The pedagogist as diversity manager and mediator between University and Labour world*

Il pedagogista in quanto diversity manager e mediatore tra Università e Mondo del Lavoro

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ABSTRACT

The diversity of gender, culture, ability is recognized as a value both at the level of common sense and in the context of national and European legislation. It is necessary to question the effectiveness of work placement strategies, as a human qualification device, of disabled people who complete their university studies. How to manage risks and opportunities in order to effectively guide the work placement of disabled people who reach the end of their university career? This contribution aims to offer an in-depth study on the subject, with a particular focus on the figure of the pedagogist as a pedagogical operator of mediation between the University and the world of work.

La diversità di genere, cultura, abilità è riconosciuta in quanto valore sia a livello del senso comune sia nel contesto nella Legislazione europea. È necessario, pertanto, interrogarsi circa l'efficacia delle strategie di collocamento lavorativo in quanto dispositivo di qualificazione umana e professionale, delle persone con disabilità che abbiano completato il proprio percorso di studi universitari. Come gestire rischi e opportunità al fine di guidare di il percorso di collocamento lavorativo per soggetti con disabilità che abbiano concluso il proprio percorso universitario? Il presente contributo si propone di offrire uno studio dell'argomento, con una particolare attenzione alla figura del pedagogista in quanto mediatore tra Università e mondo del Lavoro.

Foreword

The diversity of gender, culture, ability is recognized as a value both at the level of common sense and in the context of national and European legislation. Specifically in the world of work, however, this recognition remains more formal than substantial. In this regard, it is evident that the companies that say they are attentive to these issues do so mostly to obtain a return of image in the context of marketing strategies as well as to obtain the tax reliefs guaranteed by the law. In this regard, it is necessary to question the effectiveness of work placement strategies, as a human qualification device, of disabled people who complete their university studies (Medeghini, 2015).

This is all the more urgent since, in the context of an employment crisis in our endemic country, increasingly accentuated by the recession caused by the Covid19 pandemic, the economically and ethically impoverished social fabric has hindered the right to equal opportunities, accentuating inequalities and penalizing, in particular, women, young people and people with forms of disability and vulnerability, reducing the opportunities for access to decent work. In this context, a strategic role is played by the current globalization of cognitive technologies, which reshape learning processes and styles in all formal, non-formal and informal areas of experience, generating particularly compelling risks and opportunities for those involved in pedagogy and didactics. Among the risks, there is undoubtedly that of witnessing the end of the era of competence, in which the disinformation caused by a naive and uncritical access to the amount of information provided by the multiple media is accompanied by the clouding of the skills of dialogue, of reflection, metacognition. Among the opportunities, on the other hand, there is the fact that this technological transformation goes hand in hand with the possibility, offered by telematic networks, of creating unprecedented synergies between individuals, entities, institutions but also between information, knowledge and cultures (Baudrillard, 2010). How to manage risks and opportunities in order to effectively guide the work placement of disabled people who reach the end of their university career?

The answer to this question lies in a vast and profound revision in an inclusive key of the organizational structures of the world of work which requires to overcome technical approaches aimed at decisive and simplistically applied solutions from above: for example, increasing the number of employees with disabilities. Instead, it is a question of implementing complex forms of transformation of organizational cultures in the light of a «sensitivity to differences» capable of promoting the renewal of work contexts, of their physical and symbolic dimensions: of practices and systems of action, the quality of relations and communications, personnel management models, work organization processes, etc. This sensitivity, in fact, appears to constitute the necessary humus for generating the aptitude for

questioning stereotypes and prejudices and for valuing differences (Canevaro, 2007).

Therefore, it is necessary to deepen the professional profile of a mediation figure with a high pedagogical figure, who knows how to promote key and transversal skills in the company staff, and who knows how to accompany, in a virtuous connection between School, University and Companies, job placement of new graduates and graduates with disabilities or with SLD. All this in order to encourage the emergence of actions that allow the person with disabilities to self-determine and all colleagues to acquire and develop truly inclusive mental habits, from a sociocratic point of view.

1. Disabling work and hiding the differences in the Market-Media System.

Work, in the West, reflects precise social expectations closely linked to the late capitalist mode of production. Working, therefore, today means being consciously linked to a system that expresses its clear preference in favor of what has been very aptly defined "the vertigo of the body-simulacrum" (Gallelli, 2012). A system which, consequently, does not tolerate its wealth-producing apparatus being reproduced by the workforce of subjects who, because of their physical, psychic, social difference, do not fall within its canons of «ideal corporeality». What is the root of this subtle concealment of differences?

It is undoubtedly to be recognized in the Market-Media System, which is not limited to the commodification of every entity of nature and technology, but produces the reification of the subject-persons, who are transformed into objects useful for the dynamics of reproduction of the material and immaterial wealth which the System itself feeds on. As a consequence of this reification, it becomes necessary that the subjectivities useful to the system are characterized by precise canons of physical prowess, today powerfully conveyed by digital media, and the subjects that are not useful to it are disabled and discarded (Cottini, 2016).

The violence of the impact of the capitalist mode of production on the concrete life of so many reified subjects, who are thrown into the market as oppressed workers, has been rightly denounced by political movements for the affirmation of universal rights that have already established themselves since the nineteenth century and culminated in the vast emancipatory movement of the 1960s, characterized by the great ideals of the social redemption of the lower classes and the right to self-fulfillment in a fair and solid society. These movements met with tenacious opposition from the capital, which was (and still is) focused on the molecularization of the collective body of subjects / workers. The latter, systemically hybridized with increasingly technologically sophisticated machines, must engage relentlessly, without time limits and regardless of the waste of energy in work, occupying the remaining time in purely recreational socialization activities.

It determines the total suppression of that qualified and significant socialization which consists in becoming aware of one's condition, and allows one to organize oneself and, ultimately, to promote dynamics of personal and collective liberation. Not surprisingly, work was becoming more and more characterized as an activity to which people in good health and able to carry out a planned job description should have dedicated themselves without asking questions of meaning about their business and, above all, about their destiny. By leveraging the great technological resources that feed large late-capitalist production (Severino, 2009), the powerful ideals that characterized the political movements of the second half

of the 1960s, the market-media capitalist system (Frabboni) responded by manufacturing mass of powerful illusions. The most subtle of them is that which consists in offering humanity the mirage of material well-being as the supreme goal of existence, a mirage nourished by the unrealistic perspective of eternal maintenance, through artificial methods, of healthiness and beauty (Renna 2021).

The marked tendency of the capitalist economy to bet everything on the gain of reassurance in the exclusive sphere of the materiality of a life without ideals and without purposes, in which the maximum goal is represented by the possession of goods in quantity, indefinitely enjoyable by subjects in full physical efficiency, leads singular and collective existences, in themselves so rich in potentialities, relationships, values, projects, towards nihilistic outcomes, the most serious of which is the loss of ideal inspiration. The recommended and proposed alternative through the illusory lights of tablets, I-pods, etc. consists in the prostration before the moloch of the dematerialized market, which proposes infinite variations of pseudosocialization and media entertainment in exchange for the abdication from critical and creative thinking, as well as the ability and possibility of living an authentically democratic sociality (Demetrio, 1998), of to which one of the undisputed foundations is represented by the enhancement of differences. The condition of these subjects, reified and expropriated of dimensions of fundamental importance of their humanity such as the possibility of building meaningful and lasting relationships, is characterized by the perception of living in a timeless time, of having no ties, no history, no past. This existential condition is thus reflected in a condition of cultural discomfort (Galimberti, 2007) which is mirrored in a disabling of the capacity for existential planning[1].

It should also be said, then, that in the context of the late capitalist system in which the market sees person-subjects only as consumers, the latter are continually urged by the market-media system to lead an existence characterized by significant traits of narcissism. Projected into the dreamlike dimension of cyberspace, in which the most recent digital technologies always generate new virtual environments in which to spend time in socializing activities, these, today, are more than ever induced to conform to the models of beauty and prestige of the influencers, the which expose their bodies and their experiences to the admiration of their followers and the disapproval of the haters.

It is hardly necessary to point out the concept according to which, within this organization of spaces and times in both concrete and virtual life contexts, disabled subjectivities are included within the «playful» dimension of cyberspace oneirism, but are irremediably excluded. from the production system that does not accept the tacit criticism represented by the non-conformity, both on the physical and on the intellectual level, to the canons recognized, accepted and promoted by the System, which reflects an image of the person with disabilities as rejected, suffering, prosthetic, child (Medreghini, 2015).

In fact, therefore, in the present time, the existential planning capacity so necessary, above all for differently able subjectivities, which, starting from secondary school education, should prepare even more accurately than the so-called «able-bodied», future perspectives that contemplate the possibility of access to a dignified social life, of which an essential part is represented by access to the world of

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1   Intellectively and emotionally characterized both by maturity, autonomy and generativity (Loiodice, 2019), and by a healthy «immaturity» (Demetrio, 1998) which consists in feeling situated in a condition of ambivalence, existential planning generates positive change as it moves from an evolutionary view of the course of life.

work. Instead, they find themselves «disabled» by a system which, in fact, considers them different from its own reference models. As highlighted by Michel Foucault (1978), in fact, in the course of modern Western history sovereign power has put in place particularly subtle devices in the management of both individual and social bodies, with the aim of obtaining their subjugation through the deployment of molecular control and governance practices (Foucault, 1978, 1992; Massa, 1992).

Sovereign power was no longer exercised only, thus, in the usual formula of the power of life and death over subjects (vitae necisque potestas), or in the faculty of making people die and letting live, but in the much more subtle (and not for this reason) less coercive) formula of the power to govern the life of the subjects right down to the most hidden meanders of their daily practices, which Foucault expressed in the formula «power to let live and to let die» (Foucault, 1978). Therefore, the thanato-politics of the classical sovereign was replaced by bio-politics, the expression of a sovereign power much more pervasive and conditioning than the classic repressive force of the medieval king: pastoral power.

In the time of turbo-capitalism, therefore, pastoral power is actualized through the exercise of practices of surveillance and, at the same time, of homologation, with which the indocilitation of bodies is obtained through their enslavement to the dictates of pervasive consumerist fashions, served up in increasingly intimate areas of daily life, fashions that feed a real system of social narcissism (Gallelli, 2012). Direct effect on the self-perception of citizens now wanted and shaped as virtual consumers, hi-tech, social, and finally cyborg due to the increasingly pervasive presence of technologies in fundamental areas of existence such as affectivity and work, is the the impression of living in an eternal present and in a state of suspension, in which there is no possibility of growth beyond the standards indicated as optimal by the integrated market-media system (Frabboni, 2009).

The molecular regime of control of the bodies, typical of our Western societies of opulence and consumerism, feeds on practices marked by forced enjoyment and the commodification of bodies, subjected to a post-modern mysticism of self-control over a «perfect» body by exhibit in virtual squares (Gallelli, 2012). The consumer society (Baudrillard, 2010), a direct subsidiary of the turbocapitalist economy, encourages narcissistic behavior. Within this framework, it is necessary to re-propose for everyone, and even more so for the differently able people who today are disabled for work, the challenge of existential re-planning, which knows how to promote specific skills, including the possibility of adapting to situations unprecedented, the ability to project oneself into a future not suffered or heterodirected, but acted as organized, despite the inevitable existential insecuritas that characterizes life on Earth, through the development of the ability to orient, decide, choose, assume responsibility and care of oneself and of others: in a word, of self-determination (Cottini, 2016). This in the awareness that the well-being of the community generates the well-being of the individual, which cannot exist without a network of social protections. In this way, the existential and, specifically in this discussion, the working planning of differently able subjects and today actually disabled by the Media-Market System, represents an urgent request for the promotion of collective well-being, as well as the necessary democratic stability of the countries in which the rule of law is based on the inclusion of all. In order to make this request current, however, it is necessary to promote specific professional figures who organically link the Higher Education System with the Labor System.

2. Work and Disability between legislation and training

Italy, since it became a Republic (02/06/1946), has consolidated the idea of a democratic society based on work (see Article 1 of the Constitution) in which every citizen can develop their potential in fieri to feel active subject of the community to which it belongs and in which it operates. The world of work, however, for many disabled citizens is difficult to access and stay on due to stereotypes, prejudices and bureaucratic obstacles (Kamkhagi, 2020).

To this state of affairs has been added the progressive weakening of the world economy, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, which penalized young people and people with disabilities and frailty as they have seen opportunities for access to a job reduce even more. decent. Consequently, the world community has placed the issue of the value of work at the center of attention; in this regard, the United Nations Organization issued, in 2006, a Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities - ratified in Italy with Law 18/2009 - in which it dedicates the entire article 27 to the right to work: "States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others".

The same article also contains another important principle that of mainstreaming, according to which the services, places and contexts where the lives of people with disabilities take place must be the same as those of all other citizens and the same life must take place «at the same conditions». Despite, therefore, a consistent and highly inclusive national and international legislation is in force, in all European States there are continuing to record worrying levels of under-employment of people with disabilities, so much so that this aspect has been made one of the priorities of the funding programs in recent years. (European Commission, 2017). It should be remembered that the system of services for people with disabilities, currently in force in Italy, was built before the development of these new paradigms and this constitutes an obstacle to the implementation of the 2006 UN Convention. In Italy, the legislation governing job placements refer to both Law n.68 of 12 March 1999 and Law n.104 of February 05, 1992. In summary, we can say that in order to take advantage of law n.68 / 1999, three requirements are required: a) registry: age minimum 16 years; having fulfilled the compulsory schooling; b) subjective: people must be recipients of the ordinary invalidity allowance certified by INPS (Law 222 /1984; c) Objective: to be unemployed.

The companies, every year (precisely by January 31st), are obliged to send to the Targeted Employment Office of their metropolitan city a prospectus containing the employment situation of the company photographed at 31/12 of the previous year and all the information for the verification of the obligations on the recruitment of personnel with disabilities.

Company size	Employment of disabled people
from 15 to 35 persons	1 disabled
from 36 to 50 persons	2 disabled
from 51 to150 persons	7% (disabled) more one another beneficiary of Law n.68/'99[2]
more than 150 persons	7% (disabled) 1% more one another beneficiary of Law n.68/'99

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2   The other beneficiaries of Law 68/99 are: • family victims of war • family victims of service • family victims of work • refugees • family members who are severely disabled due to war or service • family members who are severely disabled due to work • family victims of organized crime • family victims of terrorism • family victims of duty • orphans of domestic crimes • Care Leavers.

Law no. 68/1999 also provided for a commission within the Local Health Authorities – which with art. 20 of the law n. 102/2009 was integrated with a doctor from the National Institute of Social Security, pursuant to art. 4 of Law no. 104/1992 – which, after having been informed of the outcome of the examination carried out by the Technical Committee for the evaluation of residual capacities – evaluation carried out by health professionals, with the addition of a social professional – under the employment centers in the metropolitan cities of competence, it has the task and the power to establish whether the disabled person will have the opportunity to work. Obviously this possibility is defined in terms of «residual capacity», therefore in individual terms and occurs before any job position is identified and therefore cannot take into account any reference context (Lepri, 2012).

This evaluation system is based on a medical model of disability in which the disadvantage lies completely within the person and shows that a device of absolute power weighs on the lives of these people, capable of determining the course of their lives, orienting their paths. in a way detached from their attitudes and aspirations, using tools that do not take into account the indications of the 2006 UN Convention and are still based on a concept of disability as completely corresponding to impairment. A change of mindset seems necessary, rather than a new paradigm to be fulfilled and to do this it is necessary to start from the school, that is to start from the socio-educational-formative context to lay the foundations of a new idea of inclusion that educates students to knowing and welcoming all the differences - inevitably present in the classroom - and diversity as a fact of life that is part of the existence of all individuals.

The national legislator, also following infringement procedures imposed by the European Union, issued law 107 in 2015 which, among other things, included the didactic strategy of school-work alternation – renamed in 2018 path for transversal skills and orientation (PCTO) – in the educational offer of all study courses, in the last three years of upper secondary school as an integral part of education «in order to increase job opportunities and orientation skills of students «and in 2019 the law n. 92, introductory of the transversal teaching of civic education which, among other things, promotes «activities to support the responsible and conscious approach of students to the world of work» (Article 4, paragraph 4). Both regulations have an indicative purpose tending to give the student greater awareness of their potential and control over their existence, which represent the basis of self-determination.

The orientation, provided for in the PCTOs, for disabled students unfolds over time and space, engaging the different school and work experiences from which it is possible 1) to learn an ever greater self-control; 2) build a minimum of self-awareness; 3) receive important feedback to help you reformulate your life plan. Perhaps the most interesting aspect present both in the PCTOs and in the transversal teaching of civic education is given by reciprocity as the student is not only the protagonist, but the recipient of the solidarity action and is so on two levels: on the level of the development of curricular and personal growth skills.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities refers to all persons with disabilities and, in article 1, states: «Persons with disabilities are those who have lasting physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments who interact with barriers of different nature can hinder their full and effective participation in society on the basis of equality with others «. This statement reveals that the condition of disability is not static, but can vary on the basis of the material and relational context in which the person finds himself. It is a significant step forward

compared to the definition that the World Health Organization offered in the nineties (when the law n.104 / '92 and the law n.68 / '99 were enacted), when it was reasonable to imagine acting on the context "once and for all" by building special accessible and welcoming contexts.

Despite this further step forward, the definition of disability as structurally given by the interaction with an unfavorable context still fails to spread in cultural, professional and discourse terms; in fact, as far as work is concerned, it remains both linguistically and semantically firm to «work placement», that is, it remained firm in the eighties of the last century, when there was talk of «school placement» of the «handicapped» in high school – which took place with a sentence of the Constitutional Court n. 215 of 03/06/1987 –. Where disabled people are unable to reach the levels of functioning considered acceptable, paths are designed in special and separate places and contexts where they can be welcomed, educated, entertained.

Slowly and unevenly, we moved from the idea of integration to the idea of inclusion, in which the modification of the context is structural and systematic (Lepri, 2012); this passage, however, took place in a contradictory and poorly thought-out way and this is demonstrated by the fact that the role of the support teacher, imagined and constructed to be a structural element of modification of the class-context, is still understood as the teacher "Of the disabled pupil", making the "support" a special place in everyone's place. For this reason, it is necessary that upper secondary schools, through PCTOs, and the University, through internships, create educational networks that stimulate businesses, public administrations, third sector organizations to go beyond the legislation and the obligations of hiring of protected categories for the construction of an inclusive working culture allowing to carry out internships for disabled students so that the socio-working relationships between typical, a-typical mate and work colleagues develop circularly in a significant way, breaking down preconceptions and stereotypes and above all, by changing the gaze towards diversity / difference.

The work, in fact, is always the result of a negotiation / mediation between the subjective needs of the disabled person and the organization's requests for adaptation. Here emerges the importance of the figure of the pedagogist as a mediator able to support teachers, parents, health professionals and politicians to «take care» of the difference of each subject in his right to self-determination and self-realization at work, keeping in mind what Jacques L. Monod said: "my destiny is not written anywhere. I am a lost and wandering gypsy, on a planet indifferent to my tragedy".

3. The pedagogist as "diversity manager"

It seems to us, therefore, that it is precisely to the formation of a solid «sensitivity towards differences» that we must turn in the perspective of directing the world of work towards the development of organizational structures capable of enhancing differences, virtuously linking up with the educational institutions of the territory. It is therefore desirable to have a model of collaboration between universities and companies centered on the figure of the pedagogist as a network operator, a professional figure primarily suited to a broad and articulated training project on an interinstitutional and ecological level and marked by strong skills in the field of diversity management (Perla, 2019).

In the area of Human Resource Management, the debate around the methods and practices of diversity and disability management is heated (Romano, 2020).

The international framework in which this debate is inserted is constituted by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and by subsequent international documents, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and envisages the opportunity to identify a specific professional figure, precisely that diversity and disability manager, specializing in the design of diversity management interventions.

Specifically of the interest of this discussion, the disability manager is a planner of actions aimed at:

– raise awareness and train for an inclusive corporate culture that aims to overcome possible prejudices and interpretative distortions;
– enhance the skills and professional qualities of people with disabilities and the opportunity for their integration;
– document the challenges of integration and the solutions found, located within specific organizational realities;
– provide new data, management support and concrete experiences on: recruitment phase, job placement, welfare tools, collaborations with social-health services, development of professional identity, use and role of technologies, types and use of flexibility tools, team building with colleagues, experiences of support and professional growth.

He has the task of creating contexts capable of responding to the differences of the people who work there by eliminating social, cultural, economic, institutional barriers through solutions that have connotations located according to the operational area of reference (Local authorities, companies and private companies, health, tourism, etc.) (Dalla Mora & Marino Aimone, 2020) and do not only concern changes to environments, spaces, products and technologies, but include all possible changes relating to the organization of the working context, in particular the adaptation of the management methods of production activities according to the characteristics of the people (Ianes, Cramerotti & Scapin, 2019).

More specifically, in both public and private companies and enterprises, the disability manager plans activities concerning staff with disabilities or staff who carry out caregiver tasks for family members with disabilities, with the aim of adapting the company organization to their needs and encourage the creation of a professional context that is accessible and attentive to everyone's needs

On the basis of careful negotiation with the company functions involved in the organization of the company (human resources management, safety officers, union representatives, competent doctor, etc.), he / she intervenes on the work organization to create the conditions of advantage and well-being for workers with disabilities and the company, through some actions, such as:

– constantly monitor changes in the working environment in relation to the characteristics of the workers, in order to prevent and remove any problems;
– build professional development programs for workers with disabilities;
– define organizational solutions and reasonable adjustments to be adopted in order to guarantee the accessibility of the company;
– collaborate with the company observatory on work inclusion, if present, or found the observatory as a permanent pole of innovation and development;
– promote initiatives aimed at raising the awareness of all organizational actors on issues concerning disability, diversity and inclusion as a lever for innovation in the company (Dalla Mora & Marino Aimone, 2020).

The literature produced around this figure of expert in the management and organization of inclusive work contexts does not fail to focus attention on some specific functions that pertain to the network of collaborations that the expert must weave, on the one hand, with services for the '' placement in companies present in the area (targeted placement for the disabled, job placement services, accredited bodies for work, social cooperatives, etc.) and, on the other hand, with training institutions:

– The disability manager in targeted placement services, in employment agencies, in training, educational and social services in the area. The targeted placement generally makes use of a specialist guidance service that provides advice, mediation, accompaniment and tutoring to people with disabilities. In this sector, the disability manager aspires to the position of privileged interlocutor of figures specialized in accompanying work, of the network of collaborating services and of companies, in order to guarantee the professional success of people with disabilities.
– The disability manager in schools and universities, making use of the collaboration of the network of services to support the life project of the person with disabilities, can support the school-work and school-university-work transition, favoring access to integration services labor market and accredited bodies for work, taking care of the orientation of students with disabilities in the perspective of the life cycle and providing regulatory information relating to the labor market and knowledge of the types of companies present in the reference area.

Translating into an exquisitely pedagogical perspective the indications that come to us from the ongoing debate around the figure of diversity manager, one cannot escape: on the one hand, the fact that, as described in the literature on the subject, the figure of diversity and disability manager presents functions with a high educational value and, on the other hand, the fact that, as described by the outgoing professional profile provided for the LM-85, the figure of the pedagogist appears projected to operate in a world of work in which he begins to be introjected the desire for inclusiveness seen in the cooperative relationship between disabled worker, families, higher education system, stakeholders, local authorities and associations of the territory (Ianes, 2014).

The experience of the qualifying degree course in Pedagogical Sciences of the University of Bari, on this wavelength, outlines a curriculum attentive to characterizing the pedagogist as a pedagogical operator of «mediation» between the University and the world of work, to starting from a specific set of knowledge and skills in the field of «didactics of differences». The promotion of a «thinking capable of thinking about differences», of «education for differences» skills as well as of targeted skills in managing diversity and disability in the multiple institutions and working realities mark the path towards the qualification of the pedagogist as a professional who knows implement key and transversal skills in company personnel, and who are able to accompany, in a virtuous connection between universities and companies, the job placement of new graduates with disabilities or with SLD. All this in order to encourage the emergence of actions that allow the person with disabilities to self-determine and all colleagues to acquire and develop truly inclusive mental habits.

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