

Project Number: 2017-1-LT01-KA201-035235

1. Understanding Early School Leaving

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Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the current situation of early school leaving in Europe and examines the role of the classroom peer context in the behavioural engagement of low-income students in schools. Specifically we examine associations between engagement within the context of teacher practices and student behavioural difficulties.

The overall goal is to better understand the classroom peer contexts that enable more teenagers to engage in the learning activities at school, with an eye toward informing classroom contextual interventions that promote academic outcomes.

The notion of Early School Leaving (ESL), currently named “Early Leaving from Education and Training” (ELET), has been introduced by the European Union to designate a long-term process of school disengagement involving young people aged between 18-24 who leave any type of education and training without reaching an upper secondary qualification (according to ISCED scale). Unlike the drop-out dilemma, which specifically implies a temporary study interruption, the Early School Leaving phenomenon coincides with the final outcome of the education withdrawal.

This means that ESL is a multi-faceted and complex issue caused by a cumulative process of disengagement. It is a result of personal, social, economic, education or family-related reasons (Reducing early school leaving: Key messages and policy support).

As demonstrated in several researches, a low level of education due to ESL basically leads to increased public and social expenditures, to less social cohesion and participation, a higher likelihood of unemployment, poorer health and more crime.

Conversely, it is shown that a successful education tends to positively influence people’s earning capacity due to more opportunities in the labour market and higher salaries. This will obviously mean a greater availability of human resources and a consequent growth in the economy and national productivity.

High rates of Early School Leaving (ESL) are thus today recognized as one of the most relevant issues in education due to their long term effects on societal development and economic growth (Dale, 2010) and the reduction of ESL to 10% by 2020 is at the core of the 2020 European Union education strategy.

It is well documented that early leaving from education and training leads to reduced employment opportunities and increased likelihood of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. (European Commission, Education and Training Monitor 2015, forthcoming). Seeking this goal ES declare a set documents related to reducing a number of early school leavers: Recommendation of the Council of the European Union on policies to reduce early school leaving (2011); Youth Guarantee Council



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Recommendation (2013), New skills agenda for Europe (2016) and et cetera.

Furthermore, ESL is a complex issue and cannot be solved by education policies alone. Efficient strategies to reduce early school leaving must address education, youth and social policies. They need to be tailored to local, regional and national conditions (Commission launches action plan to reduce early school leaving).

1.1. Analysis of Major Trends in School Leaving in Europe

The European Union defines early school leavers as people aged 18-24 who have only lower secondary education or less and are no longer in education or training. The definition was agreed by EU Education Ministers in the Council in 2003 (Council conclusions on "Reference levels of European Average Performance in Education and Training (Benchmarks)", May 2003). Early school leavers are therefore those who have only achieved pre-primary, primary, lower secondary or a short upper secondary education of less than 2 years (Levels 0, 1, 2 or 3c short in the United Nations' International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) (Early school leaving in Europe).

Early school leaving can take several forms. It includes young people who have dropped out of school before the end of the compulsory education, those who have completed compulsory schooling, but have not gained an upper secondary qualification, and those who have followed pre-vocational or vocational courses which did not lead to a qualification equivalent to upper secondary level (Early school leaving in Europe).

Early school leaving is a severe issue for any country to face. It is the result of a gradual disengagement process of students from school due to various interrelated factors that include lack of motivation, poor educational performance and delinquent behavior – often in connection with a difficult socioeconomic background and certain school practices (Eurydice Brief).

Early school leaving is linked to unemployment, social exclusion, poverty and poor health. There are many reasons why some young people give up education and training prematurely: personal or family problems, learning difficulties, or a fragile socio-economic situation. The way the educational system is set up, school climate and teacher-pupil relations are also important factors (Early School Leaving, EU).

The typical evolution of a young person into an early school leaver was (and, according to our research with teachers still is) frequently described as follows: The pupil comes from a poorly educated, socially and economically disadvantaged background which affords little support. Failure at school in the early stages leads to hostile attitude to school, which typically ends in chronic absenteeism. This is often reinforced by an out-of-school situation with few controls and in which the peer group plays a significant role. After a phase of truancy and school reports that reflect the pupil's lack of attendance, he/she ultimately leaves school early. This description, which focused primarily on the individual, only points to clear failings in the 'professionalization' of teachers. In particular, it hides any structural failings, and largely absolves the school (as institution) of responsibility. Yet early school leaving – in the current research consensus – is a deep-seated and far more complex phenomenon with manifold causes (Erna Nairz-Wirth, 2015).

Since there is not a single reason for early school leaving, there are no easy answers. Policies to reduce early school leaving must address a range of triggers and combine education and social policy, youth work and health related aspects such as drug use or mental and emotional problems (Early School Leaving, EU).

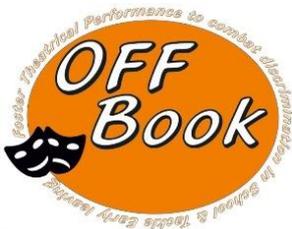
EU countries have committed to reducing the average share of early school leavers to less than 10 % by 2020. The educational achievement of young people is essential for the employment prospects of every young person. It is important for the growth of our economy and for social cohesion, especially at a time when the current financial and economic crisis is having a serious impact on young people and their families. Investing in education helps to break the cycle of deprivation and poverty leading to the social exclusion of too many young people across Europe (Reducing early school leaving: Key messages and policy support. Final Report of the Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving, 2013).

Online Resources

Early school leaving

https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/early-school-leavers_en

EU commission report describes the problem of early school leaving, presents links to sources of what has



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been done for solving the problem and what the next steps are.

Understanding and preventing early school leaving

https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/experts/understanding_and_preventing_e.htm

The article of prof. Erna Nairz-Wirth (a Head of Educational Science at Vienna University of Economics and Business) analyses the understanding of early school leaving. She justifies the opinion that dropping out of school is a significantly more complex phenomenon, and that each case has a distinct history whose roots can frequently be traced back to kindergarten.

Reducing early school leaving: Key messages and policy support

https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/esl-group-report_en.pdf

Final Report of the Thematic Working Group of EU on Early School Leaving.

Tackling early school Leaving in Europe: Different policies

<https://www.cesifo-group.de/ifoHome/facts/DICE/Education-and-Innovation/Education/Enrolment-and-Educational-Attainment/DR312-db3-tackling-early-school-leaving/fileBinary/DR312-db3-tackling-early-school-leaving.pdf>

Policies implemented in European countries to tackle Early School Leaving.

Eurydice Brief. Tackling early leaving from education and training

<https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b0599400-7bac-11e5-9fae-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search>

This Eurydice Brief provides a summary of the joint Eurydice/Cedefop report Tackling Early Leaving from Education and Training in Europe: Strategies, Policies and Measures, which has focus on general education at school level.

Education & Training 2020. Schools policy. A whole school approach to tackling early school leaving Policy messages

http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/experts-groups/2014-2015/school/early-leaving-policy_en.pdf

This paper presents the findings of the European Union's ET2020 Working Group on Schools Policy (2014-15)1 on its priority theme early school leaving (ESL).

European Commission: Education and training policies on early school leaving

https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/early-school-leavers_en

Results of the Report and policy messages on a whole school approach to tackling early school leaving.

1.2. Statistical Data and a Comparative Analysis

As far as it was aforementioned, the Europe 2020 strategy has set the goal of reducing the proportion of 18- to 24-year-olds leaving education and training early to below 10% (European semester thematic fact sheet. Early school leavers). According to statistical data in 2011 more than 6 million young people in the EU leave education and training with lower secondary level qualifications at best. In 2016 there were still more than 4 million early school leavers across Europe, around 45% of them are employed (European semester thematic fact sheet. Early school leavers).

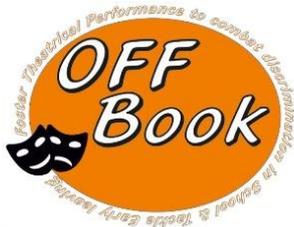
Among the EU Member States, the proportion of early leavers in 2016 ranged from 2.8 % in Croatia (note that data have low reliability) to 19.6 % in Malta (European semester thematic fact sheet. Early school leavers). Also among the EU Member States, the largest reductions (in percentage point terms) between 2011 and 2016 in the proportion of early leavers were in Portugal, Spain and Greece; this was also the case for Turkey and Norway among the non-member countries. There was an increase between 2011 and 2016 in the proportion of early leavers in eight of the Member States. The biggest increases were recorded in Slovakia, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Hungary, with less increases - Sweden, Slovenia, Romania and Estonia (Source: Eurostat (LFS, table [t2020_40])).

Compared with 2006, the proportion of early leavers from education and training decreased in 2016 in all



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Member States for which the time-series is available, except in the Czech Republic, Romania and Slovakia. In 2016, the lowest proportions of early leavers from education and training were observed in Croatia (2.8%), Lithuania (4.8%), Slovenia (4.9%), Poland (5.2%) and Luxembourg (5.5%), while the highest shares were recorded in Malta (19.6%), Spain (19.0%) and Romania (18.5%). Fifteen Member States have already met their 2020 national target for this indicator: Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Greece, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Slovenia and Finland (Source: Eurostat (LFS, table [t2020_40])).

The share of early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24) – colloquially referred to as early school leavers – has steadily decreased in the European Union (EU) over the past years, from 17.0% in 2002 to 10.7% in 2016. Fewer young women (9.2% in 2016) leave education and training early than young men (12.2%) (Source: Eurostat (LFS, table [t2020_40])).

While over 70% of early school leavers in the EU complete lower secondary education, around 17% have completed only primary education. The latter group is especially large in Bulgaria (38%) and Portugal (40%) ((Source: Eurostat (LFS, table [t2020_40])).

Furthermore, as stated in Eurydice Brief: Tackling early leaving from education and training (2017), in the majority of European countries the rate of early leavers has decreased over the recent years; and with a current EU-Average of 12 %, countries are collectively heading towards the 10 % benchmark goal by 2020 if the current trend continues. More than half of the countries examined have reached the EU headline target, and around a third of all countries have reached their own national targets, often set at a more ambitious level than the headline target.

In the last few years early school leaving varies from 3 to 20% of all young people in a single country. Within the European Union, it affects more than four million young people between the ages of 18 and 24 who have not attained an upper secondary level education qualification and who are not receiving any formal education or training (EU definition) (Erna Nairz-Wirth, 2015).

The average of all young people early leaving school average is 10,1 % in 2015 and 9,8 % in 2016. As far as gender is concerned, recent statistics from Eurostat (EU-LFS, 2017) show that in 2016 there was a higher proportion of boys (10,4 %) amongst early leavers from general education than girls (7,7 %).

In comparison with the earliest years the numbers are somehow smaller, but the problem remains important.

Online Resources

Eurostat data

<http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

Statistical data of Early leavers from education and training by sex and country of birth. Data checked 29.03.2018 (last update 21.12.2017).

Eurydice Brief. Tackling early leaving from education and training

<https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b0599400-7bac-11e5-9fae-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search>

This Eurydice Brief provides a summary of the joint Eurydice/Cedefop report Tackling Early Leaving from Education and Training in Europe: Strategies, Policies and Measures, which has focus on general education at school level.

Early school leaving. Lessons from research for policy makers.

<http://archimedes.ee/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/early-school-leaving-report.pdf>

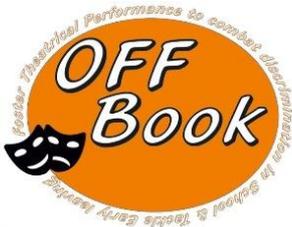
This report draws on European and international literature to examine the causes and consequences, and possible remedies for, Early School Leaving (ESL) in Europe.

CARMA> Early School Leaving – Statistics, Policies and Good Practices in Collaborative Learning

<http://carma-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/WP2-1-Country-specific-report-mapping-data-across-all-7-partner-countries.pdf>

This report explores the principal facts, data and figures of the European Union around the Early School Leaving.

European semester thematic factsheet. Early school leavers -2017



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https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/european-semester_thematic-factsheet_early-school-leavers_en.pdf

This document presents statistical data during period 2006-2016, also elucidates the next steps seeking to reduce this problem by 2020.

1.3. Policy and Early School Leaving

Education is in fact a relatively new field of EU action. It was only in the 80s that education really became part of the discussion on the priorities of the EU's action and, although the Maastricht Treaty still reaffirmed national exclusive competences over educational systems, at the same time its Article 126 authorized the EU adopt actions in order to contribute to "quality education". Since then the progress has been continuous and has led to European Council Conclusions of March 2000 in Lisbon, known as "The Lisbon Strategy", a mile stone, based on the goal transforming Europe into the most competitive and dynamic knowledge economy in the world. In this process of intervention on national strategic policies on education ESL has always been at the core of the discussion. It is important to underline that in its action on education the EU Commission has to maintain a careful balance between, on one hand, putting forward goals and objectives for the benefit of the EU economic space and, on the other, respect the domestic competence of Member States on all matters pertaining to education. At the same time one should wonder if the focus on education solely as a means to reduce poverty and enhance economic growth is not somehow limiting the relevance of an action on fostering innovative educational approaches.

Reducing the frequency of Early School Leaving in Europe is one of the main objectives set in the field of education. Starting from a regular data collection and monitoring process, policy-makers should provide quantitative and qualitative surveys on the early school leavers to adopt regulatory mechanisms and targeted policies.

According to the European Commission, efforts to tackle Early School Leaving should be based on a coordinated strategy between all the authority levels and the policy areas. What is necessary is implementing a political coordination within European actors, national authorities and public/private networks.

In this regard, legislative measures stressed the need for cooperation between Member States in order to develop quality education and successful school systems.

Following the above mentioned Lisbon Strategy, the European Parliament resolution on the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy (2005) identified in the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy's goals a top priority for the next five years; at the same time, the Council conclusions of May 2009 established a Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training ("ET 2020").

The Education Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving together with the European Parliament resolution on tackling early school leaving, both adopted in 2011, are additional supporting tools in the exchange of good practices between States, in providing preventive strategies and in the development of ES Leavers reintegration policies.

Finally, the Europe 2020 Strategy was launched in 2010 as the updated priority for the next decade, while targeting to create a smart, sustainable and inclusive European economy, aiming to reduce, in the field of education, the average European rate of early school leavers to less than 10% by 2020.

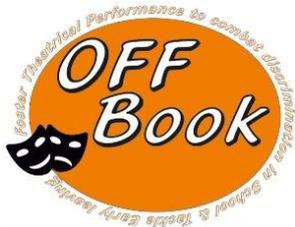
In line with the dissemination of European political strategies, the Council of Europe is actively pursuing cooperation in the area of education, supporting action at local and national level and promoting pluralism and quality teaching. Through the adoption of several important documents, including the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (CM/Rec(2010)7), Recommendation on the promotion and recognition of non-formal education / learning of young people (CM/Rec(2003)8) and Recommendation on the public responsibility for higher education and research (CM/Rec(2007)6) the States have been invited several times to identify priority challenges, probable solutions and examples of good practice.

The Council Recommendation adopted in 2011 underlines the need for a targeted comprehensive strategy, involving all levels of education and a strong community-based action.



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To be effective, the strategy should include three types of measures based on national, obvious circumstances, namely: prevention, compensation and intervention.

All these policies are respectively expected to: understand the sources of eventual dropping outs, support pupils' first difficulties in learning and help reintegrating early school leavers in education and training systems.

In tackling Early School Leaving a political and financial participation of multi-agents is required: in order to establish a synergetic approach between relevant policy areas and national, regional and local stakeholders it is necessary to enhance governance and cross-sector cooperation.

The literature on the topic demonstrates that, although there is clear evidence on the multiple costs related to ESL, policies adopted at national level have yet to demonstrate their value, due mainly to the lack of relevant and coherent data (Brunello-De Paola, 2013).

EU action on the issue is based on one hand on encouraging careful data collection and evaluation within member States and, on the other, on a traditional intergovernmental model based on States cooperation. EU funding on actions tackling ESL is transversal, continuous and clearly aimed at promoting a change within the school systems structures and teachers' competences which are perceived as the most relevant push factors of ESL.

Online Resources

Early School Leaving

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20170908-1>

Latest data on the phenomenon at European level

FP7 project Reducing Early School Leaving (2013-2018)

<https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/projects/resl-eu/deliverables/resl-eu-publications/>

List of main publications and results from the project's working groups and experts

European project CARMA

<http://carma-project.eu/>

Aspects related to the relevance of non-formal learning for students' motivation; the results of the European project CARMA. More information at <http://carma-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/WP2-1-Country-specific-report-mapping-data-across-all-7-partner-countries.pdf>

Council of the European Union. (2015)

<http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14441-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

"Council conclusions on reducing early school leaving and promoting success in school", Brussels, 14441/15, 24. 11. 2015

European Commission (2015)

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/183EN.pdf

"Eurydice Brief - Tackling Early Leaving from Education and Training in Europe"

https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/esl-group-report_en.pdf

EU Policy paper research by the Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving (2013)

Brunello-De Paola, EENEE Report

www.eenee.de/dms/EENEE/Analytical.../EENEE_AR17.pdf

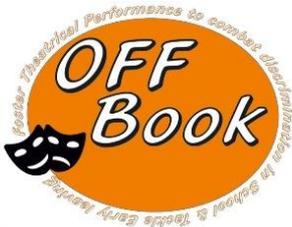
The costs of early school leaving in Europe (2013)

Eurostat. (2016)

http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Early_leaver_from_education_and_training

Glossary: Early leaver from Education and Training

Noel C. Timmerman, C. Macedo, E. Rocha, C. Araújo (2015). "Early School Leaving and Beyond"



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<https://www.fpce.up.pt/ciie/sites/default/files/ESC45Foreword.pdf>

1.4. Difficulty in the Eyes of the Teachers

The module describes the conditions and the risk factors that contribute to determine situations of school-related stress under the viewpoint of the Teachers. The focus is on (a) the analysis of strengths and weaknesses related to the phenomenon of Early School-Leaving and (b) the adoption of methodological tools to engage students and prevent the school unease, assuming a multi-factorial glance on the multiple issues connected with the school experience.

The module focuses on how it is possible to construct knowledge, skills and cultural artefacts enabling to tackle the phenomenon of school dropout at the level of schools and places of policy decision-making, starting from secondary school teachers' perspectives. The literature on the topic reveals that the risk factors, probably all common to the European countries, are personal factors (such as a variety of values leading to disorientation or the increasing problem of the individual to integrate him/herself) and sociocultural factors (such as low chance of getting an attractive job, relevance of education not being apparent enough in public, poverty- ripple effect on emotional wellbeing, such as bullying and stigmatisation from their peers, low socio-economic status/background of the area where the young people live, poor social behaviour outside school, sometimes leading to criminal prosecutions, high number of working hours outside school, thus leaving little time for school work and attendance) (Grange, 2011; Tilleczek et al., 2011; Colombo, 2008; Ress, 2007). How can teachers contribute to avoid the conditions that determine situations of school dropout among adolescents who are attending the secondary school? Which strategies and tools do teachers have in order to engage students in their learning paths? Against this background, the challenge lies in:

- Helping the teachers recognize the positive impact of promoting students' engagement in their learning processes and participation in the school life in order to hinder the school drop-out;
- Recognizing, enhancing and validating the educational practices and repertoires that teachers have, considered promising for learning practical knowledge in secondary school.

In order to meet those objectives, in the last decade there has been a greater sensitivity towards the dissemination in secondary school of teaching and learning models based on research and practical experience, such as experience-based learning (O'Neil & Marsick, 2009), practice-based learning (Billett, Harteis & Gruber, 2014), inquiry-based learning (Haq, 2017), which engage students in working together on real and meaningful problems, in and out classroom. In this sense, project and problem based learning (Krajcik & Blumenfeld, 2006; Savery, 2015), such as work related learning too (Tynjälä, 2009), give a strong contribution in proposing as often as possible new ways of contaminations among practical and theoretical knowledge. In order to prevent the mismatch between the students' expectations and the school offer, teachers are required to learn how to put into practice in their classes the following: (a) practical strategies and interactive teaching methods, (b) good basic knowledge in the core areas of literacy, numeracy and IT (Billett, Harteis & Gruber, 2014); (c) strategies of cultivation and development of cross-curricular competences, essential for all learning today, (d) flexible course opportunities, suited to each individual student's needs. According to those requirements, all the methods and techniques for learning by doing, cooperative learning and e-learning should be integrated and embedded within lessons in class, not only at the level of secondary school, but also at the level of primary school and Higher Education.

Online Resources

Prevention of Early School Leaving. Transnational Report

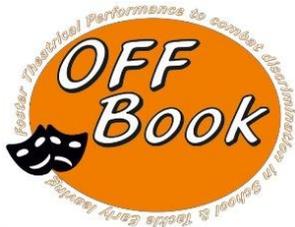
https://schoolinclusion.pixel-online.org/files/transnational_report/Transnational_Report_EN.pdf

This report presents the outcomes of a European funded projects aimed at investigating key strategies and



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educational training for teachers and key-actors in order to prevent early school Leaving.

Early School Leaving and Learners with Disabilities and/or Special Educational Needs: A Review of the Research Evidence Focusing on Europe (A. Dyson and G. Squires, eds.).

<https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/Early%20School%20Leaving%20Literature%20Review.pdf>

The document presents a review of the researches on the issues of school dropout and Learning disorders, with a particular attention on the European countries.

Understanding and preventing early school leaving

https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/experts/understanding_and_preventing_e.htm

The article identifies key-points and useful organizational strategies to deal with the phenomenon of Early School Leaving in secondary school.

International journal about the topic "Educational Reflective Practices Journal"

<https://www.francoangeli.it/riviste/sommario.asp?IDRivista=172&lingua=en&anno=2017>

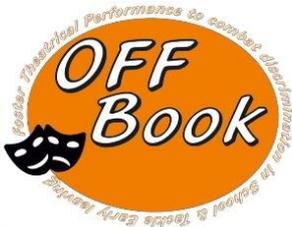
The Journal reports empirical research and articles about the topic of teaching and learning methods within secondary school and higher educational systems.

1.5. Difficulty in the Eyes of the Students

The module describes the conditions and the risk factors that contribute to determine situations of school-related stress and Early School Leaving under the viewpoint of the students. The focus is on needs and requests exposed by students, who ask to have the opportunity for: (a) doing engaging and practice-based experiences at school and (b) learning professionalizing and effective practical knowledge.

Exploring the problem of Early-School Leaving is connected with the necessity to analyse the signals that precede situations of school dropout and the contexts within which they are manifested: students often declare fragile motivations, decision-making incapacities, states of unease, transition phases, episodes of failure and descending trajectories as reasons for Early-School Leaving (Colombo, 2010), but not necessarily. The scientific literature suggested that these elements are not considered subjective attributes to be dealt with solely with individualized support devices for students, but features of the environments in which the student has learning experiences, and on which to intervene in a systemic way. What we want to highlight is how the phenomenon of school dropout finds roots in the situated experience of the students, in their paths of school failure, prelude of irregularities and desertions, but also in their disaffection for what they study, which they consider too far from what they will do as professionals in the future (Cranton & Cohen, 2013; Zurla, 2004). This hypothesis solicited to assume the investigated phenomenon of Early-School Leaving as the outcome and, at the same time, the epiphenomenon of the theoretical distance that students feel about what they study at school with regard to their future work. In this respect, early school leaving cannot be analysed through a linear cause-effect scheme; the meaningful determinants of school failure and school dropout are represented by a set of factors mutually interrelated (Lynch, 2000).

Among elements that contribute to influence the school experience in terms of satisfaction for the undertaken path, the school performance, the meanings of the idea of school and knowledge, the concept of self as a learner, the relationship with teachers, peers and parents are the most influent factors that students, especially the high school ones, consider as the most relevant (Gable, Wolf, 2012; Bracci, Grange, 2018). Secondary school students still complain about the distance between the theoretical knowledge from working practices and the persistence of decontextualized learning in formal educational environment (Howe & Ito, 2017; Kaneklin, 2008; Vicari, 2008); they prefer to learn a profession and to acquire a professional expertise. Students believe that teachers have no understanding of their problems and in fact are completely indifferent to them and this can flow into poor teacher / student relationships. Often, school does not evaluate the 'life skills' (<http://santachiaralab.unisi.it/teaching-learning-center/>) learned by the students in everyday life and



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consider this type of skills out of the outcomes of the formal education, so the students do not feel appreciated by the school. They feel as they were not well guided in choosing their courses/school or that the learning pathways are too long. Their needs are to receive more sympathetic listening to their problems and better course and career guidance. In this framework, great methodological contributions draw out from the integration at school of teaching and learning models based on research and practical experience, such as action learning (O' Neil & Marsick, 2009), practice-based learning (Billett, Harteis & Gruber, 2014), inquiry-based learning (Haq, 2017). Those practical methods of teaching and learning offer students the conditions to integrate what they learn at school with what they expect to do once in the labour market. Allowing students to experiment action-oriented knowledge and educational devices and tools that facilitate the application of what they learn, represents today an objective to be achieved also in order to prevent phenomena of Early School Leaving.

Online Resources

Eu Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving

http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/experts-groups/2011-2013/esl/esl-group-report_en.pdf

The documents illustrate the results of the Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving established to help European countries to implement successful policies against ESL.

Comparative Perspectives on Early School Leaving in the European Union

<https://www.routledge.com/Comparative-Perspectives-on-Early-School-Leaving-in-the-European-Union/Van-Praag-Nouwen-Van-Caudenberg-Clycq-Timmerman/p/book/9781138048072>

The volume provides an analysis of early school leaving (ESL) in nine European Union countries, with a particular focus on young people who were previously enrolled in educational institutions inside and outside mainstream secondary education.

Other Sources

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1.6. Conclusions

In order to conclude there are certain elements worth mentioning:

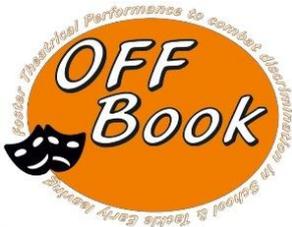
- First, ESL is a complex phenomenon with multifaceted reasons. From the analysis of the gathered data it is also clear that it is a transversal phenomenon to all European countries although with very different proportions. It is true that ESLs are decreasing at present and that various Member States have already reached the target share of 10% defined by the EU initiatives, at the same time the number of ESLs is still quite relevant counting 4 million young people across Europe;
- The second element for reflection is that, although with differences, some common features can be point out. ESL is not necessarily linked to subjective factors (such as individual marginalization and fragility) but rather to “environmental” factors at school. Dropping out thus finds roots in the situated experience of the students, in their paths of school failure, prelude of irregularities and desertions, but also in their disaffection for what they study;
- A third element refers to the fact that tackling Early School Leaving requires the involvement and participation of multi-agents and diverse stakeholders. Thus the involvement of schools, universities and civil society associations for theatre in Off Book follows the correct approach;
- The fourth and final element is the lack of consistent data in the quality of the actions tackling (or trying to tackle) ESL and in the educational content in general. Usually projects and suggestions launched at European level focus on quantitative elements, i.e. the number of actions adopted from a normative and administrative point of view at national and local level, the proportion of pupils involved in ESL, the proportion of teachers’ curriculum changes adopted at national level. Conversely, there is also a need to evaluate the impact on the school environment, teachers’ experience and students’ expectations and outcomes of an experience-learning based approach, in order to clearly demonstrate how the students’ “perception” about their classroom environment can be addressed and improved through such innovative teaching methods and how relevant from a qualitative point of view these approaches can be.

Online Resources

A whole school approach to reduce early school leaving

https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/early-school-leavers_en

EU commission report describes the problem of early school leaving, present links to sources of what has been done for solving the problem and what are the next steps.



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Reducing early school leaving: Key messages and policy support

https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/esl-group-report_en.pdf

Final Report of the Thematic Working Group of EU on Early School Leaving

**Education & Training 2020. Schools policy. A whole school approach to tackling early school leaving
Policy messages**

http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/experts-groups/2014-2015/school/early-leaving-policy_en.pdf

This paper presents the findings of the European Union's ET2020 Working Group on Schools Policy (2014-15)1 on its priority theme early school leaving (ESL).

Council of the European Union. (2015)

<http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14441-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

"Council conclusions on reducing early school leaving and promoting success in school", Brussels, 14441/15, 24. 11. 2015

Understanding and preventing early school leaving

https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/experts/understanding_and_preventing_e.htm

The article identifies key-points and useful organizational strategies to deal with the phenomenon of Early School Leaving in secondary school.

Early School Leaving: Reasons and Consequences

<http://store.ectap.ro/articole/660.pdf>

The article analyses ESL causes and its links to participation in education and school environment

Statistical Data

http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Early_leavers_from_education_and_training

This article presents statistics on early leavers from education and training in the European Union (EU) and forms part of an online publication on education and training in the EU.



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