

THE PROBLEM WE ADDRESS

Young people's transition to the professional world has been described as a sensible moment: it is a moment of **rupture** of the *status quo* (Zittoun, 2006). Oftentimes, expectations on apprenticeship and the world of work are not met (Masdonati et al., 2010). This might **create interpersonal conflicts at the workplace**.

Conflict has high costs for people, for organizations and for the society at all. It impacts on individuals' well-being, on relationships and – as a consequence – on the progress of work in organizations.

THE SCIENTIFIC STARTING POINTS

We consider argumentation as a dialogic process that starts from a difference of opinion (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004). Argumentative discussions allow managing disagreement in an ideally reasonable way; thus, **argumentation is an alternative to conflict escalation** (Greco Morasso, 2011).

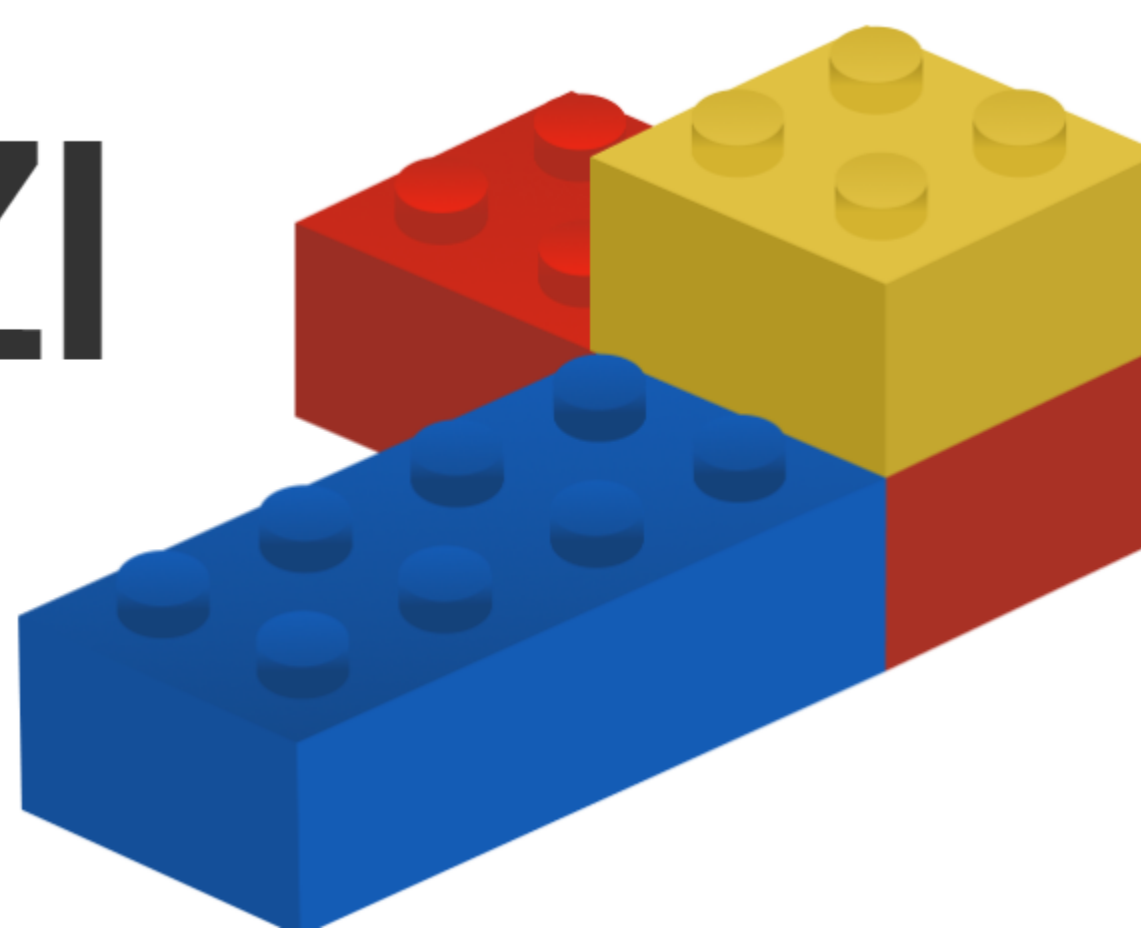
- **Reasonableness**, including rationality and **emotions** (Rigotti & Greco, 2005; Greco, Cigada & Jermini, 2024).
- **Respect of the interlocutors**, availability to listen.
- **Decentration**, i.e. the capacity to see that there might be different perspectives on the same topic (Greco, 2020).

Argumentation tools can be learnt and applied to approach disagreement and avoid its escalation into violent conflict

COSTRUIRE SPAZI DI DIALOGO

BUILDING DIALOGUE SPACES TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS

<https://spazidialogo.ch/>



THE PROJECT IN A NUTSHELL

We introduce **argumentation as an alternative to conflict escalation** to vocational education students of the Ticino Canton in Southern Switzerland (starting from October 2025).

Core of the project: in each school, starting from an activity with **LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology**, we then move on to introduce some discursive tools related to argumentation as an alternative to conflict.

LEGO® SERIOUS
PLAY® SESSION

THEORY-DRIVEN
SESSION

FINAL MEETING
FOR SCHOOLS

PODCASTS, WEBSITE, FLYER AND EXHIBITS OF LEGO® MODELS

ARGUMENTATION AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO CONFLICT: MAIN TOOLS PROPOSED TO THE STUDENTS

- **Understanding conflict escalation**, from disagreement to interpersonal hostility, **and how to stop it**.
- **Linguistic tools** (types of questions, careful use of adjectives) to construct **a dialogue space based on argumentation**.
- **Reason and emotions** in dialogue.

CRITICAL ASPECTS AND “WORK IN PROGRESS” AREAS

Striving for precision, avoiding technicalities: In order to present argumentation to an audience that has little background in the field.

Ethical concerns: Protecting respect and a dialogue space for young students (including minors) that can potentially disclose sensible personal information during the project.

PROJECT GOALS

Advancing argumentation research and practice by working on its relevance to address societal problems.

Promote values of a *restorative culture* approach (Astrologo, 2021), which, being based on authentic and mindful dialogue, is related to argumentation.

Our ultimate goal is recuperating the Aristotelian triangle connecting argumentation (*logos*) with healthy relationships (*eudaimonia*, “happiness”) in the society (*polis*) (Piazza, 2015). We consider the broader society as well as the small societies (little *poleis*) represented by relationships at work, in the family and with friends.

References

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