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Educating for Transition in Work Contexts

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ABSTRACT

Today's scenarios of constant transformation of society call for a necessary reflection on work from an exquisitely pedagogical point of view, in consideration of the multiple transitions that we are witnessing because of phenomena such as progress, forced digitization, the Covid-19 pandemic, conflicts and economic-financial crises. It's essential to move, for an education to the transition to the Recommendation of 18 December 2006 of the European Parliament on key competences for lifelong learning, from learning to learn. It is one of the eight competences, but essentially the most characterizing so that "learners take the starting point from what they have previously learned and from their life experiences to use and apply knowledge and skills in a whole range of contexts: at home, at work, in education and training".

Keywords: education; person; planning; transition; work.

1. INTRODUCTION

The reflection on the existential situation in which man lives, recalls, without any doubt, certain reflections on the value of pedagogy. Doing so implies the abandonment of the logic of objective knowledge, as well as the adoption of a healthy anti-dogmatic attitude. In relation to the theme of work, the need to refer to a pedagogy understood as practical-design knowledge is better understood, thus shifting attention from a science capable of building systems of knowledge to one capable of orienting educational action to carry out processes of change and transformation

of educational action. Hence the need for a cultural redefinition of the subject-man-person which, by strengthening and promoting the cultural and spiritual energies of individuals, makes everyone capable of being an active protagonist of the associated life.

Archived for some time now the quiet certainties deriving from the stability of the job guaranteed for life, are now more and more numerous having to face the trauma of the loss of the job and therefore to have to manage [...] the difficult condition of the unemployed [...] to have to re-question themselves on “what to do with their lives” when those economic security (even minimal) that allowed them to guarantee a dignified existence to their family are lacking. (Loiodice, 2012)

2. THE UNSTABLE MAN, WORKER, AND VICTIM OF THE TIMES

Work and person are closely related, just as there is a direct relationship between work and social well-being. Therefore, the crises of our time by urging a (re)education that revolves around the theme of transition, therefore a (re)design of one's own life path. This is even more true if we consider how job insecurity – in today's reality – is heavily reflected on an existential level. “Economic problems are accompanied by existential ones. *Job-insecurity* (threat of job loss, threats to work) and confusion/loss of identity seem increasingly inseparable. [...] This negatively affects the perception of continuity of existence and tradition, undermines the characteristics of stability, duration, and permanence of the character and therefore the integrity of the Ego” (Rossi, 2010, pp. 45-46). Not fundamental, but certainly useful, to look at other models. For example, hyper-skilled and sectoral workers, specifically trained, especially in English-speaking and American countries, to the continuous change of their labor relations and the continuous change of contexts. All this with a view to continuous reorganization of one's professional life: “the spirit of initiative, the proactive attitude, the creative thinking, the ability to become entrepreneurs of oneself, to take the risk of the uncertain as a function of continuous emancipatory growth represent the ‘heart’ of those *intangible skills*, of a strategic type and transversal to several areas of knowledge and experience without which it is not possible to walk on quicksand” (Bauman, 2006) of the liquid society, without dispersing, without “being crushed, precisely” (Loiodice, 2012).

The changes on the work front but also properly of the organizational contexts considerably affect the well-being of the person, but not only. “Sustaining change means abandoning previous behavior before, or at least, at the same time as learning the new procedures: a process called

unlearning” (Piazza, 2019, pp. 274-275). However, the theme of the continuous obsolescence of knowledge can only solicit a reflection on the front of education throughout the course of life and therefore act as a stimulus to an education to transition, which in fact determines a continuous redefinition of cognitive maps and mental models (Delahaye, 2000).

3. PLANNING, A FUNDAMENTAL CATEGORY FOR A TRANSITION EDUCATION

The *well-made head*, to quote Morin (2000), needs a rethink in the light of continuous changes and this can only be a properly pedagogical field. Laying the foundations for a transitional education means building a discourse starting essentially from one of the founding categories of pedagogy: planning.

The design specificity of the person is repeatedly reiterated in the pages of Flores d’Arcais, which precisely emphasizes the design aspect of the person, explicitly declaring that it “it is, inherently, *a project*”, that personal life is all in its *to be done*, in its tireless projection beyond the present, in its constitution, in its formation. Planning, an ontological category, as Pati (2004, pp. 13-41) recalls, is the exquisitely human ability to elaborate an image of oneself and to pursue it by projecting it into time and space; to man constitutively belongs that thirst for research which leads to the permanent becoming and to the continuous journey towards the full meaning of living. The Author writes again:

to wait for the concrete of one’s own life project means to measure we with choices whose outcomes are unknown. Conversely, to renounce to plan life is to say “no” to the possibility of growing, of “humanizing”; to become according to an original perspective intentionally chosen, to the benefit of existential inauthenticity, behavioral randomness, passive adaptation to the progress of events. It follows that education, while it is strongly qualified by its occurrence in the present, is a relationship/process aimed at building the future. (Pati, 2004, p. 20)

The education of man is strongly characterized by planning, it is even more so when it dialogues with work, understood as a place of education and a context for the construction of one’s own identity and one’s own being a person among others. It is necessary, however, in addition to being, also, *to remain projectual* (Musi, 2010), to be able to give shape to new possible horizons. The greatness of the human being lies in not being exhausted in a single predefined life plan. Nothing of our actions is definitive. The possibility of being reborn with a new choice – of making – is an intentional

search for new landings – of meaning, of existential turns, of meaning of life. “Those who rely on the fatalities of nature to deny the possibility of man abandon themselves to a myth and try to justify a renunciation” (Mounier, 1952, p. 21). The possibility of man must, in this framework, support human becoming, in accordance with freedom and the very possibility of deciding. In fact, “the person who becomes is the person who designs and pursues an image of himself in time and space for which it is of fundamental importance the openness to the Other and to others” (Granato, 2010, p. 63). In the time in which planning life is difficult, strong relationships and the responsibility of choices can avoid the danger of loss of the person, of the human being, of the worker (d’Aniello, 2019).

The multidimensionality of the object of investigation (the work), but also the strong interdisciplinary characterization, which sees different researches interact with each other – philosophy, psychology, sociology, politics, organizational sciences, economics – functional both in the perspective of being able to grasp their own purposes and in giving significance to their scientific arguments, finds decisive explanation in the project of life for man, a person who grows and grows in work he founded his own existential project (Walker, 2014). In this sense, therefore, planning becomes the founding category of a new pedagogical direction: education for transition. In the process of building this educational typicality, two preliminary aspects can be considered: design skills, that is, to design and re-design one’s own action, and resistance to change. Two issues that can facilitate, the first, and contrast, the second, the possible paths of education to the transition. Also in this regard, the first support comes from planning.

4. TRANSITION EDUCATION IN MODERN EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Educational systems cannot fail to consider the need, on the one hand, and the possibility, on the other, of being able to educate in transition. In the medical record of the late twentieth century, drawn up by the state of health of education in the old continent (Report Lisbon 2000) the European Union has shaken the planet with this cry of alarm: if the twenty-first century does not invest huge resources on the tandem knowledge-training will risk a lot. It is necessary to widen the gap between cultured (rich) and uncultivated (poor) humanity, both to make it difficult to treat the two pathologies that populate the south and north of the planet: the chronic disease of illiteracy (which denies education to almost two billion children in the southern hemisphere, south of the equator) and the neo-illiteracy disease (which affects the schooled northern hemisphere, north of the equator), where a

large number of young people lose their alphabets early a few years after leaving school. It is in this perspective that the European Union strongly recommends knowledge as an intangible good that every nation will no longer be able to do without, an element of constant and lasting transition over time. Having a European gaze means printing clearly visible on the sail of the first hull the futuristic image cut out in Lisbon 2000, where the European Union has launched a vibrant appeal to the old continent to disseminate knowledge and still knowledge about its entire citizenship. Starting from the youth planet, since the competitiveness and fortune of a socio-economic system are played on the schooling accomplished and on the well-made heads of the younger generations (Bonnard, 2020).

In this direction, the first transitional goal has the name of *institutional democratization*: that is, the right of all to access and success of the school system. The second goal has the name of *cultural modernization* or a path of transition towards the development and modernization of educational systems. The greatest urgency is certainly to identify a *pluriverse* of educational systems, declined within the social world. In a very general sense, we are faced with the difficulty of building an educational project capable of taking care of the person, the true central element of new work practices.

What is needed, therefore, is the coherence with which to look at the problems, managing to highlight the centrality and primacy of the person, as the fine subject of educational action, as well as the willingness to eliminate any pre-established a priori assumption and start from personal experience and from the questions that each person can feel. (Balzano V., 2020, p. 3)

The configuration of the education system, however, has an important impact on the way in which young people go through the school-work transition, which in turn influences the quality of their professional path and the opportunities to access decent work (Tuononen, Parpala, & Lindblom-Yläne, 2019). Unfortunately, a perfect educational system in the transitional sense does not exist, it seems necessary to reflect and develop regimes of passage that combine and maximize the benefits of each educational system, to make possible progressive and inclusive transitions. One way in this direction would be to revisit the system of alternance vocational training, whose transitional advantages are undeniable and probated, so that it is not a vehicle for social inequalities and negative first professional experiences. It is important to aim for an educational system that allows the greatest number of young people to make choices and carry out professional projects that correspond to their aspirations. In this sense, the application, to transitional challenges, of the concepts of agency (Boeren, 2019; Elfert, 2019) and ability to aspire looks promising.

5. THE TRUE PERSON TRANSITIONAL ELEMENT

The subject-person as it is designed on the epistemic level, by the most advanced frontiers of European pedagogy tends to be equipped with both existential freedom and intellectual autonomy. Non is founded, therefore, neither by individual subjective experience, nor by objective socio-cultural experience, nor by their mutual integration. The latter, therefore, is existentially equipped with only acts of choice, or personal options that guarantee freedom and that create a true system of values: the choice between authentic and inauthentic existence, between the possible and the everyday. The person, as an infinite process is always open to the integration of subjectivity and objectivity, cannot be configurable a priori in a definitive or definable essentiality. This is because “the idea of personality gives light to the educational horizon when planning a life free from dogmatic and unilateral approaches: only the concrete psychological-historical-cultural experience of the individual and the society in which he lives can determine concrete values and meanings” (Bertin, 1968, p. 96).

Continental pedagogy opts without uncertainty for the image of a Copernican man and woman, equipped with a heavy backpack when they embark on the impervious journey that leads to the crossroads between cultural directions and different value horizons, sometimes a thousand miles away from each other. At the many crossroads of personal life, pedagogy does not lose sight of two inescapable ideas of education: the idea of culture and the idea of value. The first one does “one with the adventure of the Homeric mind on the borders of the columns of Ercole. A culture free both to explore (free of dogmatic and metaphysical prejudices) the disturbing abysses hidden in the darkness, and to challenge the impossible neutrality of knowledge and science. The idea of value, on the other hand, is one with an axiological itinerary of personal life whose direction of travel is never on probation, under the control of confessional constraints” (Cerrocchi & Dozza, 2008, p. 18).

Humanity builds within history the ideal and moral options that give light to the horizon of personal choices, without any recourse to absolute hypotheses: this is because one can respond to the need for universality without paying the legitimate metaphysical tolls. In other words, education is configured as the natural terrain in which the person-value grows luxuriantly with multidimensional, integral, total figures, due to the interactivity and transversality of its group dimensions (bodily, affective, cognitive, ethical, social, and axiological). In the wake of this idea of person, the face of the generational ages that inhabits the pages of the most accredited pedagogy in the old continent is far from the one that populates today's

consumer civilization, precisely because it prints children and young people transformed into a humanity-mannequin: created and set culturally for market reasons by today's commercial industry (clothing, food, health) and mass media (TV, radio, advertising, comics, Internet). For these reasons, we seem to be able to say that European pedagogy is promoting the cry of alarm about the disappearance of the first ages of life, which is alarming much of the debate that has opened on the society of knowledge and training. "Observing the educational processes throughout the history of humanity, a significant part of the scenario is made up of unofficial, informal, and so-called community components (relational systems with learning outcomes between subjects permanently residing in a limited territory and linked by mutual bonds): in short, unofficial, and non-formal educational experiences" (Tramma, 2019, p. 6). The importance of these components of social education has certainly not been exhausted only in the places and times in which school education has been residual, because it is not widespread or because it is addressed only to the elites, but also remains in those societies, such as the present ones, in which the school institution is widespread present and active. Even in developed societies, in which widespread education is contemplated entrusted to adequately trained professionals and sufficiently scientific operational methodologies are used, social education acts, because it provides the subjects involved as educators (trainers) or educators (trainees) some basic structural knowledge and skills that interact with those formally assigned to them, as regards both being trainers and being trainees. Social education provides, in fact, knowledge and skills that can ally or conflict, rudely, with those provided for by the social mandate or claimed, in a small or loud voice, by the so-called public opinion (Sechrist, 2018).

6. CONCLUSION

The pedagogical science that we want to outline in its theoretical assumptions is receiving wide consensus in the old continent precisely because it fights without ifs and buts both the mercantile culture, which denies the historical social identity to young people and consequently their rights of citizenship, and the Ptolemaic pedagogies ideologically at the service of the today's society of globalizations, markets and culture, which tend to imprison childhood as well as adolescence in false hagiographies, reassuring metaphors, ideological rhetoric. These are worn out pedagogies that allude to a metaphysical, ahistorical person, without an anthropological face. We are faced with a context of profound "anthropological depriva-

tion” (Balzano V., 2020, p. 74), that is, a place where social life cannot be separated from the analysis and study of the concept of responsibility, understood first as a fundamental pedagogical category, and later rethought from a socio-political point of view. The reflection, here, focuses on the link between man and education-responsibility, and opens a very interesting scenario: beliefs in certain values change and those attitudes pedagogically defined as pragmatic, supported by a certain mass efficiency, take over. Man feels the need for a strong educational tension and seems more accustomed to the evil of living. There are numerous needs that have created a deep crisis in the person; we exist in a form of elective mutism that causes a feeling of fulfillment for human minds in everyday storytelling, and that leads to that false myth that tells us that the word must not be cultivated and promoted by man, but simply reveal itself in the natural fury of events (Eschenbacher, 2020; Stanistreet, Elfert, & Atchoarena, 2020). The true educational transition cannot be separated from a pedagogy understood as development and educational practice, which becomes an essential element for the analysis of what is happening in our day. Seen also as a practical design science, it will allow us to understand the essential and value problems of a difficult transition, especially for the younger generations. In other words, the singularity understood as a tension to freedom, as a horizon open to an infinite repertoire of testimonies, options, psychology. The pedagogical idea that underlies it is strongly assumed in the continental context for its theoretical disruption: because pedagogy riding the singularity opens up both to the prairies of the possible, of the future, of the utopian, and to the ultimate frontier of the subject-person, the only one able to detach himself from the metaphysics that expropriate the existential kit of the subject, as well as the romantic illusion of an individual naturalness as an absolute value.

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RIASSUNTO

Gli scenari odierni di costante trasformazione della società impongono una necessaria riflessione sul lavoro da un punto di vista squisitamente pedagogico, in considerazione delle molteplici transizioni a cui stiamo assistendo a causa di fenomeni quali il progresso, la digitalizzazione forzata, la pandemia di Covid-19, i conflitti e le crisi economico-finanziarie. È fondamentale passare, per un'educazione alla transizione alla Raccomandazione del 18 dicembre 2006 del Parlamento Europeo sulle competenze chiave per l'apprendimento permanente, dall'imparare a imparare. Si tratta di una delle otto competenze, ma essenzialmente la più caratterizzante per cui "gli allievi prendono spunto da ciò che hanno precedentemente appreso e dalle loro esperienze di vita per utilizzare e applicare conoscenze e abilità in un'intera gamma di contesti: a casa, al lavoro, nell'istruzione e nella formazione".

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