



## STUDI E RICERCHE

### Pedagogical professions. Normative references, identities and differences

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### Le professioni pedagogiche. Riferimenti normativi, identità e differenze

#### Abstract

*The article aims to examine the figures of Socio-pedagogical Educator and Pedagogist, firstly considering the normative references that legitimize and govern these professions. This paper focuses on the specificity of the individual figures, outlining their identities and differences in operational environment and identifying their theoretical foundations. This is because of the science to which both professions refer: General Pedagogy. Finally, the Clinical Pedagogist is presented as an additional professional figure studying cases of de-formation, dis-education and de-instruction of human being.*

#### Keywords

Pedagogy, pedagogical professions, pedagogist, educator, law

L'articolo prende in esame le figure di Educatore Socio-pedagogico e di Pedagogista, anzitutto considerando le leggi che ne legittimano e disciplinano la professione. Il presente contributo si sofferma poi sulla specificità delle singole figure enucleandone le identità e le differenze in ambito operativo nonché individuando i riferimenti teorici fondativi. Ciò in ragione della scienza cui entrambe le professioni si riferiscono: la Pedagogia Generale. Infine, è presentato il Pedagogista Clinico quale ulteriore figura professionale che studia casi di de-formazione, dis-educazione e de-istruzione dell'essere umano.

#### Parole chiave

Pedagogia, professioni pedagogiche, pedagogista, educatore, legge

## 1. Normative references of the pedagogical professions

In looking at the overall articulation of the pedagogical professions within which the research and discourse of pedagogy find concrete expression, it is useful to dwell on the analysis of the practical-operational profile that distinguishes each pedagogical job. This impels, preliminarily, to consider General Pedagogy as the science in which all pedagogical professions find their centering. Therefore, it is not of secondary importance – for those who engaged in pedagogical activity – to have a proper knowledge related to pedagogy, understood as a science that studies the self-formation, education, and instruction of human beings (Gennari, Sola, 2016). An appropriate awareness about the epistemological aspects of pedagogy – a term which in the Anglo-American context is not used frequently since it is translated with “didactic” or with “science of education”, but which in the Italian language identifies a specific science – allows to (a) recognize the human being, grasped in every age of life, in the totality, specificity, and unrepeatability of his being (beyond any political, religious, sexual, or cultural orientation), as the subject of its investigation; (b) recognize “self-formation”, “education”, and “cultural instruction” as its objects of study (c) develop the “research”, “discourse” and “critique” within the four levels (practical, theoretical, meta-theoretical and theoretic) that compose its knowledge; (d) identify a specific “logic”, a defined scientific “language” and an appropriate research “methodology”; (e) develop an “intra”-, “inter”- and “transdisciplinary” dialogue that opens to interconnection with pedagogical sciences, educational sciences, self-formation sciences, and thus with the encyclopedia of human and natural sciences. General Pedagogy has an important role in the cultural debate primarily on the theory of education (Colicchi, 1987).

Considering these premises, this contribution aims to highlight, disambiguate, clarify, and deepen the knowledge, skills, and abilities proper to “socio-pedagogical educators” and “pedagogists” working in pedagogical (and other) contexts (these issues will be covered in the following pages). This without going into the specific merits of the historical passages – which are not aspects of specific relevance to the analysis conducted in this article – that led to the definition of the law governing these figures. Pedagogy has the role of science orienting each professional profile. It does so by means of a specific scientific-theoretical framework and particular operational logic, with the aim of better tracing the pedagogical aspects of human-related problems and recognizing their complexity. Distant from positions that placed it in a state of “scientific subalternity” and “social irrelevance” (Gennari, Sola, 2016), pedagogy opens to an “epistemological cognition of reality” (p. 49) to prepare “cogent theoretical knowledge” and appropriate “operational skills”. In the face of the articulated structure of social reality – characterized by many problems – pedagogy has the task of recognizing causes and effects contextual to the conditions of the subjects.

The need to cope with a constant process of depedagogization of society (Gennari, Sola, 2016) – that is, the progressive disintegration of attention to the culture of the human being in the social context – requires a systematization – also of a legislative nature – of the roles of the socio-pedagogical professional educator and pedagogist. Although marked by a rather recent legislative regulation, the pedagogical professions are part of several multidisciplinary teams. Thus, the socio-pedagogical educator “performs intellectual functions with the use of specific cognitive tools of theoretical and methodological nature” (T.U. 2656-3247, 2018, Art. 2, paragraph 2 - Discipline of the jobs of socio-pedagogical professional educator, socio-health professional educator and pedagogist) in collaboration with teachers, social workers, honorary judges, psychologists, psychotherapists, physicians or nurses; whereas the pedagogist plans, coordinates, intervenes in circumstances concerning pedagogical-educational issues with “scientific autonomy and deontological responsibility” (Art. 2, paragraph 3), also in the activity carried out with other specialists.

Thus, a clear scientific-epistemological set-up of pedagogy allows to outline and support the identity profile of both the pedagogist (and the clinical pedagogist) and the socio-pedagogical professional educator. The theoretical elements are intertwined with the practical dimensions of a science, also in reference to the laws that (i) regulate, (ii) legitimize, (iii) recognize, (iv) protect its specific activities. As of January 2018, in fact, the pedagogical professions are recognized and legitimized by a law that gives them a more appropriate scientific-professional dignity.

The *Discipline of the Jobs of Educator and Pedagogist* – presented as Bill no. 2656, on October 7, 2014 – and the *Set of rules of the job of pedagogist and establishment of the relative professional register* – introduced as a further Bill no. 3247 on July 22, 2015 – have been two important steps for the evolution of the legislative tools regulating the pedagogic jobs. These legislative provisions arise from the general need to

achieve the legal recognition of the many educators and pedagogists operating on the national territory and not yet protected by a law that regulate their profession. The *Report of the Seventh Permanent Commission (Culture, Science, Education)*, forwarded to the Presidency of the XVII Legislature on June 8, 2016, reveals the urgency of dealing with and addressing the “strong demand coming from the world of social professions”. Hence, integrated with Law No. 205 of December 27, 2017 – with reference to paragraphs 594-600 – the *Consolidated Act* No. 2656-3247 (known as the “Iori-Binetti Law”) has the title of *Discipline of the Professions of Socio-Pedagogical Professional Educator, Socio-Health Professional Educator and Pedagogist*.

This law clarifies the functions of the relative professions. In the section dedicated to the *Definition of the Professions of Professional Educator Socio-pedagogical and Pedagogist*, the two roles are presented in their respective identities and differences. Both “operate in the field of formal education and non-formal education” (T.U. 2656-3247, 2018, Art. 2 - Discipline of the jobs of socio-pedagogical professional educator, socio-health professional educator and pedagogist), in compliance with a “specific deontological code” and through “the use of methodologies proper to the profession, in a regime of autonomous work, subordinate or, where possible, through forms of collaboration” (Art. 2). The socio-pedagogical professional educator is defined as a “professional who performs intellectual functions” (Art. 2) through the preparation of interventions in which the choice and use of acquired knowledge and the use of specific methodologies are expressed and connected to plan, design and evaluate educational actions. Furthermore, Paragraph 3 of Article 2 presents the pedagogist as a “professional at the top level, a specialist in educational and self-formation processes” (Art. 2). This figure is entrusted with “pedagogical planning, coordination, intervention and evaluation functions” (Art. 2). The professional activity, therefore, is developed in the following areas: (a) self-formation and education, (b) education and school, (c) social work, (d) health and social welfare limited to the socio-educational aspects, (e) parenting and family, (f) cultural, (g) judicial, (h) environmental, (i) sports and motoric, (l) international cooperation. Thus, both the pedagogist and the socio-educational professional educator carry out their activities within the public and private sectors: from educational services for children to those located in scholastic or extracurricular institutions; from services for parenthood and the family to those aimed at the elderly, from recreational and artistic-educational services to those dedicated to environmental education, from work orientation services to those for cultural promotion and reading, from self-formation services to those of private consultancy.

Pedagogists and educators also differ in their professional identity when considering the *European Qualifications Framework* (EQF): a classification system including the various professions in Europe. Divided into eight classification levels based on knowledge, skills and competences, this tool places the socio-pedagogical professional educator on the sixth level and the pedagogist on the seventh level. This means that the educator is required to have (i) advanced knowledge in work and/or study situations for the critical understanding of theories brought back into the practical dimension; (ii) skills that demonstrate the ability to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialized field; (iii) professional competences aimed at taking responsibility for decision-making (European Qualifications Framework: supporting learning, work and cross-border mobility, Publications Office of the European Union, 2018, Art. 5). Instead, the pedagogist is required to have (a) highly specialized knowledge about the “vanguard of knowledge” and “original research”, as well as a “critical awareness of issues” also in the context of inter- and transdisciplinary knowledge; (b) skills related to the resolution of epistemological issues (Gennari, Sola, 2016) in order to “develop new knowledge and [...] integrate knowledge from different fields”; (c) skills aimed at managing and transforming “complex unpredictable work or study contexts that require new strategic approaches” (Art. 8) together with the assumption of responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice.

The qualification of socio-pedagogical professional educator is obtained with a degree in *Education Sciences* (L-19). Courses of study leading to the qualification of pedagogist: Master’s Degree in *Planning and Management of Educational Services* (LM-50), *Adult and Continuing Education Sciences* (LM-57), *Pedagogical Sciences* (LM-85), *Theories and Methodologies of E-Learning and Media Education* (LM-93). In addition, this classification is attributed to Full and Associate University Professors, PhDs in pedagogy and tenured university researchers in pedagogical disciplines (T.U. 2656-3247, 2018, Art. 10 - Discipline of the jobs of socio-pedagogical professional educator, socio-health professional educator and pedagogist).

The text of the law then defines the *Adjustment of the educational paths* (Art. 11) and the *Professional Placement* (Art. 12), thus providing for the inclusion of the two figures within the nomenclature of “Professions not organized in professional orders or colleges” (Art. 12) and the organization of an “Intensive training course for a total of 60 credits, to be held at universities” (Art. 12). This with the aim to issue a certificate, equivalent to a degree, to the educators operating in the national territory and already working professionally in the educational sector.

Two other milestones in the history of the pedagogical professions date back to the year 2020. On August 27, 2020, a *Memorandum of Understanding* was signed between the Ministry of Education and several Italian Associations of pedagogists and educators, which provides for the presence of both figures within educational institutions “in order to intervene in situations of emergency or particular educational poverty” (Law no. 126, 2020, Art. 2 - Urgent measures to support and relaunch the economy). The *Memorandum* defines (i) “the implementation of processes of synergic collaboration, with respect to their own competences, between educational professionals and the bodies of the educational system, in order to initiate pedagogical-educational collaboration paths” (Art. 2), (ii) “the activation of educational projects and paths” (Art. 2), (iii) “advisory and operational support to teachers” (Art. 2), (iv) “the experimentation of forms of pedagogical and educational support to families” (Art. 3). Then, on October 13 of the same year, Law No. 126 was issued in the Official Journal, defining the *Urgent measures to support and relaunch the economy*. Article 33 bis highlights the *Urgent measures for defining the functions and role of Professional Socio-pedagogical Educators in social and health care facilities*. The article outlines the fundamental contribution regarding the “specific feature of the role and professional figure of the socio-pedagogical educator in health and social contexts” (Art. 33 bis), that is “the pedagogical dimension, in its social declinations, of marginality, disability and deviance” (2020, Art. 33 bis - Memorandum of Understanding. Activation of projects aimed at promoting education to civil, social and solidarity coexistence, as an integral part of the educational offer).

Examining the scope of the pedagogical professions requires knowledge of the legislative references through which they are legitimated, but it also requires an appropriate knowledge of pedagogy. After all, “there is no professional practice of a science without a professional who practices it” (Gennari, Sola, 2016, p. 38), just as there is no capable professional who can exclude “scientific skills” from their practice (p. 38). In conclusion, knowledge and skills drive the construction of a rigorous professionalism, centered on the human being and the formative, educational and instructional dimensions.

## 2. The professional figure of the socio-educational educator

The role of the socio-pedagogical professional educator is characterized by a conscious and critical understanding of the self-formation, educational and instructional areas, by the delineation of the problems and the attempt to resolve the complex situations that demand to be investigated and interpreted. The socio-pedagogical professional educator is first and foremost a professional in the field of education, whose processes are concretized within the plots of the multiple relationships that are established between subjects. *Educáre* – latin word for “growing” – and *edúc re* – latin word meaning “drawing out” – are arranged in life and in its indefiniteness. Educators have the responsibility to develop a path aimed at (i) the formative growth of the person being educated, (ii) the capacity of identification, understanding and interpretation of the fundamental meanings of the existence of each person being educated (iii) leading the human being on an educational and educating path, pursuing goals that are not always completely predetermined in advance. The ultimate goal of a relationship that can truly recognize itself within an “educational principle” consists of (a) the valorization of the humanity that is in human beings, (b) in the tension towards a harmonious and balanced dimension of life, (c) in the recognition of the authentic value inherent in the individual. The purpose of education is thus revealed in the construction of a relationship of trust: one can rely on the educator who accompanies, supports, listens, understands, and respects the *Weltanschauung* – the conception of the world and life – of each subject.

The above finds concrete expression in the activity of every educator. The aforementioned law (Consolidated Act No. 2656-3247 of 2018), however, refers to very different areas, realities and educational perspectives (Frabboni, Guerra, Scurati, 1999). Educators carry out their activities in kindergartens, within



the framework of so-called “Protected Meetings” or within residential facilities that accommodate children and young people removed from the family nucleus. The educator may work in educational institutions to support teachers’ work with students or in the legal-penitentiary sector to establish an educational relationship with adolescents in juvenile detention centers. Educators also operate in extracurricular contexts, in day care centers or playgrounds. Thus, the multi-faceted nature of this professional figure imposes specific and differentiated skills according to the workplaces and the subjects to deal with. A two-year-old child requires different care than a fifteen-year-old boy living in a Foster Care Educational Community, with a foster family or in a penal institution. This means that knowledge and skills relating to this profession never cease to be developed, revised and re-interpreted, because of the diversity of the “subjective worlds” with which the educator relates, which necessarily refer to a further world. The “world of alterity” is identified, for instance, in a particular life path; it is determined by experiences (also de-formative and de-educational) and particular cultural orientations. Educators are the ones who live “with” and “in” the time of the other’s existence since they spend much of their lifetime with the person to be educated. It sometimes happens that the different worlds of the educator and the person being educated are supported by profoundly discordant categories. Subordination, fear, addiction, and dependence can give an example of a “categorical network” (Sola, 2008, p. 71) – that is, a set of categories through which it is possible to rebuild the existential condition of a subject – coinciding with the situation of an adolescent who takes drugs and disintegrates his or her thinking. Suffering, discomfort, disappointment, and lack of love can motivate a state of malaise in which an eight-year-old child finds himself or herself placed in a facility where there are other children and young people separated from parents who have shown themselves to be unsuitable in assuming their educational responsibility for their children. On the other hand, care, serenity, love and taking care are categories that can be traced back to the case of a child attending kindergarten, where new spaces for playing and learning are known and where an inter-subjective relationship with other children is gradually established. While reassurance, dignity, reliability, and pain will be the possible elements of a categorical plot outlined for an eighteen-year-old girl who has been sexually harassed by adult men.

So, what meanings are attributed by each of these subjects to the categories listed above? What idea of love, family, childhood is contemplated in the light of the different cases described? The educator will have to approach these worlds, without pretending or suggesting solutions to problems, but rather by conducting the relationship within a dimension that respects the lives of others. Sometimes, different worlds clash vehemently. In the face of this clash – which is often perceived as the incompatibility of different points of view – educators have the task of educating themselves to listen to that world that is so different, since at first glance it may look indecipherable, unreasonable, and incomprehensible. Once again, this requires the educational skills of a person who does not only educates according to his or her own codes, but also educates himself or herself to understand that world, respecting its diversity. It is necessary to transcend the Popperian *Myth of the Framework* (Popper, 1994) – meaning the inability to establish a dialogical relationship with the other subject – that does not allow the debate between divergent principles, ideas, values: in this way it is possible to develop an educational project. This does not only mean the inclusion of goals (in the short and long term), indicators, observations and evaluations within preestablished and predefined grids (albeit useful and used by most educators), but it also emphasizes the educator’s ability to support the subject in the orientation of his or her own “being-in-the-world” (Heidegger, 1927/2016, p. 83) in order to think and choose the specific life project. The project, in this sense, presupposes “throwing oneself” into the future time by reason of a conscious, as well formative dimension tending towards personal well-being.

In summary: the socio-pedagogical professional educator (*a*) does not impose, but sheds light on a subject’s own possibilities of being, (*b*) promotes the awareness of life, out of all conditioning, (*c*) does not take the place of the child, the young person, the adult or the elderly person (*d*) remains on a professional level, (*e*) relentlessly tunes the orientation of the educational project, (*f*) identifies new problems, (*g*) does not focus only on one dimension of the subject’s existence but educates himself or herself to understand the existential picture as a whole (*h*) does not impose himself or herself as a parental figure, (*i*) does not impart orders, prohibitions, punishments, (*l*) does not force but leaves space, (*m*) promotes a feeling of waiting as he or she does not want to solve the problem immediately but respects the time of others, (*n*) structures a clear language, (*o*) listens to fragility without biases, (*p*) protects the freedom of being oneself,

(*q*) grants the possibility of seeing things in the world or problems from another point of view. The profession of the socio-pedagogical educator thus proposes – through its operational practice – a philosophy of education and a “pedagogy of intervention” (Giroux, 2020: 192) aimed at the constant balance between a human being’s life and the human being in life.

### 3. The profession of Pedagogist

The framework presented so far regarding the profession of socio-pedagogical educator also applies to the pedagogist profile. As a top-level professional, he or she has the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the educator. Moreover, in the light of the aforementioned law (Consolidated Act no. 2656-3247 of 2018), the pedagogist is the “professional figure [...] who operates in all contexts related to the self-formation and education of human beings” (Gennari, Sola, 2016, p. 38), in relation to the intervention areas of counselling, teaching, management and research (Gennari, 2006, p. 399). Educators operate “with” and “for” the human being starting from the logical-epistemological framework of the science they refer to.

The practical-operational dimension of a profession can also be recognized in the “style” with which a professional operates. Within the scope of the pedagogical professions, both the educator and the pedagogist conduct their activity based on a deontology that is characterized by suitable, competent, and rigorous responsibility. Then, professionals trace their action back to themselves, to a constant questioning of the human being they are since the science they study urges them to understand and interpret themselves in the light of their own humanity. In other words, it can be understood as a process of unveiling, knowing, and caring that the subject addresses to himself or herself. Therefore, this dimension of care also implies that feeling of love that is expressed in wanting the good (*a*) of oneself, (*b*) of the other subject. All this is based on a science that has gradually built up knowledge about the world of the human being.

The pedagogist can see, in the complexity of life, those problems (evident or hidden) that need to be interpreted. “Problematicity [...] constitutes the tissue on which the pedagogical device is constituted and marked between present and future, between theory and practice, between rules and chance” (Cambi, 2006, p.15). It is therefore necessary for pedagogy – and for pedagogist – to interpret the dimension of hypercomplexity (Granese, 1975) of social and real problems.

Beyond the degree obtained (albeit fundamental), “to be a pedagogist it is necessary (essentially and existentially) to ‘feel’ like a pedagogist” (Gennari, 2006, p. 339). This determines, on the one hand, the possibility of uniting the set of pedagogical professions under a common denomination – that is, under the general name of “pedagogist” – and, on the other hand, the need to highlight the peculiar feature of every professional who wants to call himself or herself such. Far from any “vocational or missionary” dimension (p. 339), to carry out the pedagogical activity it is not only necessary to consider what one puts in place in terms of work, but also (and first and foremost) to consider “how one is” (p. 339). This allows for the idea of a pedagogy understood as a system of knowledge that drives human beings to know themselves authentically and freely. The pedagogist, then, will be the one who primarily learns to (*a*) recognize the value of the human being, (*b*) interpret himself or herself and interpret his or her own and others’ existence, (*c*) understand himself or herself and understand in relation to the formative history of life, (*d*) restore possible meanings to the problems of life. Pedagogical research requires a critical openness of discourse with regard to the human that is in human beings: first of all, towards the human being that one is. Thinking oneself through the orderly construction of a specific categorial network is the first task of a competent pedagogist, capable of orienting himself or herself in the formative and educational area of his or her own life, and furthermore capable of assisting the subject in front of him or her through methodologies specific to the profession (not concerning rigid or preestablished instruments to be applied indiscriminately. It is necessary to find a *habitus* of the one who brings educational action into being, since it always refers to that “pedagogical style” that is first and foremost “a natural, cultural and professional way of being” (Sola, 2016, p. 189). With this cognitive *thesaurus*, the pedagogist “relates in all his or her conduct to the world” (p. 189) of the subject, continually modifying and revising the modes of intervention according to different educational needs. In this sense, the pedagogical point of view shows its intrinsic “social force” (Gennari, Kaiser, 2000, p. 83).

Thus, the pedagogical profession is listed in the social fabric according to different profiles. This figure

includes both the person who provides private consultancy and the professional who performs the role of pedagogical coordination within a day care center for children. The pedagogist can also support the activities of teachers in public and private schools or work in educational contexts of different kinds, as an employee of local institutions, within the legal sphere or in prisons, in residential facilities for children, young people or the elderly, as a consultant in educational institutions or even as a supervisor or expert within multi-professional teams. Finally, the pedagogical professions also include the pedagogist as researcher: the one who feels the “cultural duty to question himself or herself on the qualitative scope” (p. 407) of his or her profession and, as a consequence, to place himself or herself in a free “intellectual condition” (p. 407), in the self-awareness and awareness of the surrounding reality, as well as in the “commitment (personal and social) towards the community” (p. 407). In this sense, “the inner attitude of the man of science towards his own profession” (Weber, 1918-19/1997, p. 49) recalls the love of knowledge around the human being and his or her formative and educational identity.

The profile of the pedagogical profession is assumed with regarding to “the entire life of human being” (p. 52), where the existential path needs to be interpreted and understood by the competent professional. The latter, however, does not establish a dialogue with the “client”. Pedagogical counselling is something else than the relationship established between the one who gives the “advice” and the one who listens to it. From the idea of such a relationship one deduces the *adynamia* of a passive and impotent disposition of one who needs, on the contrary, to grasp the *dynamis* “of” and “in” his or her own education. The Aristotelian *energeia* expresses the “being-in-action” of the subject as the first and active responsible for the “choice of life”: that is, it enables the possibility of authentic life to be transformed into a form of life. In this sense the pedagogist develops the project of existence together with the subject, attempting to highlight its formative fragility aspects and emphasize its strengths at the same time. His or her competence is expressed from a dual perspective. He or she will be able to recognize existential difficulties (*i*) in terms of educational deficiencies, (*ii*) with respect to the absence of care and affection, (*iii*) in the sign of conditioning deriving from contemporary society (social networks, fashions and mass-media models being examples of this). Moreover, the professional will put the individual in a position to work (*a*) on personal resources, (*b*) on subjective capacities, (*c*) on the possibility of authentically directing one’s own life path. But this is only through the awareness of the individual who first chooses to constitute his or her existence in a balanced manner.

General Pedagogy includes within its categorial topics (Gennari, Sola, 2016, p. 102) – i.e., the logical places, the arguments, the fundamental categorizations in pedagogy – life, thought and discourse, but then also man, human being, and humanity. In dedicating oneself to thinking about life, then, the human being grasps essential elements as much in relation to the human inherent in the intimate self-formation of each person as in relation to the humanity of the world, restoring from this interpretative path constituted on the basis of an authentic subjective truth. Thus, the pedagogist, together with the subject he or she deals with, moves towards the authentication of thought about life, which becomes discourse within the constitution of both a “culture of self” and “self-care”. Aimed at these objectives, this profession cannot avoid research aimed at getting to know the human being (Ducci, 1979) in his multifaceted nature. Questioning the subject of study of pedagogy, the general pedagogist has the task of referring to dimensions of existence that relate to the biological, neurological and health, psychological, sociological and religious, historical, geographical and cultural, political, economic and civic, ecological, technological and environmental, sexual, affective and cognitive, moral, aesthetic, and social fields. The “apex level” profession investigates every dimension of the human being as it outlines the educational project concerning the subject it works with. This does not mean that pedagogy annexes and includes (or claims to override) other scientific disciplines. Rather, the set of knowledge pertaining to the human allows General Pedagogy to be understood as a “system of knowledges” (Gennari, 2006, p. 14), within which different sciences (pedagogical sciences, educational sciences, humanities and natural sciences) meet and dialogue (Broccoli, 2021). With the professionals from other disciplines, therefore, the pedagogist establishes “a dialogical and dialectical relationship” (p. 14), from which a “community of intentions” (p. 50) arises for which the pedagogical profession itself draws “evolutionary stimuli that strengthen its basic categorial framework” (p. 15). Thus, the pedagogist, through a “professional culture” (Volpi, 1982, p. 63), brings the educational project back into the “cultures of the human” (Gennari, 2006, p. 57), in an “intra”-, “inter”- and “trans”-scientific framework and in the sign of knowledge and skills concerning the discipline that bases all its

knowledge on the nature of the human being. The dimensions listed above regarding the profession of the pedagogist cannot ignore “the theoretic work” (Volpi, 1982, p. 39). Excluding this would imply “eluding the rigor of scientific discourse” (p. 39).

#### 4. The Clinical Pedagogist and the de-formative problem of life

When the *prò-blema* (Heidegger, 1947) of life takes on a negative meaning determined by conditions of malaise, discomfort and suffering, “educational ruptures” and “self-formative fractures” can occur (Sola, 2008). Within the scope of pedagogical professionalism, considered in its inter-disciplinary aspects, the clinical pedagogist works to reintroduce the subject within a congruent self-formation and educational path. The de-formative (i.e. related to an education that de-forms) and de-educational (i.e. inherent to an education that de-educates) problems are studied and interpreted by the Clinical Pedagogy: the specific pedagogical science, that investigates de-formation, de-education and de-instruction of human being. This specific pedagogical science arises from the need to address a state of deep crisis in which the subject finds itself. The existential discomfort is amplified when the latter proceeds towards subjection to profoundly de-formative and dis-educational dynamics, detected, for example, by the use of drugs, recourse to psychopharmaceuticals, addictions to alcohol or gambling (Gennari, Sola, 2016). In the face of the multiple forms of “social neurosis” (p. 39), subjective forms of neurosis are also noted. In these cases, the pedagogist requires specific knowledge and skills in order to take care of the subject in a situation of existential deformation. Pedagogy expands its heuristic and gnoseological boundaries to deal with the pathological dimension of self-formation, education, and instruction. However, there is no reference to the medical dimension, but rather the specific pedagogical research aimed at recognizing the causes that have led to the process of nihilation of human self-formation is emphasized.

Considering the clinical pedagogist as a pedagogical profession allows to analyze pedagogical problems from a further perspective. Think of the difficulty of intervening in cases of young adolescents who use substances; the situation of a parent who suffers from alcohol addiction or is affected by a gambling problem; the illness that affects the subject at a young age; the loss of a loved one; the case of separation or divorce; the anorexic, depressed, bulimic or drug addict. When self-formation ceases to be trans-formative and remains crystallized in a state of discomfort without finding the capacity to establish a formative resilience – that is, the “capacity of thought to make the self-formation resist the shock tests [...] that existential experience can bring about” (Sola, 2008, p. 62) – the clinical pedagogist intervenes by promoting a “*culture of care* that helps the subject to rebuild” (p. 41) the thought “of”, “about” and “for” one’s own life. Different points of reflection, different methodologies of investigation are proposed by this professional figure compared to (i) the general pedagogist, (ii) the other professional figures dealing with human problems. He or she, in fact, sets up his or her professionalism through pedagogical-clinical counselling aimed at a dialogic communication (Broccoli, 2021). The construction of the latter takes place in the light of the knowledge and skills that concern both the socio-pedagogical professional educator and the pedagogist. The clinical pedagogist develops his or her counselling at different times. The phases of *anamnesis* – from the Greek *anamnesis*, to recall the action of remembering –, of *diagnosis* – i.e., the act of “recognizing through” – and of care (Sola, 2008) – where the professional puts in place a culture of care – define the moments of that educational relationship with the aim of assisting the one who is in a state of “*deformative malaise*” (p. 70). Whether through the interpretation and understanding of the subject’s “*formative archaeology*” (p. 70) or through the construction of a “*categorial network*” (p. 71) that defines the specific situation of malaise, the ultimate goal is to take care of the human being who is no longer able to think about himself in the world and to think about the world. It can be said that pedagogical-clinical counselling is determined through an “educational relationship” based on the categories of care, support and dialogue (Mariani, 2021).

The work of the clinical pedagogist implies an inter-disciplinary logic between the sciences, to re-construct a problem in depth and return pedagogically coherent solutions. The legislative references that regulate the professional figures of pedagogist and socio-pedagogical professional educator move in this direction, highlighting the need to address human problems according to a trans-scientific perspective – as repeatedly emphasized throughout this brief contribution. This also applies to the clinical pedagogist



(whose profession requires the same qualification as the pedagogue) for whom, for example, openness to dialogue with the medical sciences is crucial. On the other hand, it is legitimate to support the idea that a science must constantly open itself up to new heuristic scenarios that allow for a better understanding of the human being and his many forms.

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