SECTION: PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSALTING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY РОЗДІЛ: ПСИХОЛОГІЧНЕ КОНСУЛЬТУВАННЯ ТА ПСИХОТЕРАПІЯ

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"KEY WORDS" AND MEDIATION PRACTICES IN SPECIAL PEDAGOGY

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The topics of this article concern the importance of mediators in education and the inclusion of children in general and, in particular, of those children who have difficulties due to disability, disorders or handicaps. The educator must deal with the individual as a whole and, with the help of the mediators, he must be able to achieve the goals set out in his educational project (or in a relationship of support), taking into consideration the overall needs and strengths of the subject with whom he works, or rather, cooperates. The mediators are defined as a relational resource and as a support to therapeutic, educational and assistance initiatives. They could act as harmonizers and attenuators in particular conditions of stress, suffering and conflict and they could be a valid aid for people with various problems in relationships, communication and with disturbed social behavior. Especially they would support minors, but also those people who have difficulties due to disability, including intellectual disability, and those people who are living critical situations of personal and social vulnerability or suffer an extreme social marginalization. This article highlights the particular importance of mediations and mediators in educational-pedagogical practices in schools and extra-scholastic settings, which are necessary for the growth and learning of children with disabilities. These children must be guaranteed the right to have a complete education in an "ordinary" and not separate, that is inclusive, social path.

KEYWORDS: Illness, Disability, Deficit, Handicap, Stereotypes, Prejudice, Mediations, Mediators, Integration, Inclusion

Deficit, Handicap and Disability: analysis of these terms

In social sciences and in educational sciences in particular, understanding the words in use and understanding their practical, operational meanings is the basis for high quality interventions. It allows not only the action but also the qualitative implementation of the various disciplinary points of view by developing interdisciplinary and interinstitutional cooperation in a network that is renewed according to the highlighted needs and not through bureaucratic and repetitive mechanisms. In this kind of approach, we distinguish and put together different scientific skills, which are necessary to face the complexity of the cases we are dealing with. Terms used in the disability situation are examined, in order to find the meanings and perspectives of our action.

The term Deficit in medical language assumes the meaning of alteration, anomaly, damage in the structures: "reduction of the functional activities of the organism or of certain organs or, in psychopathology, the temporary or permanent weakening of intellectual faculties" (Dizionario della lingua italiana "Treccani"). According to World Health Organization (WHO) we can use the term Impairment that is "any loss or anomaly affecting psychological, physiological or anatomical structures or functions" (Cfr. World Health Organization, 1980). If we analyse the Handicap we discover that it refers to: "The disadvantaged condition, consequent to impairment or a disability, which in a certain subject limits or prevents the fulfilment of a social role considered normal in relation to the age, sex, sociocultural context of the person (Lascioli, 2011, p.17). The meaning of this term seems to derive from the

world of horse racing where, to encourage betting, a disadvantage was imposed on the best horse, such as starting a few meters behind the opponents; the link between handicap and disadvantage would lie in the fact that bets were collected by passing a hat in hand among the bettors, "go cap in hand", or coming from the gesture of putting the hand in the hat, "hand in a cap".

The terms Deficit and Handicap do not have the same meaning in medicine and in the other disciplines since today we have the awareness that the handicap is a social and cultural problem linked mainly to environmental and social factors. The World Health Organization with the second publication of the International Classification of Functioning and Disabilities, ICIDH-2, has first eliminated the negative value of the terms handicap and disability, giving them a more neutral meaning, focusing the attention on the activity rather than on the disability, on the participation and no longer on the handicap itself; ICIDH-2 increases importance of the role of the Classification as a social model: it includes a list of environmental and contextual factors that influence the functioning and disabilities of people. In 2001 was published the ICF, the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, in which we can clearly see the conceptual transformation of what we have exposed starting from the elimination of the term handicap in favor of the term disability; in the document we can see how this "phenomenon" is considered as the result of actions and characteristics of the environmental and personal factors of the subject in the given life context. We can define this new interpretative model as a "bio-psycho-social paradigm", in which the person is seen as a whole; this model puts on the same level both the aspects concerning the health of the person (the medical model), and the aspects of social participation (the social model), and connects all these aspects in relation to environmental factors. Therefore we will consider that the deficit or the impairment in themselves do not create disabilities, but disability depends on the ways the subject establishes his relationship with the various factors previously exposed in order to create a framework of functioning in a given life context. According with

this new interpretative model the role of education and the educational function are also re-evaluated: the aim of educators must be optimizing the environmental and personal factors, so that to ensure that the individual with unfavorable health conditions gets improvements and significant changes on the global functioning; the task of education must be to create development paths suitable for improving the quality of the overall levels of functioning described above, i.e. offering a good level of quality of life.

The Deficit is not the Handicap

On the basis of the use and of the various interpretations in social disciplines, we will further distinguish the terms Deficit and Handicap, which are usually inter-exchanged, but actually refer to different concepts. As already indicated, the Deficit indicates a loss, alteration, anomaly in psychological or physical functions while the Handicap is the disadvantageous condition deriving impairment: for example, when one hears that a subject has the handicap of "not hearing" because deaf, the damage (the lack of hearing, therefore the Deficit) is considered as a Handicap, which, instead, is given by the sum of personal and environmental factors; in this sense the description of Canevaro helps us: "[...] the deficit is the irreversible difficulty, the limit. It will be useful, instead, and more correct, to focus our attention on the handicap. In situations of disability the irreversible difficulty is accompanied by many elements that make the intervention possible. The same irreversible difficulty can take on a positive connotation if examined with the intention of discovering potential resources" (Canevaro, 1999, p. 5). This is a very important distinction, especially for interdisciplinary extinctions; in fact, there may be a risk that not only the society, but also the subject may identify himself totally with his Deficit, considering himself as part of a category: the original identity is replaced by the concept of category. Moreover we see how the concept of Handicap concerns the professions of helping relationships and in particular education, in fact it turns out to be the obstacle or the difficulty that the person or the mediator encounters during the educational process to reduce the

asymmetry between being and being able; in this process must emerge the capacity of the educator to deal with an operational pedagogical and/or educational planning from which must be derived precise actions.

Handicap is not disability

This distinction does not want to be in opposition to what was explained above or to what was established in the IFC: we just try to describe the above mentioned concept, that the term Handicap can be considered as part of the educational approach of the Deficit. In particular, the task that this area must carry out is to remove the obstacles, handicaps, which prevent the potential of development present in every subject, because from this action the risk of disability can be reduced; disability, in fact, depends on the quality of life reached by the subject despite the deficit. It should not be linked to the severity of the deficit but to the relationship of the ways in which specific health conditions come into contact with certain environmental, relational and personal factors; therefore in order to discover the cause of the transformation of a serious deficit or pathology into disability, it is necessary to analyze life context and in particular functioning problems, that is the difficulties the person encounters in carrying out a task based on age and needs. In this perspective, which is taken up by the ICF, disability is a problem that concerns the entire social life of the person, it concerns society, and for this reason the deficit health situation should not affect excessively the life of the person himself, we should take into account that the impact on people's functioning levels must be reduced as much as possible, with a consequently increase of their quality of life.

Therefore we now better understand how important education is. The task of education is to create conditions in which the limits do not turn into handicaps, obstacles or disadvantages and do not interfere negatively in the path of human development and living conditions of those with a specific health condition. However, during the analysis of the educational problems of the person, it is necessary to bear in mind the type of handicap, whether it is inherent or induced: the first can be found only in the presence of an actual deficit of the subject since it concerns specific difficulties in the

processes of human development; the second, on the other hand, can also be found in subjects without deficits and it is caused by external conditions and it concerns in particular the quality of the relationships that have been created between the subject, the learner and his life context which can affect negatively his personal development, giving several forms of handicap that do not depend precisely on diseases or deficits, but on the lack of significant relationships educational and relationships. Therefore, the distinction between Handicap and Disability is fundamental enhancing relationships of support and educational interventions (also special) and in both interventions the objective is to promote human development paths with incisive proposals for the quality of life of the person.

The Rigidity and Immobility of the Stereotype and the Inclusive Perspective.

"Imperfection has always allowed continuous mutations of that marvelous imperfect mechanism that is the human brain. I believe that imperfection is more genuine characteristic of human nature rather than perfection. [...] Imperfection is a fundamental component of evolution" (Montalcini, 1987).

The extract shown above was taken from "Praise to the imperfection" by Rita Levi-Montalcini, which is significant to give a deep and positive value to what is often mistakenly seen as a limit: imperfection is what often give the motivation to overcome obstacles that seemed insurmountable. Let's take her as an example. Rita Levi-Montalcini was born in Turin and she was Jewish. She had to live a double "imperfection": being a Jewish woman prevented her from exercising in the hospital, due to the racial laws, but this was not an obstacle for her to continue in living her life. She changed her interest in medicine for the research activities, setting up a small home laboratory; at the end of the war she was called to the United States where in 1986 she received the Nobel Prize; this was achieved because Montalcini considered a challenge to overcome what should be considered an imperfection and fragility.

We all were born fragile and fragility does not disappear with age. Fragility is not a characteristic of a particular part of population that does not concern the "normal" part of it: each of us is unique and differs from the other, but often we are deceived into believing that humanity is formed by two categories: the normal and the abnormal. This distinction actually reassures: "We do not belong to the categories of those who have a disability, a fragility" (Canevaro, 2018, p. 18); perhaps because every encounter that we make reveals us to ourselves, because we see us in the other; but the other has a disability that shows in us a fragility that disturbs us and therefore we try to protect ourselves through mechanisms such as, for example, victimization, pietism or stereotypes. The prison of the stereotype has always represented a marking sign of the disabled person, but this problem can also be experienced by someone who is not disabled, that is, subjects who independently of the actions practiced and lived remain imprisoned in a specific image despite the changes in environmental and social factors. To better explain this aspect, we must now explain the need for belonging: from birth, the child, who is a fragile being and needs care, develops the desire to feel itself as part of the world and of the small context in which it interacts; moreover, it is a way to respond to one's needs and in this way the child find a balance to participation in life. This need is generally not explicitly expressed with this term but we can identify it in the desire that every individual has to have security, to work, to have free time, to play, to meet other people: i.e. to live. Sometimes, however, the need for security can result in the search for what can endanger security itself: for example, those who do not speak the same language, who have different cultural and religious habits, are seen as enemies and this is realized through a mechanism that makes the exception the rule; the danger of expressing the need for belonging in this way is to live it "with a closure inside stereotypes attributed to others and reflected on themselves" (Canevaro, 2016, p. 73). In this expression we find the concepts of "race" and the justification to implement violent behaviors and dynamics that are difficult to control; we can include in this framework, for example, the operation, called T4, carried out by the Nazis on disabled people: it concerned the elimination of disabled people and psychiatric patients to purify the "Aryan race" from "worthless lives"; this acronym therefore allowed the use of any means. To ensure that these stereotyped

visions are abandoned, an inclusive perspective must be introduced: it develops the ability to contaminate oneself, to carry out tasks and reach goals with different characteristics; it means not hiding the weak, imperfect part of oneself, not being afraid to mirror oneself in the other, disabled or not. To be able to implement this perspective, an essential element is the assumption of responsibility by the subject: one must value the competent identity that is found in every individual despite their frailties and not for a narcissistic complacency, but to develop and recall the duties of responsibility; the risk that can cause the de-responsibility is the trivialization, that is to attribute a critical element to any situation. One can believe that, being so extended the problem, it is not necessary to look for a solution to reduce the effects. The inclusion is where the connection for a quality of life for all is found, the good practices that do not mean the best but those applicable for all, where the rights of disabled people or those with special needs are found, but without forcing the picture to be completed once for evere.

"When you accept the miracle of who you are and love yourself without conditions, changing the things that need to be changed is much easier. Some aspects that you have always thought of having to change because you considered them your shortcomings, real enemies, in reality they are your faithful servants. It is thanks to them that you are who you are, a unique creature, different from anyone else who came before you or will come after" (Powers, 2014, p. 184).

Mediation - Mediators

The term Competence is of a certain importance in the care, educational and support relationships, and it is also necessary to specify its meaning. "Competence": it is a skill that can organize itself in many different contexts; this organizational capacity that becomes competence is essential as it allows you to be able to face the unexpected without going to hinder the activity but keeping the direction by integrating the unexpected elements in a common perspective.

People who have an educational role and in general a supporting role in psychological, social and pedagogical relationships are considered for their contribution in the creation and in the possible recovery of dialogue, that it was not possible to start and establish or that does not happen with ourselves, *intra*, and needs to be done with others, *inter*; the mediator must allow us to develop this competence between us and others, in order to regain the *intra* dimension: this is the profound, basic, educational and pedagogical aid competence. This competence is not easy because it needs to use a progressive way of restoring the mastery of the organization, of the discussion, of the economy of thought; through that minimum of autonomy that the subject possesses, a fuller autonomy is reconstructed, therefore through the *inter* the *intra* dimension is regrown and they find again a balance: it is not simple but it is what is required to the educational professions.

The educator and the social professional must proceed carefully in a work of adaptation in order to develop skills and for this they need a project-model, if they want to avoid a dependence on reality and to develop a cooperation that allows exchange relationships; this is essential since without a model there is the risk of being overwhelmed by the events and in some way coordinated by the shortcomings; if this happens we risk being tied to a reality that is flattened on the existing and not easily overcome. The educator and in general the social science professional engaged in a supporting relationship must make it evolve using a model.

With the term "model" we want to indicate a "flexible, elastic structure, but with fixed points. If elasticity and flexibility are exchanged with total informality and improvisation, the risk is that of having a false model" (Canevaro, 2006, p. 25).

In this model we focus our attention on functions, that can be divided in elementary functions and superior functions, the first being the simplest functions of efficiency, such as the physical capacity for survival, perception/action, reactions to the context, simple memory, recognition of persons, etc. From these functions there begins the development of some elements thanks to the capacity of evocation and representation. The superior functions are more complex, they originate the social being with social and non-self-referential knowledge, activities are pragmatic and mental at the same time, i.e. through these functions it is possible to formulate hypotheses, examine the consequences and do hypothetical

explorations. One should therefore have the ability to categorize, without closing the possibilities of developing pieces of information, original features, exchanging and reworking them, through argumentative abilities, rationalizations, causal logic patterns. You can define the elementary functions as a base, ground floor, while the superior functions as an overlying floor, and they need a connection, they need "stairs", in order to be always in contact, because life does not work without a base: here you have the "door" to access the room, above are the "windows" from which we can look farther to decide whether it is worth moving and to direct actions. These stairs, these connections, are the mediators, which could also be professional figures who should have the skills of mediation for cooperation. It turns out and it is very important that the mediators try to connect the resources of a community with another one that does not have resources. A good educator and a good professional and therefore a good competence should be able to bring out and become intentional what sometimes happens casually, that is the presence of more mediators. Through the mediators is given the possibility to overcome the tensions and immobility that is generated in the situation of stasis that eliminate the possibility of seeing the various elements that make up reality itself. There should be created a way - a project which allows to the abilities to become skills, knowing a context, so that a plural reading of the reality is possible and not only a static and immobile one.

For the Mediation it would be necessary to have and to make available, besides the symbolic elements, also the objects, which are linked to answers that serve the child for growth and/or they serve a person in difficulty; the use of objects permits to give motivation to carry out a certain task in an independent way, both from the Educator or the adult of reference and in general from the professional of supporting relationships.

It is therefore essential to recognize the importance of the mediators because it is through them that the suggestions for evolution and change of possible situations arise and these changes can be made by changing the mediators in a scheme of mediator strategies more suited to understanding the

other person and his/her control of the situation. We must constantly have in mind as a guiding idea that the interlocutor is an active subject therefore he/she is able to have as much as possible mastery of his/her pathes; this is one of the hardest form of prejudice against subjects, for example, considered "weak" or with a situation that is called "disability", who are judged without a possibility of control on themselves and on their own development. The mediator is important for this reason.

The educator and the professional of the social activity and supporting relationships should first of all have an interior structure adequate to the educational activity and an approach orientated towards a profound recognition and an effective acceptance of the other: in fact educating does not want to say to assist, to pity or to legitimize the right to be educated; instead, educating means to recognize that even in the other, despite the possible difficulties, humanity itself is present and alive.

The term Mediators concerns people, functions and objects, which give support, facilitation that promote understanding of things and are linked together to provide a path to follow. They should provide a plurality of elements to the subject that understands and connects to a certain reality. They are objects external to the subject and therefore visible from outside the subject itself and for this reason they should represent and be a meeting point between the divergences and the unity that the subject faces to understand and dynamically connect to the realities of knowledge and of their organization.

A mediator should be docile, actor and spectator at the same time, without ever definitively imposing his imprint but always perfectible, he should know how to lead and guide the subject without any feeling of judgment for his/her experimentation so as not to compromise other experiences. These reflections do not want to be a pattern to be followed and implemented, but only aspects to reflect on and internalized in a completely original way; moreover they do not have an order of importance but interact with each other at various times and with various intensities in the educational processes and help reports.

A growing subject is an evolving person who gets into the relationship with people who are already grown up, but should always be aware that they are in permanent transformation. Referring to the thought of Freire and De la Garandeire, the educator is never complete, so the educator is also educating as well as the educator is also an educator, and this does not happen spontaneously, but only through a careful and in-depth work. The educational task is therefore a task of mediation, an educational dynamic in which the educator is a methodological guide that identifies the tools, adapts distant knowledge in order to reorganize them once learned and through this mediation interaction with the educator or the adult, through this process of interaction and social integration the child and / or the person who needs to be "hetero-regulated" becomes "self-regulated". Proceeding in this way one acquires the awareness of being able to follow a path without the need to be totally guided.

What the action of a mediator consists in? "The ability to create a connection between what a subject already has and what the other has". In order to understand the answer, one must start from the development zone formulated proximal Vygotsky, that is, arrange and test a *mediator* suitable for sensory thresholds that an individual can handle. In this action there are many events of "active education". Active education means to take on new challenges to find effective mediators in perspectives without pre-established limits. Care should be taken when an improvement is achieved in the subject, without idealizing it as therapeutic: music, water, animals, objects and elements of mediation in general are mediators and their productivity consists in being able to place thems alongside other mediators; this aspect is essential because it deals towards the plurality of mediators, who constitute a continuous entrance, a constant process opening in order to continue, to move forward, while the therapeutic aspect risks a closing vision. The characteristics of the mediators must therefore be: plurality, that is the construction through them of a shared reality without renouncing to one's own identity; the security and the invitation to risk, that is to be a point of continuity and interruption, building

a project that also includes the possible unpredictable elements, the unforeseen, that can be used to continue and go further; a *mediator is not scary*, if the mediator is frightening it is necessary to replace it otherwise one runs the risk of being blocked or paralyzed; the *multimodality*, the different ways that are used to realize a design which are suggested by subjective aspects and circumstances; *multimedia*, i.e. different capacities and possibilities of choice, and finally *re-enacting organizational functions*, or the ability to reorganize a project by placing it in a context of life, habitual or not, institutional or family, shared or experienced individually, mental etc.

Being able to reorganize a project, in the course of life, is the most widely used as well as the most useful and intelligent way to solve the problems that we inexorably encounter. Having and building, organizing and engineering a project in any situation we find, are important things for personal life and coexistence (to-live-with), for a better life for ourselves and for the others.

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«КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА» ТА МЕДІАЦІЙНА ПРАКТИКА В СПЕЦІАЛЬНІЙ ПЕДАГОГІЦІ Димитріс Аргіропоулос

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Тематика статті стосується важливості медіаторів в освіті і інклюзії дітей загалом і, зокрема, тих дітей, які відчувають труднощі через інвалідність, розлади або недостатність. Педагогу слід взаємодіяти з людиною в цілому, і за допомогою медіаторів він повинен бути в змозі досягати поставлених освітніх цілей (або забезпечувати стосунки підтримки), беручи до уваги загальні потреби й сильні сторони суб'єкта, з яким він працює, або, скоріше, співпрацює. Медіатори визначаються як реляційний ресурс і підтримка терапевтичних, освітніх і допоміжних ініціатив. Вони можуть виступати в якості гармонізаторів і аттеньюаторів в конкретних умовах стресу, страждань і конфліктів, і вони можуть надавати дієву допомогу для людей з різними проблемами в міжособистісних стосунках, спілкуванні та з порушеною соціальною поведінкою. Особливе значення вони мають з точки зору підтримки неповнолітніх, а також тих людей, які відчувають труднощі через інвалідність, в тому числі розумову відсталість, і тих людей, які опинилися в кризових ситуаціях, є особистісно або соціально вразливими або піддаються крайньому ступеню соціальної маргіналізації. У статті підкреслюється особливе значення медіації та медіаторів в навчально-педагогічній практиці в школах і позанавчальних умовах, які є необхідними для зростання і навчання дітей з обмеженими можливостями здоров'я. Таким дітям повинно бути гарантовано право на отримання повної освіти за «звичайним», а не окремим, тобто інклюзивним, соціальним шляхом.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: хвороба, інвалідність, дефіцит, недостатність, стереотипи, упередження, медіація, медіатори, інтеграція, інклюзія

«КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА» И МЕДИАТИВНАЯ ПРАКТИКА В СПЕЦИАЛЬНОЙ ПЕДАГОГИКЕ Димитрис Аргиропоулос

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Тематика статьи касается важности медиаторов в образовании и инклюзии детей в общем и, в частности, тех детей, которые испытывают трудности по причине инвалидности, расстройств или недостаточности. Педагогу следует взаимодействовать с человеком в целом, и с помощью посредников он должен быть в состоянии достигать поставленных образовательных целей (или обеспечивать отношения поддержки), принимая во внимание общие потребности и сильные стороны субъекта, с которым он работает, или, скорее, сотрудничает. Медиаторы определяются как реляционный ресурс и поддержка терапевтических, образовательных и вспомогательных инициатив. Они могут выступать в качестве гармонизаторов и аттенюаторов в конкретных условиях стресса, страданий и конфликтов, и они могут оказывать действенную помощь для людей с различными проблемами в межличностных отношениях, общении и с нарушенным социальным поведением. Особое

значение они имеют с точки зрения поддержки несовершеннолетних, а также тех людей, которые испытывают трудности по причине инвалидности, в том числе умственной отсталости, и тех людей, которые оказались в кризисных ситуациях, являются личностно или социально уязвимыми или подвергаются крайней социальной маргинализации. В этой статье подчеркивается особое значение медиации и медиаторов в учебно-педагогической практике в школах и внеучебных условиях, которые необходимы для роста и обучения детей с ограниченными возможностями здоровья. Таким детям должно быть гарантировано право на получение полного образования по «обычному», а не отдельному, то есть инклюзивному, социальному пути. КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: болезнь, инвалидность, дефицит, недостаточность, стереотипы, предубеждение, медиация, медиаторы, интеграция, инклюзия