

INTERCULTURAL APPROACH IN EDUCATION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING PROCESSES

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Abstract: *The need to give coordinates to the new training processes and together with them to the new professional figures that will appear openly to manage them hasn't emerged as much as in these last years. The coordinates could be as follows: the expansion of the needs of knowledge and the demand for greater productivity to learn. Particularly it is good to question the assumption on the possible definition and position that the figure "of the expert in the training processes" has. It is necessary to follow a certain line of development starting with those that are the indicators of the new requirements of professionalism that are originated from different organizations and then with the consequential assignments of the new expansion of training.*

Keywords: *education; training; knowledge, organizations, knowledge*

1. INTRODUCTION

The need to give coordinates to the new training processes and together with them to the new professional figures that will appear openly to manage them hasn't emerged as much as in these last years. The coordinates could be as follows: the expansion of the needs of knowledge and the demand for greater productivity to learn. Particularly it is good to question the assumption on the possible definition and position that the figure "of the expert in the training processes" has. It is necessary to follow a certain line of development starting with those that are the indicators of the new requirements of professionalism that are originated from different organizations and then with the consequential assignments of the new expansion of training. When it is spoken of requirement it is referred to that expressed in the business ambit and some researchers conducted in different European countries confirm the requirement for the best preparation and more elevated levels of knowledge. The enterprises foresee a very consistent growth of the education in the low and intermediate levels and they particularly show a strong interest toward the post-diploma specializations and the university diplomas. Based on this reason, the demands of technical competence and flexibility of the employees are grown which should meet the changes of market, and besides business ambit, they have to reduce the wastes and improve the quality of the products evermore.

Concerning the entirety of the demanded competences which should be concretized in the field of the specific business operation, the most demanded component is that of technical-specific type, with a connotation of diagnostic ability (to interpret and treat the information) and reporting (to know how to communicate effectively, and collaborate with the others), with a significant importance for the decisional abilities. Referring to the ways and typologies of training, the results of the researches concerning the business ambit, openly confirm the expansion in progress of the needs to learn and understand; accordingly the importance of the role of the expert is reinstated in different situations by the traditional forms of teaching in classrooms. Synthesizing from what has been said, some meaningful indications are deduced: the training demand for all the levels is obviously grown; it is finally emphasized that

we are daily more and more affronted with the interlacement among technical components and transversal capabilities of the professionalism among which a great need of "educability" of the people emerges and the diversification of the roles, of the figures of the subjects that are part of the training (Di Nubila, 1997:213-214).

2. THE ROLE OF THE TRAINING PROCESSES

In a more and more shattered and disorientated social reality, the training should contain new

assignments, prepare professional capacities that are able to meet the demands and the unforeseen events, check and govern the new processes of innovation. This is a qualified engagement of the trainers: to participate with a proper original contribution of research and innovation in the processes of change inside which the contemporary world is absorbed. In order to respond to this reality, concerning training, a more and better defined fact starts to delineate which means the emergence of a new logic based on the interlacement of four fundamental dimensions:

the ability of innovation, the reversal of the quality-quantity relationship, the centrality of the human resource, the ability of listening and learning (Lipari, 1994:67).

The assignments of the training are synthesized as follows: first of all devoting attention to the importance that the learning gets, keeping in mind the decisive meaning of the experience and the capabilities of the subject to contextualize, also taking in consideration what is really important for the learning and the capability to catch the significance of proper actions. The increase of awareness that mostly interests the action of the training, except knowing, knowing how to do, (ability) and knowing how to be, (behaviors) it is the ability of the actors to orient themselves in the organizations, having as a constant reference point the dimensions of change and the necessity of the real centrality of human resource. Considering the increasing complexity that today's reality introduces, mentioned above in a very superficial way, the question that comes out is: who should face and guide the challenge that is introduced nowadays in the training actions. The most common answer is the trainer but the profession of the trainer is almost an indefinable one and for this profession it is asked, which is its identity, which can be the new profile of the "expert of the training processes"?

The first thing that is obvious is the concept of profession, by emphasizing the determining importance of knowledge as a premise of the abilities, to the competences and the professional behaviors and apart from this, a clear reference is evident to the relational reciprocity between profession and training process. This represents a new way of considering the profession, which is the combination of knowledge, ability and operational moments together with the culture of the job relationships, environment, and innovation.

3. THE TRAINER AS A FACILITATOR

The new trainer should learn to know the various facets of today's training, the multiplicity of quarters, the variety of needs, and the consciences that training is not, but occurs. The expert in the training processes, therefore, should not be the one who works "to give" a configuration to the human development, according to a model rigidly pre-arranged and according to the classical idea of the training, but a "facilitator" capable to activate proposals with the same subjects of training together and to create opportunities of improvement of the abilities, stimulation, activation and consequent behaviors. In other words, the expert has to accomplish the role of facilitator on learning and towards such role some characteristics are individualized, among which the communicative, didactical and methodological capabilities, the pedagogic and psychological sensibility and, finally, management of situations of organizational complexity. In addition to the above mentioned abilities, it is essential in the training capacity, the ability not only to report in and with the context, but also the involvement of subject agents in the training action. Furthermore, the trainer is the one who perceives the change, and who knows how to drive the change in its training action reducing the fear and the sense of uncertainty that every change can involve; in fact, he can come out as "an expert able to start strategies without operating any manipulations" (Nanni, 1989:54).

In the organizations, the expert should be a strongly integrated figure in the logics of development of the same organization, in his business he is not the expert of the emergent situations anymore, but the expert of learning, the man of cultural stimulation and not certainly the man of teaching. Training becomes strategic and important in the sense of learning and result and the trainer is really the one who teaches the others how to learn and to put people in the circumstances to communicate better, that means establishing common shared values.

He constitutes in the organizations a potential of human resources to improve training and in this way two objectives are satisfied that an organizational context should express:

the first one deals with the training that sets objectives of potential and improvement of knowledge, ability and responsibility of the

individuals, the second is that of development that relatively sets an improving change of the functions of the individuals and accordingly to the operation of the organizations (Colapietro, 1997:24).

Briefly, in different environments as schools, enterprises, the organization is the professional that helps people, the roles and the functions that actually are and those which should be.

In this role, the trainer is the man of listening: a listening that activates the psychic and mental sensors and it is more concerned on the way they are both emerged in comparison to the external and internal environment: it is a listening from monitoring and ability to grab what it is functional in the system at that time.

The different expenditures of professional role of this figure is unusual; in the classroom, in the places of employment, side by side as planner and tutor. This plurality of roles has in common the wealth of a great internal resource created from different competences, professional curiosity and great passion for the interesting human situations. The job of the new expert can be demonstrated somehow an unpublished and original job even if not always easy because it asks for great availability and waste of energies. Regardless of that, however, is a gratifying job: to prepare people for challenging assignments creating with them the runs, the cognitive nets and the learning roads; a job that demands long and constant pedagogic preparation, psychological, sociological and above all professional resources, of tools and a variety of updated methodologies. These are the features that should characterize the new figure of the expert in the training processes that today represents an innovation in the field of training and this event is emphasized by Ammeta, as an expert of training:

to the generations of new trainers that begin to practice the profession today, the challenge is introduced to the new trainers of this exceptional program: to create useful tools for the era of the human ware (Lamietta, 1997:219).

After having delineated a profile of the expert in the training process, it is also useful to underline the knowing of the trainers and accordingly his competences. To this intention, it is useful to clarify some definition words such as “knowing”, “competences”, “meta-quality”, “knowledge”, “ability”, being nowadays also the key terms when talking about experts in training processes.

Concerning the knowing of trainers, it is necessary, first of all, a general knowledge of the dynamics of growth and development of the labour

world, of the productive and organizational phenomena involving the enterprises and of the demands of the emerging professionalism. In addition to this, there is a particular knowledge of the macroeconomic context, in which the enterprise acts from the economic-geographical point of view also in the function of the dynamics related to the competition in the market system; finally,

a series of knowledge is essential, contemplated from what are considered as the demands and characteristics of the enterprise and the subjects to be trained (Alessandrini, 1998:40-41).

On the other hand, the competences refer to the knowledge, to the abilities and the so-called meta-qualities. The knowledge is related to everything belonging to the basic knowing of the trainer and it refers to a circle of professional preparation including, apart from the most different specialized knowledge of technical or disciplinary order, the possession of more general cognitive competences regarding the subject organization on one hand and the subject of adults' education on the other hand.

It is obvious that for such a circle of competences, the required preparation is to be understood not only as acquired knowledge, but also as matured experiences (Quaglino, 1990:187).

Whereas the abilities are a more complex frame of “operational abilities” related to the trainer's role. To be more precise, there are two types of abilities: the first one refers to the management operations of the training process and it recalls abilities connected exactly to the control activity of the process itself, of planning of the training sketch; the second refers to the operations connected directly with the carrying out of educational projects, therefore with the activity that leads to the learning of the consumers. In the entirety of these abilities emerges a typical characteristic of the trainer: the pedagogic sensibility that represents the ability to understand, to be aware of what constitutes a potential event in every situation of learning and that signifies therefore the way how to listen and understand.

The meta-qualities are meta-competences ranking over the abilities and knowledge, and a great importance is to be attributed to the awareness of the trainer to individualize a circle of expressible competence as “transparency of himself” or full knowledge of his own motivations, personal values as well as his own resources and possibilities.

A good trainer is above all someone fully aware of his inner world and the effectiveness of the pedagogic relationship depends on the personal, deep and mature awareness that the trainer possesses and is able to express (Quaglino, 1990:190-191).

As in all professions, the trainer also can incur in a series of errors that are due, at times, to inexperience in the field of planning, to a professionalism not yet completely acquired or to an overestimation of the own professionalism, almost synonymous of infallibility. There are errors that can be attributed to the expert's personality and that therefore are related to the whole subjective ambit, to the formation of the personal identity, maturity, and sensibility. Others are due to incapability of communication that mostly starts with an inattentive observation, with an excess of technicality and, finally, other errors attributed to inaccurate knowledge producing difficulties in transferring the knowing into practice, the knowledge into abilities etc. The expert has well precise duties to perform, coinciding in general with the same training function that has to do with opening the doors to change through new possibilities and modalities of learning, with the help of which is realized the passage from theory to practice. One of the first footsteps to be completed, in order to avoid the errors that can be committed and to produce change, will be that of incising human resources, valorising them; then on the project and, finally, on the project's result.

In the moment when the expert undertakes an action aiming to produce innovation, he brings forth an idea, compares it at first with himself and then with the others, re-examines it in group, elaborates the project, verifies it, and finally produces it: in all these phases he has been, in relation to the organization, a supervisor of the change process (Colapietro, 1997:90-93).

Besides the errors that the trainer can commit, there is also another topic related to his job performance: that of the risks by referring to the entirety of difficulties, obstacles, and also of rules and principles of the trainer's work and generally speaking, of the professional practice. There are three topics inherent to this problem that should be underlined: the manipulation, the imaginations and the triangularity and each of them is equivalent to a corresponding risk. Let's clarify again these concepts. The manipulation has to do with the

preoccupation that has been rather diffused for a certain period, that training as a process would mean, in every case, exercising influence: in which, therefore, the educational action can be transformed, not so much in solicitation, activation, guide and orientation of the learning processes, but rather could be practiced resorting to persuasion, belief, and suggestion. Obviously it is not possible to share on the whole this reasoning that manifests somehow a lack of realism since "the fundamental problem of training or better of the trainer has been much more than incising too much, but on the opposite, not incising at all", (Quaglino 1990:171), on the subjects under the process of learning. Referring to this, it is the topic of imaginations that constitutes the most specific circle of reflection and debate on the trainer's risks to a level of a greater theoretical examination. In this case, the risks would be preferable to the incapability to recognize the plurality of figures that in order to define the trainer, can be evoked or activated in situations of training from the subjects being under this process and everything constitutes a risk and all this expresses confusion in these subjects in relation to their role and identity. Finally, an importance of another kind must be attributed to the triangularity indicating the type of relationship among the different parts, that training activity summons to this cause; the trainer: the one who manages the process or that leads the training action; the committer: those who, by acting inside the organization, find themselves directly involved as promoters of a training intervention. The consumer: constituted by those who will directly get involved in the formation because of their participation in the course. The risk of triangularity is that of every complex relationship in the sense of the possible confusion, of the game of the implicated objectives, of the misunderstandings and particularly for the trainer, to act in a manipulative way in comparison to the other parts involved in the relationship. Therefore, the risk is that of uncertainty, and insecurity of respective roles:

what constitutes an element of complication for the action of the trainer is what requires, obviously and above all, a trainer to be able to recognize, to state explicitly and to resolve effectively (Quaglino, 1990:172-173)

As it was already stated, the expert in the training processes has the essential assignment to sustain the change – a change understood not only as a development and improvement especially in

the business ambit, but also in the traditional sense of the term, which has never been as actual as nowadays due to continuous modifications of the referent parameters related to society, economy etc. – to incise into the human resources and then valorise them. This represents a new way of thinking and working in the organization and refers to a theory that, in the recent years, is spreading more and more: the empowerment.

4. LEADERSHIP EMPOWERING

Another type of expression is also used, “leadership empowering” (Piccardo, 1995:18), intending to say that people need to find new, particular ways of working, in order to respect anyone, despite sex, age, social class, race and position. Empowerment points out a phase of change, the final one, in which the change is consolidated by being spread and promoting apprehension of the new rules of the game, the systems reform. The use of such a term aims to underline the importance of promoting the personal growth that is at the base of possibility, so that the new way of the organization’s functioning becomes an experience of all the individuals. A first difficulty derives from a breaking that is recorded in the literature concerning the opportunity to consider the empowerment as a process rather than as a function. Even in the diversity of concessions and definitions, an element in common is represented by the connotation that the term assumes, denoting situations considered positive and useful. One of the many definitions is the one given by Bruscaioni, according to whom

the empowerment is the process of amplification (through the best use of the actual available and potential resources) of the opportunities the subject can use and make operative and among which he can then choose (Bruscaioni, 1994:124).

It represents the organizational condition, in which everyone manages himself autonomously and is able to interact with everyone else within the system. The empowerment is a mental state, a way of thinking; its process has begun as we become aware that in order to change the bureaucratic organizations and to transform them into entrepreneurial undertakings, we needed to start it from ourselves. It is necessary to put into effect behaviours based on trust, autonomy, being involved in the creation and support of an ambitious vision, considering in the first place the

attainment of the enterprise objectives and only in the second one those of the personal career. All those people who are interested in this theory launch a series of appeals so that a more human enterprise is created, being aware that this means to revolutionize the managerial and organizational theories, to really consider “the people in the first place”, to provide them with the necessary power, so that their energies are activated and committed to the creation of cooperative relationships. In the last analysis,

the empowerment reinforces the idea already consolidated and diffused of the necessity of a new way of thinking and envisioning not only the enterprise, but also the employee, not only the job relationships, but also the leadership model, putting an end to a series of alienations of the worker from the product, process, and profits (Piccardo, 1995:21-22).

In this organizational panorama of a new kind there is a central element of every model of organizational transformation, which is the dialogue. It remains in the basis of effectiveness of every group action. The objective of dialogue is to make the group able to reach a higher level of awareness and creativeness through the gradual formation of a system of shared meanings and a common process of thought. It is not related to the active listening to the one’s and other people’s feelings, promoted by the human relationships, but it concerns the deep analysis of the one’s and other people’s assumed cognitive and the expression of the complexity of thought, relations, prejudices involved in our cognitive processes. In a situation of empowerment also attitudes, feelings, and characteristics of the person involved in this new reality are changed: in this ways, is delineated a profile of narcissist personality, yet able to cooperate with the organizational actors in order to produce that useful performance to pursue the expected collective results.

In a situation of empowerment, people love their job, because they do what better utilizes their potentials, they are entertained by their job, feel optimistic and trust their own capacities. The system of values that sustains this profile of personality is completely different from the hierarchical-bureaucratic model, which values are: the safety, the protection, the deep respect for the authority that generates dependence and, at times, total submission. On the contrary, the system of values of the empowered person includes the personal dignity, the freedom, the respect for oneself and the others, including the possibility of

a critical and conflicting exchange, the responsibility, the gentleness, intertwined with the willpower and determination in search of the truth and synthesis of diversity. The process of empowerment can signify then a true resolution, or better, a passage from an entirety of bureaucratic-hierarchical values to another one that can be defined as entrepreneurial-emancipating.

5. LAST REMARKS

A last concept to be analyzed in relation to the empowerment is the power and the way it is implemented. The exercising of power is always and only within a mutual relationship, even if not symmetrical, where the different degrees of the individuals' freedom are put into question: nobody is totally free, nobody is totally determined, the dependence is somehow mutual. The conception of power can be defined as inter-subjective and interactionist: it is a power that increases the possibilities of individual expressiveness, and not one that limits the personal freedom; the power as resource of cooperation and exchange among equals; the power that doesn't deny the conflict, the oppositions, but intending to transcend them searching for reciprocity and harmony and not peace at all costs without producing neither war, nor domination of a part on the other. And it still remains a self-legitimated power on the basis of the attribution of dignity and elevated potentiality to the other, and in relation to which it is assumed an educative role in the name of the ideal of the other's growth: this is the case of empowering. To know the other and to make him grow, assume in this context the meaning of self-knowing and self-

developing; it is a common birth, a common search, a fertile meeting, from which what can emerge is unknown in departure. In conclusion, it can be stated that the exercise of inter-subjectivity is authentically communicative. The empowerment is a process of total use of the inherent potentialities within the dynamics of the inter-subjective exchanges of the organizational authors at all levels.

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