



Reg. No.2014-1-RO01-KA201-002879_4

CUP H47E14000210006

CAREER ORIENTATION - BEST PRACTICES

1. OUR SCHOOL – BRIEF INTRODUCTION

The ITES A. DE VITI DE MARCO is located in Triggiano, a town in the South-East of Italy. It is a Technical secondary school where students, at the end of a five-year course, get a diploma. After a two-year general course, the *biennio*, students start the *triennio*, which is a more specific three-year course where they can choose among three different options, according to their specific career objectives and interests.

ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE AND MARKETING orientation: it aims at the development of skills and competences in language, business accounting, marketing, finance, and law and computer skills. Students learn how to set up a business and deal with management and fiscal issues and how to use application software. It is suitable for those who are interested in the world of business, people who want to carry out the work of an accountant and administrative activities within companies.

BUSINESS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS orientation: it aims at the development of skills and competences in language, business accounting, finance, law, and computer science. Students learn how to build and run a web site, to manage information networks, to build Smartphone and tablet applications. It is suitable for those who want to work in the sector of information technology.

TOURISM ORIENTATION: it aims at the development of linguistic skills and competences, together with skills in geography, history of art, computing and the

basics in accounting. Students learn three foreign languages. It is suitable for those who want to operate in the world of tourism.

At the end of the five years students can go to University or enter the world of work.

The Students attending our school come from Triggiano and from the surrounding towns of Capurso, and Noicattaro. They mainly belong to middle class families and families where there is a quite high rate of unemployment with parents living on odd jobs. Therefore most of the students, who at the end of the course get a diploma in our school, need to find a job. Only a few percentages of them can afford to go on studying and enroll at the university.

2. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND GOVERNANCE OF THE SYSTEM

With regard to governance, in Italy the management of the guidance services, within the sphere of employment services, is the concern of the Regions and the Local Authorities and so are responsibilities in the field of vocational training. With regard to the education system, on the other hand, the educational sector is the responsibility of the State.

Scholastic autonomy, which is based on **art. 21 of Law 59/1997**, is defined in terms of teaching and organizational choices, adapted to suit the different regional situations and in line with the aims of the national education system. Guidance is part of the official activities of all the schools and an integral part of their curricula. As stressed in the **2013** monitoring report by **Isfol** (Institute for the Development of Vocational Training of Workers) on education and vocational training, the situation of the guidance and placement services organized by the Regions at the local level is uneven from the point of view of regulations and provision of services and reveals the need for a national policy for guidance to put an end to the fragmentary situation of actions, practices, services and job roles. Recent actions with regard to guidance, in line with the Community instructions on lifelong guidance, have highlighted the importance of system approaches, in particular in terms of amplifying the services and improving the quality of the services offered and greater coordination and integration between the systems and subjects of education/training and the labor market.

The main functions of guidance acknowledged in the Guidelines are: **the educational function**, aimed at promoting, starting in primary school, the development of orientation skills that can enable each individual to manage his or

her auto-guidance independently; **the information function**, which can improve the ability of individuals to select and assess the information available and, possibly, to look for more; **the function of assistance** with specific transition experiences, related to activities of support to the development of decision-making and active control skills, capable of helping the person during moments of transition, with a view to eliminating the risk of failures; **the function of guidance counseling**, related to support for the ability to build personal educational and employment projects; **the system functions** (technical assistance, training operators, promoting quality, research and development) related to the system actions that need to back up guidance actions to ensure their quality and effectiveness, in all the local situations. This is the aim of the “**Linee Guida Nazionali sull’Orientamento**” (National Guidelines on Guidance), approved at a Joint Conference of the State, Regions, Local Authorities at the session of **December 2013**, which are an important step forward in the current process of defining the “National System of Lifelong Guidance in the field of education, vocational training and employment”. Within the sphere of the activities of the inter-institution Working Group on lifelong guidance, composed of the MIUR (Ministry of Education), MLPS (Ministry of Labor), MEF (Ministry of Finance), the Regions, Coordination of the Regions, the UPI (provinces), and the ANCI (municipalities), and which was entrusted with tasks of general policy, proposals and monitoring, the Guidelines announced the issue of a document on the fixing of minimum standards for the guidance services and the vocational qualifications of the operators, and also with determining the results expected and specific indicators aimed at measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the guidance actions. Above all, the Guidelines **recognize the right of every citizen to lifelong guidance**, to be ensured by means of specific policies aimed at promoting the employability and social inclusion of individuals and hence economic development. These policies are meant to be developed in an integrated manner by the State, the Regions and the Local Authorities, within a broad framework of actions concerning education, training of young people and adults, employment and social inclusion.

The actions related to multilevel governance concern:

- a) Coordination of resources and actions at various regional levels, with a view to overcoming the fragmentary nature of the actions;
- b) Support for the development of local, regional and national networks aimed at guidance;

- c) Sharing and developing tools and technologies for creating a unified network for information and backup to the offer of education, training and employment;
- d) Setting up a system for monitoring and evaluating guidance policies;
- e) Accrediting the services of guidance to individuals and the skills of the operators;
- f) Promoting an integrated guidance offer, through regional networks, by the various systems (school, training, university, employment, and social policies);
- g) Support for the development of an on-going process of innovation of shared tools and methodologies for action.

Also in line with the aims of the Youth Guarantee, the Guidelines identify the following among the specific aims for action with regard to guidance:

- **Fighting educational disruption**, by reducing non-attendance at and dropping out of school;
- **Supporting greater employability for young people** and adults, also by improving the quality of the guidance actions involving the public services for employment
- **Promoting social inclusion** through greater participation by families in the training and career choices of young people.

Attention to the subject of guidance is linked to the commitments of the Youth Guarantee, which foresees activation of the young person within four months of the start of unemployment status or of leaving the educational/career system, and also organizes the guarantee of activation in different options for back-to school, training, placement; actions of user profiling and guidance are foreseen by actions on the placement services, funded by the ESF.

Another important tool in the process of reforming the guidance system, currently in progress, is **Law 128/2013**, which contains the most recent regulations with regard to school-to-work transition. For the purpose of facilitating awareness of career opportunities and openings, that law ordered the amplification of the guidance systems in secondary schools, allocating 6.6 million euro (1.6 for 2013 and 5 for 2014) for that purpose. In particular, a closer connection is envisaged between school and the labor market, by means of training days in enterprises and periods of on-the-job training for students during the last two years of upper secondary school. With regard to the teachers, the law requires compulsory training and refresher

training activities with regard to systems of school-to-work alternation, possibly held at the enterprises.

Within the framework of the school system, **in February 2014 the MIUR** (Ministry of Education) issued the “**Linee guida nazionali sull’orientamento permanente**” (National guidelines for lifelong guidance), drawn up in line with the “Linee Guida Nazionali sull’Orientamento” (National guidelines for guidance) agreed on at the inter-institution level and with the Youth Guarantee, as well as in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy. These Guidelines, which replace the 2009 ones, confirm the value of guidance not merely in relation to school/training and employment transition but also with a view to lifelong development of each individual, necessary in order to be able to adapt to constantly evolving situations. With regard in particular to educational guidance, the document stresses the role played by the school system, through “guidance teaching” activities in order for the young people to acquire basic and transverse skills (life skills). This has to be accompanied by assistance and guidance counseling activities, to be carried out in response to specific individual or group needs. The Guidelines also introduce the role of the “guidance tutor”, currently being defined, for all the educational establishments, starting with the primary schools, with the duties of organizing and coordinating the guidance activities.

The schools, recognized as places of learning within which it is necessary to take guidance actions aimed at assisting the choice processes of the young person, thus promoting personal and career success, inclusion and employment, are also given the task of amplifying cooperation with the labor market, with associations and with the third sector, in order to reinforce and develop networks and partnerships at the local level; developing entrepreneurial experiences, in cooperation with economic bodies and enterprises and with the assistance of a tutor; creating, also with the participation of businesses, development laboratories responsible for career management; developing internships and on-the-job training activities, making them part of the training program of the upper secondary school.

The subject of school-to-work alternation has also been regulated. This started with art. 4 of delegated **Law no. 53/2003**, which introduced **alternation** as a way of carrying out the program of the second cycle and not as a system in itself. Subsequently, **Legislative Decree 77/2005** regulated alternation as a teaching method of the education system in order to enable students that have reached 15 years of age to carry out the studies of the second cycle while also alternating periods of study and of work, for the purpose of career guidance and of acquiring skills in demand on the labor market. A new boost for experiences of connection

between schools and the labor market is given by the regulations for reforming the second level secondary schools, issued on the basis of the **Gelmini Reform and contained in Presidential Decrees nos. 87, 88 and 89 of 2010, with regard, respectively, to Vocational Schools, Technical Schools and Secondary Schools.** Going back to and confirming the provisions of Leg. Dec. 77/2005, those regulations ordered, starting with school year 2010-2011, more **careful use of school-to-work alternation as a systematic method to envisage in the teaching curriculum of the various establishments, with different characteristics** depending on the type of school but with the common aim of facilitating the acquisition of skills that can facilitate transition to the labor market or access to higher studies. In Secondary Schools, alternation, on-the-job training or practical experience are an option, alongside the activation of study-work models or initiatives for projects; in the Technical Schools, internships, on-the-job training and school-to-work alternation are “teaching tools for carrying out study courses”; alternation is compulsory during the top two years of the Vocational Schools.

Law 128/2013 with regard to alternation requires the creation of an experimental program during the three- year period 2014–2016 for carrying out periods of on-the-job training for students of the last two years of the upper secondary schools. The MIUR, MEF, MLPS (education, finance, labor) inter-ministerial decree came out at the beginning of June 2014, laying down the terms for activation of the program related to courses alternating with apprenticeship contracts¹⁴, while regulations related to other forms of alternation (on-the-job training, internships and laboratory teaching), referred to in art.5 c. 4-ter of the same law are still pending.

In Italy, the public career guidance service aimed at young people of school-going age is provided outside the school sphere by services set up by the Regions, since they are responsible for career guidance. They organize the offer of guidance services independently, mainly delegating them to the Provinces.

Generally speaking, the main public figures in career guidance are the placement services, which sometimes have a dedicated “counter” for young people. Even lacking that, their services, in addition to bringing demand and supply together, include reception, information, guidance, and assistance with drawing up a vocational and/or training project.

In addition to the public services, the offer of guidance for young people can also be supplemented by various private bodies, including, for example, Chambers of Commerce, Training Authorities, Employment Agencies, trade unions, trade associations, schools and universities, employment consultants, based on the

liberalization of the market for employment services. With regard to the latter, attention is drawn to the annual organization by the employers' federation, Confindustria, of the “**Giornata Nazionale Orientagiovani**” (National youth guidance day) aimed at bringing businesses and young people together: in all the provinces, the industrial associations, in cooperation with schools and universities, give students and teachers the opportunity to get close to the business sector and to obtain useful information for subsequent placement in the labor market. There also are guidance services available on the web, which offer information related to professions and to training or vocational courses. They include: the Ministry of Labor's portal “**Cliclavoro**”, the new portal of the MUIR; the “**Orientaonline**” service of **Isfol** (Vocational Training Institute) and **Jobtel15**.

With regard to specific programs for facilitating school-to-work transition, the main national experience is the “**Formazione ed Innovazione per l'Occupazione - Scuola e Università**” (training and innovation for employment – school and university) program – FIO S&U, belonging to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies and carried out by Italia Lavoro. This is a national, experimental program for technical assistance to schools and universities. With regard to actions intended for secondary schools, FIO, in cooperation with the Regions, with which a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed, is aimed at intervening in the sphere of the transition from the education and training system to the labor market.

The service model prepared by the Program foresees:

- a) organization of a placement service inside schools, for assisting the educational establishments in organizing and providing services of guidance, intermediation and placement, and in the use of active labor policy arrangements and measures in line with the new role of practitioners on the labor market assigned to them by the Biagi law and in liaison with the network of local stakeholders (placement services, enterprises, universities, etc.). Technical assistance includes the qualification and inclusion of the operators of the school system;
- b) implementation of a customized guidance/placement system for the students, offering a series of services adaptable to suit the needs of the person holding or studying for a diploma;
- c) assistance with the establishment/strengthening of the territorial network of stakeholders, aimed at strengthening the Employment Services sector and the role of schools as a link between students and production resources in the area, in order to finalize the course of guidance in placement, facilitating the employability and employment of young people.

During 2014, the Program involved 383 secondary schools / school networks, for a total of 631 educational establishments, located in all the Regions and in the two Autonomous Provinces, training 1,691 school practitioners in the techniques of organizing and managing guidance and placement services. By June the course of guidance and placement of about 26,500 persons holding or studying for diplomas was completed, compared to the total of 57,450 expected to be reached before the end of the year.

In Italy, guidance is part of the official work of all the educational establishments and an integral part of the curricula, as well as of the entire educational and training process. During the last year of lower secondary school, the schools are required to take initiatives aimed at guiding young people in the choice between a scholastic and vocational system that they have to make when they have passed the examination at the end of the third year of lower secondary school. Subsequently, during upper secondary school and, in particular, during the last two years of the course, the schools are required to organize activities in preparation for the choice to be made at the end of studies (for instance, information on types of university studies, post-diploma vocational training courses and labor market, characteristics of the production sector/job roles; visits to Universities etc.).

The initiatives and the time devoted to them are the responsibility of each educational establishment and are therefore not easy to standardize. In its Guidance Report, presented in 2012 on the data of the previous year made on a sample of 3,274 schools¹⁶, Isfol highlighted how the largest part of guidance work was conducted inside the establishments and mainly consisted of guidance teaching, group discussions, information action and individual guidance interviews. External activities were mainly organized by upper secondary education establishments: participation in days dedicated to meetings with enterprises (job meetings), shows, career days, “open days”. The report pointed out that, even though guidance culture had become part of the education system, the guidance service in educational establishments was still not part of the system, but instead was occasional, mainly due to the scarcity of resources, both financial and human. It was also seen that networking with other services in the area, in particular Placement Services and Informagiovani, was not very widespread and neither were guidance activities in relation with the outside, nor activities for evaluating the guidance activities, limited to one third of the schools.

As far as alternating is concerned, on the basis of national monitoring reports drawn up by INDIRE (the national institute for educational documentation, innovation and research), on the alternation systems implemented by upper secondary schools,

following Leg. Dec. 77/2005 and the subsequent Gelmini Reform and, in particular, on the basis of the Summary of the monitoring report 201317, the positive results of the efforts made in the last few years to integrate school training with work experience can be seen. During school year 2012-13, recourse to alternation as a teaching method involved 45.6% of the upper secondary schools. Out of the approximately 11,600 school-to-work alternation program carried out, 67.1% were started by Vocational Schools, 22% by Technical Schools and 7.8% by Secondary Schools. In comparison with the previous school year, the number of programs increased by 18.5%, with the biggest increase reported by secondary schools. If we compare that number with the programs carried out in school year 2009-2010 (the year before the entry into force of the Reform of the secondary school), the increase is of 329%. A 58.2% of the alternation programs were carried out in enterprises and mainly involved students in the last two years.

The schools express their autonomy, decreed by law no. 59 of 1997, in the **Piano dell'offerta formative (POF)** (training offer plan) drawn up by the Teaching Staff and adopted by the School Council and by the Head of the School¹⁸, on the basis of an analysis of the needs and resources of the area: this document shows the curricular, extra-curricular, teaching and organizational planning of the establishment's activities. The annual version of the POF gives educational establishments the option, within the framework of the general and educational objectives laid down at the national level, of adapting the study plan to suit the needs of the relevant socio-economic context. In short, the Principal of the Establishment has the possibility of organizing a different teaching offer and organizing extra-curricular courses, also aimed at bringing education closer to the labor market.

In order to assist schools in designing curricula, with regard to the planning of alternation actions aimed at facilitating school-to-work transition, in March 2013 the Ministry of Education started a public consultation aimed at school operators on the document "Costruire insieme l'alternanza scuola-lavoro"¹⁹ (building school to-work alternation together). It deals with the most important subjects that concern the implementation of alternation systems: reference structures, local alliances, shared planning, organizational structure, implementation, evaluation of learning, certification, project evaluation, financial resources. In particular, the proposal considers alternation to be the starting point for the development of territorial networks between educational and training establishments, enterprises and other elements of the economic world and the third sector, the creation of which is also hoped for in the Fornero Labor Reform²⁰. The territorial networks are organized by means of various types of agreement, concerning a variable number of parties, and they can lead to stable forms of partnership, lasting for many years. For establishing

school-firm partnerships reference can also be made to the territorial networks for lifelong learning, foreseen by the **Intesa** (understanding) of December 2012 on policies for lifelong learning.

3. EDUCATIONAL CAREER ORIENTATION IN ITALY

In Italy we can identify Career Orientation in different moments of the student educational career.

The first moment in which students have to make a decision about their future is at the age of 13/14 when they must decide in which type of high school carry on their formative path. Students may choose from a range of 'High Schools' known as *licei* with either classical, linguistic, artistic or scientific specializations; vocational secondary education and technical schools (*istituto professionale e tecnico*) where students acquire vocational education and the technical skills they need in order to perform the tasks of a particular job; In this choice students are, above all, helped **by their families. The role of the school in that moment is unfortunately not as fundamental as it should** be. The educational system plans a cycle of visits among the different high schools to give students and parents the possibility to visit the school in which they probably will go and above all to give them the chance to speak both with the students attending the school and the teachers who work there. In this way students have more instruments of evaluation.

In vocational high school there is a second step in which career orientation is important. After the first two years, in fact, students have to decide the specialization to follow for their future professional career. In that moment a fundamental role is played by teachers who know the attitudes of their students and can give them assistance, information and above all suggestions based on their direct experience.

At the end of secondary school, at the age of 18, students in Italy are called to make a vital decision which will influence their lives. They have to decide if they enter the University, and above all which faculty among the many universities available all over Italy, or enter the labor market and start looking for a job. Career Orientation, at this stage, starts between the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth (and last) year of high education. Inside the school there is a person in charge for connecting students both with the labor market and University.

The academic world focuses on career orientation at the end of the first cycle. In some universities, after the first 3 years students have some interview with an academic tutor in charge for the research of an internship who will introduce the

student to the work area in which he studied. Thanks to this interview students can focus on their strengths and evaluate which is the sector in which they would like to work in the future. Once the work area is identified with the tutor, and a company is established and identified, they start the internship and the student will have the possibility to turn his studies in practice. It is also not unusual that from that moment onward the internship becomes cooperation and sometimes, turns into a real job offer.

4. CAREER ORIENTATION PRACTICES IN OUR SCHOOL

Since it was founded in 1999, our school has tried to involve students in activities or projects designed to promote a better understanding of themselves both as people and citizens and of the world of work. For this purpose the ITES A. de Viti de Marco has built up a network of contacts in local governmental and non-governmental institutions (Region of Puglia, Chamber of Commerce, Law Enforcement, Ufficio Scolastico Regionale, University of Bari, Fiera del Levante) and has entered into agreement with some cultural associations and businesses (Alliance Française of Bari, Lord Byron Institute, Theatres, public employment services, private companies). The cooperation has resulted in projects, most of which have been implemented with European and regional funds. Some of the activities have been focused mainly on career orientation. Here is a list of the most valuable projects:

a) “MEET THE PROFESSIONALS”

The project has been promoted by “Osservatorio Provinciale per l’Orientamento di Bari – Azione 1 (Provincial Orientation Observatory of Bari) and was open to all the secondary schools in the province. In each of the participating schools, the students in the last year have been given the chance to meet young professionals and entrepreneurs. A survey was first conducted in order to get to know which sectors the students were mainly interested in, and professionals from the working sectors which resulted from the poll, were invited to school. During these meetings the professionals talked about their personal experience in the world of work, about the positive and negative aspects of their jobs, about how they got their positions and students in turn talked about their hopes and fears about their future and also asked for information about the job. The meetings made quite an impact on the students.

b) “I STUDY AND...WORK”

The economy of our territory is mainly based on trade which represents a main

sector where young people can apply for a job. Our school has signed an agreement with a local big shopping centre and some local businesses to give our students the opportunity of unpaid work experience.

The project has been carried out for two years now and it will be done in the next years, too. "I study and...work" intends to create a connection between the schooling system and the world of work and involves students from the *triennio*, meaning the 3rd, 4th and 5th years of our school.

Students apply for the placement and send their CVs to the businesses participating in the project. They are interviewed and if the interview goes well they are offered a period of apprenticeship. They work for about a month in the afternoons and on Sundays.

The project has resulted in benefits both for the school and for the students.

As far as the teachers are concerned it fosters:

- Exchange of experiences with the world of work;
- Assessment of curricula;
- Updating of the didactic methodologies.

As far as the students are concerned it fosters:

- Knowledge of the world of work;
- Development of professional competences;
- Awareness of their potential.

Some of the students, who have proven to be competent during the apprenticeship experience, have been offered a real contract of employment.

c) "TOURIST GUIDE"

In recent years our region has had considerable touristic development, which requires strategic management of the products in an increasingly global culture. Tourism is a resource which can generate jobs and it is for this reason that our school has implemented activities aimed at preparing our students to work in the world of tourism.

The project 'TOURIST GUIDE' involved students of 4th and 5th years of the course specializing in tourism. The students have gathered information about cathedrals, monuments, churches, etc. in Bari and also about legends and anecdotes connected to the city and they have organized the information in a report in French and Italian. Then each student, on the basis of the information collected, has prepared an itinerary and in turn, walking through, the old city, (Bari Vecchia), the students have shown their schoolmates around. They have explained the itinerary both in Italian and French.

All the activity was filmed. The activity was also performed for groups of younger teenagers from Middle school during a school orientation activity.

The project has given students the opportunity to implement the acquired skills and competences and 'to learn by doing'.

d) "TOURISM ENTERTAINER"

Our school for 11 years has organized a period of unpaid training in a tourist resort for students who specialize in tourism.

The course is divided into two stages of 50 hours each which take place in two different school years.

The students first attend, in our school, ten two-hour training workshops, which focus on entertainment performances and activities.

Then the students experience a thirty- hour apprenticeship in a holiday resort. At the end they get a certificate stating they have attended the training course.

The following school year the students participate in the second and last stage of the project which is also divided into a learning period of twenty hours followed by thirty-hour on-job training.

At the end of the training the participants get a certificate.

The first stage allows an initial training in the areas of sports, recreational activities and dramatization; the 2nd stage is aimed at the acquisition of the techniques for the management and implementation of dramatization and elocution.

The objective of this project is to enrich the cultural and general knowledge of the students, to promote socialization and responsibility, to help students discover and develop their potential. It offers students an additional qualification to include in

their portfolio which gives them more opportunities to find a job in the tourism sector.

e) "THE WORK IN THE ERA OF WEB 2.0"

This project was financed with EU funds. It was a PON (National Operative Program) Action C5, which deals with training and apprenticeship in Italy and in European countries.

The project has involved 16 students of our school, chosen among those who have shown a particular interest in computing. The students have participated in an apprenticeship of three weeks in Rimini in a big business, the ASSOFORM which deals with information technology products and vocational training.

Throughout the period of the internship the students were allowed to operate actively in the different phases of the production and in the product management. They attended a one hundred and twenty-hour learning course on the most important markup languages (HTML, CSS, PHP, and SQL) and participated in the international meeting "Be-Wizard". The meeting lasts three days and is held every year. It is a training course, which focuses on online tourism, 2.0 hospitality, e-commerce and web – business.

The project was planned to pursue the following objectives:

- 1 - Participation in an educational program in order to complete schooling;
- 2 - Knowledge of the labor market and organization and management of a company;
- 3 - Development of the creative abilities and individual, organizational, interpersonal skills.

Students have learnt to work individually and in groups together with the staff of the organization.

Most of the students who participated in the internship, are currently working in companies requiring the competences they acquired during the unpaid work experience.

f) “ON BOARD”

The project was carried out in the school year 2013/2014 for the students from the *triennio* and it had the objective of combining the theoretical training with practical activities of internships and workshops on a ship. It was an opportunity to integrate a school trip to Barcelona with an internship on board. The students involved had the opportunity to immerse themselves in a new work environment.

The students from the tourism course were involved in receptive activities of the ship. They had to speak in two languages: Italian and Spanish. They were explained the duties and responsibilities by the Hotel Manager and they learned to welcome passengers, carry out check-in procedures and manage groups on board.

Students from the Administration, Finance and Marketing course were shown the administrative offices of the ship, where they could witness the administrative management of a ship in all its aspects.

It was a short experience but students appreciated it.

g) “SCHOOL-WORK ALTERNATION”

The project is financed by EU funds on application to the Regional office which is in charge of dealing with European projects. It has been done more than once over the recent years and our school has been granted funds for carrying it out the next school year. The ‘School-work alternation’ is a learning model that allows students of secondary school, aged between 15 and 18, to alternate schooling and unpaid training in a company or an entity of the territory. It is a new vision of education, which arises from the need to overcome the separation between education and the world of work, and is based on the idea that education and work experience may be combined into a single training project.

The project is planned, implemented, monitored and assessed, under the responsibility of the school, on the basis of appropriate agreements with the participating companies and external organizations. For the purpose of a constructive link between the training activities in the school and those carried out in the company, the school appoints a tutor of the course, who is a teacher, who plays the role of assistant and checks that the activities are performed properly together with the company tutor. The company tutor is appointed by the business manager and favors the inclusion of the students in the operating environment, assists them in the job training and provides any relevant information to verify and evaluate the

activities of the student and the effectiveness of the educational process. At the end of the course the school takes into account the information provided by the company tutor about each student, and issues a certificate to state the skills acquired during the training.

The goals of Alternation School-Work project are:

- 1 – Implementing a flexible learning, linking classroom training to practical experience;
- 2 - Improving the knowledge acquired by the students in the school with the acquisition of competences that can be used on the labor market;
- 3 - Promoting the orientation, personal vocations, interests and individual learning styles of young people;
- 4 - Creating a link between schooling and the cultural, social and economic development of the territory.

h) "ALMA DIPLOMA"

The ITE "De Viti De Marco" has also joined the project Alma Diploma. It is an on line association which links together secondary schools and companies with the objectives of:

- 1 - Providing schools with information to verify the effectiveness of the training courses offered;
- 2 - Providing tools for guidance in the choice of the university;
- 3 - Facilitating access of graduates to the work market;
- 4 - Helping companies find qualified personnel;
- 5 - Reducing the time occurring between demand and supply of a job.

It is a kind of work market on line, designed to facilitate – after students get a (diploma) degree – the entry into the world of work in Italy and in Europe, and also to make contacts with the Italian Universities if students intend to continue their studies. This association follows the directives of the recent legislation of the Minister of Work and Education which requires the publication of the CVs of the students in the final year. The work market acts as an intermediary between students

and companies .The schools which adhere to the association **Alma Diploma** have access to various services including:

- **AlmaOrientati questionnaire:** an individual journey that helps a person to reflect on post-diploma choices and gives information and insights on the basis of an analysis of skills, interests and expectations for the world of work;
- **AlmaDiploma questionnaire:** allows students to make an assessment of their school experience. It will be also useful to schools which on the basis of their results can improve and offer students better services;
- **CVs:** students enter their CVs and they can compile and update them at any time. They always have a CV in Europass format to respond to job offers. Moreover, companies associated with AlmaDiploma can select a resume and propose jobs directly.
- **Jobs:** companies associated with AlmaDiploma advertise vacancies directly on the site of AlmaDiploma. Graduates check the bulletin board of job offers and have to remember that member companies have access to the CVs found in the database only if they authorize the publication of their CVs.

i) “PEER GUIDANCE”

It was carried out some years ago. The project involved thirty students who graduated our school. They were invited to meet the students attending the last year and relate the story of their lives after they left school. They spoke about the problems they were faced with and expressed their ideas about the role of education in the achievement of their career objectives. It was a worthwhile project where students had the chance to listen to the actual experiences lived by peers and to get an idea of what they were likely to face after leaving school. It resulted in a benefit also for the school because it gave the opportunity to better the methodological approach according to the suggestions given by former students. The project was carried out by two teachers who drew up statistics about students who had succeeded in getting a job, students who could/could not afford to enroll at university, students who left university before finishing the course, students who got a university degree, students who were still unemployed.

The project was carried out only for a year.

j) “JOURNALIST FOR TWO DAYS”

Some students who were good at writing spent two days on the premises of a newspaper. They wrote articles and participated in all the activities undertaken before publishing a newspaper. Students were really excited and glad about the experience.

5. FOREIGN LANGUAGE CERTIFICATIONS

The ITES A. de Viti de Marco organizes extracurricular courses to encourage students to achieve language certificates in English, French, Spanish and German according to the Common European Framework of languages. The CEF provides the means for educational administrators, teachers, teacher trainers, etc., to reflect on their current practice, with a view to coordinating their efforts and to ensuring that they meet the real needs of the learners for whom they are responsible. The provision of objective criteria for describing language proficiency facilitates the mutual recognition of qualifications gained in different learning contexts, and accordingly aid European mobility. At work the language certification helps to enrich the CV and promotes integration and professional development in an international context. In schools and university it represents a further qualification, because it is requested for the enrollment in the European universities. Italian university faculties recognize an educational value (CFU university formative credit) to the achievement of language certificates. In some cases certificated language skills and competences are requested in order to achieve the ultimate title.

6. CAREER ORIENTATION WEAKNESSES

Choosing a career can be a very difficult decision for young adults and one in which parents are often intricately involved, but without the competences to give a real help or address it in the best way. What lacks in Italy is a more humane component, the possibility to have a personal tutor from the beginning of the educational course who will monitor the student pointing on his strength and working on his weaknesses. In this way education could become effective, efficient and oriented to the world of work.

Thus far, pending a clearer definition of the role of guidance tutor as foreseen by the national Guidelines for lifelong Guidance of the MIUR of February 2014, in schools,

guidance work is done by teachers, known as “Guidance Referents” and appointed on an annual basis by the Principal of the school. Pending the publication of the document on fixing the standards of guidance services and the qualifications of the operators announced in the Linee Guida Nazionali sull’Orientamento inter-istituzionali (Inter-institution national guidelines on guidance), at present the referents for guidance are not required to undergo specific training. Any skills they possess are mainly acquired voluntarily, through various types of training courses, and rarely on the initiative of the school to which they belong. What is more, their work consists of organizing extra-curricular work for students and families, carrying out actions of an individual type, such as, for example, “listening counters”, and conducting relations with the outside.

Currently services dedicated to school-to-work transition have mainly been put into effect within the framework of projects with specific financing, or left to individual schools or teachers.

So far only a limited number of students, usually fifteen per project, have benefited from the projects financed with European funds.

Although some projects have resulted in benefits both for the school and for the students they are not redone because of lack of funds.

In addition, as for our school, we lack statistics about what students do after they leave our school, how many of our students were successful in their careers, how many entered the world of work, etc., which could help to improve the educational activity.

We lack a psychologist who could help identify the area of strengths and weaknesses of students. We think it is extremely important for students to understand who they are, and nurture their strengths, rather than wasting energy and resources trying to fix our areas of non-strength as it usually happens when we assess students.

What is more, we lack cooperation with regional centers, local agencies and organizations responsible for the employment of people with disabilities.