upper Secondary Education

Technical education aims at preparing to carry out technical and administrative functions as well as some professions in the trade, services, industry, building, agriculture, navigation and aeronautics sectors. Vocational education aims at providing a specific theoretical and practical preparation to carry out qualified functions in the trade, services, industry, artisanship, agriculture and navigation sectors. Art education aims at preparing to artistic work and production according to the local industry tradition and typical raw materials.



TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS

General Upper Secondary Education

Upper secondary education includes the following schools:

<i>Liceo classico</i>	It includes five years of study and is structured in two cycles: a two-year lower cycle ginnasio and a three-year upper cycle
<i>Liceo scientifico</i>	It comprises a five-year course, focusing on scientific training last three years of study
<i>Liceo artistico</i>	The courses last five years and are structured in two sections: one for figurative arts and stage design, the other for architecture

Law 53/2003 modifies also the second cycle of education that will be composed of the *sistema dei licei* and the *sistema dell'istruzione e de* Students who have *lla formazione professionale*.

The *sistema dei licei* includes eight types of licei: *liceo artistico*, *liceo classico*, economic liceo, linguistic liceo, music and dance liceo, *liceo scientifico*, technological liceo, human sciences liceo. In some cases, one only type of liceo would not satisfy the various educational needs of the students; for this reason, the artistic, economic and technological licei can offer more branches of study.

All licei have a five-year duration subdivided into two two-year teaching cycles followed by a fifth and final year destined to deepen knowledge and skills typical of the study course. The upper secondary leaving certificate *diploma di superamento dell'esame di stato* is the title required to access university and High Level Art, Music and Dance Education (*Alta formazione Artistica e Musicale – AFAM*).

Vocational Upper Secondary Education

Schools offering vocational secondary education are the following:

<i>Istituti tecnici</i>	Their duration is subdivided into a basic two-year cycle and a three-year cycle with more branches of study and specialisations
<i>Istituti professionali</i>	Their duration is subdivided into a three-year cycle, leading to obtain a <i>diploma di qualifica</i> , and a post-qualification two-year cycle (4 th and 5 th years) that grants admission to the university



<i>Istituti d'arte</i>	They foresee courses lasting for three years and structured in sections depending on the art specialisation's: ornamental painting, ornamental sculpture, graphics, wood, ceramic and metal applied arts, etc. Applied art courses include practice in the laboratory. Law 27 October 1969, no. 754 has instituted in Istituti d'arte further courses lasting two years, granting admission to University. Courses lasting three years end with the <i>diploma di qualifica</i>
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Students have to make their choice at the end of *scuola secondaria di primo grado*; a transition is however possible between the two systems.

Furthermore, law allows 15 to 18 year-old students to attend 2nd level courses through alternation of study and work periods, under the responsibility of schools or training institutions, on the basis of agreements with enterprises or associations of professional classes, public or private bodies, or to attend integrated courses organised at vocational education and training institutes offering study programmes planned by the two systems together.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND CHOICE OF SCHOOL

General Upper Secondary Education	Students who have obtained the <i>diploma di esame di Stato conclusivo del primo ciclo di istruzione</i>
Vocational Upper Secondary Education	Students who have obtained the <i>diploma di esame di Stato conclusivo del primo ciclo di istruzione</i> can enrol in this type of education institutes
<i>Vocational training course</i>	In particular, the courses of the second level are reserved for those who hold a <i>diploma di superamento dell'esame di stato</i> . There are various types of selection to determine admission, using the objective evidence provided by entrance tests of students' prior knowledge of the subject or tests of capacity

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR PUPILS

Financial aids are foreseen both by the state and regional legislation. As for students of state school and scuole paritarie, Law of 10 March 2000, no. 62, on equality foresees accomplishment of compulsory schooling and subsequent attendance of secondary school through grants to be awarded with priority to low income families; these grants don't consist in money, but in the possibility for these families to deduct from tax an amount equal to the expenses paid for the school.



Financial aids provided by the Regions responsible for the right to study are more conspicuous. These measures may be implemented directly by the Regions, or through the provinces or the communes; they may change from one Region to the other. Generally they are the following:

- school vouchers, to cover partially education expenses;
- financial contributions to purchase textbooks;
- free-of-charge transport and canteen services;
- non-recurring cheques for students of low-income and socially disadvantaged families;
- particular provisions for disabled students;
- free lodging in the *convitti nazionali and educandati femminili dello stato*.

SPECIALISATION OF STUDIES

<i>General Upper Secondary Education</i>	
<i>Licei classici and licei scientifici</i>	Have one only cycle subdivided into a two-year and a three-year periods
<i>Licei artistici</i>	After a common two-year period, offer two specialisations: figurative arts and architecture, lasting two years

It is worth it to remind that, due to the lack of a reform of upper secondary school, many institutes have started additional experimental five-year branches of study not foreseen by the school system, in order to meet the new requirements of the students (for example, linguistic, psycho-pedagogical licei, etc.).

<i>Vocational Upper Secondary Education</i>	
<p><i>Istituti tecnici</i> The most widespread sectors, all having a five-year duration. Experimentation braches of study have been started also by the technical institutes (for example, biological-sanitary, informatics branches of study, etc.); however, most institutes have adopted for some time the experimentation programmes elaborated by the Ministry of Education in order to obtain additional programmes, subjects and timetables.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Commerce</i> - specialisation: trade, foreign trade, business administration, etc. - <i>Industry sector</i> - specialisation: mechanics, electrical engineering, electronics, industrial physics, chemicals, textiles, etc. - <i>Surveying</i> - <i>Agriculture</i> - specialisation: forestry, ecology, etc. - <i>Nautical sector</i> - specialisation: captain, machinery operator, shipbuilder. - <i>Tourism</i> - <i>Social studies</i> (the former <i>Istituti tecnici</i> for girls).
<p><i>Istituti professionali</i> Lots of three-year sectors and branches of study specialisation's are offered After the three-year period of specialisation, two-year courses can be instituted to offer cultural and practice education at upper secondary school level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agriculture-specialisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - agricultural - agroindustrial; - Industry and crafts-specialisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - economy and business - clothing and fashion - building - chemico-biological - mechanical and thermal - electrical and electronic - service sector-specialisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - economy-business-tourism - advertising - hotel and catering services - social services
<p><i>Istituti d'arte</i> The main three-year specialisations offered by the istituti d'arte are the following. After the three-year period of specialisation, two-year courses can be instituted to offer cultural and artistic education at upper secondary school level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - painting - sculpture - graphics - ceramics



CURRICULUM AND SUBJECTS

<p><i>General Upper Secondary Education</i></p>	<p>The subjects, except for religion or alternative activities (optional subjects), are Italian, Latin, Greek, foreign language (only in the first two years), history and philosophy, natural sciences, chemistry and geography, mathematics and physics, history of art, physical education.</p> <p>It is worth it to remind that schools have used experimentation not only to introduce new branches of study, but also to introduce other subjects (ICT, history of art in the first two years, and foreign language in the three-year period of the liceo classico, etc.) or to modify the teaching hours of some subjects</p>
<p><i>Vocational Upper Secondary Education</i></p>	<p><i>Istituti tecnici:</i> Technical education underwent the most relevant transformations through experimentations elaborated by the Ministry; as a consequence, the original teaching programs, subjects and timetables were replaced by programs, subjects and timetables foreseen by experimental projects which affect by now all technical education specialisations.</p> <p><i>Istituti professionali:</i> The courses leading to qualifications have been considerably reduced, based on the assumption that if initial training is not too specialised, the student's personality can become more flexible and he/she can be better introduced into the working world or be re-trained. The new system introduced the concept of basic training in the first three years, also as a guidance period helping to pass on to other courses or schools. Professional specialist options are still found in the fourth and fifth year. Relevant innovations concerning curricula are expected following the reform of upper secondary school; however, school autonomy already assures to schools the possibility to adopt all the measures aimed at implementing organisation, teaching as well as research and experimentation autonomy foreseen by the <i>Piano dell'Offerta Formativa</i> (POF).</p> <p><i>Istituti d'arte:</i> Specific teaching programs have not been established at national level. They are elaborated at school level.</p>



PRIVATE EDUCATION

Non state secondary schools are divided in the following categories:

1. *Scuole paritarie* are schools that requested and obtained equality according to the conditions foreseen by Law no. 62 of 10 March 2000. Therefore, they became part of the national education system.

2. Merely *private schools* are schools that didn't request or didn't obtain either equality nor legal recognition. School of this kind that adopt curricula or teaching contents similar to those adopted in state schools can also take the proper denomination (for example, Liceo classico, Istituto tecnico, etc.) but the qualification issued has not legal value.

- *Scuole legalmente riconosciute* and *scuole pareggiate* (only temporarily) are schools that didn't request or didn't obtain the transformation of the legal recognition or from scuole pareggiate into scuole paritarie. They keep on being regulated according to Consolidation Act of laws on education of 16 April 1994, no. 297, while awaiting the verification foreseen by Law no. 62 of 10 March 2000.

Both *scuole legalmente riconosciute* and *scuole pareggiate* issue qualifications with the same legal value as those issued by state schools or *scuole paritarie*.

SCHOOLS ATTENDANCE RATE AT STATE AND PRIVATE SCUOLA SECONDARIA DI SECONDO GRADO

Year	School Attendance rate
2003-2004	94.0

NUMBER OF HOLDERS OF LICENZA IN STATE SCHOOLS - SCHOOL YEAR 2003-2004

Upper secondary school(s)	98.6%
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STUDENTS' ENROLMENT RATE IN UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOLS BY TYPE OF SCHOOL YEAR 2003-2004

Type of school	Pupils
Licei classici	9.6
Licei scientifici	20.7
Istituti magistrali	7.7
Istituti professionali	21.4
Istituti tecnici	37.7
Istituti d'arte e licei artistici	3.9



RATE OF ENROLMENT IN THE UNIVERSITY 2003-2004

Rate of enrolment to university	75.9
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(Sources: CENSIS: 38° rapporto sulla situazione sociale del paese 2004)

II. SOCIAL EXCLUSION

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR YOUNG SCHOOL LEAVERS AND ADULTS

Civil, social and economic development as well as technology progress required the promotion of permanent education and training which became more and more relevant in the framework of the economic development policy fostering the highest exploitation of human resources.

As for young people, the strongest effort was aimed for many years at fighting school dropout. Such phenomenon, that has almost completely disappeared in compulsory school age, still affects post-compulsory school age. In order to combat drop out, first Law of 17 May 1999, no. 94, and then Law no. 53 of 2003, introduced compulsory training up to 18 years of age. Young people must complete compulsory training within general or vocational upper secondary education system, through apprenticeship, or within the basic vocational training system (also called “of 1st level”). As far as adult education is concerned, its primary aim was to fight the heavy question of complete illiteracy. This kind of illiteracy has certainly decreased, but another is persistent, in the same way worrying and widespread, which we may define as functional and which includes everyone who - having or not a certificate of compulsory school - is not able to understand a simple text related to everyday life.

The qualitative change in literacy brought to develop new instruments, different from those used in the past, when the main problem was to teach adults to read, to write and to count. In the last years, the amount of workers attendance decreased remarkably, while courses are attended by a higher number of unemployed, housewives, young people over 15 years old and, recently, Third World immigrants too. The original users changed as well as the requirements of the social tissue. These changes addressed *school policies at community level* not only in Italy, towards a general system of lifelong learning which includes not only school education and vocational training but also permanent training for workers and citizens.

The Statistical service of the Ministry of education published data of a sample survey on school dropout (December 2004). It refers to students from scuola secondaria di primo and secondo grado (with exclusion of the fifth year) who have not been evaluated due to their high number of absences.



School years	Scuola secondaria di primo grado per 100 enrolled students	Scuola secondaria di secondo grado per 100 enrolled students
1999-2000	0.6	1.8
2000-2001	0.5	1.8
2001-2002	0.5	1.7
2002-2003	0.5	1.8
2003-2004	0.4	2.1

However, administrative innovations were introduced starting from Ministerial Order no. 455 of 29 July 1997, which instituted, for example, *Centri Territoriali Permanenti* – CTP offering education and training for adults.

III. CONSTRUCTIVE INTERVENTION

EDUCATIONAL/VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE, EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT LINKS

The Ministry keeps on paying high attention to school guidance, also through directives addressed to peripheral bodies and schools in order to point out the necessity to reinforce guidance actions within the *Piano dell'Offerta Formativa* (POF) in the view of continuing to study and to enter the labour market.

This interest has been recently confirmed with the institution of the National Committee for guidance chaired by the Ministry of education or by a delegate of the ministry with study, analysis, planning and technical-scientific counselling tasks. A decree of 9 September 2004 foresees the inclusion within the Committee of representatives of the Ministries of Education, of Labour and Social policy, of Italian Manufacturer Association *Confederazione generale dell'industria italiana* – Confindustria, of the chamber of commerce, of the communes and provinces association, of the regions, publishers, universities as well as INVALSI and INDIRE. The committee should promote the comparison among school actors, local authorities and the university for the definition of guidance lines, the decision of work methods and to carry out operational/experimentation initiatives and pilot projects.

Law 53/2003 for the reform of the education and training system stresses the central position of students and considers guidance as the main strategy to offer growth opportunities, therefore the Ministry has started the National Plan for Guidance for school year 2004-2005, according to development lines established by the above mentioned committee also for the training of guidance staff at regional level. Furthermore, the Ministry has fostered the spreading in the schools of information on the National Day of “Orientagiovani”, organised by Confindustria.



GENERAL UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

Many guidance activities - mainly based on information - are carried out in the last two years of upper secondary education.

There are various kind of possible initiatives, depending on the orientation of the course where they are planned, on the socio-economic and cultural environment in which the school operates, on the funds and the facilities available, coming not only from the Ministry of Education, but also from companies, industrial associations, artisans, professionals, local banks, etc.

Starting from the school year 1998-99, the pre-enrolment in universities has been introduced and schools must organize activities, such as guided visits of the university or close study of teaching subjects, to verify the choice of the faculty.

Guidance activities are carried on in various ways, depending on the school and which vary every year, because of the lack of a person responsible for this charge.

Vocational schools have introduced specific guidance provisions in the curriculum and in the educational programmes, especially inside what is called *area di approfondimento*. The same provisions will be extended to all the types of institution of upper secondary education as soon as the law on school autonomy comes into force, on the 1st of September 2000. Guidance activity is carried out both at the level of *scuola secondaria di di primo grado e scuola secondaria di secondo grado*, as well as a provision of information and counselling from public and private bodies.

ONGOING DEBATES AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Permanent education is one of the main principles at the basis of delegated decrees foreseen by Law of 28 March 2003, no. 53 for the reform of the education and training system. It is likely that the debate on this subject will arise again as soon as these decrees' projects will be submitted to the parliamentary committees and the *Conferenza unificata Stato/Regioni*, which includes State, Regions, local governments, in order to obtain their opinions.

SPECIFIC LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Vocational courses (1st level), destined to *young people from 15 to 18 years* of age, falls within responsibility of the regions and are regulated by their respective legislations.

It is important to point out that, as already mentioned, all subjects will be completely revised under the broader new structure of the education and vocational education and training system *sistema dei licei and sistema di istruzione e formazione professionale*, as introduced both by the reform of the Title V of the Constitution, and by the reform law no. 53 of 2003 and by the decrees that will be issued for its implementation. In the



meantime, useful indications can be taken by the agreement signed between the State and the Regions on 15th January 2004 on vocational training. Following the agreement signed by the *Conferenza Unificata Stato-Regioni* on 19th June 2003 for creating an experimental formative offer of vocational education and training, the aim of this agreement has been the definition of basic training standards starting from basic skills, to allow the recognition at national level of credits, certifications and titles for assuring the transition from vocational to general pathways.

The *Centri Territoriali Permanenti* – CTP, destined to young people from 15 years of age and adults, are under the responsibility of the State and are regulated by Ministerial Orders.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

Vocational courses (1st level) aim at the learning of specific professional theoretical and practical skills, also through exercises and stages in enterprise. They last two years and are subdivided into cycles that can be certified. They are made up of reception, guidance and tutoring modules and offer the possibility to attend a third year at the end of which it is released a specialisation certificate. The structure of these courses will be modified according to Law 53/2003.

The general objectives of the *Centri Territoriali Permanenti* – CTP are a higher level of education, through higher cultural education and the related communication abilities; it will give the possibility to increase the abilities related to language, communication and culture and will help to develop the attitudes for a full participation in the social life.

These objectives are reached through differentiated organisations and programs according to the types of users and their requirements, taking into consideration their literacy level, employment or unemployment state, geographical provenience.

TYPES OF INSTITUTION

The types of Vocational courses (1st level) are not previously determined.

These are the types of intervention:

- literacy adult education courses that end up with the issue of a certificate that allows to enrol in *scuola secondaria di primo grado*;
- *scuola secondaria di primo grado* for adults (150 hours);
- adult education courses in upper secondary schools;
- courses of functional alphabetisation;
- integrated paths (education and training) state and regional responsibilities;
- pilot projects to integrate training systems.



According to the following Directive of 16th of January 2004, the Administration is committed with boosting the cultural development of adult population in the education system and favouring social integration of particular groups, in collaboration with vocational training system, voluntary public and private organizations.

These activities are carried out by the *Centri Territoriali Permanenti* which provide for reception, listening, guidance as well as for primary functional and post literacy programs, for language learning as well as for recovery and development of cultural and relational skills necessary for a full participation in the social life.

The centres, through the work of the co-ordinators, keep up relations with public and private bodies involved in education and training. It must be remembered that the first interlocutors for the organisation of adult education courses were the trade unions; at present the changes that have occurred in the type of users have extended the number of interlocutors to include local government bodies, associations, recreational clubs for workers (case del popolo), parish churches, etc.

GEOGRAPHICAL ACCESSIBILITY

The disposition of the *Centri territoriali* is responsibility of the Regions, in agreement with local authorities and the director of the *Ufficio Scolastico Regionale*. The director of the *Ufficio Scolastico Regionale* adopts these provisions concerning the reorganisation and foundation of new centres, always in agreement with Regions and local authorities. They are financed by State and local authorities.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All adults (over the age of 15) who do not hold a compulsory school certificate as well as adults who, although in possession of a compulsory school leaving certificate, intend to go back to education and training can participate to the activities of the *Centri territoriali*. Only adults in possession of a diploma of *scuola secondaria di primo grado* can be admitted to vocational evening classes.

REGISTRATION AND/OR TUITION FEES

No payment of fees is required for enrolment and attendance in vocational courses (1st level) or *Centri Territoriali Permanenti*, except for adult courses in upper secondary education institutes where it is foreseen a fees payment equal to that foreseen for diurnal courses.



FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

The courses are basically free of charge; as a consequence, financial aids are not provided. Labour contracts of some workers' categories (like metalworkers, for example) foresee paid permission to allow them to attend the courses in order to obtain the lower secondary school certificate or, more rarely, the upper secondary school certificate.

MAIN AREAS OF SPECIALISATION

Vocational courses (1st level) cover almost all the sectors of the economy system and deal with the following types of interventions:

- cultural *corsi di alfabetizzazione*, to obtain the certificate that allows to enrol in *scuola secondaria di primo grado*;
- courses to obtain the certificate of *istruzione secondaria di primo grado*;
- upper secondary education courses (in the evening) for working students.

Since 1964 there has been a provisions for instituting in upper secondary schools evening classes for working people or those who are temporarily unemployed. At the end of these courses, that can, if necessary, be completed in 6 years rather than the 5 years as prescribed for school-age pupils, students take the upper secondary school leaving examinations according to the regulations in effect; the diploma they receive has the same validity as that given to students who complete the normal courses and can grant admission to courses of higher education.

In addition to the above mentioned courses, provides also for what follows:

- courses of functional alphabetisation (short and modular courses, linguistic and social integration courses);
- integrated paths (education and training) provided for weak population and weak labour market. They allow to obtain a degree and the certification of credits that can be used for vocational training or a vocational qualification as well as the certification of credits that can be spent in the education system;
- pilot projects to integrate training system, to promote a new integrated system of lifelong learning for adult as stated in the agreement of 2 March 2000.

Statistical data at paragraph show that the increase in the formative offer correspond mainly to an increase in the offer of short modular courses which last approximately 30-50 hours and which aim at providing basic skills (information technology, linguistic, and multimedial skills). Starting from school year 2000-2001, a new type of courses has been added to the two already existing types of courses (education and primary literacy



courses and short courses): it is specifically destined to foreign users with linguistic and social integration needs.

EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT LINKS

The system described up to now deals with adult education aimed at a permanent training for the acquisition of basic, general and professional skills offered by the “formal” sector, above all by the *Centri Territoriali Permanenti* – CTP dependent on the Ministry of Education.

Together with this system, there is the permanent vocational training (Law 236/93) that includes all the learning activities subsequent to initial training, destined to adult employed or unemployed workers for their professional re-qualification and updating. They are dependant on the Ministry of labour and social policy Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali – MPS. Some of these activities are those proposed by enterprises to adequate and increase the professional skills also as far as technological innovations and organisation of the production process are concerned.

The recent Law of 14 February 2003, no. 30 on the *relation between training and employment*, introduces innovations on the connection between employment supply and demand, through the reform of services for employment Servizi per l’impiego – SPI and apprenticeship contracts, as well as through new types of labour contracts (job on call, etc.). The new regulations provide for a subdivision of apprenticeship as follows:

- *apprenticeship for the accomplishment* of the diritto/dovere to education and vocational training for students between 15 and 28 years of age;
- *professionalising apprenticeship* for students between 18 and 29 years of age.

Guidance activities are carried out, besides schools, also by Provinces, Services for the employment (Servizi Per l’Impiego – SPI) that avail themselves of operational structures at local level (Centri Per l’Impiego – CPI – Centres for Employment), also by the Centres for work guidance Centri di Orientamento al Lavoro – COL of the Communes.

PRIVATE EDUCATION

Permanent training activities can be carried out also by private organisations. Enterprises, for example, plan training activities for their employees. Initiatives can be started also by training bodies, professional class associations, professional associations, etc. Furthermore, as for non formal offer, it’s worth it to mention popular universities, universities for the third age, recreational-cultural and voluntary associations, libraries, museums, theatres. Some of these initiatives can be financed on the whole or partially,



by public bodies. Support criteria and monitoring procedures vary from one body to the other.

STATISTICS

The following data are the only available; updated statistical data are not available due to the numerous and different subjects/structures offering permanent training very year. A recent CENSIS survey individuated more than 5000 structures operating within formal institutional and non formal offer, which is carried outside the main educational and training structures. These latter are organisations with deeply different origins and aims: *Centri Territoriali Permanenti* – CTP for adult education; vocational training centres, cultural associations, voluntary associations operating in the social sector, universities for the third age and popular universities, municipal libraries and park bodies.

ADULT EDUCATION: NUMBER OF COURSES AND PARTICIPANTS

Type of courses	No. of courses	No. of enrolments
Education courses	3,006	64,684
Short and modular courses	10,844	280,860
Linguistic and social integrations courses	1,960	38,246
Total	15,810	383,790
Foreigners		70,208

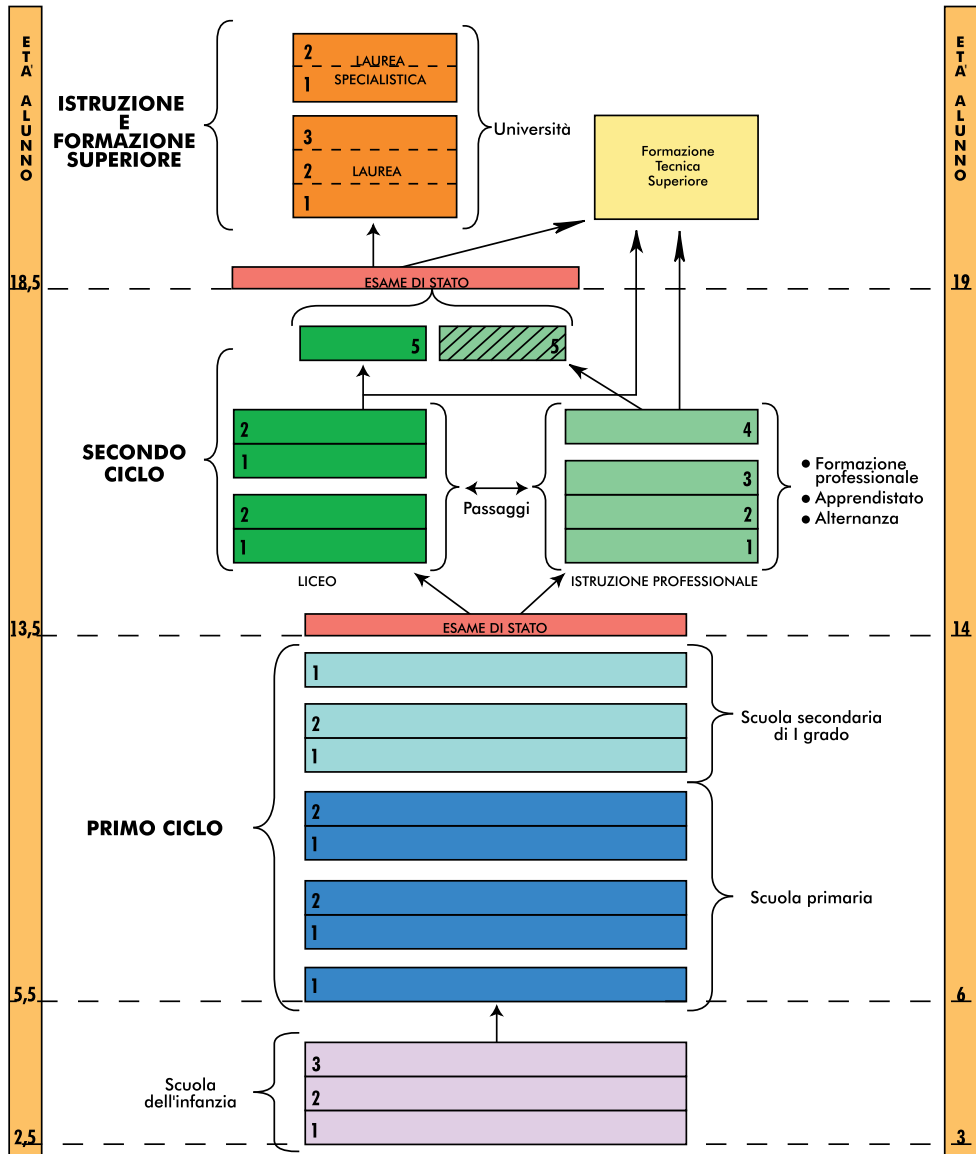
(Source: CENSIS- rapporto sulla situazione del paese 2002)

- *Abstract from Eurydice Researches and Reports*





IL PERCORSO DELLO STUDENTE



Ipotesi inizio a 2,5 anni

Ipotesi inizio a 3 anni

IL NUOVO SISTEMA DI ISTRUZIONE E FORMAZIONE



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