

Decision in the pedagogical professional practice and the abduction's function

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Sunto Lo scopo di questo breve contributo è presentare sinteticamente il problema della decisione nell'ambito dell'esercizio della professione di pedagogo, e il ruolo in esso dell'abduzione, o *ἄπαγωγή*, o retroduzione, come anche nelle altre professioni sociali che hanno la pedagogia come loro componente organico.

Forma paradigmatica dell'esercizio professionale pedagogico è la cosiddetta "interlocuzione pedagogica", erede legittima del dialogo socratico.

La decisione nell'esercizio professionale pedagogico, propriamente, si colloca nell'interlocutore (o negli interlocutori), che viene da questi presa, discussa e fatta evolvere con l'aiuto del pedagogo professionale. Questa decisione è sempre ipotetica, interlocutoria, provvisoria; d'altra parte, essa è fallibile e falsificabile, imperfetta e perfettibile, con evidenti limiti e controindicazioni..

L'aiuto del pedagogo professionale, a questo specifico riguardo come in tutto l'esercizio professionale, comporta il ricorso all'abduzione, l'antica *ἄπαγωγή* appunto. Essa, come del resto l'induzione, non contiene in sé la sua validità logica e deve essere sottoposta al controllo empirico, all'esperienza futura secondo un principio fondamentale del Pragmatismo classico.

L'approccio professionale del pedagogo, dal punto di vista metodologico, è casistico e situazionale come forma di aiuto rivolta alla persona, alternativo alla metodologia statistico-operazionale che si rivolge piuttosto a popolazioni composte da individui.

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I casi generali di interesse pedagogico-professionale possono essere chiamati “casistiche”. Ottimi esempi di casistiche ci sono state offerte da Erich Fromm, a proposito dei problemi dell’educazione familiare; e da Viktor E. Frankl con la sua ricerca del senso della vita, Lebensinn o λόγος.

Ulteriori ventagli di esempi trattabili pedagogicamente si hanno nell’orientamento per la vita e negli studi, e nel Training Autogeno, con specifico riguardo alla formula proposizionale, detta ed eventualmente ripetuta sia in apertura che in chiusura, la quale va adattata al singolo caso cioè alla singola persona, tenuto conto dei casi generali che la letteratura riporta, e questa può esser considerata competenza specificamente pedagogica come del resto la formazione graduale a questa tecnica proposta da Johannes Heinrich Schultz.

La pedagogia professionale, in questo modo e per queste vie, può recare un contributo originale ed altamente specifico al discorso sulla decisione nelle scienze sociali, umane e della cultura (o, se si vuole, human- sozial- geistes- wissenschaften).

Parole chiave Pedagogia sociale e professionale, pedagogista professionale, professioni sociali, metodologia, tecnica d’esercizio

Abstract The aim of this short contribution is to present a summary of the decision problem within the profession of the pedagogist, and the fundamental role of the abduction (᾿απαγωγή, retroduction) process in its proper context, in professional practice of the pedagogist, as in all professional practice involving the social and professional pedagogy.

Pedagogy is a field for reflection, application and commitment or engagement to education. Moreover, pedagogy is establishing itself as a profession, the profession of the pedagogist (not of the educator, who is a different figure), in the socio-health, intellectual, cultural and aid profession field, even in spite of heavy delays and failures of the Italian laws and the resistance of professional groups related but already recognized both by law and by society.

The so-called “*pedagogical interlocution*” is a paradigmatic form of the professional pedagogical practice. Decision in professional pedagogy, properly speaking, must be reached by the interlocutor(s),

who must debate and develop it, with the aid of the professional pedagogist. Abduction is not a valid syllogism: it concerns a possible example of a general case or of a rule, whose the actual pertinence to this general case or this rule is mediated by the professional or expert assumptions.

The professional approach of the pedagogist, from methodological point of view, is casuistic (case based) and situational as a form of aid given to the person, alternative and other than to the statistical-operational methodology that addresses rather to populations composed of individuals.

Cases of general interest in professional pedagogy can be labeled as "casuistries" or "case study" categories.

A good collection of casuistries - case study categories is provided by Erich Fromm, concerning the problems of family education; and by Viktor E. Frankl in his search for sense, Lebenssinn or *λόγος*. A further range of examples of categories based on case studies which can be dealt with a pedagogical professional methodology are the life and studies orientation problems. A fourth class of examples, applicable differently but methodologically similar, offers to us the autogenic training, particularly the choice of the propositional formula, called and eventually repeated both in the opening and in the closure, which must be adapted to the particular case of each single person; and this can be considered a specific pedagogical competence as the gradual training to the technique proposed by Johannes Heinrich Schultz reveals to be.

Professional pedagogy, by this way, can make an important and an authentic and specific contribution to general discussion about decision in the social, human and cultural sciences (or *human- sozial- geistes- Wissenschaften*).

Key words Social and professional pedagogy, professional pedagogist, methodology, professional practice technique

1. Introduction: pedagogy as a social profession

Pedagogy is a field for reflection, application and commitment or engagement to education. The plurality of terms used to name or denote it, in Western languages, is an evidence of its composite nature and of the multiplicity of its aspects and problems which it deals with.

During the nineteenth and the twentieth century, in Italy, Pedagogy had for a long time a dominant interest in the school with particular regard to some of the ages of development (childhood, late childhood), with possible developments in minor history and philosophy reductionism, and with some variations in the so-called "special pedagogy", i.e. pedagogy of special needs. In the nineteenth century the last neo-idealist philosophy considered pedagogy as a philosophical reductionism.

These reductive visions are being overrun by some decades. It is acknowledged that pedagogy covers all the social aggregation and relations and all the ages of the human person lifetime, without the need to distinguish it from andragogy and geragogy as we do in other European languages, for instance in German and in Slavic languages. It also covers all branches of social, political and human relationship. Moreover, pedagogy is establishing itself as a profession, the profession of the pedagogist (not of the educator, who is a different figure), in the socio-health, intellectual, cultural and aid profession area, even in spite of comprehensive heavy delays and failures of the Italian laws and the resistance of professional groups related but already recognized both by law and by society.

It is a profession with an ancient history as medicine and surgery or as jurisprudence, but recently resurfaced. It's right and necessary to bring us back to these ancient roots because several important conceptual and operational pedagogical tools, with obvious actuality, date back to them.

We can begin exemplification with Protagoras from Abdera (ca. 490 – 420 BC) πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἔστιν, τῶν δὲ οὐκ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν; Gorgias from Leontini (ca. 485 - c.380 BC) οὐδὲν ἐστίν, εἰ δ' ἐστίν οὐ νοητόν, εἰ δὲ νοητόν, ἀλλ' οὐ γνωστόν, εἰδὲ καὶ γνωστόν, ἀλλ' οὐ δηλωτόν ἄλλους;

Aristoteles (384 - 322 BC) φύσει μὲν ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος ζῶν πολιτικόν; ῥητορεία role and importance; Socrates διάλογος; πολιτεία as socialization and active participation in political life; classical *logic* and its rules; γνῶθι σεαυτόν (*nosce te ipsum*), with the full awareness of his own potential and limits, and the ὕβρις condemnation; and so on.

We have been committed for nearly twenty years in preparing the necessary equipment for launching the profession: i.e. the methodological context, the techniques, the procedures, the scientific vocabulary, clinical case studies and everything that is necessary for any profession, and for any other ones which need the contribution of pedagogy.

The aim of this short contribution is to present a summary of the decision problem within the profession of the pedagogist, and the role of the abduction process or *'απαγωγή* in its proper context.

2. The decision process in the pedagogical interlocution context

The so-called “*pedagogical interlocution*” is a paradigmatic form of the professional pedagogical practice. It is the legitimate heir of the socratic dialogue. We can still speak of ἑρωτική and μαευτική τέχνη, but not of ἀλήθεια, with reference to this second phase.

The pedagogist practices a form of aid to one or more interlocutors, only on request, by promoting the transition from problematic situation to a strict and full problem posing, by employing the *Einfühlung* (not exactly Empathy), comparing advices, opinions, viewpoints, and enforcing the rules of the scientific research and discovery methodology, as the logical consistency, the theoretical controllability (or check) with the future experience and the resulting asymmetric feedback. The aim is to support interlocutors in the research of their own problem(s) solutions, and allow them to submit this (these) solution(s) to logical and empirical evidences.

Decision in professional pedagogy, properly speaking, must be reached by the interlocutor(s), who must debate and develop it, with

the aid of the professional pedagogist. It is always a conjectural, hypothetical, controversial decision, and on the other hand fallible, falsifiable, capable of contradictions. Where and when a falsification occurs, the idea of possible solution should be spelled out, made explicit, in any case.

3. Abduction in pedagogical practice

The aid of the professional pedagogist, as in this particular regard, as in all professional practice involves the use of old *ᾠπαγωγή* known by Aristotle (384-322 BC), used as a figure of speech in particular in the field of philosophy, logic and legal or juridical, approachable to *reductio ad absurdum* of Zeno from Elea (489-430 BC). This is used to justify the falsity of a statement underlining the absurdity of the consequences of its application.

The whole theoretical framework of reference for the profession of the pedagogist refers to the classic Pragmatism or to a Neopragmatism current perspective. Coherently, the concept of abduction is taken as it was formulated by Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914) (*Collected papers*, 7.218), as inference and not as an argument or a demonstration; it represents an alternative to induction and deduction, which provides an opportunity and a chance that we would call "corroboration" in accordance with the concept of the Critical Rationalism by Popper, with some similarity to the concept of "educated guess", but without any effect on the probability as shown by the well-known theorem of Pavel Tichý (*On Popper's definition of verisimilitude*, "British journal for the philosophy of science", 25, 1974, pp. 155-160; *Verisimilitude redefined*, "British journal for the philosophy of science", 27, 1976, pp. 25-42).

In substance, and taking the topic of this contribution into account, we can describe synthetically the abduction as follows:

Rule	the general case A presents (or can present) the B phenomenology
Data	the evidences B of a particular case repeat aspects that can be considered professionally experienced to include reference into the A general case, and no other reasonable hypothesis explains these evidences as well
Clinical diagnosis	the case we are studying, the B evidences, constitutes a particular case of A

Abduction is not a valid syllogism: it concerns a possible example of a general case or of a rule, whose the actual pertinence to this general case or this rule is mediated by the professional or expert assumptions.

It is suitable to increase our knowledge, to advance new hypotheses, make predictions, which can find their substance in the past experiences, particularly thanks to some professional skills. But it is also the operative way of reasoning to be more subject to the risk of error. It, like the induction, doesn't contain its logical validity in itself, therefore it must be assessed through empirical tests, the previous mentioned *future experience*, following a fundamental taught (or principle) of the classical Pragmatism.

4. The casuistic-situational (case based), or clinical, approach

The professional approach of the pedagogist, from methodological point of view, is casuistic (case based) and situational as a form of aid given to the person, alternative and other than to the statistical-

operational methodology that addresses rather to populations composed of individuals.

For this particular approach we use the term "clinical" (κλινικός, the adjective, not to be used as a noun) in methodological terms (κλίνη, κλίνω). The analogy is with the practice of clinicians and surgeons who cures patients and not diseases, but the same analogy is to be applied to the professional training: there should not be therapeutic profession if the therapist did not know to inscribe the clinical symptoms of each individual sickness, with its unique singularity, into more general cases or categories of illness or disease that they know how to be dealt with, being aware of the treatment strategies, used from subject to subject, transferable inter-subjectively in their general way. till to be generalized.

The only difference, however substantial, is that the relationship with the pedagogist is an aid's relation, exclusive alternative to the therapeutic relationship, thus being something very different from. In this way, the pedagogist takes care of the interlocutor(s), and he doesn't cure him or them. Cases of general interest in professional pedagogy can be labeled as "casuistries" or "case study" categories.

5. Some examples of clinical casuistries categories interesting professional pedagogy

A good collection of casuistries - case study categories is provided by Erich Fromm (1900-1980). They concern the problems of family education: problems we have faced working professionally with a wide prevalence in recent years. It is well known the distinction he proposed between paternal love (i.e. conditional) and maternal love (unconditional), whose full integration brings to mature and accomplished love. The possible combinations of some lack of balance between a form of love and the other, addressed to a child male or female, taking into account love they feel for themselves and the selfish love lead to a series of general case study categories. We have already proposed to draw the attention of professional pedagogy, obviously far away from Fromm suggestion : to deal them with psychotherapy, rather we suggested to everything relate to family education and treat them specifically by a pedagogical approach .

Other good examples of casuistic - case study categories are offered to us by Viktor E. Frankl (1905-1997), in his search for sense, the meaning of life, Sinn, Lebenssinn or λόγος, that we cannot call "logotherapy" because the pedagogical relationship excludes the therapeutic relationship, but neither "logoanalysis" or "existential analysis" because it is rather a synthetic approach. Both the search for sense and for sense in life (someone improperly translates "Sinn" as "meaning"), as the conceptual tools proposed by Frankl namely "dereflection" and "paradoxical intention", can be used with full legitimacy by the professional pedagogue, because they are not tools whose use is exclusive by MD or psychotherapist.

A further range of examples of categories based on case studies which can be dealt with a pedagogical professional methodology orientation, a pedagogical skill, which is first of all pivotal in life and then in school and university. Even the access to a secondary school course or degree course and post-graduate students are case studies, where each case to be guided and oriented, often together with his/her own family, is to be dealt abductively through the pedagogical practitioner's ability of mediation and culture.

A fourth class of examples, applicable differently but methodologically similar, offers to us the autogenic training, which we don't consider only, or even mainly, a relaxation technique. The sequence of six stages (heaviness, heat, breath, solar plexus, heart, fresh forehead) cannot be changed by a pedagogue, at least this is our well-founded opinion, but the propositional formula, called and eventually repeated both in the opening and in the closure, which must be adapted to the particular case of each single person, given the general claims that the literature shows, and this can be considered a specific pedagogical competence as the gradual training to the technique proposed by Johannes Heinrich Schultz (1884-1970) reveals to be.

6. The supportive, professional aid's relationship, and the decision outcoming by the interlocutor(s)

Among the conditions indicated by the research and the professional experience, in order the pedagogue can the

interlocutor(s) to make decisions and manage them, we can point out, without any pretence of completeness and being comprehensive, the following ones:

- a) the «opening», willingness to question themselves, both as partners and the professional;
- b) the position of the problem, starting from the problematic situation;
- c) the staunch mastery by the professional of the rules of methodology of the scientific research;
- d) the professional use of the *Einfühlung*, in order to take the problematic situation into himself and return it to the interlocutor so that it is better solvable;
- e) the ability to detect social and relational evidences in their problematic significance, similarly to what happens as for the doctor's «clinical eye»;
- f) the ability to proceed by abduction from cases to casuistries studies or case study categories, to offer the interlocutors the specific contribution of pedagogy.

The speech is complex (Blezza 2010, 2014), and perhaps this is neither the place, nor the time for a detailed description of the outlined profession and its practice (AA.VV. 1998, 1999, Crispiani 2001, Blezza 2011, Trisciuzzi 2003, Crispiani 2008). Specifically regarding the theme of this convention, it is essential that the decision in relation to the professional pedagogue is always taken by the person involved in such a relation with the aid of the pedagogical practitioner who works by abduction in the search for possible solution strategies that are just opportunities and proposals.

The decision is, furthermore always hypothetical, *ad interim*, that is provisional. On the other hand, such a decision is fallible, weak, sick, can be forged, with obvious limitations and drawbacks. In the pedagogical interlocution the decisions are shaped according to double hypothetical imperatives (if ... then ...), meaning that besides being hypothetical just the protasis («if ... ») even the apodosis is alike («... then ... »).

This is the reason why it should be feasible to recognize even in word clusters that this very particular kind of decision ("if ... then maybe").

Professional pedagogy, by this way, can make an important and an authentic and specific contribution to general discussion about decision in the social, human and cultural sciences (or *human- sozial- geistes- Wissenschaften*).

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