

Rediscovering authority in education: a new opportunity within and beyond school education

Abstract

Nowadays, the notion of pedagogical authority gives rise to much discussion and various interpretations. Some authors argue that authority has no place in our postmodern world, and they stress this by using expressions such as crisis, extinction, erosion, sunset, eclipse; others are in search of new solutions, both practical and theoretical.

A particularly original approach is offered by some philosophers and thinkers who have proposed an understanding of authority based on its etymological origin: the derivation from the Latin verb "augere" (to grow) points to an idea of authority linked to inner growth. I explore this direction through a phenomenological-eidetic research carried out with Italian and Lithuanian teachers, interviewed with regard to their experience in accompanying the growth of the youth. The aim is that of rediscovering and revaluing the notion of pedagogical authority both ontologically and experientially. In this way, a new horizon of meaning opens up, one in which the word "authority" can befriend us again, lighting up our daily experience well beyond the world of school education.