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## (dis)orientation in education:

## philosophy (un)compass for navigating uncertainty

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### abstract

In a rapidly evolving global landscape marked by political, economic, and social upheavals, the role - and meaning - of education has never been more critical. It is not merely about imparting knowledge or preparing students for predefined career paths but also about nurturing their (c)abilities to navigate uncertainty, foster self- and otherness-exploration, and embrace collective inquiry. This joint paper emerged from a round table conversation held at the World Philosophy Conference 2025 on the topic of orientation, questioning one of the main assumptions on the role of education adopted within the Western human development frames and policies. In fact, despite the many and disparate pedagogical models available, no doubt is raised about the evidence that education has youth orientation and guidance as proper mission and goal. Starting from this discussion, the aim of the paper is to synthesize insights and suggestions on the transformative effect and potential of philosophical inquiry in education, incorporating contributions from various experiences, perspectives, and aspirations towards reimagining the process of educational (dis)orientation within an improvising futures frame. The implications of these alternative perspectives and proposals in re-designing the school orientation curriculum and activities are highlighted,

emphasizing the importance of embracing a new pedagogy of uncertainty.

**keywords:** educational orientation; philosophical (dis)orientation; community of inquiry; uncertainty.

**(des)orientación en educación:** filosofía  
(des)brújula para navegar en la  
incertidumbre

### resumen

En un panorama mundial en rápida evolución marcado por convulsiones políticas, económicas y sociales, el papel -y el significado- de la educación nunca ha sido más crítico. No se trata simplemente de impartir conocimientos o preparar a los estudiantes para carreras predefinidas, sino también de fomentar sus *(c)apabilities* para navegar por la incertidumbre, fomentar la autoexploración y la exploración de la otredad, y abrazar la investigación colectiva. Este documento conjunto surgió de una mesa redonda celebrada en la Conferencia Mundial de Filosofía 2025 sobre el tema de la orientación, cuestionando uno de los principales supuestos sobre el papel de la educación adoptados en los marcos y políticas occidentales de desarrollo humano. De hecho, a pesar de los muchos y dispares modelos pedagógicos disponibles, no se pone en duda la evidencia de que la educación tiene como misión y objetivo propios la orientación y guía de los jóvenes. Partiendo de este debate, el objetivo de este artículo es sintetizar ideas y sugerencias sobre el efecto transformador y el potencial de la investigación filosófica en la educación, incorporando contribuciones de diversas experiencias, perspectivas y aspiraciones para reimaginar el proceso de (des)orientación educativa dentro de un marco de futuros improvisados. Se destacan las implicaciones de estas perspectivas y propuestas alternativas en el rediseño del currículo y las actividades de orientación escolar, haciendo hincapié

en la importancia de adoptar una nueva pedagogía de la incertidumbre.

**keywords:** orientación educativa; (des)orientación filosófica; comunidad de investigación; incertidumbre.

**des(orientação) na educação:** filosofia  
(des)bússola para navegar na incerteza

### resumo

Em um panorama mundial em rápida evolução e marcado por convulsões políticas, econômicas e sociais, o papel – e significado – da educação nunca foi mais crítico. Não se trata apenas de transmitir conhecimentos ou preparar os estudantes para profissões predefinidas, mas de cultivar suas habilidades de navegar pela incerteza, promover a exploração de si mesmo e do outro e abraçar a investigação coletiva. Este artigo conjunto surgiu de uma conversa, em uma mesa redonda realizada na Conferência Mundial de Filosofia de 2025 a partir do tema da orientação, questionando um dos principais pressupostos sobre o papel da educação adotados nos quadros e políticas de desenvolvimento humano ocidentais. De fato, apesar dos numerosos e diversos modelos pedagógicos disponíveis, não há dúvidas sobre a evidenciada missão e objetivo da educação de orientar e guiar os jovens. Partindo dessa discussão, o objetivo do artigo é sintetizar percepções e sugestões sobre o efeito transformador e o potencial da investigação filosófica na educação, incorporando contribuições de várias experiências, perspectivas e aspirações para reimaginar o processo de (des)orientação educacional, dentro de um panorama de futuros improvisados. Destacam-se as implicações dessas perspectivas e propostas alternativas no remodelamento do currículo e das atividades de orientação escolar, enfatizando-se a importância da adoção de uma nova pedagogia da incerteza.

**palavras-chave:** orientação educacional; (des)orientação filosófica; comunidade de investigação; incerteza.

## **(dis)orientation in education: philosophy (un)compass for navigating uncertainty**

### ***nothing wrong in education: the right to err and embracing uncertainty in learning***

It is mostly assumed that education, despite the many and disparate pedagogical models adopted within the main Western human development frames and policies, has youth orientation and guidance as proper mission and goal. This is not surprising considering the etymological meaning of 'Education' (from Latin: *educere* as *ex-ducere*) which is maintained in many different languages and well known: hinting at expressions like 'to draw out, extract, branch out, lead out, and bring into view.' Anyway, such a 'release into the open,' seems to be missing in the common use of the word, often assimilated with apprenticeship processes such as training, forgetting that education, however, cannot be dominated or controlled. On the contrary, it is the dose of unpredictability and freedom that distinguish education from other kinds of 'domestication processes' and recognizing the risky and ambiguous components entailed in every educational relationship seems crucial and diriment, especially when they are invoked as orientation commitments. Instead, although embedded by intentionality, education happens in us and to us beyond our wanting and doing. Moreover, staying in the etymological perspective, what is interesting in the genealogy of the word education is the *ex-* which proceeds the movement direction, for *σχολῶ* is 'outside' of *οἶκος*; meaning that the 'pedagogue'/educator leads a child 'out' and 'into the clearing.' Remaining in the lands of the word origin, it is interesting to note that, "[...] in the Nicomachean *Ethics* and later in his politics, Aristotle emphasizes how *οἶκος* is linked to a hierarchical setting, focused on productivity as well as mere biological survival. As such, education would not be assimilated to training and the learning involved cannot be limited within the foreseeable realm of quantity or goal-driven productivity of the familiar home. Instead, to truly 'learn,' the 'educands' have to enter a place of 'non-familiarity.' Echoing Plato's cave analogy, educating and/as learning are ongoing possibilities that occur in the clearing when grace and will allow us. This describes both a time and a spatial quality: a threefold present as it is now (present), there (present), and

gift (present)<sup>1</sup>.” (Weber, B.; Wiercinski, A., 2024, p. 8) In this time-seeing the modality of education, the ‘when’ of wondering and the ‘where’ of wandering are not decided in advance, rather every moment would open a new path on the way of being by disclosures of ever-new ways of seeing the world, and then, an increasing of possibilities might occur, thereby changing both humans and things in the world. In this framework, focusing on errancy and/of thinking becomes crucial.

The theme of errancy appears quite interesting in relation to the orientation issue at hand. In fact, currently it emerges mainly according to the meaning of making errors and the experience of doing mistakes, which lead to ‘bad’ problem-solution, decision-making, or choices in our own life design. In recent times, many educational theories tend to oversimplify and generalize the experience of error in the context of learning – positioning errors both in terms of mistakes as incidents useful to learn, and/or as something wrong bringing negative effects and offering ways to overcome failure. Of course, some research has been done in the area of error and learning (e.g., Boumans & Hon, 2014; Corder, 1967; Friesen, 2017; Hon, 1995; James, 1998; Roberts, 2011; Schwartz, 1976; William, 1981), but most arrive at the conclusion that error has to be overcome quickly in order to ‘maximize’ learning<sup>2</sup>. An example of works on error is Hon’s paper on the distinction between an avoidable mistake and an unavoidable error (Hon, 1995). Manoff (2024), however, quickly identifies the difficulty of such a rather simplistic distinction. Moreover, he asks: “What is the limit of epistemic responsibility we assign to any particular individual in conducting a scientific experiment or formulating a theory?” (Manoff, 2024, p. 88). The implications are even emphasized when transposing the question in our own life design.

Thus, the problem remains that we often do not know what we reasonably do not know or ignore and what is ‘only’ a mistake. What then happens when we err? Given Hon’s distinction, it describes a situation where a question sends us on a quest, and we do not (yet) know where to find an answer. Or in other words, it

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<sup>1</sup> See Walter Kohan talk on the Present(s) of the Question, talk given at the University of British Columbia, October 2022.

<sup>2</sup> An exception here is the original PhD thesis by Itamar Manoff (2024). He offers an intricate, smart and deep exploration of the experiences of error in language learning and teaching. His work surely will change our perspective regarding the existential experience of error.

means that there is not a straight line from the question to an answer. We all remember the times of schooling when we quickly crammed so many facts into our head, the day before or on the day of an exam. How much of that knowledge do we still remember? Has it really 'changed' us? It is productive learning, linear, often entailing the memorization of facts that are quickly learned and quickly forgotten. Maybe learning is not and cannot be linear, but rather the 'detour' (like the Delphi labyrinth of healing) is the most direct (ideal) way, because the meandering leads to a deeper, existential learning (Weber, 2007). This does not mean we have to mislead students or order them to fail. Just as we do not push a toddler over to make them fall as part of learning to walk, we recognize that swaying from side to side is a natural and essential part to gain experience with gravity, balance, and motion. However, how does this tie into learning to think? And why is erring an inherent part of learning to think?

On the issue and remaining in the Western framework, the German philosopher Martin Heidegger<sup>3</sup> in one of his late seminars from 1951, claims: "The most thought-provoking in our thought-provoking time is that we are still not thinking."<sup>4</sup> He continues affirming that in order to think, we have to be "ready to learn to think" (p. 3). Heidegger's claim here is twofold and suggests a twofold educational orientation of thinking. Firstly, we can only know what thinking means if we do it ourselves. And secondly, thinking provokes us, meaning that we 'find ourselves' called or even urged to think. When called into this urgency to think, it is not an activity of the 'mind' or aloof play. Instead, it exiles us from everydayness, estranges us from what is known, thereby creating an existential urgency that cannot be 'arranged', but rather rearranges us: and turns our own existence into a question that stands into Being like an odd rusty nail. Thus, at the heart of such thinking is the experience of "knowing that we do not know." We are given back to ourselves as a question<sup>5</sup>. As such, it opens the future as undetermined. The orientation of this backward questioning is not self-directed to

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<sup>3</sup> The authors would like to distance themselves from any political decisions and statements made by Martin Heidegger. They took extra care to only include quotes and ideas that are not in any way related to his political statements and ideas, which are vehemently rejected.

<sup>4</sup> The lecture series was published as *Was heißt Denken?* in 1954 by Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen.

<sup>5</sup> See Augustine's *Mihi quaestio factus sum*.

finally give an answer on who we are, but to move thinking forward, toward the unknown which would emerge as a possibility to be. Wondering the unknown would be the kind of wandering thinking we need to move from our certainty. When Heidegger (1959/1966) talks about the “great thoughtlessness” [*grosse Gedankenlosigkeit*], he contrasts “contemplative”, true thinking with a merely “calculative thinking” [*das rechnende Denken*] (p. 46), which he sees as a thinking that is goal-driven, productive, and “races from one aspect to the next” (p. 46). He writes that “[t]houghtlessness is an uncanny visitor who comes and goes everywhere in today’s world. For nowadays we take in everything in the quickest and cheapest way, only to forget it just as quickly, instantly. That is to say, there is an emphasis on speed and quick answers (problem solving) at the expense of sustainability and complexity. And he ponders:

Perhaps there is a thinking which is more sober than the irresistible race of rationalization and the sweeping character of cybernetics. Perhaps there is a thinking outside of the distinction of rational and irrational still more sober than scientific technology, more sober and thus removed, without effect and yet having its own necessity” (Heidegger, 1969/1972, p. 72).

Thus, the question is: what has led us into this ‘race’ away from thinking? Is it possible to learn to ‘think’ again?

Of course, at the heart of this lies the old ‘ignorantia’ in philosophy: to give oneself into the possibility and the right of ‘not knowing.’ Instead of fleeing the moment of suspense, to dwell in the abyss that a true question might reveal. This is a calling, a true vocation. Heidegger writes: “We are thinking. To say it circumspectly, we are attempting to let ourselves become involved in this relatedness to Being. We are attempting to learn thinking” (Heidegger, 1954/1968, p. 86). This means that by responding, we are not staying ‘outside’ of what has been opened; rather, we are becoming entangled with Being itself. In other words, we can learn thinking only if we radically unlearn what thinking has been traditionally (see Heidegger, 1954/1968, p. 8), and instead, we are provoked to think. “The English word “provoke” comes from the Latin *provocare* to challenge, a synthesis of *pro-* forth and *vocare*, to call. Thus, thinking might occur in our humbleness, fragility, and sensibility toward what has become questionable and in doubt.” (Wolf; Weber, 2023). What has been brought into suspense frees us to explore and ... to err.

### *orienting education towards the improvisational, collective nature of learning*

What would be a school of ‘learning to think’ of such a shape? Where would an ‘errant education’ be oriented and how does the educational compass work in a suspenseful time? These questions should be at the core of the Educational Orientation (EO) policies, although the framework of ‘educational guidance’ – as referred to in the UE context – has long been integral to modern schooling, initially conceived to link education with the professional world. In early 20th-century industrial societies, schools were tasked with preparing individuals for specific roles based on aptitude and socio-economic status. This approach reflected a static view of career paths, emphasizing rigid roles and vocational development.

By the late 20th century, industrial societies transitioned into financial and information-driven economies. This shift prompted a re-evaluation of educational orientation, expanding its scope to lifelong learning and personal development. UNESCO’s 1990 *World Declaration on Education for All* highlighted education as a lifelong endeavor essential for navigating complex societies. Similarly, the World Health Organization’s 1994 emphasis on life skills education underscored the importance of equipping individuals with adaptive competencies. Despite diverse orientation models – from vocational guidance to socio-cognitive approaches – contemporary EO was tasked with prioritizing fostering critical thinking and adaptability. Although the risk of reducing critical thinking to effective problem-solving and efficient decision making, and adaptability to responsive flexibility to market instability remains very high (Santi, 2019), this recent shift of priorities contributed to moving beyond informational and content-oriented support, towards cultivating skills and capabilities for lifelong navigation of uncertainty. Education systems must now be aware of its role and responsibility in helping individuals not only to acquire knowledge but also develop the capacity to reconfigure personal and social projects throughout life. As Nussbaum (2010) noted, responsible reasoning and respectful exchange are vital for resolving differences peacefully. Scholars such as Dumont, Istance, and Benavides (2010) argue that embracing uncertainty in the curriculum fosters critical thinking and



innovation. It seems that what we need in the so called “Age of Uncertainty” (Barnett, 2007) is a pedagogy that is able to deal with “epistemological chaos” (Buckingham (2014), “discontinuity in learning” (English, 2013), “welcoming confusion” (Gordon, 2006), preparing young people for complex and supercomplex decision-making, therefore developing “uncertainty competences” to learn for an unknow future (Barnett, 2012), that include specific sets of skills, knowledge, attitudes and capabilities needed to handle uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity in diverse contexts (Tauritz, 2012).

In this scenario, *Philosophy for Children* (P4C) offers a compelling framework for EO by emphasizing the importance of sharing the human experience of errancy through collective dialogue in a ‘community of inquiry’. In an era marked by societal polarization, P4C cultivates the interest and commitment to be engaged in reasoned discourse not to learn to debate, to be right or to have the right answer, but to collaboratively address complex issues by exercising the “complex thinking” (Lipman, 2003). P4C offers methodological devices to situate the new priorities of educational guidance within a dialogical school environment where students collectively confront open-ended questions by engaging themselves and together into complexity, fostering imagination, invention, curiosity, exercising empathy, compassion, and attention towards other minds and opinions, enfueling logical reasoning with creative and caring thinking. This “thinking without railing” was an adventure (*ad-venire* in Latin), because it brought the future towards us yet undetermined, as truly Other. To remain in the moment of ‘suspense’ is a right, not just a privilege, as we are ‘only’ ever alive in this present moment, where potentialities unfold before us into an undetermined future among other minds and bodies, but called out in our irreplaceability. Listening and attending to the diverse voices and different perspectives, we always arrive unprepared but open, unlearned but receptive, undecided but compassionate.

In the context of the community of inquiry, dis-orientation becomes more than a personal feeling of loss, to emerge as a common situation of losing certainties which could be transformed into an opportunity to change, a living experience of a strong educational value. Rather than seeking – or even memorizing – definitive answers to ready-made questions, students learn to



navigate uncertainty through dialogue and shared inquiry. This approach equips them with tools to address life's unpredictable challenges and nurtures resilience in the face of ambiguity. Reimagining EO requires acknowledging that to orient and being oriented in complex societies is inherently collective and dynamic. Dis-orientation can serve as a catalyst for creative exploration and new understanding. Philosophy, particularly P4C, offers a methodological basis for guiding students through this process as a communal path.

Incorporating dis-orientation into EO involves redefining the purpose of education itself. Rather than merely preparing students for pre-defined futures, education should empower them to engage in ongoing processes of questioning and rethinking. As Wolf & Weber (2023) highlight, genuine thinking arises from existential urgency – a willingness to dwell in uncertainty and question established norms. This form of thinking fosters a shared space for dialogue, where students can collectively explore and articulate ideas. By embracing this approach, education becomes an adventure into the unknown, fostering a sense of irreplaceable individuality within a community context, continuously re-shaped by interpersonal relationships and in relation with the world. Habiting the world means for humans to be continually learning and adapting, especially in complex and uncertain situations. That's true, especially in a time of fast change such as this era. Anyway, the reductionism which has led to transforming schools into "learnification" environments (Biesta, 2006) for good adapters is as risky as conservatorism and an almost incomplete operationalization of a simplistic idea of pragmatism (Lavery & Gregory, 2017). According to Gould and Vrba (1982), the need to recover "the missing dimension of exaptation" seems urgent to escape a Darwinist view and practice of orientation based on the selection rule and logic. That is particularly urgent when the "reparative futures" (Santi & Ghedin, 2024), the youth are demanding, ask for creative efforts which are incommensurable under the current assessment and criteria. As Santi noted "Exaptation may be viewed as a sort of creative adaptation which is not demanded or elicited by the environment; it consists in a variation in the normalized, regular function, and a veering toward unexplored and 'needless' uses" (Santi, 2017, p. 636). Dis-orientation becomes a good circumstance and opportunity to experience a sort

of “functioning serendipity” and education as an *exaptational time* which happens every day.

Dis-orientation (Barreneche, 2025) is/as improvisation, embraces and appears in daily life, even without knowing it, as a generative process, responding to unexpected events that are happening. While not all ex/adaptation to change is improvisation, all successful improvisations are good ex/adaptive responses to change. In improvisation, there is a presence that sets the improviser in a present where the past appears as a possibility, even for transgression. From this perspective, tradition may be considered a standard that is built on previous transgressions; so, we could state that improvisation works alongside tradition by applying rules and standards, while continuously breaking with it to produce new forms (Santi & Illetterati, 2010). In this sense, improvisation is not a synonym for cluelessness. It has a deep relationship with being a technical expert that has “at its disposal” for use in times of improvisation, but it is also a listener to an outcome of unexpected, surprising and spontaneous imagination born of an experience which can never be planted in advance. Far from being generated in the vacuum, “Improvisation requires a powerful memory: memory of the parameters of an instrument, of the body, of available technology, the parameters of a work's structure and ones placed within it at any one time, the parameters of an idiom, a genre and its history, its possibilities.” (Peters, 2009, p. 82). As the Socratic ignorance which knows that unknowns, improvisation sees unforeseen.

In education then, improvisation lies in-between the paradox of recognizing, learning and teaching something that repeats the past and the creation of an undisclosed present (Santi & Zorzi, 2016). There are always unexpected responses, questions, content that appears, moments that were not planned. From a theatrical perspective, improvising is a response to contingency as a collaborative emergence toward a successful novelty. As Scott Thomson (2007) remembers us, criteria for successful collective improvisation emphasize the relationships that are the barometer of the “wellbeing of the community”; but mostly of its well-becoming (Biggeri & Santi, 2012). Successful improvisations are processes in which everyone is really listening to each other and their impulses, and in which the creative paths – discovered or originated –

are successful because involved the real honest intentions to collaborate and co-create by the participants (Zorzi & Santi, 2023). A wide range of actions is possible at each moment, the actors don't know what is going to follow an action, and they don't know their actions will be interpreted and elaborated (Sawyer, 2010). The performance will have to do then, with the listening, the openness of what the other is bringing and the response from which improvisation occurs that creates a new scene, or in education, a new way of understanding together (Barreneche, 2005). Also, errors become in improvisation an incident, an accident that can be valorized and turn into an opportunity for growth (Santi & Illetterati, 2010).

Experiencing improvisation as a collective practice can also become a real creative opportunity, in contrast to the repetitiveness that becomes homologation and creates the false certainty that everything can be repeated and reproduced, also relationships (Zorzi & Santi, 2023). The incalculable unrepeatable, the non-standardizable, is for the educational phenomenon an opportunity that embraces the polyphonic complexity of a society marked by continuous transformations, movable boundaries, fluid and changing dynamics, characterized by discontinuity and uncertainty (Santi & Zorzi, 2020; Zorzi & Gottardo, 2022). Improvisational aptitudes become capable and conscious dispositions and responses to cope with complex, unforeseen and unpredictable situations; tools that start from *originary* – rather than 'original' – and *personified* – rather than 'individual' – dispositions, that the person acquires or consciously refines, that emerge in experience, from the daily actions and on which they can critically reflect (Zorzi et al., 2019).

This, then, could be a horizon to be cultivated by orienting teachers who, through the care of generative action born of the mistakes, contingencies and difficulties of the classroom (but also of life), create conditions so that orientation can be an opportunity for all and everyone. Promoting an orientation practice that contemplates not only the individual variable but also the community variable means fostering research inherently understood not as a predetermined path but as the possibility of (re)searching and changing paths; a horizon that helps students to continually ask questions rather than put answers at the center; a

movement that values the present, the lost and the error as possibilities and not as something to run away from. This reinterpretation of orientation offers an opportunity to shed light on significant aspects already present within it, while simultaneously providing a renewed perspective that enhances its meaning and opens new avenues for exploration (Barreneche, 2025). The inherently exploratory nature of P4C does not merely guide students in a linear sense; rather, it fosters a productive disorientation, encouraging students to navigate uncertainty. This disorienting practice is embedded structurally within the P4C curriculum and emerges naturally through the flow of community dialogue and inquiry (Barreneche & Santi, 2022).

In this sense, dis-orientation may inspire the collective meaning and community building among a class. Teaching as well in the process the potentialities and the importance of otherness. In searching for meaning through the practice of P4C, one experiences and learns the importance of the other (Barreneche, 2025). Indeed, it is not the possession of the appropriate thinking skills that enables dialogue to blossom, but it is the practice of dialogue itself (with all the implications of contextuality) that fosters the development of thinking (Lipman, 2003). In communities of inquiry, it is embraced the building of cognitive and affective ground with and between diverse members of the class. Recognizing diversity and difference as a source, on a broad spectrum, and actively honoring multiple voices and perspectives (Vadeboncoeur et al., 2015). In this context, practice gives community members the opportunity to look together toward different horizons, to delve into new perspectives, and to change ideas because of collective thought process. It is an ongoing, open-ended, anti-totalizing quest to be different from what we are, to constitute ourselves into what we are not yet (Kohan, 2015).

### *reimagining educational orientation as a wandering practice*

Historically, EO was designed to align education with professional needs, often reducing learners to their economic utility. However, as societies transition to complex, interconnected systems, the scope of EO must expand. Not because they no longer focus on utilitarianism and the logic of the market and productivity, but

precisely because they have come to focus almost exclusively on this aspect. As an educational tool, EO should have as its principle the suspension of social logic, especially if this social logic impedes school processes such as the use of time, distancing from social/family time, and preparation for an independent life.

In this sense, philosophy offers a methodological basis for this transformation. As argued above, education should empower students to dwell in the complexity of decision-making, viewing error and uncertainty as a space of possibility and creativity, rather than a source of anxiety. This shift demands a paradigm that celebrates the improvisational, collective nature of learning – encouraging students to see themselves as active participants in shaping their futures.

And so, philosophy for ‘children’, while diminishing the feeling of certainty as to what things are, in its practice greatly increases the knowledge as to what they can be (Kohan, 2006). It removes the somewhat arrogant dogmatism of what is known, liberating doubt and keeping alive the sense of wonder by showing familiar things in an unfamiliar way (Barreneche, 2025). In contrast to the crystallization of reality or paradigm. After all, school education is not about preparing children for the adult world (or worse: preparing them to fix the mistakes of adults) but about creating the possibilities for inventing new worlds. As Dewey said, children are not “candidates for adulthood”: the end of the educational process is not afterwards, but in the now, in the child's own experience of building and inhabiting worlds (Dewey, 1899, p. 33, 1902, p. 13). Childhood opens forces that can counter their line of escape, where everything can become something else, where all the absurdities of life are on the same level of understanding (Gaivota, 2024a). And this idea, this notion of childhood and position in front of the world, in front of the given, in wonder and restlessness to study – and not in the adequacy to learn. This movement can only be achieved if educational processes open to another kinetic quality, another vectorial notation. When pursuing this path, there is a kind of movement like that of the traveler who assumes the position of foreigner, stranger, always in a vertiginous movement (Gaivota, 2019). Unlike the touristic one, who moves to reach the desired location, this is a movement concentrated on its intensity rather than on its extension; more

in thickness than in length, more in density than in dilatation. Its form is found more in the quality than in the quantity, more in the delay than in the speed of movement (Kohan, 2012). It is a nomadic movement, not a sedentary one (Gaivota, 2024b).

Deleuze and Guattari, when talking about travel, more specifically when dealing with nomadism, seem to admit that the displacement that concerns it is not related to extension, to surface, but of another order. The nomad is someone who always lives *in the passage*, in other words, between two points. There is no point of arrival; the points along the way only exist as part of the path: they are subordinate to it. A river appears as part of the path, but the path is not a tool to find the river. The river, like everything that passes through, is left behind and carried on in a certain way. In the case of the sedentary, the opposite happens: the points determine the path, because the path is made to move between the beginning and the end of itself. That is, the path serves its ends. The road leads to the river and back to the house, and you only walk it when you need to reach the river or the house. In the case of the nomad, the point does not define the path, but on the contrary, is defined by it. A tree, a lake or a stone take on different configurations and functions depending on the type of journey, the distance covered, the number of people and the speed of the travelers. Thus, the points do not configure the principles of nomadic displacement, but rather its consequences (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 53).

If we take this other idea of movement into account, we can better think about the displacement operated by EO and why we propose this re-signification of it as dis-orientation. A sedentary orientation, which establishes the start and end points, can only work from a utilitarian perspective, from a mercantile society that gives value only to what is productive. A sedentary EO perspective seems, in the context in which we find ourselves, doomed to repeat what Dewey (1902) understands as the artificial separation between the end and the means of education, reducing the educational process to mechanical preparation for a predetermined future, instead of valuing it as a lived and meaningful experience in itself. Without the change of perspective we are suggesting, EO in our context runs the serious risk of reproducing what Rancière (1987) calls coarsening: the

process by which the inequality of intelligences is naturalized, establishing a distance between those who know and those who must be led to a predetermined knowledge. In this model, EO would become (or remain) yet another practice of explanation, reinforcing the hierarchical and utilitarian logic that transforms education into a closed path, where the learner is seen only as a candidate for a future state, and not as a subject who is already capable of learning and thinking for themselves. On the contrary, when conceived as a dis-orientation, EO can open up space for intellectual emancipation, understood as the verification of the equality of intelligences and the possibility for everyone to build their own paths of knowledge (Rancière, 1987, p. 31).

Our proposal in bringing up these concepts of travel and nomadism is to suggest that this emancipation occurs through a kind of errantry or errance, either understood in the sense of error or wandering. Rooted in the idea of errance, education time emerges as a distinct temporal dimension -an open, indeterminate space shaped by the unfolding of inquiry rather than by preordained outcomes. It may begin with a prompt or a question, yet it resists closure or fixed destinations (Barreneche, 2025) Like the infant, the errant approaches the world from a position of established knowledge but being sensitive to the knowledge of the world. It conceives the possibility of error as part of the path. And it invites a particular way of relating to this error, the 'non-knowledge.' It conceives in its movement a displacement, an ebb and flow of thought, which is unfinished and far from absolute certainty (Gaivota, 2024b). Thus, putting into perspective and questioning what is given as 'true' or 'correct.' Philosophical inquiry can challenge regimes of visibility and control, offering a cryptical stance that resists conformity.

Errantry also brings rupture and revolution: the errant is someone who does not conform to the status quo, for whom things have no fixed state, and who seeks to interrupt and make impossible the continuity of what is being (Kohan, 2012). It establishes a renewed relationship with what is presented – one that does not take the given for granted. Rather than conforming to established norms or institutionalized frameworks, it thinks and lives from a place of nonconformity and resistance, questioning what is presumed to be and challenging the dictates of



what 'should be', to injustice and subjugation. Isn't that what educational orientation existing for in schools?

And more importantly, school is precisely the place where it is possible to create a safe space for this exercise in error. It is through a practice of (dis)orientation that students can be invited to get lost, even in a world that constantly demands they be found. School can offer both time and space for a kind of 'safe insecurity,' allowing for an open-ended exploration of reality and relationships – one that is not predetermined and, as such, can give rise to the emergence of new worlds. The impossibility of separating thought and life, which is characteristic of wandering, is therefore fundamental to educational guidance. In this practice of wandering, teachers and students embark on openness and wandering praxis. It runs through them; it resonates in their own lives and in their own existence. Within P4C's practice, lives the potentiality of a particular relationship with wandering and loss. Different from the image of the teacher as a decisive and self-confident person who, in front of the class, hands over their knowledge to the students. Different from the idea that the fewer mistakes' students make – the less error – the better. Different, and because it works through difference, an educational practice that can stand up to the homogenizing forces that permeate our complex and so often captured societies.

### *a (dis)orienting conclusion*

If true thinking is not just an intellectual exercise but a transformative vocation that rearranges our very existence, inviting us to step into an undetermined future. By integrating the principles of Philosophy for Children (P4C), Educational Orientation (EO) can evolve from a rigid process of mapping predetermined futures into one that nurtures adaptability, creativity, and resilience.

Education, then, becomes a collective adventure – a dynamic space where students and educators navigate life's uncertainties together. In fostering a culture of questioning and embracing the unknown, we are more prepared as individuals for our future paths.

From a professional development perspective, we should build on this vision by emphasizing that school and university orientation should be a continuous journey of self-exploration and reflection, rather than a rushed decision at the end of school or after graduation. This approach enables students to uncover their uniqueness, guiding them toward fulfilling and authentic choices. The real challenge today is that of enriching the strict conception of 'good job' with a larger idea of good working life, emphasizing the equal dignity of all professions as a form of solidary relationships within flourishing communities, rejecting the notion that any one job is inherently superior, affirming that laboriousness is a way to stay more than connected, as bounded humanity. Working as a meaningful human activity based on reciprocity, passion, commitment, and enthusiasm gives the true value of a profession. Every contribution to society, no matter what the scale, is significant and deserves respect.

In this process of signification of working as a component of a life which works, the responsibility of educators is underscored: helping students discover their passions and hidden abilities should be a priority to nurture their aspirations. Discover implies inquiry; inquiry implies uncertainty: the spiral of (dis)orientation re-emerges. EO, especially when addressed to young adults, demands a shift away from external pressures, such as societal expectations or job market trends, and toward a more personalized focus on individual strengths and desirable future. While career opportunities are undeniably important, it is time to remember that the ultimate purpose of learning is to enrich individuals holistically, preparing them for all aspects of life, not just professional challenges.

By embracing this reimagined approach to education, we champion the dignity of diverse life paths, celebrate the richness of shared inquiry, and unlock the profound potential for human flourishing. Creating educational collective spaces of questioning, error and improvisation is how individuals will be able to orient, dis-orient, and re-orient their lives.

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