

**Barbara MERRILL, Adrianna NIZINSKA,
Andrea GALIMBERTI, Jérôme ENEAU,
Elzbieta SANOJCA, Samira BEZZARI (eds.)**

**EXPLORING LEARNING CONTEXTS:
IMPLICATIONS FOR ACCESS,
LEARNING CAREERS
AND IDENTITIES**



**Barbara MERRILL, Adrianna NIZINSKA,
Andrea GALIMBERTI, Jérôme ENEAU,
Elzbieta SANOJCA, Samira BEZZARI (eds.)**

**EXPLORING LEARNING
CONTEXTS:
IMPLICATIONS FOR ACCESS,
LEARNING CAREERS
AND IDENTITIES**

B. Merrill, A. Nizinska, A. Galimberti, J. Eneau, E. Sanojca, S. Bezzari, (eds.)

Exploring Learning Contexts: Implications For Access, Learning Careers And Identities

University Rennes 2 / ESREA

ISBN: 978-2-9564498-0-5

Rennes, Mars 2019

Cover page photograph: Sébastien Boyer - Université Rennes 2 /
Felice Varini / Musée des Beaux-arts de Rouen

Design and layout: Samira Bezzari & Elzbieta Sanojca

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Barbara Merrill	
Introduction.....	7

Power issues in learning contexts: access, equity and social justice

Kristin Reimer, John Pardy	
About and within enabling learning contexts: Student perspectives of the Monash Access Program	13
Samantha Broadhead	
The recontextualised art practices of British postgraduate students	23
Laura Wyper	
What is Basic Adult Education? And Who Gets to Learn?.....	33

Epistemological dimensions of learning contexts

Laura Formenti	
Perspectives on context: metaphors, epistemologies, and theoretical definitions	45
Alessandro Ferrante, Andrea Galimberti	
Transitions Between Different Learning Contexts. Themes, Issues and Problems ...	59
Marina Barioglio, Paola Mottana, Ilaria Torelli	
A place for the soul-making. The imaginal clearing as a learning context.....	69

Dealing with different cultural context

Alessandra Mussi	
Migration and parenting in women of Arab origin.....	79
Padma Ramsamy-Prat	
Interaction with refugees.....	87

Learning contexts for health professionals

Shanti Fernando, Alyson King

The Medium is The Message. Mediated Learning and Mental Health101

Micaela Castiglioni

Life Transitions and Professional Transitions.....111

Florence Sartier

Mentor regulation activity towards physiotherapist students following
a learning clinical situation.119

Paola Zonca, Emanuela Guarcello

A formative proposal through the professional identity mapping131

Lois Meyer

Navigating Career Trajectories: A Longitudinal Study in Professional
Re-Formation141

Training contexts for educational professionals in higher and further education

Francesca Oggionni

Educational professionalism: a lifelong learning process of constructing educators'
professional identity in multiple learning contexts159

Pawan Sahu, Pushpa kumari, Geetanjali Baswani, Koshy Jacob

Competency of Adult Educators with the Changing Learning Contexts
in India167

Carol Thompson, Peter Wolstencroft

Empowerers, Inspirers, Knowledge Providers # living the dream175

Expanding contexts: Formal and informal learning processes at play

Federico Zamengo, Nicolo Valenzano

The community of philosophical inquiry as a learning context between
adults187

Peter Wolstencroft

'If You Stand for Nothing, You Will Fall for Anything' The maintenance
of self-identity in times of change.....195

Jean Michel Megret, Jérôme Eneau

The relationship between formal and informal adult learning..... 203

Mottana Paolo, Barioglio Marina, Martino Francesca, Pedrazzini Eletta

Diffused and joyful education.....213

INTRODUCTION

This book arose from the ESREA (European Society for Research in the Education of Adults) Access, Learning Careers and Identity Network Conference 2017 held in Rennes, France at which papers were presented by people from Europe, Australia, Canada and India. The conference title was; *Exploring Learning Contexts: Implications for access, learning careers and identities*. The previous ESREA Access, Learning Careers and Identity Network Conference in 2015 interrogated the dimension of continuity and discontinuity in learning careers. The 2017 conference shifted the focus to the concept of 'learning contexts' and how they impact on access, learning careers and identities. Learning contexts may be formal, informal or non-formal so that there is the possibility to access different forms of knowledge and /or educational domains resulting in learning shaping representations of self and identities. Adult learners may experience different and diverse learning contexts as they transition between contexts. The interpretation of learning processes in terms of a lifelong and lifewide phenomenon highlights the transversal dimension of this experience: the fact that we live, at the same time and along different moments, in a plurality of learning contexts and, as a consequence, the importance of considering and dealing with their different assumptions, implications and impacts.

The concept of learning contexts is underpinned by different theoretical approaches and is open to a range of meanings in adult education. On the one hand, for example, we can think about learning contexts as a phenomenon distributed across the social order of educational institutions, the workplace, home or community and embedded in practices. The social order itself also becomes a learning context so that learning cannot be separated from the practice, and as a result all contexts become a learning context (Edwards 2009). On the other hand, the learning context can be seen as an outcome of activity or a set of practices itself (Nespor, 2003). *'Learning contexts are practically and discursively performed and performative'* (Edwards, 2009, p. 6). One example of this relationship between contexts is related to one of the traditional issues of this network: the experiences of non-traditional students at university. In this case there is the possibility to promote and foster a dialogue between different learning contexts (e.g. the academy, the family, work, the neighbourhood and community) and encompassing diverse codes, habitus and expectations. At the same time these differences may raise issues of inequalities in terms of access: borders between learning contexts may assume the traits of walls that are not possible to be crossed (Finnegan, Merrill and Thunborg, 2014).

At another level it is important to consider that the notion of lifewide learning and the distinction between formal/non-formal/informal learning are not universally accepted. Different scholars have warned that if the whole of life becomes "pedagogised" many aspects belonging to the private sphere are at risk of being exposed to external scrutiny, evaluation and intervention with related issues of power and control (see Andersson & Fejes, 2005). Furthermore a vision in which learning contexts are everywhere, without a general agreement on their specificity risks to reduce the concept to an empty signifier without real meaning and significance. For Edwards (2009: 2) this raises questions of: 'What is specific to a learning context which is not to be found in other contexts? And who names these contexts as learning contexts?'

Finally the notion of learning contexts raises epistemological issues that question the way in which learning is shaped and realised. Different metaphors may be used to map the concept (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) and each one sheds light only on particular aspects of the phenomenon with specific possibilities and constraints: "In all common sense uses of the

term, context refers to an empty slot, a container, into which other things are placed. It is the 'con' that contains the 'text', the bowl that contains the soup. As such, it shapes the contours of its contents: it has its effects only at the borders of the phenomenon under analysis. A static sense of context delivers a stable world" (McDermott quoted in Edwards, 2009, p. 2).

Learning contexts are, therefore, diverse and different and the range of chapters presented in this book reflect this situation.

A History of the Network

This network was established in 1996 and a first network conference was held at the University of Leeds in the UK. At that time the network was called the Access research network reflecting the focus of adult education research at that time. The conference book publication entitled *Participation and Organisational Change* (Hill & Merrill, 1997) illuminates the narrow theme of the network as it only addressed access and participation in higher education. The network conveners were Chris Duke, Etienne Bourgeois and Barbara Merrill. This focus of the network continued to dominate the following two network conferences in Barcelona and Edinburgh. Subsequent network conferences (held every two years) were located at University of Barcelona (2000) for a second time, Louvain University, Belgium (2006), University of Seville, Spain (2008), University of Aveiro, Portugal (2011), Linköping, Sweden (2013) and again at the University of Seville (2015).

Ten years later responding to the changing nature of European adult education research and literature which was moving beyond research just on access and participation to other wider concerns and concepts the network name was changed to Access, Learning Careers and Identity. The narrow focus was thus widened away from just accessing and getting into an institution to experiences of learning in a wide range of educational contexts such as further and higher education, community education and vocational education. Importantly the network also explores the impact of biography and lifelong learning in shaping learning careers and how this process may result in a changing self and identity. This raises issues of agency and structure and their interaction by taking into account the socio-economic position in which adult learners are located and the actions that they take to develop their learner identity and career within a particular educational setting. In doing so the network examines the different conceptual approaches to understanding learning careers and learning identities. The network provides a forum for adult educators from a range of disciplines to discuss and debate these issues in relation to theory, policy, practice and methodology. The network is now convened by three coordinators: Barbara Merrill (University of Warwick, UK), Andrea Galimberti (University Milano Bicocca, Italy) and Adrianna Nizinska (Gothenburg University, Sweden).

The European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA)

This section outlines information about ESREA as an organisation and this particular network.

ESREA is a European scientific society. It was established in 1991 to provide a European-wide forum for all researchers engaged in research on adult education and learning and to promote and disseminate theoretical and empirical research in the field. Since 1991 the landscape of adult education and learning has changed to include more diverse learning contexts at formal and informal levels. At the same time there has been a policy push by the European Union, OECD, UNESCO and national governments to promote a policy of lifelong learning. ESREA provides an important space for these changes and (re)definition of adult

education and learning in relation to research, theory, policy and practice to be reflected upon and discussed. This takes place at the triennial conference, network conferences and through the publication of books and a journal.

ESREA Research Networks

The major priority of ESREA is the encouragement of co-operation between active researchers in the form of thematic research networks which encourage inter-disciplinary research drawing on a broad range of the social sciences. These research networks hold annual/biennial seminars and conferences for the exchange of research results and to encourage publications.

The current active ESREA networks are:

- Access, Learning Careers and Identities
- Active Democratic Citizenship and Adult Learning
- Adult Educators, Trainers and their Professional Development
- Between Global and Local: Adult Learning and Development
- Education and Learning of Older Adults
- Gender and Adult Learning
- History of Adult Education and Training in Europe
- Interrogating transformative processes in learning: An international exchange.
- Life-history and Biographical Research
- Migration, Ethnicity, Racism and Xenophobia
- Policy Studies in Adult Education
- Working Life and Learning

ESREA Triennial European Research Conference

In order to encourage the widest possible forum for the exchange of ongoing research activities ESREA holds a triennial European Research Conference. The conferences have been held in Strobl (1995), Bruxelles (1998), Lisbon (2001), Wroclaw (2004), Seville (2007), Linköping (2010), Berlin (2013), Maynooth (2016) and Belgrade (2019).

ESREA Journal

ESREA publishes a scientific open access journal entitled *The European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults* (RELA). All issues of the journal can be read at www.rela.ep.liu.se. You can also find more information about call for papers and submission procedures on this website.

References:

- Andersson, P. & Fejes, A. (2005) Recognition of prior learning as a technique for fabricating the adult learner: a genealogical analysis on Swedish adult education policy. *Journal of Education Policy*, 20.
- Edwards, R. (2009) Introduction. Life is a learning context? In: Edwards, R., Biesta, G., Thorpe, M. (eds.) *Rethinking Contexts for Learning and Teaching*. Oxon UK: Routledge.
- Field, J. & Lynch, H. (2015) Getting stuck, becoming unstuck: agency, identity and transition between learning contexts. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, Volume 21, 3-17.
- Finnegan, F., Merrill, B. & Thunborg, C. (2014) *Students Voices of Inequalities in European Higher Education*. Oxon UK: Routledge.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980) *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nespor, J. (2003) Undergraduate curricula as networks and trajectories. In: Edwards, R. Usher, R. (eds.) *Space, Curriculum and Learning*. Greenwich: IAP

**POWER ISSUES IN LEARNING CONTEXTS:
ACCESS, EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

About and within enabling learning contexts: Student perspectives of the Monash Access Program

Kristin Reimer*, John Pardy**

**Faculty of Education
Monash University,
19 Ancora Imparo Way
Clayton, Victoria
3147
Australia
Kristin.Reimer@monash.edu*

***Faculty of Education
Monash University,
19 Ancora Imparo Way
Clayton, Victoria
3147
Australia
John.Pardy@monash.edu*

ABSTRACT: This paper explores student experiences in the learning context of an enabling program at an Australian university. Access and equity have long been policy goals and institutional ambitions in Australian universities. Enabling programs are an institutional response to bringing in those who otherwise would not have the opportunity to attend university. In this paper, we present findings from a qualitative study that explores how students who participated in the Monash Access Program negotiate and reconcile the idea of university study with the actualities of becoming a university student. Pedagogies in enabling programs are organised around supporting students to develop the capabilities to know themselves as learners and to experience connections to a learning community and thus, the institution. This paper, drawing on research into student experiences in such programs, illuminates the component characteristics of such an enabling pedagogy.

KEYWORDS: higher education, access, equity, widening participation, pedagogy

Introduction

Widening participation in higher education is a curriculum and policy response by Australian universities to provide more open access to prospective students who would otherwise be locked out of higher education. Such a response has a long history in Australia: Australia's first university, University of Sydney, founded in 1850, was established in order to enable access to higher education for those "unable to make the long journey to England in order to take up a university place" (Gale & Parker, 2013, p. 5). Australia continues to be seen as a leader in its policy response to widening higher education participation (Gale & Parker 2013; James 2007). Yet, institutions have significant freedom in how they ensure the participation of underrepresented groups, resulting in the offering and delivery of a variety of enabling education programs. Gale and Parker (2013) suggest that the various programs can be categorized as either targeted student support strategies that fall outside of teaching programs (such as child care and housing support) or teaching and learning strategies, often focusing on supporting students in their first year of university. This paper provides a view into the student experience of one university's approach to enabling education, a teaching and learning strategy.

Monash University, located in Melbourne, Australia, is a member of the Group of Eight (Go8), a coalition of Australia's top research-intensive universities. Monash University's Access Program (MAP) was first offered in 2014 as an alternative admission opportunity to students who had experienced educational disadvantage. Educational disadvantage more often than not affects equity groups that are routinely absent in Australian universities. For example, people with high socioeconomic status (SES) are three times more likely to attend university than those with low SES (James 2007). The Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley, 2008) found in spite of increased participation in university study, indigenous people, those from low SES (working-class), people from rural and remote communities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse groups and people with disabilities remain underrepresented in Australian universities. The MAP course is aimed at providing an avenue into university for those students in the underrepresented groups who do not meet admission requirements. Principally MAP seeks to prepare the underprepared with the intention to make ways for the underrepresented to successfully participate in the opportunities afforded through a university education.

This paper will present data from student experiences of MAP, detailing their expectations of university and the enabling course, and their actual experience of the course. Specifically, the paper reports on the teaching and learning, the pedagogies that make the transition to university study possible and achievable. Student participants reveal what they identify as central to and constitutive of a transitional pedagogy.

Context

MAP is an enabling program aimed at providing adults with an admission track into undergraduate studies. MAP is a non-award course offered over two semesters that introduces students to the expectations of university study, and provides instruction in academic writing and mathematical reasoning. These units, along with a first-year elective unit made available by participating faculties, iteratively step the student into the cultures of studying and being at the university. The course is an assisted (no tuition fees) pathway into higher education, thus removing the financial barrier for students seeking access.

As such, MAP fits into the discourse of equity, long present in Australian discussions of access to higher education. Equity was formally described in a landmark paper, *A Fair*

Chance for All, by the National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET) in 1990:

The overall objective for equity in higher education is to ensure that Australians from all groups in society have the opportunity to participate successfully in higher education. This will be achieved by changing the balance of the student population to reflect more closely the composition of the society as a whole. (p.2)

Gale and Parker (2013) show that proportional representation is still the goal: since 25 per cent of the population of Australia is low SES, so too should the population of higher education. Yet in 2011, the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIISRTE, 2012) revealed that only 17 per cent of commencing students at Australian universities were low SES. The numbers were worse for the Go8 universities of which Monash is a member: only 9.56 per cent of the student populations at Go8 institutions were from the five target groups (people who are Indigenous, people from low SES, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, people with a disability, and people from regional and remote areas) (DIISRTE, 2012).

In some ways, enabling programs in higher education attempt to address a lack of equity in education that manifests during primary and secondary schooling. The Organisation of Economic and Cooperative Development (OECD) (2007) showed that the relationship between socio-economic background and educational outcomes was stronger in Australia than in other similar countries. Schooling in Australia is stratified with parents with higher incomes often sending their children to private schools, in search of quality education. This is most pronounced in secondary schooling. In Australia, 41 per cent of secondary students attend private schools, this includes non-government primary and secondary schools (Rowe 2017). Gale and Parker (2013) claim that “where once government schooling was the norm for the vast majority of Australians, it is in danger of becoming a residual system for students who cannot meet private school selection criteria” (p.7). Thus, the schools that students attend matter, when considering equity and access to higher education. The most significant indicators of progression from school to higher education are students’ SES and the secondary school they attended (Gale & Parker, 2017).

Enabling programs in higher education are thus especially crucial in countries where inequity in earlier schooling is prevalent. James (2007) lauds enabling higher education programs as both important for the individuals who undertake them (offering such benefits as increased social status and career development) and for Australian society, which benefits from increased cohesion and social justice.

Literature Review

The education of adults is premised upon recognising their lived experiences. Knowles’ (1984) identified principles of adult learning that include; a recognition that adults have an independent self-concept; that they possess life experiences to draw upon; and are generally intrinsically motivated. The teaching and learning in MAP is underpinned by such principles of adult learning, and are further augmented by a sociohistorical approach that responds to the factors, both personal and social, that have prevented MAP students from accessing university level education. Specifically, the sociohistorical (Rose, 2007) and relational (Llewellyn, 2011; Vaandering, 2014) frameworks highlight how contextual and personal circumstances operate to limit educational opportunities and participation and their redress are central to the teaching and learning design and delivery of MAP.

What emerges in this grounding is a focus on access and participation. Access refers to both admission into the university context, which is premised on past educational

achievement, and the ability to access sufficient resources to fully participate once admitted. The likelihood of admission is determined far before any application is submitted whereby prior educational experiences by underrepresented groups often work explicitly and implicitly to “foreclose their educational aspirations” (Harwood, Hickey-Moody, McMahon and O’Shea, 2017, p. 13). These are the students that Rose (2007) proclaims live much of their lives in “an educational underclass.” Disrupting this trajectory of exclusion is a key objective in enabling programs such as MAP.

Rose (2007) uses the metaphor of conversation, and specifically ‘entering the conversation’ to illuminate how successful participation in tertiary education is dependent upon explicit skills and dispositions. For Rose (2007) these skills and dispositions include the capabilities to competently engage with ideas and texts, and to persist through sustained effort to participate in the ‘conversation’. As an organising concept, the metaphor of ‘entering the conversation’ involves both the person and the institution. Institutionally, Rose (2007) highlights the place of pedagogy and how students feel, relate to and experience, the academic knowledge, the educational institution, their peers (fellow students) and their teachers/lecturers. Those whose educational aspirations were or have been foreclosed as a result of class, status, race, ethnicity, gender, and disability encounter structural and subsequently personal barriers and impediments to participation in further and higher learning and the opportunities that follow. Participation is therefore dependent upon a deliberative pedagogy that makes transition into university possible and does so in ways that equip students with the resources and dispositions to not only enter but to participate in the conversations of knowledge. Enabling those who feel that they do not belong or indeed have a right to be at university requires an explicit pedagogy that paves the way for students to access resources, both external to, and internal within themselves to participate in, and take advantage of the affordances of a university education.

Methodology

Student experiences within the learning context of an enabling program at an Australian university represent the key data of in this paper. Both authors of this paper lead and teach within this program; as such, the study was conducted as practice-close research. Practice-close is a term used in the health sciences. It is qualitative methodology that acknowledges the importance of practice (Baumbusch, 2010). The term highlights a shift from viewing the researcher as an impartial observer to acknowledging the researcher as someone who interacts closely with research participants (Lykkeslet & Gjengedal, 2007). As a consequence, practice-close research is focused upon gaining understandings the experiences of those the researchers work with. In this context of enabling education, the focus is on understanding the experiences of students seeking an admission pathway to university. The research explores the students’ experience of becoming a university student, whilst simultaneously reflecting upon the pedagogic practices that shape the enabling program. It is practice-close, because the findings affect the future delivery of MAP and have implications for future students seeking opportunities for admission to university study. Unlike action-based research, the research participants as past-students are not affected by how the findings may reshape the pedagogies of the MAP course.

The study focused primarily on a single year group but is also influenced and informed by the experiences of teaching students in previous years. In the 2017 MAP group there were 24 students who began the program in April 2017 and 18 who completed the program in September 2017.

The data collected focused on two aspects of the students’ experience – the *idea of being at university* and the *process of becoming a university student*. Data was collected at three

specific time periods - before the program began; three weeks into the program; and a month after the program finished - and through three different methods. Firstly, before classes commenced, students completed an interview form in which they identified their educational goals and possible impediments to completing MAP. Secondly, for part of the students' first assignment, due three weeks into the program, students wrote a 600-word reflection about their own experience of being and becoming a student and coming to university. All 24 MAP students completed these two research activities.

Finally, once students finished the program, they were invited to participate in focus groups or individual interviews in which they were asked to reflect on their expectations of university, the reality of becoming a university student and their experience of MAP. To date, eleven students have participated in the interviews.

As the study relies upon a practice-close methodology, data about the teaching, learning and assessment practices are premised upon our own reflections which emerged from interacting with students in formal and informal ways within and outside of the classroom. To counter a potential blinding effect, the research relies upon the students' own words and the subsequent use of our observations and reflections to further understand their perspective.

Findings

The data generated in this study explored student perspectives on making the decision to forge a path to university and all this entailed. The data selected and presented focuses on the students' experiences and the impact of participating in MAP.

The idea of readiness for university

Most MAP students identified that the decision to attend university was not spontaneous. It was something one student who had left school early said "always circulated" (David¹) in his mind. Timing, in terms of where study fit in their lives, was crucial. The students listed many reasons why the timing for university study had not been right in the past: immaturity, family and other life commitments, overwhelming doubt, lack of encouragement, indecision, institutional barriers, along with health issues. Penelope wrote, "I always knew that I would go to university, the only question I needed to answer was 'when would I be truly ready?' For Penelope and the other students, the answer was now, and hence they applied to do the MAP course. In the initial interview students announced their commitment to becoming a university student. Most named university study as their number one priority, exemplified in Lina's comments: "I have wanted to do this for a while and I know that I am prepared and it will be a priority above other aspects of my life." Students in the enabling MAP course had an idea of themselves as committed and ready.

Brandon, a qualified electrician, wanted to undertake university studies but was unsure about how best to obtain access. For him deciding to undertake MAP was strategic: he wanted to use MAP to "turn on the learning side again." What this meant for students like Brandon was a "refresher" course to develop skills such as academic writing, mathematical reasoning, group presentation skills, study skills, and time management. As David put it he wanted a "head start" for the rest of his proposed university study. This an explicit intention that the design of MAP, as an enabling course, is aimed to achieve.

¹ All names used are pseudonyms

MAP students are underprepared and underrepresented, and the course seeks to build a path for them to access university study. Yet all the MAP students in this study recognised they had skills, knowledge and abilities that would allow them to study at university. Most students named their varied life skills, the ones that “cannot be taught in a classroom” (Josh), as the source of their confidence. Yet equally students did not always feel they belonged and read this as a personal limitation or failing. Terri admitted that she had, in the past, seen her lack of university education as evidence of a personal failing or deficiency: “It took me ten years of learning in different contexts, such as the workforce, to believe that I am a good learner and with the exclusion of becoming an astronaut, I can learn anything if I put in the time and effort.” Most students imagined themselves as fully capable of being university students.

Barriers to participation in university study

Being ready or committed did not, of course, preclude having doubts. Some students were breathing very unfamiliar water. As Sally, a sole parent, wrote, no one had been to university in her family and, after high school, “it did not seem like a huge disappointment to anyone that I would not be going.” Lana, too, was the youngest of 14 siblings and would be the first to attend university. Jess was racked with doubt about her own abilities before starting the program, asking “Could I do it? Am I smart enough? Is it too late?” The first weeks as university students did not necessarily alleviate the doubts. Dennis wrote, three weeks in, that “my anxiety has gone through the roof and I feel out of my depth.” Brandon found resonance with words in our readings: “I feel like I’m in a foreign land, an Academic world that I don’t understand. Rose (2007, p. 54) writes ‘I was encountering a new language-the language of the academy-and was trying to find my way around in it.’” Brandon writes “This is me.” For many students, there were occasional feelings of uncertainty about their identity as university students. These feelings would change over the time in the MAP course. Using Rose (2007) as instructive in the design of the MAP course as well as a resource for students provided a way for students to consciously recognise their intentions in pursuing a path to university level studies. It also allowed them to reflect upon the barriers they faced both structurally (external) and personally (internal).

The process of becoming a university student

The ideas of being at university balanced with the actualities of participating in university studies involved a process of becoming and identifying with being a university student. In this section, students expressed their developing understandings of the process of becoming a university student, the importance of the collective experience in this stage of becoming and the pedagogies that facilitated these transitions and transformations.

The students’ understandings evolved during their five months of participating in MAP as university students – experiencing university as a place and site for learning, and of their own abilities and interests as students. Terri’s understanding of the purpose of university evolved from using her studies as a path to a specific career to recognising university as “a place for personal and intellectual growth and I know I will learn life skills.” Penelope on the other hand recalls thinking of university as the “place where all the really, really smart people go” and now realising that they are “just here to learn and I can learn at that same level.” Both Terri and Penelope, by participating in university study through MAP demystified university as something separate from them. Similar feelings were echoed by many students, and equally surprised them, particularly around their own capacity to study and their interest in learning. Nathaniel shared his reflection: “The effect that university has had on me thus far has been something I never expected; I’m finding myself looking forward

to class, I'm finding that I'm actually motivated to perform well as opposed to just looking to satisfy the teacher's requirements and above all I'm finding that my attitude towards myself, towards other people and towards my daily surroundings are changing for what I believe to be the better." Students identified changes in themselves such as becoming more positive, feeling pride, taking ownership in their decisions and acquiring an openness to learn. Issy referred to the joy she felt as her outlook on the world and herself shifted through what she called "my educational transformation." Students recognised and embraced the evolution in their self-understandings and their new-found appreciations of the social worlds they inhabit.

University was seen as a place uniquely suited to those social worlds. Some students saw themselves as being linked into a communal quest for knowledge and understanding. The university was seen as crucial since for such a quest, "a space is required. An institution. One filled with all the minds that wish to meet all the others, just to share notes" (Bill). For other students, they expected university study would allow them to build connections outside the university, to "contribute to society to help make it a better place" (Terri). These students had an idea that being at university provided them with resources to be active members of a variety of communities - both within and without the university campus.

Pedagogies of belonging

In the classroom, the social contexts of learning in MAP allowed the students to recognise that everyone was there with similar goals. Jenny voiced her appreciation this way: "Being in a class with people in the same situation, I believe it to be easier to make connections with fellow students and not feel like I'm the odd one out, that in return has made it easier to find my place in this new world and has instituted a feeling of belonging as well as a sense of being able to accomplish this course successfully." That sense of belonging was reiterated by most participants. Students felt connected to and supported by their peers in MAP. MAP, as Sally said, "prepared us to belong" and James recognised that they were "teaching each other." Students voiced appreciation for the close relationships with both their peers and the teaching staff. This was contrasted with the lack of unity seen amongst students and teaching staff in the elective units they undertook in the faculties into which they were seeking admission, after completing MAP. Partly due to this recognition that the culture in MAP was different to the rest of the university, some students only felt "truly a student" once they started and were comfortable in studying in their elective unit. This also resulted in others being worried what next year would bring without MAP. For many, they came to identify a sense of connection and belonging as the key benefits of MAP - not, as they first believed, the skills they developed within the program.

Pedagogies of becoming

MAP as an enabling program is premised upon a staged immersion into the cultures of university study. The pedagogies are focused on developing within students the skills needed for university study and this practical focus was appreciated by students. As Michelle stated, "MAP was the bridging I needed." With a focus on such specific yet necessary skills as referencing, these underprepared students grew to feel "better prepared than the kids" they encountered in their elective classes. And yet much more important than skill development were the pedagogies in MAP, organised around supporting students to develop the capabilities to know themselves as learners and to experience connections to a learning community and thus, the university institution. The program unfolds iteratively, with small achievements creating platforms to build further capabilities for progress and eventual success. As Josh explained: "They are slowly taking their hand away from us, removing one

floaty from us and we are learning how to tread water with one hand rather than just being thrown straight in." For Josh, the support was necessary at the beginning of MAP but the preparation allowed him and others to feel comfortable with the gradual withdrawal of that direct support.

Important to the transitional pedagogy were assignments designed as critical reflection activities, providing insight into the process of becoming a university student at the same time that students were experiencing it. Issy, researching a topic on student transition to university, found it motivating; her research "established a newfound confidence within myself and has also given me insight on how to alleviate some of my concerns." Students frequently referred to quotations or ideas found within assigned texts such as Rose (2007) when reflecting upon their own transition experience. In doing this, they explained how what they read resonated with their understandings about their experiences inside and outside education, and their quest to access university studies.

Another pedagogy used in MAP are circle discussions. Circle pedagogy connects individual students to one another in a learning community and facilitates deeper engagement with class content and personal experiences. Each class involved a circle discussion in which students linked class material and texts to their past and present experiences, as well as to the insights shared amongst the group. Students were aware that within circle they had the responsibility and opportunity to co-construct knowledge. In the focus groups, students named this pedagogy as helping to create "a positive learning environment." Michelle discussed how the circle evolved: "You realise as the program progresses that everyone is sharing more and getting more comfortable and you see how far you've developed as a person in the course." Brandon added that being encouraged to speak in circle made it easier for him to voice his thoughts, something he previously found difficult. David noted the circle as helping him feel like he belonged, teaching him how to ask questions "without shame" and to feel comfortable in a learning environment.

Discussion

Not surprisingly, for most students who completed MAP, university was seen as a key to "unlock doors" (Josh) to futures that would otherwise not be possible or available to them. Several students mentioned how their university experience was the chance to focus on a career goal of the past, one that had been lying dormant "for a very long time" (Bill). Beyond future careers, university was seen to be a facilitator of change, allowing students to become "better versions of ourselves" (Penelope). Although recognising that being at university takes "dedication, discipline and willingness" on the part of an individual (Oscar), students had the sense that this change was beyond their individual capacity. Jamal saw university as actually turning a "pupil into an intellectual." Being at university, for many, was the idea of moving forward on a personal yet facilitated "journey of self cultivation and growth" (Oscar).

Thus students had an idea of being at university as taking their first step toward more meaningful livelihoods and lives. This first step, given the past foreclosure of their educational aspirations (Harwood, Hickey-Moody, McMahon and O'Shea 2017), is dependent upon and informed by a pedagogy that allows students to access resources in themselves to participate in, and take advantage of the resources afforded by a university education. The challenge, James (2007) writes "is not only to remove or reduce barriers, where they exist, but also to build possibilities and choices" (p.11). Students identified component characteristics of such an enabling pedagogy as: iterative immersion in the cultures of university study; building explicit connections between learning contexts outside and within university walls; constant critical reflection on the process of becoming a university student;

co-constructing knowledge; and building a supportive and rigorous learning community of peers.

Importantly, Gale and Parker (2013) point out that many enabling projects in Australian higher education institutions tend to “adopt an institution and system-serving stance rather than an equity stance, upholding the interests of higher education (embedded in pedagogy and curriculum and the implicit epistemological assumptions of academic knowledge) by placing the onus on students to adapt or conform to institutional expectations” (p.41). If only serving the institution’s needs, enabling programs become skill development programs, devoid of the pedagogies of belonging and becoming so necessary to the MAP program. MAP was seen by the students to serve *their* needs – practical, social, intellectual – and allow them to find their own ways participate in higher education.

Conclusion

The students who completed MAP felt as though they had accessed the resources within themselves, between themselves and within the institution to be able to ‘enter the conversation’ (Rose, 2007). Interestingly, they did not expect that conversation would reach its anticipated depths in MAP. Rather than simple preparation for the conversation, MAP was their first experience of the conversation personally and in a knowledge sense. It was within MAP that they raised their voices, dialogued with texts, ideas and one another, and began the process of becoming and belonging.

References

- Baumbusch, J. (2010) Semi-structured interviewing in practice-close research. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing*, 15(3), 255-258.
- Bradley, D., Noonan, P., Nugen, H. & Scales, B. (2008) *Review of Australian higher education*. Canberra: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.
- Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIISRTE). (2012) *Summary of the 2011 Higher Education Student Statistics*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.
- Gale, T. & Parker, S. (2013) *Widening participation in Australian higher education*. Report submitted to the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Office for Fair Access. England.
- Harwood, V., Hickey-Moody, A., McMahon, S. and O’Shea, S. (2017) *The politics of widening participation and university access for young people: making educational futures*. Routledge.
- James, R. (2007) *Social equity in a mass, globalised higher education environment: the unresolved issue of widening access to university*. Dean’s Lecture, University of Melbourne. Retrieved 10 May 2018, from <http://web.education.unimelb.edu.au/news/lectures/pdf/richardjamestranscript.pdf>
- Knowles, M.S. (1984) *Andragogy in action*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Llewellyn, J. (2011) A relational vision of justice. In *Re-visioning justice: Restorative justice week 2011*. Ottawa: Restorative Justice Division, Correctional Service of Canada.
- Lykkeslet, E. & Gjengedal, E. (2007) Methodological problems associated with practice-close research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(5), 699-704.
- National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET). (1990) *A fair chance for all: national and institutional planning for equity in higher education, a discussion paper*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.
- OECD (Organisation of Economic and Cooperative Development). (2007) *Education at a glance*. Paris: OECD.

Kristin Reimer & John Pardy

Rose, M. (2007) *Lives on the boundary: a moving account of the struggles and achievements of America's educationally underprepared*. New York: Penguin Books.

Rowe, E. (2017) Fewer students are going to public secondary schools in Australia. The Conversation. Retrieved from: <https://theconversation.com/fewer-students-are-going-to-public-secondary-schools-in-australia-79425>

Vaandering, D. (2014) Relational restorative justice pedagogy in educator professional development. *Curriculum Inquiry* 44(4), 508-530.

The recontextualised art practices of British postgraduate students

Working at the Artists' House in Canale di Tenno

Samantha Broadhead

Leeds Arts University
Blenheim Walk
LS2 9AQ – Leeds
United Kingdom
Email: sam.broadhead@leeds-art.ac.uk

ABSTRACT: This is a case study based upon a residency undertaken by British postgraduate creative arts students at the artists' House in Canale di Tenno in Italy. The activity is analysed using Bernstein's model of the pedagogic device, where he argues that when practices are recontextualised within educational contexts ideological discourses come into play. Within this particular case, artistic practices and communal living are recontextualised as a learning opportunity for those students who wish to become professional artists, craftspeople or designers. The outputs of this residency (a public exhibition and a body of work) were evaluated as being of high quality by the tutors, because they demonstrated the student attributes of openness, being globally oriented, risk-taking, self-organisation and collaboration. However, the case study also revealed that such learning opportunities are not inclusive and are linked to the distribution of unequal power, resource and knowledge.

KEYWORDS: pedagogic device, recontextualisation, residency, postgraduate, art education.

Introduction

This essay offers a critical reflection on the processes by which practices and discourses are recontextualised into the dominant pedagogic discourse of art education. The account draws upon the ideas of Bernstein where he said:

Pedagogic discourse is a principle for appropriating other discourses and bringing them into a special relation with each other for the purposes of their selective transmission and acquisition. (Bernstein, 1990: 183-4)

An analysis of a case study based on a week's residency undertaken by creative practice students at the Artists' House of Canale di Tenno in the Italian Alps during April 2017 and repeated again in May 2018 was used to show how practices and discourses are recontextualised into pedagogic discourse.

As part of the residency students and staff live and work together in a medieval artists' house for six days. They listen to talks given by local a historian and a local anthropologist which explore a set of complex meanings to the landscape. This is significant because the place has unique features as it is situated within a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve between the Mediterranean climate of Lake Garda and the Alpine Dolomites. These meanings are reproduced and reimagined in the creative work of the students. At the same time they learn about local cultures, economies and modes of production through social events and day trips. Students are able to reposition their creative practices within a new, and for some, different working space and culture. During this time the horizontal discourses that occurred whilst living, learning, cooking and exhibiting together informed the content of their work. The emersion of students and staff in a different kind of space away from the urban environment of the art school in Britain leads to thoughtful work that can be developed further after the residency has ended.

Sharing the outputs derived through the pedagogic discourse with other Italian artists as part of a public critique and exhibition held on the last evening is a good opportunity to consider the different audiences for the work. It also acted as a celebration and significant point in time where students could take stock of what they had experienced and made. The audience of Italian amateur artists were intrigued by work on show and both groups of people were able to talk about the residency during a shared meal.

Bernstein (2001: 365) argued that new technologies, lifelong learning policies and a fluid, adaptable workforce would drive as a 'totally pedagogised society.' When applying this notion to student experience at the Artists' House it can be seen that the boundaries between domestic, social and personal activities are blurred with pedagogic and art practices. Students and staff are continuously present as part of a teaching and learning relationship. Horizontal and Vertical discourses are woven together and mediated through various translations. The implications for this in terms of the reproduction of social relations is analyzed further, for example, who was included and excluded from this learning experience (for example; those who could not take part in the residency and those who were alienated by the process). Potentially, certain practices and discourses could be recontextualised through the pedagogic device in order to construct flexible workers with ambivalent notions of the boundaries between work and personal activity.

Theoretical context

Two important theoretical concepts are explored in this case study, firstly the notion of horizontal and vertical discourse and secondly the pedagogic device with a focus on recontextualisation.

Horizontal and vertical discourses

Bernstein (1999) described how horizontal discourse functioned to selectively distribute knowledge through the day-to-day contact in families, communities and in particular student cohorts. Horizontal discourse is, “oral, local, context dependent and specific, tacit, multi-layered and contradictory across but not within contexts,” (Bernstein, 1999, p. 159). It is organized segmentally according to the sites where it is realized (for example: at home; at work or in the art and design studio). Shared informal discourses situated within a particular context can construct a particular group identity:

The structuring of social relationships generates the forms of discourse but the discourse in turn is structuring a form of consciousness, its contextual mode of orientation and realization, and motivates modes of social solidarity. (Bernstein, 1999: 160).

A vertical discourse by contrast is a, “coherent, explicit and systematically principled structure, hierarchically organized, as in the sciences or takes its form from specialized languages with specialized modes of interrogation and specialized criteria for the production and circulation of texts, as in the social sciences and humanities.” (Bernstein, 1999, p. 159). It is through horizontal discourse that students ultimately gain access to the vertical discourse of their subject area and its related specialist knowledge.

Because the distributive rules of horizontal discourse “structure and specialize social relations, practices and their contexts,” (Bernstein, 1999, p. 159) the day-to-day talk between students and tutors can construct and maintain power relationships between groups leading to differing access to knowledge. Both vertical and horizontal discourses were likely to set up positions of defense and challenge. If people are isolated and excluded within their working or learning space they cannot take part in exchanges of shared strategies, procedures and knowledge (Bernstein, 1999). In other words students who are marginalized find it more difficult to draw upon the reservoir of strategies for success available within their learning communities (Bernstein, 1999).

Horizontal discourse, although localized and informal, impacts on those students ‘who do not fit in’ or those whose identities challenge the mythical group solidarities. This is because they cannot easily access the group’s knowledge in order to develop their own repertoire that allows them to flourish. The horizontal discourse that occurs in the Art and Design studio include some students and exclude others whilst ultimately enabling or preventing some from gaining access to specialist Art and Design discourses and knowledge.

The kinds of discourse that occur within particular sites, the studio for example, are constructed through various social relationships (between educators and students or between students and students or between educators and managers). Thus certain kinds of discourse are encouraged and others may be discouraged through social interaction. Discourse, in turn, structures and forms a subject’s consciousness; constructing and enabling (or repressing) different dispositions or ways of being motivating particular modes of social solidarity. Thus social relationships can be reproduced within educational contexts where people are ‘kept in their place’.

The pedagogic device

Many scholars have drawn upon Bernstein's theory of the pedagogic device to shine a light on the politics of the curriculum (Bourne, 2008; Loughland & Sriprakash, 2017). The pedagogic device refers to how social discourses are appropriated, regulated, contested and controlled in order for them to become 'pedagogised'. It filters what knowledge is thinkable or unthinkable and demonstrates how the historical, political and social contexts mediate the meaning and function of education. If thinking the unthinkable is an ability to create new knowledge rather than simply to reproduce old knowledge, it can be seen that this gives people power and control over their lives. The rules of what is accepted as educational knowledge are often hidden.

The pedagogic device operates through three interrelated rules: the distributive rules, the recontextualising rules and the evaluative rules. The distributive rules defines who can transmit knowledge and to whom; they regulate the relationship between power, social group and knowledge (Bernstein, 1996).

The recontextualising rules refer to the ways in which discourses are shaped as they are moved, appropriated and brought into new relationships with other discourses. Recontextualisation relocates and refocuses discourses and this is mediated by social, political and economic forces. Bernstein (1996) uses the example of 'outside' education there is carpentry which is transformed 'in side' education into woodwork or more recently design technology.

The case study 'The Artists' House' illustrates how artistic practice realized through communal living constructs particular horizontal discourses which are recontextualised into a pedagogised discourse. Bernstein (2001: 365), identified a new social order, constructed by new technologies, lifelong learning policies and a fluid, adaptable workforce, as a 'totally pedagogised society.' The case study demonstrates how this could be realized. For example, the horizontal discourses that occur between people within a domestic setting (eating, sleeping, and relaxing) become 'pedagogised' in the Artists' House residency where people learn to live and work together. Also recontextualising the students' creative practices within a new culture through participation in talks and visits also become 'pedagogised'.

As the discourse moves from its original site to its new positioning as a pedagogic discourse, a transformation takes place. The transformation takes place because every time a discourse moves from one position to another, there is a space in which ideology can play. (Bernstein, 1996: 32)

This process of the recontextualisation of specialist knowledge opens a space for changes in power and control relations as well as ideological meaning. Ideologies are but are structured into the selection, organization, transmission and acquisition of knowledge. Singh (1997: 126) said the concept of recontextualisation allows researchers to analyze how practices of pedagogic communication directly or indirectly reproduce dominant power and control relationships which regulate cultural reproduction and change

It is argued that the underpinning ideologies within this particular case study are that students should be global citizens, professional and that the boundaries between everyday life and art should be fluid. The ideology that the boundaries between art practice and life are weak can be seen as having a long history and are articulated in the writings of William Morris (1884 in McAlister, 1984).

The evaluative rules are the ways in which educational discourses are sustained and reproduced. Evaluative rules regulate what counts as legitimate educational knowledge. Potentially it can produce new social norms for individuals, states and institutions

(Bernstein, 1996). On a subjective level evaluative rules construct consciousness. For example tutors and students identify 'good' students are those go on residencies, participate well in groups and engage with new cultures. Conversely 'bad' students don't go on residencies or if they do they don't work with the group or learn from the experience.

The Artists' House case study

The activity has taken place on two occasions; this case study will focus on the second residency in 2018. The students were adults studying their taught MA Creative Practice within a small specialist art institution in the United Kingdom. They had financed their education either with private funds or through a postgraduate loan. All the students in the group were invited to take part in the Artists' House residency which entailed them travelling to and staying in the village of Canale di Tenno, Italy. Out of a group of 30 students ten were able to go. This suggested these particular individuals were in a position to pay additional monies for the learning opportunity. Generally artist residencies are accepted as part of a professional artist's activities where the individual undertakes their art practice within a particular setting for a particular amount of time (A-N, 2003). The students would gain benefit from having experience of an international residency which would enable them to apply for more opportunities when they finished their course.

The participating students were briefed on the project and asked to research the area of Tenno in Italy before they made the trip; although one or two students decided to respond to the place without any prior knowledge. Three tutors from the art institution accompanied the students on the residency. Tenno benefits from a typically Mediterranean climate, even though it is also immersed in the Alpine environment. The characteristic local rural environment includes olive groves, vineyards and chestnut groves.

The Casa degli Artisti (Home of the Artists), dedicated to the artist Giacomo Vittone (1888 – 1995), is situated in Canale di Tenno, Italian Alps. It is a residence and meeting place for artists from the whole of Europe. Tenno and the surrounding hamlets are part of the Judicaria Ecological Museum "from the Dolomites to Lake Garda". The House of Artists is a medieval building that has been used as a living, making and exhibiting space since the 1960s. It is also open to visitors who can watch artists at work in the studios.

During the coach transfer from the airport in Milan to the Italian Alps there was a critical moment in the journey for the students' learning. The 'chatter' in the coach was silenced when the students were first confronted with the striking Alpine landscape. The sense of awe and wonder at the beauty and scale of the mountains was experienced by the students who had not seen this location before. This experience marked a point where it was clear that they were in a new and different learning space.

In collaboration with *Dolomit*, an organisation who promote learning in Trentino who, "aim to challenge simplistic visions of social reality and to value cultural diversity, offering rewarding learning experiences to the curious" the group of creative practice students undertook a week long residency at The Artists' House. This entailed the students living in the house; sharing rooms; cooking together; engaging with local, rural cultures and industries; performing their creative practice in the studios; drawing upon local visual, social and political issues in their work and producing a final exhibition for local people.

Language differences were the topic of conversation as the British students were fascinated with the differences in Italian dialect. Also the *Alpini* were very visible in the surrounding area of Trentino, wearing hats with black or gold feathers, this was because the residency coincided with the Alpine National Gathering Program in nearby Trento from 11 to 13 May 2018. The *Alpini* (Italian for "alpinists"), are a mountain military band of the Italian

Army established in 1872. The students were able to listen to the *Alpini* choir in the village of Tenno and were intrigued by the related historical and political contexts.

In response to the new environment the students engaged in activities such as drawing, painting, scavenging for materials, weaving, photographing, printing and basketry. One student had even brought her sewing machine and was able to make a piece of textile art. Problem solving, in regards to making with a restricted amount of tools and materials, was demonstrated by the students who were inventive and creative in their practices.

The tutors guided the students by holding meetings in the kitchen of the Artists' House around a large table which functioned as a learning space but also as an eating and entertaining place. Visits to the *Bosco Arte Stenico*, an outside land art forest and a local amateur arts group provided an opportunity to talk about different communities of artistic practice.

The final exhibition was called *Foresti* and was a reference to the artist-students coming as foreigners to a new place; the work being a response to being in an unfamiliar environment. The students chose this name as it also made them think of the forest; the wood found in the forest was an important part of the materials used by the students. Although the exhibition was only in situ for one evening it was very well attended by 40 people from various arts groups around the region. Local food providers came and catered for the people visiting exhibition. A group of Italian amateur artists from the locality were especially invited to view the work which resulted in friendly discussions about the art on show. One of the students was able to give a welcoming speech in English and Italian.

Further pedagogic interventions happened when the students returned to the United Kingdom where they were asked to meet and reflect on their learning experiences. Subsequently, students were able to work together to exhibit their work in a self-directed manner firstly within the art school and then afterwards they exhibited as a group in an independent arts space. They had learned how to curate their work in different contexts and for different audiences. The students had grown confident with their own creative practice and as part of the group.

Through taking part in the experience the students understood how to work collaboratively in order to manage an exhibition and its related publicity. For example use of social media was improved to communicate to a wider audience about their work.

Discussion

The students who took part in the residency were perceived as being open to learning about and learning in new cultural, social and political contexts. They were able to take creative risks in producing work that responded to unfamiliar environments and people; for an audience who was not previously known to them. The students, in a sense, were able to 'think the unthinkable' (Bernstein, 1996). They demonstrated their learning through creating a group exhibition not only in Tenno, but also back in the United Kingdom. Also the level of critical reflection was enhanced because of the group's ability to meet and evaluate the success and challenges of the project. The attributes of openness, risk-taking, self-organisation and collaboration were all viewed as positive in the consciousness of staff and students.

When considering the students who did not go on the residency (there are many reasons for not participating including financial and family commitments) it can be seen that much more was at stake than a missing out on a learning enhancement. Symbolically these students have not had the opportunity to be associated with the positive attributes mentioned above. Although it is very simplistic to say that 'good' students are open,

innovative, self-directed and collaborative and 'bad' students are not; this dichotomy can be inferred when the efforts of the students who went on the residency are evaluated by staff as being legitimate educational outputs of high quality. The distributive rules of the pedagogic device mean that only those students who have the disposition, time and resources to take part the residency have access to certain kinds of knowledge about being a professional, internationally focussed artist. Previous experiences in travelling and living in other countries as well as being able to communicate in Italian may effect an individual's decision to participate. These are factors which influence how opportunities are unequally distributed and some social groups are then disadvantaged. In other words a student's cultural capital continues to advantage them in the learning process.

The encroachment of pedagogic discourse into the private space of staff and students was an important aspect of the residency. Discussions about producing and curating work happened around the kitchen table; in the studios; in the social spaces of the garden and the local cafes. The horizontal discourse - the informal day-to-day between students and between staff and students was recontextualised into the official pedagogic discourse about being a professional, globally-oriented creative practitioner. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education [QAA] (2017) publishes subject benchmark statements that describe the desirable characteristics of an art and design graduate in the United Kingdom. The directives from QAA can be seen as a signifier of the official pedagogic discourse concerning British higher education:

... programmes are designed to encourage the development of a range of generic skills considered essential in the successful creative practitioner. These include, not exclusively, personal innovation, risk-taking, independent enquiry, effective communication, negotiation, interpersonal, management, presentation, organisational, self-management, critical engagement, team working, social, communication, and research skills. (QAA, 2017, paragraph 5.5, p. 13)

It can be seen that participating in the Artists' House residency would enable the students to perform many of these attributes. The evaluation of their performance in these areas would construct their consciousness about what it is to be a creative practitioner and this is articulated through everyday conversations in the studio and around the kitchen table between students and staff. Similarly, working within international contexts is valued as being part of the official pedagogic discourse:

Students' broader understanding of global contexts is developed through a programme that embraces international cultural, economic and environmental perspectives. Traditionally introduced through study visits, student exchange and placement, this is supplemented by increasing numbers of international partnerships, staff exchanges and international students. (QAA, 2017, p. 14)

This constructs a creative practitioner who is focused globally, yet does not refer to the importance of creatives working locally within communities. Also more generally, lifelong learning policies and practices are closely linked to globalisation (Lucio-Villegas, 2016). Those students who situate their practice within their locality could feel alienated from pedagogies that privilege the global context.

Not all students were happy with the model of communal living, one student chose to stay in a local hotel and another spent much of the time on their own (through personal choice). As a result, they lost some of the opportunities of learning from each other and the staff. It could be suggested that they resisted to some extent the recontextualising of their day-to-day domestic, private life into part of a pedagogic discourse. They did not easily subscribe to the profile of the creative practitioner constructed by the ideologies that define successful students as gregarious, global citizens who as part of their professional identities accept the fluidity between their artist practice and everyday life.

The impact of the residency and final exhibition on the group of amateur Italian artists is more difficult to analyse. They appeared to be very engaged in the conversations with the students and shared pictures of their own work stored on their mobile phones. Feedback from *Dolomit* was that the Italian artists continued to talk about the event after students had left Tenno and plans were under discussion to increase the participation of this group of people in any future project. Their presence at the exhibition was a valuable aspect of process as it was the conversations with fellow artists that gave the event meaning and significance.

Conclusion

The use of Bernstein's theories of horizontal and vertical discourse alongside his theory of the pedagogic device have been useful in critically analysing a learning opportunity which had been very positive for some of the students.

Initially the artists' residency appears to be an excellent opportunity to promote the values and attributes of a successful professional artist to students; giving them an opportunity to perform these attributes in a new and challenging environment.

However the case study also shows how power relationships continue to be reproduced as certain social groups are disadvantaged; through not having the disposable resources and the cultural capital that gives some groups the confidence to travel, communicate and live abroad.

Through the recontextualisation of artistic practice and communal living discourses into a pedagogic discourse it was possible to see what attributes were valued in current art and design education; these being openness, globally oriented, risk-taking, self-organisation and collaboration.

When these attributes are evaluated as being examples of legitimate educational knowledge then they construct the consciousness of both staff and students as to what successful creative practitioners should be and how they should operate. But conversely, a construction of what an unsuccessful creative practitioner is also created in the minds of all students and staff including those who did not take part in the trip. This case study showed that two students partly resisted the process of recontextualisation by not taking part in the communal aspects of the experience; however they were still able to exhibit and produce interesting work.

Bernstein's model of the pedagogic device allows certain people to explore the unthinkable as well as the thinkable. This can be understood as being able to produce new knowledge rather than accepting or reproducing received knowledge. This can be seen in the students' ability to create new exhibitions in the United Kingdom. The case study demonstrates how the ability to think the unthinkable is not equally facilitated and is linked to the distribution of power, resource and knowledge. This draws attention to a moral dilemma faced by tutors, should they continue to work using international opportunities that give some students an excellent experience when not everyone can take part.

References

a-n *The Artists Information Company (2003) Residencies*. Found at <https://www.a-n.co.uk/resource/residencies> accessed 20/09/2017.

Bernstein, B. (1990) *Class, codes and control Vol.4: the structuring of pedagogic discourse*. London: Routledge.

- Bernstein, B. (1996) *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity: theory, research, critique*. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Bernstein, B. (1999) Vertical and horizontal discourse: an essay. *British journal of sociology of education*, 20(2), 57–173.
- Bernstein, B. (2001) From pedagogies to knowledges. In: Morais, A., Neves, I., Davies, B. and Daniels, H. (eds.) *Towards a sociology of pedagogy*. Lang: New York, pp. 363-368.
- Bourne, J. (2008) Official pedagogic discourses and the construction of learners' identities. In Hornberger N. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of language and education*. New York: Springer, pp.41-52.
- Lucio-Villegas, E. (2016) Like a rolling stone: non-traditional spaces of adult education. *European journal for research on the education and learning of adults*, 7(1), 75-88.
- McAlister, B. (1984) *William Morris today*. London: Institute of Contemporary Art.
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education [QAA] (2017) *Subject benchmark statements, art and design*. Found at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/SBS-Art-and-Design-17.pdf> accessed 04/12/2017.
- Singh, P. (1997) Review essay: Basil Bernstein (1996) *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity*. *British Journal of sociology of education*, 18(1), 119-124.

What is Basic Adult Education? And Who Gets to Learn?

Laura Wyper

Algoma University
1520 Queen Street East
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario
Canada P6A 2G4
laura.wyper@algomau.ca

ABSTRACT: This paper looks at the authors PhD research related to first and second order policy effects, including issues of access, marginalization and displacement of certain adult student demographics in Literacy and Basic Skills programs in Ontario, Canada. As these trends can be seen at global and local levels, the author looks at neoliberal ideologies and conceptual framing, and how the implications of these processes affect social equity in Ontario's basic adult education settings. This research not only includes issues of who gets access to which learning contexts related to these processes, but also includes the implications of variations in adult educator identity and praxis, the multiplicity of goals across basic adult education centers, and how these intersecting and at times competing needs play out in the basic adult education field currently.

KEYWORDS: adult education, equity, marginalization, neoliberalism, Ontario

Introduction

Over the past few years some Literacy and Basic Skills administrators and practitioners in Ontario have been witnessing changes in service delivery that are related to a huge shift in provincial government policy and practice that happened in 2012. This policy change can be understood through concepts of neoliberalism and New Public Management (NPM) policy trends that seem to be affecting adult basic education (ABE) and practitioner capacity to resist policy change when it becomes an equity issue of social justice and excludes learners. These changes are concerning when vulnerable sectors of society are being refused adult basic education service or no longer have ABE service options, are underserved, and are now falling through the cracks.

Neoliberalism specifically relates to a decrease in public service and government involvement towards a more private sector expansion of global market ideology (Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow, & Tinkler, 2005; Haque, 2017; Hennessy & Sawchuk, 2003; Ryan, Connel & Burgess, 2017; Siltala, 2013), whereas NPM generally is understood to include neoliberal market ideologies related to outcomes based efficiency and accountability models through a private sector managerial business lens (Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow & Tinkler, 2005; Haque, 2017; Hennessy & Sawchuk, 2003; Lapsley, 2009; Ryan, Connel & Burgess, 2017; Siltala, 2013; van der Sluis, Reezigt & Borghans, 2017).

How practitioners respond to this type of neoliberal NPM policy in practice through types of resistance individually, or institutionally, effects not only the type of resistor they may become but how access at their particular site may be affected by their own policy responses. This policy change and practitioner response is significant because many issues of inequity in education are happening in other provinces in Canada (Lange, Chovanec, Cardinal, Kajner & Acuna, 2015) as well as being a global phenomenon related to neoliberal and historical colonial power structures that perpetuate inequity in education for many (Angotti, 2012; Block et. al., 2012; Carney, 2011-2012; Sage, 2014; Starkey, 2012), often as part of a New Program Management (NPM) push (Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow & Tinkler, 2005; Haque, 2017; Hennessy & Sawchuk, 2003; Lapsley, 2009; Ryan, Connel & Burgess, 2017; Siltala, 2013; van der Sluis, Reezigt & Borghans, 2017).

Background

Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programming in Ontario has been funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) since 1997 (MTCU, 2013), and is now called the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) as of 2016. The provincial Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Program policy changes began in 2012 (MTCU, 2013) and LBS is housed under the MAESD's Employment Ontario Service Provider Umbrella (MTCU, 2013).

Employment Ontario (EO) has seven main principles for service delivery across its programming, and includes the use of these principles in the new LBS policy mandate. These principles are: accessibility, being client centered, quality of service, integration of services, cost-effectiveness, accountability and community-based organization (MTCU, 2013). From these principles, 'effectiveness, efficiency, and service delivery' parameters are often used to justify policy, particularly when used as part of global trends towards standardization in education for global economic means (Clarke, 2012; Moutsios, 2010) and for public service agencies specifically as part of NPM policy (Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow & Tinkler, 2005; Haque, 2017; Hennessy & Sawchuk, 2003; Lapsley, 2009; Ryan, Connel & Burgess, 2017; Siltala, 2013; van der Sluis, Reezigt & Borghans, 2017).

LBS Programs are now tracked in a provincially standardized database known as the Employment Ontario Information System – Case Management System (EOIS-CAMS) (MAESD, 2107). As with many other NPM models, digital era governance is a part of this process wherein the relationships between government, agencies and civil society are monitored and measured through these pervasive digital systems (Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow & Tinkler, 2005: 478). The scoring and the tracking of agency performance is known as a performance management framework (PMF); this PMF would then determine each LBS agency's standing with the government in terms of whether they were measuring up to the MAESD standards: if not, they would be flagged for improvement.

At face value the new LBS policy implies a form of accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness aimed at showing the public that government monies are being spent responsibly and that the government has the public's interest at stake. Yet within critical adult education discourse:

Terms such as efficiency and effectiveness are often rejected as being fundamentally technical and economistic, conceiving of education as neutral, commodity and deterministic, rather than as a public good to be democratically debated and enacted in pluralistic societies, as a human right, or as unpredictable existential endeavor. Notions of quality, efficiency, time and resources are not only contested, but become manifest in unequal and radically distinct contexts. (Niyozov & Tarc, 2015: 3-4)

As this quote shows, and as is often the case, the conceptual framing of policy is very different from what it ends up being upon implementation.

This 2012 LBS policy change has meant a huge shift in practice for some LBS centres as LBS programs have historically been funded by the MAESD, but programs across the province all had their own individualized programs as LBS sites were structured historically by stream and sector, and continue to be after the policy change. For example, there are Anglophone, Francophone, First Nations, and Deaf / Deaf-Blind streams as well as programming sectors run by colleges, by school boards, and by community based agencies. The variety of programming by stream and sector has historically created a differentiation of programming options between LBS communities, and lead in part to my research questions related to the LBS policy changes.

Overarching research questions

1. What changes in practices have administrators/practitioners at LBS sites observed and how do they believe these changes are related to changes in provincial LBS policies?
2. How have the demographics of the students served changed? Are some subgroups of students served more or less frequently than before?
3. What strategies are staff at LBS sites using to resist and/or mitigate the changes?

Methodology

This study used a qualitative research methodology with semi-structured interviews, and is a case study of LBS practices in the province of Ontario. LBS site administrators / practitioners were invited to participate after being chosen by the researcher based on sampling (Figure 1) across both Northern and Southern Ontario by LBS streams (Francophone, Deaf, Aboriginal, and English) and sectors (College, School Board, Community-based). In the end 22 site administrators were interviewed and (Figure 1)

represented the 24 sites, due to administrator / practitioner specific roles; these administrator / practitioners had actual oversight of approximately 50 sites across the province, again due to their various roles and capacities related to how LBS sites are managed in various streams and sectors.

	College	School Boards	Community
FN			6
Francophone			4
Deaf & Deaf-blind			4
Anglophone	2	3	3

Figure 1. LBS Stream and Sector Interview Sampling.

I transcribed and manually categorized and coded all collected data using thematic tables (Creswell, 1994). Themes that showed up across a third or more of the interviewees were counted as an overriding theme.

Results

Results showed that three of the four scenarios' demographics were not being served fully (Figure 2) in the sites sampled and that for some sites this was directly related to the LBS 2012 policy changes.

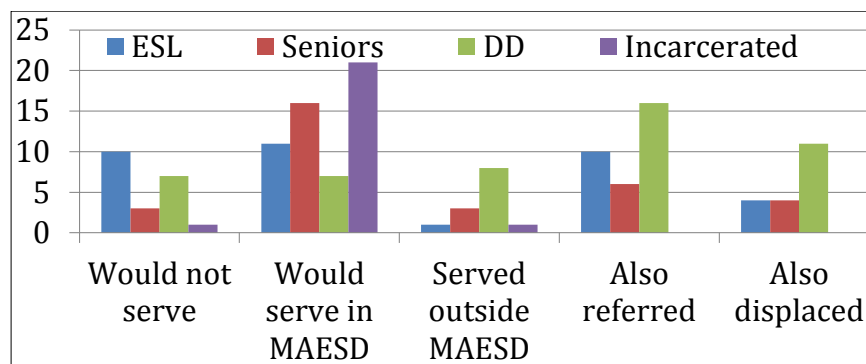


Figure 2. General Overview of Scenario Results.

The five main themes that emerged from participant data related to Figure 1 above included:

- Standardization in pluralistic societies
- Second order effects: North, South, Urban, and Rural
- Types of resistance and gatekeeping: Practitioner praxis and practice
- Access to and definitions of literacy needs in multimodal, multi-literacies world: who is a literacy learner and what is literacy learning?
- Balancing acts: Community and MAESD; needs and expectations

Related to Figure 2 it appears that seniors and incarcerated individuals are largely served within MAESD, but the only group who was truly fully served was the scenario where learners had a history of incarceration. Seniors were often counted as a group served, yet

with further questioning of interviewees it was often found that seniors were mostly not served as they were being served in far smaller numbers than prior to 2102, or were served in more token ways and quickly referred out.

The ESL and developmentally delayed adult scenarios seemed to also be served less, with the developmentally delayed adult demographic being most affected by the MAESD policy change. Some sites had never taken either of these groups of adults, even prior to 2012, but for those that did every site said they were being affected. Both these demographics were being served in decreasing numbers and were being displaced. When referred they either had wait times for service, or no service available; for the developmentally delayed learners the option was respite daycare services, which are usually segregated and very different from the LBS services they would have been receiving prior to the policy changes. These results highlighted themes *1. Standardization in pluralistic societies, and 2. Second order effects: North, South, Urban, and Rural.*

There were also many angry and frustrated practitioner voices heard related to the interview scenarios. Issues of discrimination, human rights, and government responsibility to serve what were considered by many interviewees to be the most vulnerable and already marginalized groups, were heard. Creative compliance, non-compliance and resistance by practitioners was happening in some sites as they falsified statistics and other required paperwork, did not count learners in the LBS database but still served them, or counted adults as volunteers when they were actually learners at the centres; these actions were stated as necessary by interviewees in an effort to not displace the senior, ESL and developmentally delayed learners. These results highlighted themes *1. Standardization in pluralistic societies, 2. Second order effects: North, South, Urban, and Rural, 3. Types of resistance and gatekeeping: Practitioner praxis and practice, 4. Access to and definitions of literacy needs in multimodal, multi-literacies world: who is a literacy learner and what is literacy learning?*

In each of the scenarios presented there were issues of access related to service provision mandates, service availability, and a diversity of student and community needs. Determining who is a learner (and who is not) affected access, as did whether a learner was trying to access service in northern or rural Ontario areas. Urban settings with lengthy waitlists also affected access, as did first language spoken by learners. Sites that were using resistance strategies to keep learners also often had capacity issues related to what was becoming the competing needs of meeting MAESD versus community expectations. All of these elements helped to explain or determine whether and how the types of students profiled in the scenarios were being served. These factors of community need and access, progress, and ability to measure outcomes were the reasons behind why students in each of the four scenarios were or were not being served. These results highlighted not only the first four themes, but theme *5. Balancing acts: Community and MAESD; needs and expectations.*

Implications

In relation to the MAESD policy change, Stephen Ball differentiates between first order effects which are “changes in practice or structure (which are evident in particular sites and across the system as a whole)” and; second order effects which are “the impact of these changes on patterns of social access and opportunity and social justice” (1993, p. 16). I heard from interviewees how the first order effects were causing second order effects in some LBS programs in Ontario since the new policy and guidelines had been introduced. The implementation of these new policies represent first order effects based on Ball’s definition in that they are a change in practice. The first order effects consequently inhibited access to LBS services for students in some demographics. This lack of access to services represents

second-order effects based on Ball's definition in that they impacted patterns of social opportunity. The second order effects the new LBS policy is having include the negative social justice and equity impacts related to access, ableism, and ageism in the LBS student demographic.

To explain this further, MAESD's Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway (EOPG, 2015) ironically states explicitly under their legislative obligations section that:

The *Human Rights Code* recognizes the dignity and worth of every person and provides for equal rights and opportunities without discrimination. Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods and facilities, without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or disability (EOPG, 2015).

On face value or due to the conceptual framing by the government the MAESD seems to be applying the principals of the human rights code in their LBS programming; yet, the inadvertent second order effects of this new policy and performance expectations coupled with the MAESD's *unwritten* policies, like those on how many learners sites can have in particular goal paths like the 'independence' goal path, were clearly being felt by some LBS Programs. These types of expectations are delivered with 'perform or lose funding' ideation, which was promoting the resistance and creative compliance strategies that were being seen in some sites, as can happen with tiki box and audit society mentalities (Lapsley, 2009, p. 11) of NPM models of practice.

Ageism is also reinforced in present LBS policy as a systemic barrier when older adults are now classified as inappropriate or outside the current learner profile / MAESD mandate. This policy fails to recognize the very real computer literacy needs of this age group – needs that affect their ability to navigate the world, and at times without which can lead to increased isolation. When viewed through an intersectional lens that shows us our literacy levels can also be intersectional, we see the value of learning, particularly in the multi-modal multiple literacies world that we live in (Cope & Kalantis, 2000; Jewitt, 2008).

As happens with marginalization, people are not even included in the conversation, or in this case seniors are not counted in terms of MEASD's age mandates, which then becomes interpreted as 'who is a learner or who is not'. Marginalization is when a person or "whole category of people is expelled from useful participation in social life" (Young, 2010, p. 38) and is often stigmatized due to intersectional identities that can be socio-political, economic (Olufunke & Odemalo, 2012), or related to various other isms.

The hegemony in our educational system is also continued as this allows some groups to continue to be oppressed as a whole while other individuals within groups succeed (Ledwith, 2005). This can be seen specifically when ESL learners have no other options in some rural and northern communities but are not allowed access due to language levels. That a first language learner with a cognitive ability of a grade two person could be allowed access to an LBS program but an ESL learner with higher cognition, who may have a lower level Canadian language benchmark (CLB), cannot access this same program, seems to be a direct form of systemic / institutional racism related to language discrimination or hegemonic beliefs related to dominant language use / supremacist first language policy.

The new MAESD LBS policy is too simplistic and linear in terms of 'entrance, progression, and exit' ideologies for learners as well. This shows in the displacement of Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) clients, or those with developmental / LD challenges that fail to show 'progress' by the new LBS policy definitions or are not employment bound, ESL students in some rural and northern areas who are 'not allowed' to access LBS service, and in seniors who have programming options changed.

The displacements happening presently in some LBS programs in Ontario are not new or unknown phenomena. The MAESD in Ontario has already been criticized by their own auditors (Cathexis, 2016) and others, echoing interviewee concerns, related to its new OALCF framework and the learning tasks like milestones, that are included in the LBS policy changes as:

...the emphasis on the compliance function of the Milestones over learners and learning has led to the development of yet another barrier for those who already experience and have experienced multiple education and learning barriers, a direct contradiction of the stated aims of the LBS Program (Pinsent-Johnson & Sturm, 2015, p. 18)

This same article critiques the efficiency and accountability stance as the MAESD puts fiscal concerns over the learning process and learners' needs /goals (Pinsent-Johnson, 2015). It also questions MAESD's attempt at creating some sort of best practice as it states "Ontario is the first and only known jurisdiction in the world to have reformulated some of the international survey testing methods for educational and pedagogical purposes, and then mandated its use within an accountability framework" (Pinsent-Johnson & Sturm, 2015, p. 8-9). This idea of 'best practice' was also critiqued above by Niyozov and Tarc (2015).

From a theoretical position that views adult education through a critical lens the five themes that were seen in this study can be problematic as they relate to and are echoed in larger educational issues that are both historical and present. Adult Education, over the past many hundreds of years has been a mixed spectrum of enlightened ideology to further entrenchment in imperial, colonial and neoliberal patronage. Even today "[e]ducation [is] a way of bundling together the hopes and fears of its sponsors and recipients, with the question An education for whom? Never far from the surface" (Willinsky, 1998: 101)

As such adult education has been an extension of imperial and colonial conquest through the justifications of Modernization theory in which 'development' and 'human capital' were the driving forces (Youngman, 2000). One example of this is Marshall (2011) who speaks to the different agendas or instrumental goals of global citizenship education and how it is often aligned with neoliberal / Western ideologies. The idea that education systems are pressured to produce individuals "for global competition" (p.412) is not a new idea. Certainly, LBS policy has aligned with this ideology in recent years. Outcomes now seem to be measured in some sites and considered successful, in relation to whether students move on to postsecondary or find employment. The student who can make change and therefore do their groceries on their own is now totally discounted in terms of their 'progress' or 'success'. This policy directed change in definition of progress has many LBS practitioners now asking then: 'what is adult basic education, and who gets to learn?'

In other Canadian provinces like Alberta, neoliberalism has also meant that shifts in economics negatively affect the education sector as "...there was a substantial reduction in the funding of adult education, especially programs that increased access for minority groups, including English as a second language, adult basic education, women's centre, and adult literacy programs" (Lange, Chovanec, Cardinal, Kajner & Acuna, 2015, p. 85). Again, these funding gaps and reductions are often excused as efficiency and accountability measures.

When one looks at the MAESD policy language related to Literacy and Basic Skills through this anti-racist, anti-oppressive, lens or takes a deconstructivist and decolonial approach as a feminist practitioner in the field one can see the parallels in neoliberal conceptual framing and erasure or 'disappearing' that is happening in the adult basic education landscape in Ontario. This furthers marginalization of at times already marginalized adults.

From an educational perspective these LBS policy changes do reflect the global push for best-practices, standardization and policy transfers in the name of efficiency and accountability (Samoff, 2008; Silova, 2014), to ensure students will be equipped to compete in global markets (Marshall, 2011) due to our 'fast capitalist' factors of hyper competition combined with massive technological changes, and demands of uber sophisticated consumers (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996). Yet neoliberalism has often been critiqued for the issues of inequity, homogenization, competition and other more negative aspects it often hides (Niyozov & Dastambuev, 2012) as the socially constructed exclusions that happen are based on neoliberal ideologies of 'selection of the fittest' (Siltala, 2013, p. 474).

Conclusions

The MAESD's LBS policies seem to be leading to a dispossession and disappearing of what at times are some of the most marginalized adult learners in many of the LBS sites sampled. As learner displacement continues so too does the gap between haves and have-nots, those with power and without, those seen as valuable and those deemed –by these very global power structures- less valuable.

The implications of this study's themes in relation to neoliberalism, conceptual framing and erasure are highlighted in interviewee responses heard. NPM ideologies of efficiency and accountability are not only affecting first and second order effects of access and social justice issues in terms of decreasing LBS service for adult learners in some communities, but also seem to be simultaneously increasing workloads, capacity issues, and decreasing self-efficacy and meaningfulness of work for some practitioners. The stressors related to this new policy are also putting practitioners at risk as they choose in some cases to resist the policy changes in order to manipulate the LBS PMF to serve their communities in ways they have historically.

Communities have very real needs that they are not able to meet within the current mandate without resistance strategies that simultaneously put their sites at risk. This situation is a testament to neoliberal framing versus reality, or first order effects versus second order effects related to the LBS policy change. That language needs, age and/or ability are being used as access barriers to service, even if unintentionally, speaks to the perpetuation of our shared colonial histories even today in Canada through top-down governmental policy. Further to this, NPM related neoliberal ideologies in the new LBS policy exacerbate this situation as the policy simplifies and makes linear learning processes and community needs that are pluralistic and complex.

References

- Angotti, T. (2012) The urban-rural divide and food sovereignty in India. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 28 (4), 379-402.
- Ball, S. (1993) What is policy? Text, trajectories and toolboxes. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 13 (2), 10-17.
- Block, R., Chavez, N., Allen, E., and Ramirez, D (2012) Food sovereignty, urban food access, and food activism: contemplating the connections through examples from Chicago. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 29 (2), 203-215.
- Carney, M. (Winter 2011-2012) "Food security" and "food sovereignty": What frameworks are best suited for social equity in food systems? *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 2 (2), 71-87.
- Clarke, M. (2012) The (absent) politics of neo-liberal education policy. *Critical Studies in Education*, 53 (3), pp. 297-310.
- Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (eds.) (2000) *Multiliteracies*. London: Routledge.

- Creswell, J.W. (1994) *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. London: Sage Publications.
- Dunleavy, P., Margetts, H., Bastow, S. and Tinkler, J. (2005) New public management is dead – long live digital-era governance. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 16, pp. 467-494.
- Gee, J.P., Hull, G., and Lankshear, C. (1996) *The new work order: Behind the language of new capitalism*. Sidney: Allen & Unwin Pty. Ltd.
- Haque, M.S. (n.d.). New public management: origins, dimensions, and critical applications. *UNESCO–EOLSS Sample Chapters Public Administration and Public Policy* Vol. 1, pp. 1-8. Available from: <http://www.eolss.net/Sample-Chapters/C14/E1-34-04-01.pdf>. [29 January 2017].
- Harvey, D. (2005) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hennessy, T. & Sawchuk, P. (2003) Worker response to technological change in the Canadian public sector: Issues of learning and labour process. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 15 (7/8), pp. 28-43.
- Jewitt, C. (2008) Multimodality and literacy in school classrooms. *Review of Research in Education*, 32 (1), pp. 241-267.
- Lange, E. A., Chovanec, D. M., Cardinal, T., Kajner, T., and Acuna, N. S. (2015) Wounded learners: Symbolic violence, educational justice, and re-engagement of low-income adults. *The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*, 27 (3), pp. 83-104.
- Lapsley, I. (2009) New public management: The cruellest invention of the human spirit? *ABACUS: A Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business Studies*, 45 (1), pp. 1-21.
- Ledwith, M. (2005) *Community Development: A critical approach*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Marshall, H. (2011) 'Instrumentalism, ideals and imaginaries: theorizing the contested space of global citizenship education in schools' *Globalization, Societies and Education*, 9 (3-4), pp. 411-426.
- Moutsios, S. (2010) Power, politics and transnational policy-making in education. *Globalization, Societies and Education*, 8 (1), pp. 121-141.
- Niyozov S. & Dastambuev, N. (2012) Exploiting globalization while being exploited by it? *Canadian and International Education, Special Issue*, November 2012.
- Niyozov, S. & Tarc, P. (eds). (2015) Working with, against, and despite global 'best practices': Educational Conversations around the Globe. A RICE / CIDEDEC compendium. CIDEDEC Symposium at OISE, University of Toronto 2104. Available from: https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/cidec/UserFiles/File/Website/Compendium_GBP_Final_Jan_2016.pdf. [17 February 2015].
- Olufunke, A.M., and Ademola, O.J. (2012) Adult Education: The hope of the marginalized. *European Journal of Educational Studies*, 4 (1), pp. 91-97.
- Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities. (2015). *EOIS – CAMS Literacy and Basic Skills Data Dictionary*. Available from: http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/eois_cams_lbs_data_dictionary.pdf. [12 September 2017].
- Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities. (2013) *Literacy and Basic Skills Service Provider Guidelines*. Ministry of Training Colleges & University. [Pdf]. Available from: http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/2013-2014_lbs_sd_guidelines.pdf. [9 November 2014].
- Pinsent-Johnson, C. & Sturm, M. (2015) *Research Overview -Assessment Challenges, Contradictions and Inequities: An analysis of the use of digital technology and OALCF Milestones*. Alpha Plus.
- Ryan, S., Connell, J. and Burgess, J. (2017) Casual academics: a new public management paradox. *Labour & Industry: A Journal of the social and economic relations of work*, 27 (1), pp. 56-72.
- Sage, C. (2014) The transition movement and food sovereignty: From local resilience to global engagement in food system transformation. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 14 (2), pp. 254-275.

Samoff, J. (2008) Foreign aid to education: Managing global transfers and exchanges. In Chisholm, L. & Steiner-Khamisi, G. (eds.), *South-South Cooperation in Education and Development*. New York: Teachers College Press & Cape Town: HSRC Press, pp. 123-157.

Silova, I. (2014) The interplay of “posts” in comparative education: Post-socialism and post-colonialism after the cold war. In: Vegas, L. (eds.), *Empires, Post-coloniality and Interculturality: Comparative Education between past, post, and present*. Netherlands: Sense Publishers, pp. 181-198.

Siltala, J. (2013) New public management: The evidence-based worst practice? *Administration & Society*, 45 (4), 468-493.

Starkey, Hugh. (2012) Human rights, cosmopolitanism and utopias: implications for citizenship education. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 42 (1), 21-35.

Tikly, L. and Bond, T. (2013) Towards a postcolonial research ethics in comparative and international education. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*. 43 (4), 422-442. Available from:

https://research-information.bristol.ac.uk/files/32570135/Post_colonial_ethics_Edited_final.pdf. [12 October 2014].

Van der Sluis, M.E., Reezigt, G.J. and Borghans, L. (2017) Implementing new public management in educational policy. *Educational Policy*, 31 (3), 303-329.

Willinsky, J. (1998) The Educational Mission. *Learning to Divide the World: Education at Empire's End*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

Young, I. (2010) Five Faces of Oppression. In: Adams, M. et al. (eds). *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*, (2nd ed.) New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis, pp. 35-44.

Youngman, F. (2000) Adult Education and Development Theory. Chapter 4. *The Political Economy of Adult Education and Development*. UK: Zed Books.

(2017). *Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development: Employment Ontario Information System – Case Management System*. Available from:

http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/eotransformation/eois-cams_training.html. [17 December 2017].

(2016). *Evaluation of the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Program: Final Report*; Cathexis Consulting Inc., for the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, November, 2016.

(2015). *Legislative Obligations*. Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway. Available from: http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/programs/lbs_legislative_obligations.html. [22 November 2015]

**EPISTEMOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF
LEARNING CONTEXTS**

Perspectives on context: metaphors, epistemologies, and theoretical definitions

Laura Formenti

Università degli Studi di Milano Bicocca

ABSTRACT: What happens when we use the word context, in research and learning? Are we aware of its different connotations? Or do we simply use it to evoke anything "surrounding" learning? When we begin to analyse the contexts of learning, we stumble over many antinomies and conceptual polarities. Different perspectives define what a context is, and what it does to us. There are at least four of them: the materialist/structural, the constructivist/symbolic, the reflexive/recursive, and the enactive/co-evolutionary. The talk will play with all these lenses, using etymology, imagination, and narratives to suggest a generative theory of context.

KEYWORDS: adult education, contexts of learning, context-based learning

Introduction

Insofar as we expand our concept of learning to embrace apparently all strata of life, we might be said to lose the conceptual basis for talking specifically of a learning context. This raises important questions (Edwards, 2009, p. 1).

In this chapter, I develop a theory of context and its consequences for research and practice in adult education and learning. The idea of context is very familiar and extensively used, not least in everyday speech. Following a general trend in social sciences, by the end of the twentieth century most models and theories - constructivism, critical pedagogy, feminism, situated cognition, community of practices, etc.- have been based on considering the learning context as a pillar of adult education. It is by and large recognized that context matters, at the point that, in adult education, “context-based learning” is identified as an emerging paradigm of its own (Merriam, 2017).

And yet, there seems to be a lack of theorization about it in adult education. The book edited by Edwards, Biesta and Thorpe in 2009 developed a multi-perspective reflection where contexts were understood as the different “strata” (workplace, home, community, leisure, and so on) where adults learn life-long and life-wide. After that book, the notion received little further theoretical interest, apart from a few papers and conference presentations. Most scholars use this word extensively, without discussing its meaning. This lack of theorization risks to reinforce shabby ideas and uses, or hidden presuppositions. When something becomes so familiar that we stop thinking about it, and avoid to interrogate its meaning, there is a problem. What is context? How does it enter in adult education practices, theories, and research? And is learning a feature, or an outcome, of all contexts? (Niewolny & Wilson, 2011).

The relationship between context and learning is complex, problematic, and somehow obscure. Niewolny & Wilson (2011) explored what they call “the question of context” as a discursive practice in adult learning literature - a discourse which affects our understanding and practices of education. The authors bring our attention to binaries affecting this discourse, such as individual versus social, cognitive versus situated, and in ways of using the concept, to conclude that it may be interpreted in too narrow and static ways. They argue in favour of a re-conceptualization of “learning-in-context”, hence a verbal phrase, opening a way towards a more dynamic and evolutionary view.

My argument here is similar, but wider: my view is rooted in complexity, radical constructivism, and systemic theory. I follow the idea that context goes beyond “influencing” (a linear-causal concept) learners’ performances, to become a component of learning itself, a part of the system of interdependencies qualifying a specific learning situation. The context is not “out there”, or “around” us, but it is a part of the learning process. Besides, a context is practical as well as embodied, symbolic, and socially constructed. It has a subjective, objective, and intersubjective dimension. From the binary interpretation, we can shift to a developmental, ternary, dialectic one.

I will build arguments in favour of a specific attitude and way of doing in adult education, that I call “contextualization”, as complementary to commoner practices of “context analysis”. The former is dynamic, interactive, and participatory, while the latter tends to be more objective, detached, and definite. Both may be important for educational practice and research, but they open different possibilities of meaning and further action.

From images to hidden assumptions: a reflexive exercise

I am making the case, here, for a terminological, conceptual and epistemological shift. This may help us to build a shared and satisfying theoretical framework for this concept. However, my ideas are developing, coherently with a dynamic and situated view of cognition. By playing with the idea of context, and exploring its connotations and meanings, I try to be generative and to question my own assumptions, as well as the reader's. A generative theory may inspire adult educators to adopt more contextualized practices and policies.

Systems theory and complexity (Formenti, 2017, p. 2018) invite us to overcome the need for a static and universal definition of this concept, since such a definition would be contradictory with the notion of "contextuality" itself. As a word of ordinary language (Wittgenstein, 1953), "context" has multiple, fuzzy, and largely implicit meanings. An anti-foundational, pragmatic, and dynamic stance, then, should avoid the unique definition, to explore the uses of the word/concept in different "contexts". So, which is the context of context? As in Escher's drawings, we feel puzzled by this entangled question.

Complexity theory claims that we can shift our perspective to a meta-level, by questioning the context of context, as Heinz von Foerster did, when he used recursion to search the "cybernetics of cybernetics" (1974), the "observed observer" (1987), and the "knowledge of knowledge" (Foerster & Pörksen, 2001). Recursivity is very appropriate to study the living, hence education.

During the conference in Rennes that originated this book, I introduced my discourse by proposing some metaphors and images of context. It was a reflexive exercise that I proposed to the audience and, later, to my students. Reflexivity happens when our own embodied cognition (perceptions, emotions, and imagination) is evoked, to grasp the metaphoric nature of a concept (in this case, the notion itself of context). Metaphors belong to a kind of knowing/thinking that is abductive (Bateson, 1979), narrative (Bruner, 1990), presentational (Heron, 1996), reflexive (Hunt, 2013), imaginal (Jung, 2009), and largely unconscious. They are very useful in illuminating our assumptions and epistemologies.

So, what comes to your mind when I say "context"? What kind of images are evoked? I did the exercise myself, collecting and screening photographs that illustrate some aspects of the notion. These images belong to different families:

A common family of metaphors that see context as a frame (Goffman, 1986) delimiting a specific content or object, and assigning meaning to it. If content is the figure, context is the ground, a metaphor borrowed from Gestalt theory (Bateson, 1972). By speaking of a frame separated from its content, however, we risk to objectify it. Is there another frame, then, to contain it? Maybe the wall where it is hanging? Or the building? Which is the context of context? We can imagine contexts as a layered structure of interrelated frames (Goffman, 1986). The metaphor is binary indeed: figure/ground, content/frame. We find it in psychological and psycholinguistic theories of context, as well as in common discourse. Some authors, seeing it as a linear structure of hierarchically ordered relationship, use the metaphor of an onion, or a Russian doll: each new layer would be a further meta-level of containment. There are good reasons, however, to think that this order is unreal, and the relationships between levels of context are not linear, but circular, entangled (Introna, 2000), or potentially "strange" (Oliver, 2004). In the same family of metaphors, we find context as a box or a container: another reified image, evoking the same epistemology.

Context can be qualified as an atmosphere, climate, landscape, or sensory scape: an assemblage of interrelated objects, spaces, voices, endowed with material and symbolic features, which have the power to trigger perceptions, emotions, and dispositions inside,

outside, and among participants. What is interesting in this family of metaphors is the composition of (different) items, words, images, influencing each other: within a phrase, each word makes the context for the others; in a mood board, or a collage, communication and meaning are the product of juxtaposition (of fragments, colors, forms, etc.).

There are metaphors with an intrinsic dynamic quality: context as a flux, a stream of water passing through a land, and with a little boat in the stream, brought elsewhere, maybe to a lake, or the ocean; in this journey, the sailor can drift, or paddle, or navigate; she can look at the water, the bank, or the sky; what is relevant, however, is things happening in the process.

Context is then represented as a network, or web, which is built at any moment, hence undergoing continuous structuration and re-structuration. For example, at a meso-level of interaction, we can identify speech acts and local rules of communication as the components of a network. At a larger, institutional level, we see the action of constraints, requirements, rules, and scripts, both conscious and unconscious.

There is also a dark side of the context, when it is represented as a prison, due to the presence of many constraints, which limit our possibilities and allow only some actions, or perceptions, or communications; the context is a counterforce hindering our freedom, a labyrinth, or some dangerous, confusing place, as in Escher's drawings, where one can get lost, and is brought to distrust her senses, if not madness.

All these metaphors are "psychological" (Bateson, 1972, p. 186): they are the result of cognition and communication among interacting subjects. They are also epistemological, since they reveal the basic assumptions of our culture. As stated by Bateson, "the analogy of the picture frame is excessively concrete" and context "is neither physical nor logical", but we, as westerners, add it to our picture of an objective world. Our way of thinking, shaped by a need to frame events, is "externalized" (p. 187) in the idea of "frame". Bateson adds that frames (i.e. the definition of context) work by exclusion (some messages/actions are considered "out of frame") and inclusion (everything happening inside the frame, hence belongs, and is defined, by it). Frames reveal the work of premises, they have a meta-communicative role (and conversely, meta-communicative messages are used to define a context), and they shape perception.

During the conference in Rennes, I ended my presentation of images with my own favorite metaphor, an art object: a giant installation by the Korean artist Kang Ik-Joong, whose title *Samramansang* means "The entire world, the universe and all things" (see it at http://www.ikjoongkang.com/c_img/image.htm). The artist composed 10,000 3 x 3 inch coloured canvases to form the walls of a cylindrical room. In the centre of it, a silver Buddha. This piece of art displays an idea of context as the potential composition of everything. When you are in the room, you can feel very disoriented, and not knowing what to look at. Too many details! Then you can turn to the Buddha, and forget about all the stimuli around you. A suggestion? A warning? What do we see, when we are exposed to art? (Formenti & West, 2018).

Art has a powerful role in adult education, especially contemporary art, whose main task is to illuminate as well as challenge our assumptions, frames, cultures, and webs of influence. In a word: our "contexts".

Learning contexts and context-based learning

The context-based learning approach says that “the context of adult learning is as important as identifying characteristics of adult learners and the cognitive processes involved in learning” (Merriam, 2017, p. 29). For decades, especially in North American literature, the learners’ features were constantly brought to the forefront. Cognitive, individualistic theories are coherent with the American Dream, of a self-standing individual who can build his/her own fortune by force of will, or at least is the captain of his/her own meaningful, intentional action. Not by chance, one of the most influential theories in that part of the globe was Knowles’ andragogy, focusing on adult learners’ interests, motivations, previous experiences, and questions, as determinant aspects of the learning process. Andragogy, however, too often appears as de-contextualized, and the same is valid for Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning, the new dominant one in the mainstream of adult education discourse in the US. At the end of the eighties, a different approach became popular, where individual and cognitive features started to be related to the context (Perkins & Salomon, 1989).

Context-based learning assumes that adults always learn in socially and culturally structured environments. This idea is different from hypostatizing a “learning context” as pre-existing the individual. To overcome the dualist view, of individual against society, some scholars wrote about “learning cultures” (Hodkinson, Biesta, & James, 2008), and a cultural theory of learning, combining participatory and situated views with a concept of embodied construction and a metaphor of “becoming”. Adults learn within and from their participation to ongoing relationships, using language, interacting with social objects and others, and participating in cultural activities. Adults learn in everyday life, where informal, non-formal and accidental situations are more relevant than structured and institutionalized processes. They learn unconsciously and holistically. And even institutional education (higher education, training, etc.) bears many informal effects on adults’ bodies, minds, and souls, beyond (in some occasions, even against) instructional intentions. We learn from the changing context of our learning, besides and beyond what is taught, intentional, or conscious. The social and cultural dimensions of learning have always received attention from sensitive, good adult educators, who are ready to recognize the complex relationships between learning, knowing, and living. Educators who are engaged in a dialogic process with their participants. A relational view is very present in the practice of adult education, from its historical roots which are libertarian and democratic.

However, the dominant individual approach, typical of Anglo-Saxon cultures, is reinforced nowadays by psychological theories and neoliberal policies, that identify learning as a mental, conscious, and rational process, functional to the economic growth. The mainstream view on adult learning in research, in everyday discourse, and practice, is cumulative, individual, economic, and purposeful. Learning is finalized to acquire de-contextualized skills that are (seen as) useful, separable, measurable, marketable, and – once acquired - transferrable to new places, tasks, and relationships. The idea of a “knowledge capital”, as possessed by the individual, is an economic metaphor that needs to be interrogated, when we understand that skills and competences are not established within the individual, but they manifest themselves only in relation to a context, a learning culture, a specific situation. I can be agentic in my family, and not at work, or vice versa. I can be shy when I am alone in a new environment, and very open when I feel safe. I can be a “problem-solver”, but if I do not know the situation, and I do not have help and resources, I will not solve any problem. Adults know what it means, to feel like a child, and powerless, when the external conditions are unfavorable.

The critiques to the dominant view are themselves contextual and culturally shaped, e.g. by assuming the presuppositions of critical theory, feminism, constructivism, and so on. In many cases, they share an epistemological assumption, that I call “the rhetoric of influence”. Since the search of causes is a tenet of Western philosophy, in this case the context is meant to be an *influential* part of the process of learning. But this is another separation, another dualism. What is this influence? How does it work? I use the systemic approach to argue that binary and causal thinking is not useful, when we speak of context.

From the learners’ point of view, the context defines what and how has to be learned, its meaning, and its process. It is acknowledged by and large that what counts more in adult learning is the learners’ own experience and meanings. It is less acknowledged that these are shaped by interaction. Good, significant and deep learning is contextual, collaborative, and situated.

Learning is *contextual* when it links to life and experience. It may be active too, but active learning *per se* is not necessarily contextual. The link to real life is engaging, for the learner, at the level of content as well as method. A very diffused but narrow interpretation of contextual learning is applied or problem-based learning. However, if most adults are happy when they perceive the possibility to apply what they learn, there is not always a “problem” to be solved. Problem-based learning becomes a problem itself, when it is the only possibility. There are adults who are (or become) interested to learning for the sake of it, without a specific goal, inspired by curiosity, meaning-making, and the general feeling of well-being that is produced when you are engaged in learning situations. Reading, discussing, thinking, and writing may be very rewarding activities, indeed, even when they seem purpose-less. So, if we claim that significant or deep learning is contextual, we need to redefine its meaning.

The idea of learning as *collaborative* has deep roots in the history of adult education. Shared decision-making, group and team work, and interpersonal communication are crucial for adult life, work, cognition, and to enhance social justice. Discussions and debates foster our understanding and open possibilities to learn beyond one’s own frames, or previous knowledge. Democracy itself is based on thinking together for social transformation. Collaborative learning can be finalized to external purposes, but it is often centred on the present, here-and-now. It transforms individual and collective attitudes and beliefs, meanings and actions; it fosters a democratic education, based on differences, listening, reciprocity, self-other awareness, and recognition.

Situated learning is also contextual. “What” is learned is always situational. For example, in my experience many students who enroll on the course of education are focused at the start on traditional ideas, based on previous learning. These ideas are challenged, and students may do well, but when I meet them at the beginning of the second year, they seem not able to use their knowledge in relation to my course. They are presented with a new situation, they need time to understand how those ideas can be used to address a specific topic. Somehow, they have to re-learn within this specific and new context. Situated cognition is applied today in many courses, for example in teaching health, design, and engineering, where specific problems have to be addressed and resolved. Problem-solving skills cannot be separated from the specific contexts in which they are applied. The dominant trend is to consider these skills as generic and transferrable across contexts. A disputable idea.

Situational and contextual learning are not synonyms. If situated cognition is necessarily contextual, the inverse is not true. As educators, we tend to provide learning contexts which are relevant to the learner’s life experience; this increases the meaning of experience. Relevance and meaning are the core features of contextual learning.

From Context to Coordination: A Complex Systemic Theory

The theoretical concept of context is defined by different paradigms and disciplines. Its original definition comes from linguistics, and refers to how meaning is built and understood. From linguistic, it moved then to communication theories, psychology, and all the human and social sciences. Yet, even in the field of linguistics there is no unified theory, but many perspectives and approaches, including the pragmatic, neurolinguistic, clinical, interactional, and psycholinguistic views (Finkbeiner, Meibauer & Schumacher, 2012).

In the systemic view, communication is not only shaped and framed by context; it builds it (Bateson, 1972, p. 184-184). We can identify different levels of context which participate to the construction of meaning: at the micro-level, each participant in an interaction interprets and defines what is going on, for example by using deixis (me/you, this/here, that/there) and metacommunication to clarify the present situation, the relationship at hand, and the objects of discourse. Each individual has a relative power to define the context. However, the answer of the other can change any tentative definition. This is the meso-level, a level of becoming, where the relationship at hand is defined by concrete interactions and conversations. The meso-level can be structured by a previous history of interactions, that fixed some interpretations and ways of doing. For example, family life or workplace interaction (local systems of interdependence) become a sort of fixed, or known context through repetition, enduring relationships, identities, scripts, and tacit rules, which are implemented in these relational systems in order to ensure some continuity, hence trust in situated, shared meaning (Ruesch & Bateson, 1968). This has an “economic” reason: it makes our life simpler. The macro-context, which is defined by languages, practices, discourses at a wider societal level, has the power to create a very strong cognitive, social, and cultural frame for meaning.

Following the theory of the Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM), many levels of context intervene in every communication (Cronen, Johnson, & Lannamann, 1982; Cronen & Pearce, 1981; Oliver, 2004). They are based on a dynamic and circular relationship between a contextual force (acting top-down) and an implicational force (acting bottom-up). No meaning is given: they are constantly exchanged and transformed in the process of systemic becoming.

So, we can see the context as unbound: open, dynamic, stratified, and relational, but also subjective and unconscious. It is worth, then, to go beyond a logical analytic approach, to become curious about complexity, circularity, and the parts-whole relationships. As Fetzer and Oishi (2011) maintain:

The multilayered outlook on context requires an analytic frame of reference based on methodological compositionality (p. 4).

Connectedness of parts and whole is a core feature of a (new) compositional methodology. We need interdisciplinarity to bring together different perspectives, but also transdisciplinarity, to transcend the disciplinary boundaries and enhance our understanding of this construct, which appears inherently unbounded (as a labyrinth, a foggy landscape, or a disorienting piece of art) and able to become bounded (e.g. a frame, a container) only when it is instantiated. The pragmatic approach to communication is especially interesting, in this regard: it has to do with the possibility to achieve satisfying or appropriate action in a world of meanings (Fetzer & Oishi, 2011). In this respect, our words are actions, and the manipulation or management of language creates a context where some actions (some narratives, some exchanges of information, some questions, or answers) are made possible, while others are excluded. If learning is about opening and multiplying possibilities, words count, and speech acts reveal as well as build the situation at hand.

Language itself creates the context where some wording/acting is true and pertinent; it defines who is the speaker and who is the listener, in relation to each other, and what they are doing here and now. Three fundamental questions are constantly asked, and answered, in any relationship: Who am I for you? Who are you for me? What are we here for? They summarize the definition of a local, instantiated context.

The relationship between context, speech, and action needs to be reconsidered: differently from those who maintain that 'everything is text', hence assigning a marginal role to the con-text (as merely serving to the needs of text), I consider presentational languages (as in art, aesthetic experience, or gesture) as contributing in a fundamental way to a more equilibrate relationship. The context produced by an artistic performance, by silence, or by a caress, does much more than serving the purposes of propositional knowing.

So, how does an unbound, open, and indeterminate "context" become a bound object, that is "an object of talk" (Fetzer & Oishi, 2011, p. 2)? How do we transit from the presentational to the propositional (Heron, 1996)? In linguistics, context is related to communicative acts and their relationships; it is made of all the communicative acts which accompany a specific message, before, during and after its emission. In a more socio-linguistic frame, we need to look at the geographic, social, and local aspects of communication, which determine the variations of speech. At a micro level, it is made of the situational, emotional, and cognitive aspects of communication which are subjectively relevant. Pragmatically, why and when do we (need to) refer to the context, or even to define, explore, name it? One can say that this always happens, if tacitly. Any message or text has to be interpreted: to understand motives, effects, and meanings we must refer to information which is not in the content of the message. There is no information without a context: this idea is at the core of Gregory Bateson's work: "It is the context which evolves" (1972, p. 155). It is a matter of systemic evolution, where content and relationship are connected: the communicative context has a biological matrix and a recursive self-organising structure.

Linguistic theories say that we use our knowledge of the context to identify references, to overcome ambiguities, to fill voids and specify meanings, to identify the illocutionary act (is this a question, a statement, an order?), and to grasp the implicit. Is it so? What commonsense notions of context often miss, is the gap between context and reality: the context belongs to the world of mind, of interpretation. It is not factual. It has to do with previous knowledge, with hypotheses and inferences that are unconsciously made by the participants. As a sort of cognitive background, it allows us to recognize and yet go beyond the literal meaning of utterances. It is mobile and multiple, although it requires some rules, some sharing and coordination. We can say that the core business of context is, indeed, coordination (Cronen, Johnson & Lannamann, 1982; Cronen & Pearce, 1981; Oliver, 2004). Following Bateson (1979), when I say that the context is mental, I am not considering the individual mind separated from others and the environment. The context is a system of co-evolving events.

The definition of context is, as said, a common human activity: where are we, what are we doing here, who am I for you, and you for me? It starts when we need to fix the sense and meaning of our relationships. It is typical of processes of communication, interpretation, and cognition. And learning, as strictly connected to the three of them. Hence, a theory of adult learning cannot avoid the question, as well as educational practices cannot avoid to establish a context.

Commonsense and dominant approaches, however, tend to trust words, when it comes to the coordination of meaning: they rely on the speakers' intentions, the rules governing the uses of language, and semantics. Relationships are underestimated. In the pragmatic approach of cooperative conversation (Grice, 1975), on the contrary, relationships are

determinant in establishing the context. A conversation has many implications which depend on the situation, beyond and beside semantics, or the conventional meaning of words. The pragmatic notion of “conversational implicature”, introduced by Grice, is defined by a “cooperative principle” and intervenes in deciding which knowledge is relevant within a communication, as a basic guarantee of cooperation.

A narrow view of interpretation, as mental and dis-embodied, will exclude from the coordination of meaning the role of the body, senses, actions, space, objects, and emotions. They highlight the intrinsic ambiguity of a relationship, the necessity to restate and verify it constantly, and also the presence of reflexive loops and double binds (Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson, 1967; Ruesch & Bateson, 1968; Cronen, Johnson & Lannamann, 1983). In the systemic theory, relationship is primary and the rules of conversation are not given, but continuously created, confirmed, combined, reframed, transformed, in entangled and often messy ways. The act of distinction that defines a context is a meta-communicative act. It is profoundly relational, it is the act of foundation of the relationship itself, and already contains the seeds of its transformation.

The capacity of transferring information from a context to another is intrinsic to the human condition and appears in play, imagination, humor, narration. Bateson (1972) called it a transcontextual syndrome, which is more evident in some individuals and, as a gift, can bring to creative and generative effects, but also confusion and pathology:

It seems that both those whose life is enriched by transcontextual gifts and those who are impoverished by transcontextual confusions are alike in one respect: for them there is always or often a “double take”. A falling leaf, the greeting of a friend, or a “primrose by the river’s brim” is not “just that and nothing more”. Exogenous experience may be framed in the contexts of dream, and internal thought may be projected into the contexts of the external world. And so on. For all this, we seek a partial explanation in learning and experience (Bateson, 1972, p. 272-273).

Learning is stratified, and similarly its explanation. When we learn (learning I, see Bateson, 1972), we also learn about the context of our learning; we are able to redefine it (learning II) and transform our way to do this (learning III). Complexity theories offer a multiple, organic, compositional view (Formenti & West, 2018): self-organising systems build their coherence within an ongoing process of dynamic differentiation (Haggis, 2009). Context emerges from living together, communicating and co-constructing shared knowledge by a community of speakers/observers/actors.

Weaving together: from mystery to blindness

Etymology illuminates. The Latin word *contextus* is derived from a verb, *contexere*, which means weaving together, interconnecting, intertwining. This transforms an idea of the text as given, as a static object within a static container, to an ongoing construction of both. Text and con-text form a whole. There is also an ancient link to *contestari*, that is “calling witnesses” and “suing”; this social and legal interpretation of the context is a call to responsibility.

I owe to Marco Bianciardi (1998), an Italian systemic psychotherapist, a very deep semantic and philosophical analysis of the concept from a systemic perspective. He uses the epistemological metaphor of *mystery*, to state the elusive and intangible nature of context, and its interpretation, due to the multiple and undefinable levels entailed. So, he states, the context cannot be defined as something which “accompanies, surrounds, frames, precedes, comments, influences” (p. 31, my translation) our behaviors and communications. It cannot be understood as separated, original, and independent from its “content”, i.e. our own actions, messages, relationships. We need to overcome the traditional logic, where subject, object and context have an ontological status, are independent and mutually influencing.

Essentialism is not pertinent to the systemic approach; where text and context are a whole from the start. Their interconnection is original, primary, as the warp and the weft in a fabric. They are born together, “this text” does not exist separated from its context, and vice versa. Context is not pre-existing, given, “out there”. And both, in order to exist, require an act of distinction: an interpreting observer/community/mind drawing the pertinent differences which will make a difference (this is Bateson’s definition of information, see 1979).

So, if we cannot talk of the context as “surrounding” or “framing” (a fabric does not “surround” its threads), we need new metaphors and a new language to talk about the social or historical “context”, the natural environment, or the setting of education. If we recognize these as hypostatic metaphors, we need to reflect more on how a trivial use of this word is making us blind about the complex, entangled relationships of the whole and the parts. This also means that we become more responsible for the context, and for the concept of context, that we build in our interactions.

The whole and the parts co-exist in an open, living, articulated process. A subject or an object *ex-sists* – literally, *emerges from* - the context (Bianciardi, 1998). This makes us blind and vulnerable: we do not understand, let alone control, the context that is giving birth to us. Complexity theories sustain the impossibility to observe or define a context from outside. The observer is engaged in the system (Von Foerster, 1991), in history, in her own body, in the place where action happens. And so on. Being a part of the larger unit of interactions, the human being always has a partial, limited perspective on the context. We are structurally blind, as a thread not knowing how the fabric is being formed or a mosaic tile ignoring the overall picture (Bianciardi, 1998). The definition of context, then, is based both on subjectivity and on the subject’s structural blindness: together, they define context as *complex*: constrained yet unpredictable, made of interdependent yet autonomous perspectives, fragmentary, unfinished. As our story, it is alive, and not a written script.

Conclusion: towards situational complexity

I tried to argue that we can embrace different perspectives of meaning when we use the concept of context in research and intervention. Relativism and trivialization are frequent: we say “it depends on context” when we want to explain accidents and exceptions. Or, on the contrary, we invoke context to start a deeper analysis of the conditions which allow a certain event: for example, to highlight some aspects of the learning setting, the features of a task, or the influence of previous knowledge, relationships, and/or language.

The emerging contextual models of adult learning are based on diverse perspectives and parameters:

- the materialist perspective focuses on structural variables, such as physical dimensions (space, time, objects) involved in structures and discourses (objectivation);
- the constructivist perspective focuses on symbolic variables: meanings, frames, systems of representation (subjectivation);
- the reflexive perspective focuses on recursive and mental processes: the engaged observer(s), reflexive circuits, strange loops, paradoxes, cybernetic complementarities (Keeney, 1985);
- the enactive perspective focuses on embodied and embedded interactions within co-evolutionary systems: structural coupling, communities, cultures, co-operation, *linguaging*.

The definition of context is backed by different philosophies: from pragmatism (context as interaction) to relativism (context as culture), from epistemology (context as a background of presuppositions) to localism (context as historicized becoming). Where are we? Where do we position ourselves? A reflexive exercise becomes a necessity, in times of fragmentation and pluralization.

Bagnall and Hodge (2018) refer to the presence of four epistemologies in the field of adult education and learning: disciplinary, constructivist, emancipatory, and instrumental. They consider the “*hegemony of instrumental epistemology*”, and the “*unsuitability of the other traditional epistemologies*”, which seem too weak and/or unable to answer real questions of adult education, as the main reasons for the *emergence* of a new *situational* epistemology. Here, knowledge is defined as “achieving in context”, and the growing need for enhancement of our “critical situational sensitivity and responsiveness” is met (Bagnall & Hodge, 2018, p. 27-29).

Situational epistemology is the emerging paradigm of present times, with a force of its own which seems able to contrast the almost total domination of positivism and functionalism, in research as well as intervention. It defines knowledge as contextual, which is also the case for the dominant epistemologies: they are dominant because of the conditions of post-modernity. Bagnall and Hodge (2018) highlight an ethical and political, as well as epistemological, need to challenge the narrow and trivial ideas of education that became normal, centred on individual skills and competences, professionalization, job market needs. This demands for new concepts, in order to grow the sensitivity and responsivity of our theories and practices. In their view, the emerging situational epistemology is an answer to binary thinking and contemporary dilemmas.

I see it as an evolution and complexification of the theory of situated knowing, that made its appearance in the nineties (Lave, 1996; Hansman, 2001), based on pragmatic philosophy and the materialist definition of *social context*. Concrete interactions among people, with tools and with the environment were brought at the forefront by this theory, without forgetting the whole *situation* and the participants’ interests, needs and previous knowledge. Education and learning are based on acting in the real world, sustained by social and relational practices (Lave, 1996): beliefs, values, and meaning are not merely subjective, they develop by participating to a community/culture (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

If we apply these principles to the community of adult educators and researchers, we can develop a better capacity of reading the present situation:

The *context* for adult learning is growing more *complex* [...] from modernity to postmodernity and beyond into complexity [...] discordant threads of theorists who try to integrate and apply disparate rational, psychological, behavioral, embodied, spiritual, or holistic approaches to learning in *different contexts of knowledge building* (Nicolaides, Marsick, 2016, p. 12, *italics are mine*)

As stated by Nicolaïdes & Marsick, liquid modernity brought a pluralisation of learning forms, needs and occasions; this produced a fragmented field of contrasting theories and approaches. Traditional *problem-solving* (more typical of the American than the European culture) becomes obsolete and adult educators have to read the context at hand to decide if it requires “simple, complicated, complex or chaotic” (p. 14) learning. The theory of complexity is invoked, here, as a basis to connect individual learning with the systems of interactions, their constraints and possibilities.

The systemic approach is deeply situational, when it suggests to shift from context-as-an-object to *contextualizing*: an action, a methodological principle connecting the plural dimensions of learning with the here-and-now situation. Among the systemic models, *co-operative inquiry* (Heron, 1996) composes four kinds of contextual knowing:

- authentic experience, that contextualizes learning through the senses, and what is perceived inside and outside by interacting with the environment;
- aesthetic representation, that contextualizes learning with abduction, using metaphors, imagination and narrative thought;
- intelligent understanding, that contextualizes learning through the making of meaning, using conceptualization, conversations, writing, weaving information, definitions and explanations to make a satisfying and socially shared theory;
- deliberate action, the apex of contextualization which defines context through practice: following the principle of enaction, a world is generated through our gestures and (communicative) acts. This becomes especially interesting when the latter draw distinctions and reveal hidden assumptions, across borders.

The capacity of contextualizing through appropriate and mindful communication may be the most relevant for adults, and for adult educators and researchers, in contemporary times. *Draw a distinction!*, exhorts Heinz von Foerster (1981), to make us aware that knowing – and learning – is the coordinated construction of pertinent knowledge through and by interaction. This frames learning as an ongoing adaptation and coevolution in/of/with and through the context.

References

- Bagnall, R.G. & Hodge, S. (2018) Contemporary adult and lifelong education and learning: An epistemological analysis. In: M. Milana (eds.) *The Palgrave international handbook on adult and lifelong education and learning*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.13-44
- Bateson, G. (1972) *Steps to an ecology of mind*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Bateson, G. (1979) *Mind and nature, A necessary unity*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Bateson, G. (1991) *A Sacred unity: Further steps to an ecology of mind* (R.E. Donaldson, Ed.). New York: Harper Collins.
- Bateson, G. and Bateson, M.C. (1987) *Angels fear*. New York: Macmillan.
- Bianciardi, M. (1998) Complessità del concetto di contesto. *Connessioni. Testo Contesto Sistema*, 3, 29-45.
- Biesta, G. (2009) Pragmatism's contribution to understanding learning-in-context. In: Edwards, R. Biesta, G. and Thorpe, M. (eds.) *Rethinking contexts for learning and teaching*. London: Routledge.
- Cronen, V.E., Johnson, K. & Lannamann, J.W. (1982). Paradoxes, double-binds, and reflexive loops: An alternative theoretical perspective. *Family Process*, 20,91-112.
- Cronen, V.E. & Pearce, W.B. (1981) Logical force in interpersonal communication: a new concept of the 'necessity' in social behavior. *Communication*, 6, 5-67.
- Dirkx, J.M., Mezirow J. & Cranton, P. (2006) Musings and reflections on the meaning, context, and process of transformative learning: A dialogue between John Dirkx and Jack Mezirow. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 4(2), 123-139.
- Edwards, R. (2009) Introduction: Life as a learning context? In Edwards, R. Biesta, G. and Thorpe, M. (eds.) *Rethinking contexts for learning and teaching*. London: Routledge.
- Edwards, R., Biesta, G. & Thorpe, M. (Eds.) (2009) *Rethinking contexts for learning and teaching: Communities, activities and networks*. London: Routledge.
- Fetzer, A. & Oishi, E. (eds.) (2011) *Context and contexts. Parts meet whole?* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Finkbeiner, R., Meibauer, J. & Schumacher, P.B. (eds.) (2012) *What is a Context? Linguistic approaches and challenges*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

- Foerster, (von) H. (1974) *Cybernetics of Cybernetics, or the Control of Control and the Communication of Communication*. Urbana, IL: Biological Computer Laboratory, University of Illinois.
- Foerster, (von) H. (1981) *Observing systems*. Seaside, Ca: Intersystems Publications.
- Foerster, (von) H. (1993) *Understanding Understanding. Essays on cybernetics and cognition*. New York: Springer.
- Foerster, (von) H. & Pörksen, B. (2002) *Understanding systems. Conversations on epistemology and ethics*. Heidelberg/New York: Carl-Auer-Systeme Verlag/Plenum Publishers.
- Formenti, L. (2018) Complexity, adult biographies and co-operative transformation. In: Milana, M. and al. (eds.), *The Palgrave international handbook on adult and lifelong education and learning* (pp. 191-209). London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 191-209.
- Formenti, L., West, L. and Horsdal, M. (eds.). (2014) *Embodied narratives. Connecting stories, bodies, cultures and ecologies*. Odense: University of Southern Denmark Press.
- Formenti, L. & West, L. (eds.). (2016) *Stories that make a difference. Exploring the collective, social, and political potential of narratives in adult education research*. Lecce: Pensa Multimedia.
- Formenti, L. & West, L. (2018) *Transforming perspectives in lifelong learning and adult education: A dialogue*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Goodwin, C. (1992) Rethinking context: an introduction. In: Duranti, A. (eds.), *Rethinking context. Language as an interactive phenomenon*. (pp. 1-42). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Grice, P.H. (1975) Logic and Conversation. In P. Cole and J. Morgan (eds.). *Syntax and semantics. Speech acts*. New York: Academic Press, vol. 3, pp. 41-58
- Haggis, T. (2009) Beyond 'mutual constitution': Looking at learning and context from the perspective of complexity theory. In: Edwards, R. Biesta, G. Thorpe, M. (eds.) *Rethinking contexts for learning and teaching* (pp. 44-60). London: Routledge.
- Hansman, C.A. (2001) Context-based adult learning. In: Merriam, S. (eds.), *The new update on adult learning theory. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 89, 43-52.
- Heron, J. (1996) *Co-operative inquiry. Research into the human condition*. London: Sage.
- Hodkinson, P., Biesta, G. & James, D. (2008) Understanding learning culturally: Overcoming the dualism between social and individual views of learning. *Vocations and Learning*, 1, 27-47.
- Hunt, C. (2013) *Transformative learning through creative life writing: Exploring the Self in the learning process*. London: Routledge.
- Introna, L. (2000) Context, power, bodies and information: exploring the 'entangled' context of information. In *Exploring the contexts of information behavior* (pp. 1-10). London: Taylor Graham.
- Jung, C.G. (2009) *The red book. Liber Novus*. (Shamdasani, S. eds.). New York: W.W. Norton.
- Keeney, B. (1983) *Aesthetics of Change*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lave, J. (1996) The practice of learning. In: Chaiklin, S. and Lave, J. (eds.) *Understanding practice: Perspectives on activity and context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mezirow, J. (1991) *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. New York: Wiley & Sons.
- Mezirow, J. (2000) Learning to think like an adult. Core concepts of transformation theory. In J. Mezirow & Ass. (Eds.), *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 3-34). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Milana, M., Webb, S., Holford, J., Waller, R. & Jarvis, P. (eds.) (2018) *The Palgrave international handbook on adult and lifelong education and learning*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Nicolaides A., & Marsick, V. (2016) Understanding adult learning in the midst of complex social “Liquid Modernity”. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 149, 9-20.
- Niewolny, K.L. & Wilson, A.L. (2011) Are all contexts learning contexts? Rethinking the relationship between learning and context in adult learning theory. *Adult Education Research Conference Proceedings*, Toronto, ON, Canada. Retrieved October 26, 2018 from <http://newprairiepress.org/aerc/2011/papers/74>
- Oliver, C. (2004). Reflexive inquiry and the strange loop tool. *Human Systems: The journal of systemic consultation & management*, 15(2), 127-140.
- Perkins, D.M. and Salomon, G. (1989) Are cognitive skills context-bound? *Educational Researcher*. 18(1), 16-25.
- Ruesch, J. & Bateson, G. (1968) *Communication: The social matrix of psychiatry* (2nd ed). New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Silverstein, M. (1992) The indeterminacy of contextualization: When is enough enough? In: Auer, P. and Di Luzio, A. (eds.), *The contextualization of language* (pp. 55-76). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Watzlawick, P., Beavin, J.H. and Jackson, D.D. (1967) *Pragmatics of human communication. A study of interactional patterns, pathologies and paradoxes*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Wilson, A.L. (1993) The promise of situated cognition. In: Merriam, S. (eds.), *An update on adult learning theory. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 57, pp. 71-79.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1953) *Philosophical investigations* (Transl. G.E.M. Anscombe). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Transitions Between Different Learning Contexts. Themes, Issues and Problems

Alessandro Ferrante*, Andrea Galimberti **

** University of Milano-Bicocca
Piazza dell'Ateneo Nuovo, 1
20126 – Milan
Italy
alessandro.ferrante@unimib.it*

*** University of Milano-Bicocca
Piazza dell'Ateneo Nuovo, 1
20126 – Milan
Italy
andrea.galimberti@unimib.it*

This paper was conceived by the two authors. Specifically Alessandro Ferrante wrote paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 and Andrea Galimberti wrote paragraphs 4 and 5.

ABSTRACT: Educational work is intrinsically complex and tiring from a psychological point of view. Educators and teachers experience these difficulties in their daily work and it is evident, for them, the necessity to combine initial training (school and university) and experiential learning. Team meetings, vocational training courses, supervision and pedagogical counselling are currently the main contexts for an ongoing professional development. In such contexts “second level practice”, specifically aimed at “training the trainers”, are designed in order to support “first level” educational processes and teaching practices. This paper presents some reflections about the possibility to “transfer” new perspectives of thought and action from a “second level” context to a “first level” one. The issue will be addressed using different epistemological assumptions entailing divergent consequences on both theoretical and methodological levels.

KEYWORDS: reflective approaches, sociomaterial approaches, systemic approaches, transitions, learning contexts.

Introduction

Educational work is intrinsically complex and educators and teachers know it very well, even very tiring from a psychological, affective, relational and often physical point of view. In addition, today's working, social, cultural and political conditions make it even harder to carry out the educational profession, especially if you are seeking to provide high-quality training (Payne & Askeland, 2008; Palmieri, 2012; Ulivieri Stiozzi, 2016). Thus, professionals strongly need to find a temporary rest from the daily urgencies and tensions and gain a reflexive research stance that might allow them to reflect on their practices and deconstruct, rebuild, evaluate and redefine them, thus becoming more aware of their own educational style and frameworks and of what produces educational effects in the contexts in which they operate (Massa, 1992; Mortari, 2003; Palmieri, 2011; Marcialis, 2015).

It is evident, hence, the necessity to combine initial (school and university) training and experiential learning that marks – though often without awareness – the entrance of new educators into workplaces with in-service training. Team meetings, vocational training courses, supervision and pedagogical counseling are currently the main contexts for continuing education. In such contexts “second-level practices”, specifically aimed at the “training of trainers”, take place, within the broader field of adult education and lifelong learning. In many cases, these practices aim at structuring learning environments designed not only to convey knowledge to teachers and social workers, but rather to implement their skills, to help them understand the educational processes they are part of, to shape teaching and learning practices from a time and space distance, and to encourage the development of new perspectives of thought and action (Rezzara & Cerioli, 2004; Sartori, 2012).

But what is the relationship between what happens every day in the educational (scholastic and out of school) contexts and the learning that is generated in the training setting of trainers? How is it possible to translate the awareness and learning developed during counseling and supervision into daily educational experiences? Asking these questions means questioning what favors or, vice versa, obstructs transitions between learning contexts with quite different characteristics, without simply assuming that each learning can be automatically translated from one context to another. Services and schools, moreover, often tend to replicate consolidated routines, procedures and organizational modalities, although these have proved inadequate. The risk is that practitioners, once they leave the counseling and supervisory settings, are once again entrapped in the entanglements of institutional mechanisms. The point, then, becomes to understand whether and how the learning developed in a given context – in this case, in counseling and supervision – can be translated into situations other than those in which it originated.

Starting from these premises, this contribution intends to critically address the issue of the “translation” of the learning achieved during “second-level” training course to a “first-level” context, on a theoretical and methodological level. We will explore this problem with reference to reflective approaches, sociomaterial approaches and, finally, to systemic-constructive perspectives. In particular, it will be shown how different epistemological frameworks lead to very different settings in defining and treating the issue under scrutiny. The outcomes of this reflection can be of particular interest to counselors and pedagogical supervisors, as the epistemological frameworks they adopt to conceive education and learning and the different focuses they generate have a significant impact on the design and implementation of the training of trainers.

Reflective approaches

Very often consultants and supervisors adopt epistemological premises that are directly or indirectly related to approaches which, in general terms, can be called “reflective”, and that are extremely widespread in educational studies (Sartori, 2012). With the expression “reflective approaches” we intend to refer to a somewhat heterogeneous set of theoretical and methodological perspectives employed in different fields of knowledge, from organizational studies to those relating to adult education (Fenwick, 2000; Miettinen, 2000; Mortari, 2003; Jordi, 2011; Biasin, 2016; Fabbri, 2016). Reflective approaches may include very different authors and theories, such as Schön’s reflective practitioner (1983), Kolb’s learning cycle (1984), Mezirow’s transformative learning (1991a), and perspectives devoted to critical reflection (Mezirow, 1991b; Fook & Gardner, 2007; Brookfield, 2009). Given the restricted length of this paper, we will not explain in full the complex debate on reflection in education, nor to deepen the lines of research that we have just mentioned. We will only introduce schematically the common traits of these reflective approaches, showing the epistemological premises that they share – albeit in varying degrees – and that lead to a set of ideas about what learning is, can and should be.

First, reflective approaches believe that educational practices depend on (more or less intentional and conscious) human action, and that such action is closely linked to thought and forms of rationality and knowledge learnt in a variety of contexts, not just at school. Second, they relate to Dewey’s work, particularly to *How We Think* (1910), and interpret it as an invite to emphasize the meaning and value of reflection as a process to learn from experience. Reflection is what allows people to learn from what they do and from the contexts they live and work, and to transform those contexts by improving their living and working conditions. Reflective approaches, therefore, argue that reflection plays a fundamental role in the relations that individuals have with themselves, with others and with the world. Through reflection, as a matter of fact, the human subject is able to know better, at the same time, her/his self, other people and reality; to solve complex problems and face difficult situations, characterized by uniqueness, uncertainty and conflict; to evaluate critically values, beliefs, meanings, social representations, expectations and assumptions that explicitly and implicitly affect individual and collective action; to develop new strategies of action and patterns of creative thinking; and to change her/his assumptions on themes, issues and problems of personal or social nature. Reflection, hence, is a construct that allows us to connect learning and experience, individual and world, mind and action. From this theoretical perspective, educating means creating the conditions for reflection before, during and after action, developing knowledge and learning related to everyday experience and practice.

According to some scholars (e.g. Fenwick, 2000; Miettinen, 2000; Sartori, 2012), a number of reflective approaches tend to narrow the research focus to cognitive dynamics and mental processes, taking the individual as a unit of analysis, and separate individual from context, considering the former as a conscious being, free to self-determine, whose experiences are entirely accessible to thought, and the latter as a simple container for experience that human subjects can shape without too many impediments. From this perspective, reflective approaches underestimate the affective and unconscious dimensions and, to a large extent, ignore the active contribution of the body, objects, and materiality in defining the constraints and possibilities within which individuals think, educate, learn, grow, and relate with themselves and with others.

However, despite such epistemological premises being debatable from many viewpoints, reflective approaches are widespread in educational studies and pedagogical practices. For example, academic texts, as well as professional adult education environments, obsessively

repeat the idea that in counseling and supervision settings teachers and social workers guided by one or more experts should reflect individually and/or in groups on first-hand educational experience, in order to learn and to transform it. Arguably, the success of reflective approaches is also linked to the fact that their epistemological premises do not give rise to any particular theoretical and methodological problems related to the question of the transferability of learning from one context to another. According to such approaches, increased critical awareness of practitioners over their own assumptions and others' assumptions makes social change possible. It is up to practitioners to work to change schools and educational services according to the new meanings gained during consultations and supervisions. Being inscribed in the mind of the individual, these meanings can easily be extracted from experience in counseling or supervision settings and can be transposed – albeit with some attention – in the contexts of daily work practices. Even if practitioners did not succeed in changing the institution, however, they could still focus on themselves and their own educational style, making it more open, democratic and conscious, or could activate resistance strategies against the training systems they are involved in, when they judge it as oppressive. In any cases, the transition from one context to another is not a problematic theme in itself. Assuming that any learning is perfectly translatable in a set of practices other than the one in which it originated, reflective approaches make it practicable that the training of trainers can build the conditions for a possible change. So they end up indirectly to legitimize a set of professional figures (supervisors, consultants, trainers) and a large number of educational practices that belong to the field of adult education and that are deeply rooted on change as a concept and practice.

Sociomaterial approaches

Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuk (2011) believe that in educational studies a significant change is occurring, linked to the contribution offered over the last two decades by some approaches that they have generically defined as “sociomaterial”. The popularity of these perspectives in the international debate and the paradigmatic change that they are generating has prompted scholars to affirm that a sociomaterial turn in educational research is underway. These approaches – including Complexity Theory, Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), Actor-Network Theory (ANT), and Spatiality Theories – open up new research directions and coin a new vocabulary to rethink pedagogy as well as educational practices (Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuk, 2011; Fenwick & Landri, 2012). They challenge the primacy ascribed to humans in learning processes, and divert the attention from teachers and students to materials and materiality. These approaches analyze learning, knowledge and educational action by decentralizing the focus from the individual who learns, knows and acts. Knowledge and learning do not occur in the mind of individual subjects, but are collective, hybrid events performed in sociomaterial networks, which the researcher has to trace and describe (Fenwick, Jensen and Nerland, 2012; Landri & Viteritti, 2016). Education, therefore, is no longer investigated as if it were only a human prerogative, a cultural, social and personal phenomenon, resulting from relationships and intersubjective communication between teachers and students, but is rather conceived as a performance rooted in practice. Education is the effect of immanent assemblies, which include objects, technologies, spaces, times, bodies, organic materials and individuals (Sørensen, 2009; Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Ferrante, 2017). Sociomaterial approaches, therefore, focus on relationships that connect a multitude of human and non-human actors (Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuk, 2011). These approaches rely on relational epistemology, emphasize the heterogeneity of the elements involved in the formation process, and avoid separating individuals from things (Fenwick, 2010). Sociomaterial approaches also redefine the concept of agency (Ferrante, 2016). Although to varying degrees, they refuse to ascribe agency to human only, and recognize the active role of non-human too. For them, material is

performative, rather than inert (Fenwick & Edwards, 2013). Namely, things act on and with subjects and vice versa (Sørensen, 2009; Fenwick & Edwards, 2010). This specific attention to materiality in action allows to identify what directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly supports and enables learning and is often shadowed by human-centered research (Ferrante, 2018).

Sociomaterial approaches, however, also have critical aspects. For example, in some cases they tend to neglect the specific contribution of the human subject to educational practices. These presuppose complex cognitive activities that cannot avoid calling into question the determining role of humans (Lichtner, 2016). If, on the one hand, it is legitimate to think that learning is an effect of the interaction between human and non-human in both social and material contexts, and therefore what happens in education depends not only on intentions, values, meanings and human actions, on the other hand it makes little sense to deal with the various actors involved in the educational process in a symmetrical way. Therefore, the challenge for those researchers who want to analyze the relation between human and non-human, is to produce accounts that are sufficiently robust to avoid charges of both “symmetrical absence and symmetrical absurdity” (McLean & Hassard, 2004; Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuk, 2011). In addition, sociomaterial research lines tend to produce analyzes and descriptions, but are merely indicative of operational solutions, or even of pragmatic orientations. Of course, being able to rely on precise descriptions and analyzes of specific contexts and certain sets of practices creates the conditions for initiating a possible change in school policies and daily educational actions. However, the almost total absence of research application is likely to create a distance between researchers and practitioners and hence may become a hindrance to change. Perhaps also for this reason, those who carry out counseling and supervisory professions rarely adopt the epistemological premises that can be attributed to these approaches. However, such perspectives may prove to be extremely helpful during counseling or supervision to investigate the materiality of learning processes (Sartori, 2012; Ferrante, 2016).

In relation to the topic of this paper – i.e. from which theoretical premises it is possible to investigate the transition between different learning contexts – sociomaterial approaches can be freely adopted in order to raise theoretical and methodological problems that, in our opinion, are very relevant in consultative practices, and are underexplored in reflective and human-centered approaches. According to sociomaterial perspectives, learning is a contingent, unstable and changeable phenomenon that is embedded in a peculiar ecology of relationships, and is intrinsically exposed to uncertainty and fallibility. Learning must be re-contextualized every time, as it does not correspond to a mental set that can be transferred tout court to another environment, as if it were an abstract program that can be run automatically anywhere and under any circumstance, regardless of specific social and material conditions (Sørensen, 2009; Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuk, 2011). In other words, the translation of learning from one context to another is not guaranteed a priori, as certain material and performative conditions are needed for this transition to happen. It is therefore necessary to try and understand how the learning developed in a given context – in this case, in counseling and supervision – can be translated into situations other than those in which it originated. From an operational point of view, for example, this implies considering the need to design and build mediations (objects, documents, practices, organizational and material modifications) that facilitate the transition between different learning contexts and allow to translate learning within a new ecology of relationships (Ferrante, 2016). In conclusion, a sociomaterial epistemological framework allows to fully disclose a complex and difficult-to-manage theoretical and methodological issue, which certainly should be further explored through empirical research. Thanks to these approaches, thus, the transition between different contexts of learning turns from matter of fact into matter of concern.

Systemic approaches

Systemic approaches are diffused in a large area of disciplines gathering a variety of scholars around the concept of “system”. Systemic thinking is rooted in the seminal work of Norbert Wiener describing auto-regulation based on feedbacks of physical and mechanical systems. It is during the flourishing studies on cybernetics developed during Macy conferences in the US in 40^{es} and 50^{es} that systemic theories started to influence different disciplinary domains, thanks to an heterogeneous group of scholars interested in exploring the application of these ideas in their research fields. Warren McCulloch, Gregory Bateson, Margaret Mead, Claude Shannon, Heinz Von Foerster, John Von Neumann, Norbert Wiener, among others, contributed to this effort and in 1968 Von Bertalanffy’s General System Theory (Von Bertalanffy, 1968) became a meta model for research in Sociology, Economics, Biology, Anthropology, Psychology, etc. Also the educational field was involved in this dialogue, and it is still engaged with many systemic ideas (see Demozzi, 2011; Bella *et al.*, 2014; Formenti, 2017).

Systemic thinking became an epistemology useful to consider different “objects” (e.g. human relationships, educational processes) from different disciplinary perspectives.

This epistemology had a turning point during the 70es when “the first order cybernetics” moved towards the “second order cybernetics”. The focus shifted from “observed systems” to “observing systems” (Von Foerster, 1981) introducing the observer as a part of the observed system: this single unit became the new object of inquiry. The new epistemic stance was a clear critique to realism and objectivity and allowed new avenues of development dealing with radical constructivism (Von Glasersfeld, 1995) or, more recently, social constructionism (Gergen, 1999). The importance of self-reflection – for an observer participating in the construction and interpretation of the research object – raised in the foreground too.

In this very synthetic overview it is also important to highlight the contribute of Maturana and Varela (1980) for introducing systemic ideas in the field of biology and life sciences, bringing to the development of notions like “structural coupling” and “embodiment” that stressed the importance of co-evolution between systems and contexts.

It is possible to point out some general features of systemic-thinking:

- The idea of system as an entity that transcends the features of its components, that constructs and maintains its own balance, based on feedbacks circularity and that cannot be changed in a determined direction by single actions (neither internal or external);
- An epistemological foundation in which the observer is participating in (and influencing) the observed system in ways that are not possible to be anticipated;
- A limit to knowledge: individuals are bond to seize only an “arch of the larger circuit” in which they act and live;
- The idea that knowledge and learning do not occur only inside individual subjects, but in the relationships they develop with wider systems;
- a tendency to decline rationality in relationality, looking for “the meaningful bonding that discloses aspects inaccessible through the examination of unrelated components” (Baracchi, 2013, p. 211).

The more recognizable and inspiring exponent of systemic thinking is Gregory Bateson (1972, 1979), maybe the one that most tried to practice this epistemology in different fields and on different objects, re-shaping concepts (like “mind”, “story” or “sacred”) through these lenses, in his endeavor to build up a meta-language, a sort of “syntax of life” (Baracchi, 2013). Bateson was very careful in not meshing up the “map” with the “territory”: systemic thinking

is not based on a new ontology but is continually generated through the search of the “pattern which connects”: “an arrangement of elements seized in their correspondences, resonances and mutual implications” (Baracchi, 2013: 213). This connecting attitude, in Bateson view, is recognizable in the whole living system and represents the key element to extend the concept of mind “outwards”.

In relation to the topic of this paper – i.e. from which theoretical premises it is possible to investigate the transition between different learning contexts – systemic thinking can offer some useful avenues of work. First of all, the word “context” is not conceived as a neutral background but as a “matrix” shaping languages, meanings and experiences and – overall – learning. Bateson criticized behaviourist experiments (e.g. Pavlov’s conditioning) fundamentally for their conventional assumption that context can be repeated. Subjects don’t learn only from the specific interactions they live but they develop learning (often without awareness) about the rules and the set of alternatives that characterize the context in which this experience takes place. Bateson called “deuterolearning” the specific learning about “the manner in which the stream of action is segmented or punctuated into contexts together with changes in the use of context markers” (Bateson, 1972, p. 199). Training and counselling settings (or “second level” settings) take place in contexts that are very different from the daily workplace of an educator. We are considering two different contexts (with different context markers) that segment or punctuate the experience differently (in systemic terms we could say that both generate a certain kind of deuterolearning). It is in the interplay of these two kind of learning processes that may emerge new forms of educational actions (Galimberti, 2018). But – this is a fundamental thing – we can’t foresee the results of this interplay (or, in other words, we can’t control processes in complex systems). It is a logic error thinking that learning on “second level settings” has the power to drive learning and actions of “first-level settings” in a unilateral and straightforward way.

Systemic thinking can also help us considering the notion of reflection: another useful contribution to our inquiry is, in fact, the distinction between reflection and reflexivity. The first is the activity that may be carried out by individuals inside a system: they could be able to consider ideas, assumptions, practices that are embodied and performed in this ecology of relationships. Through reflection, subjects may change their attitudes, ideas and actions, changing their way to influence the system, but not determining or controlling it. At another level, in fact, we can identify reflexivity as an emergent property (Formenti *et al.*, 2014), a not foreseeable outcome, resulting from the reflective actions of all the system components.

The question for all the professionals involved in second level settings become therefore how to deal in a generative way with the uncertainty coming from the interplay of different reflective practices/learning processes and make it useful in consultancy or supervision settings. It is not the notion of reflection that can solve this issue. Identify and name this dimension it is important and, at the same time, it is fundamental to structure mediations in order to deal with it (e.g. constructing a space able to collect feedbacks coming from educational workplaces, connecting them to “second level” practices and settings and dealing in a generative way with those differences or tensions related to the relationship between these two contexts).

Conclusion

Reflective approaches usually focus on how subjects can gain a more aware and critical stance in relation to educational practices. Many efforts have been made by different scholars in order to describe which kind of processes are entailed in the act of reflecting (see for example the work of Mezirow distinguishing reflection, critical reflection, and critical reflection on assumptions: Mezirow, 1998). This epistemological inquiry tends, in general, to

put in background the idea of learning contexts with the result of a commonsense use of the term: "In all common sense uses of the term context refers to an empty slot, a container, into which other things are placed. It is the "con" that contains the "text", the bowl that contains the soup. As such, it shapes the contours of its contents: it has its effects only at the borders of the phenomenon under analysis. A static sense of context delivers a stable world" (McDermott, quoted in Edwards, 2009, p. 2).

The two latter approaches we synthesized in this paper, on the contrary, go beyond the "bowl" metaphor: the sociomaterial networks and the systemic "patterns" punctuating experience, offer, in fact, other directions for interpreting the idea of context and, as a consequence, tend to problematize the idea of transition. These approaches are, in fact, characterized by those features that for Fenwick distinguish a complexity perspective: "emergence, flows and relations, uncertainty, self-organisation and interconnected diversity" (Fenwick, 2009, p. 107). The idea of taking seriously "contingency, complexity and co-emergence of human experiential learning" (Fenwick, 2006, p. 48) and the related ecology of relationships has the fundamental effect of representing learning and reflection as phenomena completely embedded in one context.

Adopting these views in a "second level" educational setting entail the need of constructing mediations able to thematize and constantly interrogate the relationship between the contingency of learning processes and uniqueness of the context that is shaping them.

References

- Bateson, G. (1972) *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Bateson, G. (1979) *Mind and Nature. A Necessary Unity*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Baracchi, C. (2013) The Syntax of Life: Gregory Bateson and the 'Platonic View'. *Research in Phenomenology*, 43, pp. 204-219.
- Bella, A., Galimberti, A., Serrelli, E. and Vitale, A. (2014) Gregory Bateson ha ancora qualcosa da insegnare?. *Paradigmi. Rivista di critica filosofica*, 2, pp. 155-181.
- Bertalanffy, von (1968) *General System Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications*. New York: George Braziller.
- Biasin, C. (2016) Adulità, riflessione critica e apprendimento trasformativo. *Metis, Special Issue L'educazione degli adulti nella contemporaneità. Teorie, contesti e pratiche in Italia*.
- Brookfield, S. (2009) The Concept of Critical Reflection: Promises and Contradictions. *European Journal of Social Work*, 12 (3), pp. 293-304.
- Dewey, J. (1910) *How We Think*. Lexington: D.C. Heath.
- Demozzi, S. (2011) *La struttura che connette. Gregory Bateson in educazione*. Pisa: ETS.
- Edwards, R. (2009) Introduction. Life is a Learning Context? In: Edwards, R., Biesta, G. and Thorpe, M. (eds.) *Rethinking Contexts for Learning and Teaching*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Fabbri, L. (2016) La competenza riflessiva. In: Perla, L. and Riva, M.G. (eds.) *L'agire educativo. Manuale per educatori e operatori socio-assistenziali*. Brescia: La Scuola, pp. 230-245.
- Fenwick, T. (2000) Expanding Conceptions of Experiential Learning: a Review of the Five Contemporary Perspectives on Cognition. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 50 (4), pp. 243-272.
- Fenwick, T. (2006) Inside Out of Experiential Learning: Fluid Bodies, Co-emergent Minds. In: Edwards, R., Gallacher, J. and Whittaker, S. (eds.) *Learning Outside the Academy. International Research Perspectives on Lifelong Learning*. New York: Routledge, pp. 42-55.
- Fenwick, T. (2009) Responsibility, Complexity Science and Education: Dilemmas and Uncertain Responses.

Studies in Philosophy and Education, 28 (2), pp. 101-118.

Fenwick, T. (2010) Re-thinking the 'Thing'. Sociomaterial Approaches to Understanding and Researching Learning in Work. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 22 (1-2), pp. 104-116.

Fenwick, T. and Edwards, R. (2010) *Actor-Network Theory in Education*. London: Routledge.

Fenwick, T., Edwards, R. and Sawchuk, P. (2011) *Emerging Approaches to Educational Research: Tracing the Socio-material*. London: Routledge.

Fenwick, T., Jensen, K. and Nerland, M. (2012) Sociomaterial Approaches to Conceptualising Professional Learning and Practice. *Journal of Education and Work*, 25 (1), pp. 1-13.

Fenwick, T. and Landri, P. (2012) Materialities, Textures and Pedagogies: Socio-material Assemblages in Education. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 20 (1), pp. 1-7.

Fenwick, T. and Edwards, R. (2013) Performative Ontologies. Sociomaterial Approaches to Researching Adult Education and Lifelong Learning. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 4 (1), pp. 49-63.

Ferrante, A. (2016) *Materialità e azione educativa*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Ferrante, A. (2017) Post-humanism and Actor-Network Theory: New Research Trends on Technology in Education. In: Gómez Chova, L., López Martínez, A. and Candel Torres, I. (eds.) *ICERI 2017 Proceedings*. IATED Academy, pp. 3629-3636.

Ferrante, A. (2018) Posthuman Materialities in Education: a Nomadic and Non-anthropocentric Research. In: Hannes, K., Dierckx de Casterlé, B., Heylighen, A. and Truyen, F. (eds.) *European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry 2018 Proceedings. Second Edition-Nomadic Inquiry*. Leuven: KU Leuven NQRL, pp. 1-8.

Foerster, H. von (1981) *Observing Systems*. Seaside: Intersystems Publications.

Fook, J. and Gardner, F. (2007) *Practicing Critical Reflection. A Resource Handbook*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Formenti, L. (2017) *Formazione e trasformazione. Un modello complesso*. Milano: Raffaello Cortina.

Formenti, L., West, L. and Horsdal, M. (2014) Introduction. Only Connect, the Parts and the Whole: the Role of Biographical and Narrative Research. In: Formenti, L., West, L. and Horsdal, M. (eds.) *Embodied Narratives. Connecting Stories, Bodies, Cultures and Ecologies*. Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark.

Gergen, K. (1999) *An Invitation to Social Construction*. London: Sage.

Galimberti, A. (2018) Togetherness and systemic thinking. Dealing with deuterolearning in educational/training contexts based on narratives. *Paper presented at ESREA Life History and Biography Network Conference "Togetherness and its discontents"*. 1-4 March: Corep, Turin, Italy.

Glanville, R. (2004) The Purpose of Second-order Cybernetics. *Kybernetes*, 33 (9-10), pp. 1379-1386.

Glaserfeld, E. von (1995) *Radical Constructivism: a Way of Knowing and Learning*. London: Falmer Press.

Jordi, R. (2011) Reframing the Concept of Reflection: Consciousness, Experiential Learning, and Reflective Learning Practices. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 61 (2), pp. 181-197.

Kolb, D.A. (1984) *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Landri, P. and Viteritti, A. (2016) Introduzione. Le masse mancanti in educazione. *Scuola Democratica. Learning for Democracy*, 7 (1), pp. 7-22.

Lichtner, M. (2016) La svolta pratica. Un confronto tra l'Activity Theory e l'ANT. *Scuola Democratica. Learning for Democracy*, 7 (1), pp. 199-211.

Marcialis, P. (ed.) (2015) *Educare e ricercare*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Maturana, H. and Varela, F. (1980) *Autopoiesis and Cognition. The Realization of the Living*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Boston inc.

- Massa, R. (eds.) (1992) *La clinica della formazione. Un'esperienza di ricerca*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- McLean, C. and Hassard, J. (2004) Symmetrical Absence/Symmetrical Absurdity: Critical Notes on the Production of Actor-network Accounts. *Journal of Management Studies*, 41 (3), pp. 493-519.
- Mezirow, J. (1991a) *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. Oxford: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (eds.) (1991b) *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood. A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (1998) On Critical Reflection. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 48 (3), pp. 185-197.
- Miettinen, R. (2000) The Concept of Experiential Learning and John Dewey's Theory of Reflective Thought and Action. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 19 (1), pp. 54-72.
- Mortari, L. (2003) *Apprendere dall'esperienza. Il pensare riflessivo della formazione*. Roma: Carocci.
- Palmieri, C. (2011) *Un'esperienza di cui aver cura. Appunti pedagogici sul fare educazione*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Palmieri, C. (eds.) (2012) *Crisi sociale e disagio educativo. Spunti di ricerca pedagogica*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Payne, M. and Askeland, G.A. (2008) *Globalization and International Social Work. Postmodern Change and Challenge*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Rezzara, A. and Cerioli, L. (eds.) (2004) *La consulenza clinica a scuola*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Sartori, D. (2012) Consulenza pedagogica e disagio. In: Palmieri, C. (eds.) *Crisi sociale e disagio educativo. Spunti di ricerca pedagogica*. Milano: FrancoAngeli, pp. 215-233.
- Schön, D.A. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think In Action*. New York: Basic Books.
- Sørensen, E. (2009) *The Materiality of Learning. Technology and Knowledge in Educational Practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ulivieri Stiozzi, S. (2016) La continuità tra le funzioni di coordinamento e di supervisione. In: Perla, L. and Riva, M.G. (eds) *L'agire educativo. Manuale per educatori e operatori socio-assistenziali*. Brescia: La Scuola, pp. 309-318.

A place for the soul-making. The imaginal clearing as a learning context

Marina Barioglio*, Paolo Mottana ** Ilaria Torelli***

** Institution University of Milano - Bicocca
Address - P.zza Ateneo Nuovo 2
20126 – Milan, Italy
marina.barioglio@unimib.it*

*** Institution University of Milano - Bicocca
Address - Piazza Ateneo Nuovo 1
20126 – Town Milano, Italy
paolo.mottana@unimib.it*

*** Institution University of Milano - Bicocca
Address - Piazza Ateneo Nuovo 1
20126 – Town Milano, Italy
torelli.ilaria@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT: This essay aims to consider the notion of “learning contest” as an educational place, a concrete and symbolic “vessel” imagined, created and dwelt by knowledges, practices, images, adults participants and educators in order to generate a particular educational experience, stimulate a particular kind of learning and encourage a revision of the relationship that all of us has with the world and its phenomena. The educational place we would like to present here is the imaginal clearing born out of the elaboration of the Italian Pedagogist Mottana. During the last ten years this educational vessel has been dwelt in several paths of adult's education with the intention to invite the participant in a soul-making activity, to generate a symbolic, imaginative, reflective and participative attitude towards things, events, problems and in general towards the world.

KEYWORDS: learning context, imaginal education, soul-making, imaginal clearing, adult education

Introduction

Following the imagination: a place for adult's education

The concrete and imaginative dimension of space is certainly one of the principal category in which mankind organizes his/her life and elaborate his/her own experience of the world. As the philosophic tradition shows, this category often represents one of the great breaking points of many conceptions of the world and of the position that mankind adopted in it along ages. Among the theories of "place" and "space", among distinctions that delimited space as the open and isomorphic dimension in which the human being find himself/herself in a condition of drift and exile, and the "place" as uninterrupted universe in which natures find their collocation and mankind mirror as a microcosm of a wider but inseparable macrocosm, the *querelle* about space constantly asks fundamental questions about human experience.

Blank and filled space; in the Cartesian modernity, space split from the spiritual human life or, at the opposite, space shared by subject and object inside a unit and organic universe endowed with spiritual life; space of intimate and of wideness, space of the polemic and dominant expansion in the "daily regime of images" (Durand) or space of nightly antiphrasis in the poetic of the nest, of the shell, or of the corner of Bachelard, even in the modern age space appears as the network of demarcations that symbolize controlling or dwelling the world. Different ways of being, different positions and kind of relationship that we find in the field of architecture, urbanistic, art, science, cure, and even education, as complex devices and dispositions of social, cultural, individual relationship, and in short, of vital experience of mankind in the world.

Even the pedagogical thought recognized the relevance of the "space/place" category for educative experience and in its constituting through cultures and ages or in its showing as a "learning potential zone" it has been object of intense reflection and lively debate (i.e. Massa 1987; Mottana 1993; Barioglio, Chinelli & Fisauli in Mottana, 2009).

This text aim to consider the idea of "learning contest" as educational vessel, a concrete and symbolic place we imagine, evoke, create and dwell with knowledges, objects, practices in a defined space of time to make it possible a particular kind of educational experience, to stimulate a particular learning, to cultivate a particular attitude towards the world.

From this point of view the great attitudes towards space/place (the polemic and the participatory ones) we find in the philosophic reflection and in the exploration the anthropological imaginary offered by Gilbert Durand, can be find also in the pedagogical thought and in educational settings and practices with important effects on the learning experience they generated and the consequent attitude towards life, people, problems, facts, things events, they produce.

As many research showed (i.e Foucault, Massa *et al.*, Durand, Mottana, 2009) the most of our educational practices takes place in extremely *diurnal* environments: (from school to professional contests and many other places of adult's education). The real and imagined spaces of education (even in our Universities) are often unwelcoming or unfriendly: squared, bare, colorless, even when they are full of technological tools; seats are uncomfortable, inconvenient; wall are pale, cool. The same colors, shape, furniture characterize most of the educational environments as if there was no difference among the contents, the cultures, the languages, the kind of learning and the attitude towards things we want to generate or to share in them. The sense of oppression, alienation, geometry of thought and distance from the body of the world that these concrete spaces convey is often intensified by the kind of knowledge, (abstract, scientific, logical, conceptual, or extremely concrete and operative,

unemotional) they invite to promote. The same learning and culture that many educational practices, tools and support develop: just think to the shape, the features, the structure, the languages, the lack of colors and images of our book or our evaluation procedures (see Barioglio, Antonacci, in Mottana, 2009).

All these environments actually educate, discipline us as Foucault had well shown and, as Durand, Jung, Hillman underlined is rooted on a deep lively imaginative texture of myths and symbols which guides our lives and oriented our attitude toward it. In particular we can say that the genius loci of these kind of educative contests is the Hero: an armed hero wearing a thick armor to defend himself from enemies, emotions and wounds of life, a polemic hero with a sword (to fight the monsters and to divide people, things, ideas and the integrity of experience) and a torch (to bring light, clearness, explanations, absolutes) in his hand (see Hillman, Durand, Mottana, 2009; Barioglio, 2010; 2014; 2018). As several psychologists said this hero of thousand faces (Campbell, 2004) is a very important character in our educational path: he teaches us to distinguish, to clarify, to face life and problems, to be active in the world, to produce things, to fight enemies and sickness and so on. But the dominant trait of his character is the polemic temper, the attitude to separate “good” and “evil”, to fly away from the world, to refuse what is also ambiguous, painful, shadowy, fleeting as our life. As Carl Gustav Jung and James Hillman argued the hero's attitude is the figure of our Western thought, that helped the development of our civilization, of our consciousness and self confidence, but is totally unable to manage with all that is strange, different, alien, who carries different culture, ideas, habit, values and is totally incompetent for the more delicate task of our existence such as cope with and understanding pain, sufferings, aging, decline, weakness, wounds, depression, grief, death. Even if these “negative” experiences can afflict all of us in any phase of our life, we can affirm these conditions mostly involved the second phase of life as Jung would have said, and so are of great interest for adult education. It is especially in the second phase of life that the hero has to shrink, has to make room for less polemic, more sensitive, more imaginative, feminine forms of imaginary, the ones Hillman ascribes to the Anima archetype rejected by the calculating rationality. Imagination, sensibility, participative attitude, are fertile, fruitful elements, indispensable for the comprehension of vulnerability of human beings and of everything else. And to stimulate, to awake this attitude we need specific educational contests made of spaces, times, contents, methodologies, tools, languages that are very different from the hero's castles of knowledge and education.

Entering the imaginal clearing

Starting with the exigence to soul-making according to this beautiful expression by James Hillman in life, culture, education, that is to stimulate a more sensitive, affective, imaginative and participative attitude towards life, things and experiences, the Imaginal Pedagogy (Mottana, 2002; 2004) has for some years been offering a particular educational contest called “clearing”. The *Clearing* wants to be a place where we can stop, we can rest and with the help of the power of imaginative works of art (coming from cinema, poetry, paint, music) we can learn and cultivate a symbolic and poetic way of understanding and living in the world. In this perspective symbolic images are the real source of knowledge and the actual teachers or better mentors, of the educational process. when images are really symbolic (such as a film by Tarkovskij or Lars Von Triar, a painting by Cezanne, Soutine or Bacon, a poem by Eliot, Rilke or Sylvia Plath, they are really alive, animated presences “pregnant of meaning” as Jung would say, and can transform our point of view. To get in touch with this kind of images (that can also be called archetypal ones) lying in works of art, recognize them and listen to them is not easy nor obvious. The soul-making of the imaginal practice need a

suitable place, conductive condition, or what an alchemist would call “the right vessel and the right intensity of fire”.

In our experience a good place, a conductive educational vessel is the *clearing*. First of all the *clearing* is a metaphor able to evoke a happy and poetic rest, a particular place of cultural restoring on the edge of the wood of our tasks and our daily activities, at the edge of the dominant heroic culture, at the edge of the huge forests of signs as Baudrillard said. Clearing as intermediate and intermediary zone between the everyday condition and the mythic one, between ordinary and extraordinary experience, between fact and concept, matter and spirit. Clearing as a point of amazing light in the darkness of the forest, as a mental condition for a different knowledge, as a symbol which joins the play between light and darkness of the imaginal hermeneutics the participant are supposed to learn: “the ambivalence forest-clearing and their feverish alternation inspires the rhythmic exercise of binding and unbinding (solve et coagula)” (Mottana, 2004: 94). The transformation of the “classroom” often seen as a grey, aseptic room, haunted by evaluation memories as many educational places are in a *clearing* is much more than a literal and cosmetic procedure. It is a cultural revolution. The *clearing* has to be imagined, evoked, presented and dwelt with the participants as a the room for the imaginal reflection, as the place in which, according to Heidegger, anything at all can appear, in which some thing or idea can show itself, or be unconcealed. A *clearing* is a living metaphor of the necessary disposition for the access to a revealing knowledge, to a dreaming state in which everything shows us its symbolic rooting and, at the same time, we can participate, we can be housed. So the *clearing* belonged to the poetic world, to the reign of symbolic images and it is not our house. A *clearing* is neither a living-room nor a tavern, it is not the place of human talking, gossip or conviviality, it is not “our souls”, the chest of our personal inner world. The *clearing* is out of us, out of town, far from civil institutions, sentimental and familiar relationships. As myth tells us it belongs to Artemis and to her animals, to Pan and to his parade of satyrs and Nymphs. These mythical characters help us to distinguish the soul-making from other imaginative practices guided by Hera or Demeter more humanistic, more personalistic, more interested in social relationship more found of the emotional condition, the reactions, the feelings, the story of each participant.

In the *clearing* the most important relationship to cultivate is with symbolic images and they are in their own habitat, they are “animals”, they are riotous, wild, indomitable. In this sense and once more, the words or better the images we choose to evoke the vessel, to open the magic space of educational experience is crucial, decisive to facilitate and to make it possible and facilitate the learning experience itself. The clearing has its reason, its necessity and its precision. It is better than the classroom because it neutralizes a school imagination full of ghosts and shadows of evaluation; it is also better than the “house” because in the imaginal world of symbolic art we are strangers, migrants, asylum seekers, we are guests in someone else's house and we have to be gentle. It is better than a conference room where people is accustomed to discuss because here we have to shut up to hear the voice of images, better than a nest, a shell or a nunnery cell where we used to meditate, to find ourselves.

Entering the *clearing* asks a particular disposition that can be facilitate through some ritual forms such as listening to a specific music chosen for its symbolic dimension, able to evoke the theme, the particular area of the imaginative life (such as love, grief, childhood, death and rebirth etc.) we would like to explore. Just to make some examples a music by Brian Eno can help to enter in touch with a painting by Rothko or a video by Bill Viola and help adult's participants to explore the symbolic dimension of fading, dissolution, dying. Musics like *Cello blue* by David Darling can symbolize with a movie like *Mogari No Mori* by Naomi Kawase allowing to enter the deep imagination of grief, and its elaboration; a music by Zanesi can allude to the educational figure of mentor and so on. The music itself is part of

the place, it is not a decoration but a necessity of the learning contest because the intense listening to a symbolic musing at the beginning of a learning experience before any words, before any human voice, before any explanation, even before the participant's presentations produces a very involving experience, stimulate our imaginative sensibility, induce us to listen before speaking, and disorient us. The music seduce us, that is, like any authentically educative experience it ex-duces us, it rips us from the usual ground of logic, literal attitude and it carries us elsewhere, toward a different condition of being.

Dwelling the imaginal clearing

Like any other educational vessel the clearing has to be experienced, lived, explored to generate the kind of learning it is supposed to induce. At the same time like any other educational contest it has its own inhabitant, its contents, times, procedures, indications to be followed. As we have already say the main contents, the knowledge as well as the teacher, the mentor, and even the methodology and the languages are the images. All we need for the education exercise of soul-making is already contained in them. They are a sort of alchemic stone, not pills for a magic healing like stupids thought, but lapis, gems in which it is caved the way we have to follow to renew our vision. Dwelling the *clearing*, then, means first of all enter the work of art (the movie, the picture, the poetry) and dwell it in a poetic way, that is respecting the same conditions which guided the artist who made it: loyalty to image, renounce to judgement, and outward attitude. To be loyal to the symbolic image means to consider it, to keep it in a central position, to regard it in a devote way, as it was an attractive living creature we would like to meet, to follow it, to stick it in order to recognize it better and better. This loyalty asks for a little sacrifice of ourselves, of our heroic and ambitious “ego” who always wants to be the centre of every conversation. To be loyal to the image means also to renounce to speak about feelings, sensations, reaction it produce n us because in this way we go back to ourselves, we lost the image (and the clearing) and we started again to talk of ourselves. The last indication in the imaginal practice ask us to suspend our judgement upon the images (aesthetic, moral, politic ones) because to express judgements is another extraordinary way to refuse everything appears different, strange, unusual and far from our categories. Respecting these indications means to subvert the usual position we have in the world, undergo a sort of spoliation and humiliation of the anthropocentric attitude, give up on our individualism, our personal feelings, story, our culture, our literacy, and all the other securities which the heroic culture gave, endure a sort of eradication to find new roots in the symbolic body of the world that the work of art represents where human beings are placed in a less important position but even a more contemplative and restful one. Sticking the images, follow them, stay with them, recognize their face their symbolic body respecting these indication is a way of soul-making, to deep the experience, to stay with the experience, to abandon our desire of control and finally participate of a huge and intense, complex tissue of meanings able to wide our imaginary and our comprehension of the world. So simply adhering and adhering to these principles produce an intense educational effect.

Starting with this soul-making discipline the imaginal exercise slowly goes on passing and re-passing across the phases of vision (an enchanted contemplation of the moving, the poetry or the work of art), meditation (individual reflection on the images), and circulation (a group activity aimed at recognizing the feature, the character, the voice, the personality and the symbolic meanings the work communicate. These phases which analogically are referred to the alchemic process (*nigredo*, *albedo*, *rubedo*) are guided by an imaginative hermeneutic which Paul Ricoeur and Gilbert Durand would called nocturnal because its goal is no to illuminate the works of art with some bright interpretation or to unmask it, not to unravel its mystery but to re-veal it.

As we have already shown in other essays and volumes (Mottana, 2004; 2010; Barioglio, 2012; 2014) this imaginal hermeneutic is deeply rooted in a nocturnal, feminine, participatory, intimate symbolic tissue and guided by more welcoming, pacific and tolerant mythical figures very

important for our understanding and coping with the unexplainable, with the uncertain, with grief, suffering and any other negative experiences of life. The practice of soul-making that is the imaginal path allowed learn this hermeneutic attitude, little by little, passing and re-passing through an alchemical *nigredo* (in which we lose our usual category, the usual reference we use to understand, we dissolve our literacy, our prejudices, our heroic position and so on); a phase of albedo (in which the symbolic texture of the work of art becomes visible and we are allowed to participate and to feel part of its imaginal world); a phase of *rubedo* (in which we try to distill meanings, figure, knowledge, different attitudes towards the aspects of life and the experienced transfigured by the images).

Conclusions

As we have already shown in other essays and volumes (Mottana 2004; 2010; Barioglio, 2012, 2014) this imaginal hermeneutic is deeply rooted in a nocturnal, feminine, participatory, intimate symbolic tissue and guided by more welcoming, pacific and tolerant mythical figures very important for our understanding and coping with the unexplainable, with the uncertain, with grief, suffering and any other negative experiences of life. The practice of soul-making that is the imaginal path allowed learn this hermeneutic attitude, little by little, passing and re-passing through an alchemical *nigredo* (in which we lose our usual category, the usual reference we use to understand, we dissolve our literacy, our prejudices, our heroic position and so on); a phase of albedo (in which the symbolic texture of the work of art becomes visible and we are allowed to participate and to feel part of its imaginal world); a phase of *rubedo* (in which we try to distill meanings, figure, knowledge, different attitudes towards the aspects of life and the experienced transfigured by the images) Going back to the beginning of this text, going back to the figure of the Hero, with his sword, his torch, his armor and his polemic attitude towards the world from which he wants to escape as the dominant imaginal figure of our culture, we can now argue that the imaginal approach, its pedagogical intentions, and most of all its vessel, the learning contest it creates, the “imaginal clearing” and the way of dwelling it, its symbolic artistic objects, offers an opportunity to gain experience in a different way of living and dwelling the world in a poetic and no longer polemic position.

References

- Bachelard, G. (2006) *Poetica dello spazio*. Bari: Dedalo
- Barioglio, M. (2018) *Poetica dello spazio educativo. La radura immaginale per abitare la terra*. Milano: Mimesis
- Barioglio, M. (2014) *La pratica immaginale* in Quagliano G.P. (a cura di), *Formazione. I metodi*. Milano: Cortina, pp. 661-681
- Barioglio, M. (2012) *A corpo a corpo con l'immagine. L'esperienza immaginale come alchimia di una comprensione integrale*. In: Antonacci, F. (a cura di), *Corpi radiosi, segnati, sottili. Ultimum a una pedagogia dal culo di pietra*. Milano: Angeli, pp. 31-56
- Barioglio, M. (a cura di) (2010) *Eros, corpo, notte. Ricerche immaginali*. Milano: Mimesis
- Barioglio, M. (2008) *Nel regno dell'immaginazione. Da Jung alla pedagogia immaginale*. Bergamo: Moretti e Vitali
- Campbell, J. (2004) *L'eroe dai mille volti*. Parma: Guanda
- Durand, G. (1972) *Le strutture antropologiche dell'immaginario*. Bari: Dedalo
- Hillman, J. (2013) *Psicologia alchemica*. Milano: Adelphi
- Hillman J. & Truppi C. (2004) *L'anima dei luoghi*, Milano, Rizzoli

- Hillman, J. (1983) *Re-visione della psicologia*. Milano: Adelphi
- Massa, R. (1987) *Educare o istruire. La fine della pedagogia nella cultura contemporanea*. Milano: Unicopli
- Mottana, P. (2010) *L'arte che non muore. L'immaginale contemporaneo*. Milano: Mimesis
- Mottana, P. (2010a) *Eros Dioniso e altri bambini. Scorribande pedagogiche*. Milano: Angeli
- Mottana, P. (2009) (a cura di). *L'immaginario della scuola*. Milano: Mimesis
- Mottana, P. (2007) *Comprendere poeticamente*. In: Donfrancesco, F. (a cura di). *L'arte di comprendere*. Bergamo: Moretti e Vitali
- Mottana, P. (2004) *La visione smeraldina. Introduzione alla pedagogia immaginale*. Milano: Mimesis
- Mottana, P. (2002) *L'opera dello sguardo. Braci di pedagogia immaginale*. Bergamo: Moretti e Vitali
- Mottana, P. (2000) *Miti d'oggi nell'educazione. E opportune contromisure*. Milano: Angeli
- Mottana, P. (1993) *Formazione e affetti*. Bologna: Armando

DEALING WITH DIFFERENT CULTURAL CONTEXTS

Migration and parenting in women of Arab origin

Alessandra Mussi

*“Riccardo Massa” Department of Human Sciences and Education
University of Milano Bicocca
Piazza dell’Ateneo Nuovo 1
20126 – Milano
Italy
a.mussi1@campus.unimib.it*

ABSTRACT: The paper intends to explore how the experience of parenting during migration can be a learning opportunity for Arab women migrated to Europe and their children. Migrant mothers, especially those from North Africa and the Middle East, have low access to care and assistance services, instead of parenting programs that allow them to grow as women and as mothers. Research has shown that maternity in a country different from home is a vulnerability factor for both mother and child, but also a crucial learning experience within which a positive negotiation and renegotiation of educational models develops starting from the confrontation between the culture of the country of origin and that of the destination country. The aim is to problematize these issues through a theoretical reflection that focuses on the literature review and an analysis of some life stories.

KEYWORDS: Migration. Parenthood. Arab women. Inclusion. Intercultural education.

Introduction

The migration phenomenon has a strong impact on parenting within migrant families. This paper aims to explore in particular how migration can be a learning experience for both women of Arab origin who have migrated to Europe, and their children.

Migrant mothers, especially those originating from North Africa and the Middle East, often have reduced access to care services, rather than parenting support programs which would allow them to grow as women and mothers.

Migrant mothers, especially those originating from North Africa and the Middle East, often have reduced access to care services, rather than parenting support programs which would allow them to grow as women and mothers.

Motherhood in a country other than home is a source of vulnerability for both the mother and the child (Moro, 2002), but nonetheless also a crucial learning experience within which a positive path of negotiation and renegotiation of educational models can develop from the confrontation between the culture of their country of origin and that of the country of destination (Favaro, Mantovani, & Musatti, 2013). This entire process restructures the mother's identity, helping to bridge a gap between the two cultures felt both by the mother and her child.

The aim of the paper is to problematise these issues through a theoretical reflection that takes stock of the literature review, together with an initial analysis of some life stories collected during the preliminary phase of an empirical research that will continue throughout the next academic year. This research fits within the framework of the ISOTIS project - Inclusive Education and Social Support to Tackle Inequalities in Society¹. Its aim is to analyse and tackle the emergence of social and educational inequalities from childhood, taking into consideration social, economic, cultural and institutional factors, with a specific focus on the vulnerability of migrant families.

This analysis will take shape in the form of some initial remarks to introduce the research topic, followed by an overview of the theoretical-epistemological framework, the references that have emerged from the literature review, the methodology adopted, and some reflections from this first, exploratory phase.

Research topic

Migration is subject of numerous interdisciplinary studies and is a hotbed of political and cultural debates, especially concerning Arab communities and women.

Despite the considerable presence of Arab migrants in Italy and the West, these communities are amongst the most impacted by prejudices, rooted in an orientalist imagery difficult to eradicate (Fabiatti, 2002; Said, 1978). Arab women are often described as veiled, passive, and subjugated by the power of men. They are particularly affected by episodes of prejudice but also by assumptions made by academic research, which entails the risk of condemning them to immobility rather than helping to "free" them (Abu-Lughod, 2002; Ahmed, 1992).

The exploration of the parenting side in women belonging to Arab migrant communities is a particularly pressing area. This because the number of stabilisations of migration

¹ ISOTIS project is an H2020 coordinated by Paul Leseman - Utrecht University and on the Italian side, Giulia Pastori - Bicocca University. For more info: www.isotis.org.

projects and family reunifications between these groups in the hosting countries is increasing significantly.

Arab women, as mothers, have long been part of studies in the field of anthropology, sociology and psychology; meanwhile there are still insufficient contributions in the educational field. Two moments related to the life of children are subject to particular analysis: birth (Ali & Burchett, 2004; Davies & Papadopoulos, 2006) and adolescence (Aroian *et al.*, 2009; Renzaho, McCabe, & Sainsbury, 2011)(Aroian *et al.*, 2009; Renzaho *et al.*, 2011).

My work analyses the topic of parenting by focusing on representations of Arab women in relation to the early childhood phase, which at present has not been studied sufficiently. By doing so, an educational perspective is being adopted.

When talking about Arab communities and Arab women, defining specific terminology is appropriate to avoid the risk of creating homogenising representations that don't recognise the subcultures which exist within the varied Arab world. In my work, I focus on Muslim women who belong to the most populated Arab groups in Milan and I try to pay particular attention to the distinctive ways of every one of my informants to interpret their each individual culture.

So, in my research I intend to explore the representations of migrant women of Arab origin in the following areas: parenting, early childhood, and preschool education.

The objectives are:

- Exploring resources and skills that can contribute to the creation of a positive family environment for child development even in vulnerable situations such as those of Arab migrant women;
- Identifying, from the maternal voices, criteria for the development of initiatives to support parenting in migration.

Theoretical-epistemological framework

The epistemological framework is based on the bio-ecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), which describes the child's environment as a series of systems at different levels: micro, meso, eso, macro; the unified theory of development (Sameroff, 2010), where child development is defined as a process that depends on the interaction with personal, social, and cultural factors; and the concept of developmental niche (Super & Harkness, 1986), where a child's development is considered as depending on the "developmental niche", which consists of: social and physical elements that compose the context, childcare customs, and the psychology of caregivers.

Within this epistemological framework, my work lies in the tradition of educational studies on family education (Formenti, 2000; Milani, 2001; Pourtois & Desmet, 1989). In particular, it cites the latest studies on parenting support, which recommend an examination of the child and the relationships with the caregivers inside the family context, alongside a look at how to help parents mobilise their educational potential. The literature in this field, together with Intercultural Pedagogy (Nigris, 2015; Portera, 2013), points out that research on migrant parenthood is needed to promote the well-being and the integration of the whole family (Balsamo, Favaro, Giacalone, Pavesi, & Samaniego, 2002; Iavarone, Marone, & Sabatano, 2015; 2012).

In addition to this, my work refers to the studies of engendering migration (Pessar & Mahler, 2003) on a theoretical level. It spans the dimension of parenting with gender,

because being a migrant woman or a migrant man and being mother or father (Giovannini, 2007) are divergent realities, from which different experiences and representations arise.

The study also follows research that analyses the topic of Arab women from a culturally specific perspective without using the classic categories of western feminism (Ahmed, 1992; Pepicelli, 2010).

Methods and methodology

Methodologically, the work fits within a narrative paradigm of the literature review, with a critical analysis of the recently published bibliography on the subject. In addition to this, some life stories are analysed. They were collected during this preliminary phase of an on-going empirical research, based on the use of the ethnographic method and in-depth interviews.

This methodology is based, on one side, on the pedagogical indications to give voice to the insiders - in particular migrants (De Souza, 2004) - while, on the other, on the tradition of dialogic anthropology, which considers scientific text as the result of the encounter between researcher and subject (Clifford & Marcus, 1986).

These methodological choices were made based on the fact that I believe they allow me to use a research methodology with political and formative effects at the same time: not only in giving a voice to the women I'm focusing on, but also stimulating them to talk about themselves, to reconnect with their own representational world. This will ensure the immediate release of a catalyst which will be the trigger for positive resources and skills for both the mother and the child.

Following the indications from Lumbelli (1980), in this preliminary phase I made an initial exploration of the field during which I decided to immerse myself in the daily lives of some Arab mothers. Focussing specifically on one such mother - I will call her Sara, a pseudonym for privacy reasons - I visited her several times at her home, forging a deep relationship, founded on our conversations and the sharing of moments from everyday life. It was an intimate and dialogue-rich relationship, from which I could observe practices, hear her life story and reflect on the arguments deriving from the theory.

Motherhood in women of Arab origin

Maternity is an extremely delicate moment in the life of each woman, but especially in that of a migrant woman (Moro, 2002). Migration is a traumatic event; motherhood while living the trauma of migration becomes a moment of distinct vulnerability, with the "cultural transparency" compounding the psychic transparency.

Ethnopsychanalyst Moro's theories help us understand the risk factors associated with migrant motherhood, but it is also important to emphasise the protection factors and the resilience and educational skills that motherhood can bring to Arab migrant women.

The experience of motherhood is, for Arab women, a decisive event that marks social recognition and the legitimate transition to adulthood. In migration, this event maintains its importance: it adds meaning to a migration project that has often been cultivated precisely from the idea of creating a family or of securing it a future. At the same time, it provokes disorientation. The Arab migrant woman experiences a double shock: the first a generational one, when compared to the models of her mother and grandmother, and the second a cultural-symbolic one, following the migration process (Giacalone, 2013). Her emotional world is complex: she feels lonely, far from her family of origin, disorientated, guilty, but also

a sense of satisfaction for the ongoing project, and hope for her children's futures. Along these lines, motherhood can be interpreted as an experience that gives meaning to both the journey and daily efforts. It could ensure strides are made towards promoting the well-being of the mother and, subsequently, the child.

Sara is an Egyptian Muslim woman, 38 years old, mother of six children (ranging from 7 months to 18 years old). She arrived for the first time in Italy 18 years ago, but remained there continuously for only 5 years: before she was spending just three months a year in Italy and the rest of the time in Egypt. The last born after 7 male children, Sara – then aged 17 – agreed to marry her husband, who had already moved to Italy, in order to escape the control of the men in her family. She was hoping for a different, freer life, and these hopes later turned into aspirations for the lives of her children. These are her words, during one of our conversations, as reported in my ethnographic diary:

I was the last and the only female child, I was permanently enclosed in my house and controlled by my brother. So when the chance came up to move to Italy, I took it without thinking twice. I wanted to study but my dad decided to take me out of college to force me to marry. Then my husband did not allow me to go back to my studies, but the same mustn't happen to my daughters: they have to study! I would like them to become doctors or dentists! (Ethnographic diary, 21/02/17)

In the countries of origin...

Representations related to motherhood in Arab women have historically been influenced by cultural systems, such as colonialism, political Islam, and Arab nationalism. Colonialist projects were justified by the mission of liberating Arab women. This mission pushed to identify and align Arab motherhood with the European equivalent. With the emergence of nationalist movements, criticism of colonial domination grew: it was deemed necessary to resist assimilation; native customs were to be rekindled. There were two options: those on one hand who preferred to avoid any change in women's conditions, and on the other those who believed in a project of general regeneration of Arab societies and hence changes in women's conditions – but in ways seen as culturally acceptable and not responding to explicit feminist demands.

Even today, Arab women continue to negotiate between modernity and tradition, seeking their own cultural identity, both as women and as mothers. Being a mother doesn't necessarily conflict with studies and work, like being a Muslim does not necessarily mean being relegated to stay at home. Indeed, education and a good profession can amply contribute to the development of the educational skills of a good Muslim mother (Davies & Papadopoulos, 2006).

... During migration

For migrant women, this task becomes even more delicate, because the confrontation between the culture of origin and the culture of the destination country can complicate, sometimes dramatically, this passage: it is extremely demanding to reconcile tradition and modernity; identify as a woman and as a mother without the fear of betraying one's own culture of origin, by adhering to a new one (Cattaneo & dal Verme, 2005, 93).

Sara endured an intense battle with her husband during her first few years in Italy. He was opposed to her communicating with anyone outside of their home. It was only after some contact with Italian neighbours, her husband's distance due to work, and the need to take care of her children that ensured Sara, step by step, began to build relationships and establish a degree of autonomy outside home:

For 5 years I was stuck at home. My husband didn't even want me to go out for milk, he was always afraid that I would meet bad people who could hurt me. I couldn't even go to shops located beneath the house: I had to call him and he would buy me what I needed. (...) I didn't know anyone, I didn't have any friends, I got to know just a few of my Italian neighbours, a couple who were very kind to me. They made themselves available in case I needed anything. Then he changed his job and I started to go out. Now I do everything by myself. (ethnographic diary, 21/02/17).

Maintaining links with the culture of origin and simultaneously incorporating elements from the new one; creatively rethinking the representation connected with motherhood within the original culture following the confrontation with the new one. These appear to be the preconditions in order to make this experience become a learning moment of reconciliation with one's own ghosts deriving from the country of origin, and also the beginning of a process of negotiation between educational models and multiple identities, which can be positive for the well-being of both mother and child.

Results and impact

The empirical research will continue throughout the next academic year. The results, chiefly available towards the end of the research, will highlight critical issues regarding: the educational models of Arab migrant mothers in Milan and the *metisage* with the ones of the hosting country; the learning opportunities associated with the experience of migration and possible obstacles related to ethnic-cultural or gender issues.

The relevance lies in combining a deep knowledge of the Arab migrant mothers' case with a pedagogical framework able to address parenting support programs to ensure a genuine promotion of inclusiveness and wellbeing for the families.

The development of educational practices and intercultural competencies of operators will be drawn up in different ways:

- Building processes, methods and tools to share knowledge on Arab migrant mothers with them, as a first step in the fight against prejudice;
- Elaborating an educational reflection on intercultural competencies, which can facilitate support for an effective learning process for migrant women of Arab origin. Within them, the latter will have the opportunity to develop valuable resilience and educational skills not only for themselves but also their children.

References

- Abu-Lughod, L. (2002) Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others. *American Ahtropologist*, 104(3), 783–790.
- Ahmed, L. (1992) *Women and gender in Islam: Historical roots of a modern debate*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Ali, N. & Burchett, H. (2004) *Experiences of Maternity Services: Muslim Women's Perspectives*. London: The Maternity Alliance.
- Aroian, K., Hough, E. S., Templin, T. N., Kulwicki, A., Ramaswamy, V. and Katz, A. (2009) Social Science & Medicine A model of mother – child adjustment in Arab Muslim immigrants to the US q. *Social Science & Medicine*, 69(9), 1377–1386.
- Balsamo, E., Favaro, G., Giacalone, F., Pavesi, A. & Samaniego, M. (2002) *Mille modi di crescere: bambini immigrati e modi di cura*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.

- Bawadi, H. (2009) *Migrant Arab Muslim Women's experiences of Childbirth in the UK*. Leicester: De Montfort University.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986) Ecology of the Family as a Context for Human Development: Research Perspectives. *Developmental Psychology*, 22(6), 723-742.
- Cattaneo, M. L. & dal Verme, S. (2005) *Donne e madri nella migrazione. Prospettive transculturali e di genere*. Milano: Edizioni Unicopli.
- Clifford, J. & Marcus, G. E. (eds.). (1986) *Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Davies, M. & Papadopoulos, I. (2006) Notions of Motherhood and the Maternity Needs of Arab Muslim Women. In I. Papadopoulos (Ed.), *Transcultural Health and Social Care*. London: Elsevier, pp. 145-161
- De Souza, R. (2004) Motherhood, Migration and Methodology: Giving Voice to the Other. *The Qualitative Report*, 9(3), 463-482.
- Fabietti, U. (2002) *Culture in bilico. Antropologia del Medio Oriente*. Milano: Mondadori.
- Favaro, G., Mantovani, S. & Musatti, T. (eds.). (2013). *Nello stesso nido. Famiglie e bambini stranieri nei servizi educativi*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Formenti, L. (2000) *Pedagogia della famiglia*. Milano: Guerini.
- Giacalone, F. (2013) I saperi del corpo tra Islam e servizi. La vita quotidiana delle madri maghrebine. In G. Favaro, S. Mantovani, & T. Musatti (eds.), *Nello stesso nido. Famiglie e bambini stranieri nei servizi educativi*. Milano: FrancoAngeli, pp. 202-242.
- Giovannini, G. (2007) Essere genitori in situazione di migrazione. In Bazzarin, V (eds.), *Famiglie migranti e stili genitoriali*. Bologna: Provincia di Bologna, pp. 17-24.
- Iavarone, M. L., Marone, F. and Sabatano, F. (2015) Genitorialità migrante: un'esperienza di formazione interculturale con madri immigrate a Napoli. *Rivista Italiana Di Educazione Familiare*, 1, pp. 53-75.
- Lumbelli, L. (1980) La ricerca esplorativa in pedagogia. *Ricerche Pedagogiche*, (56-61), 60-77.
- Milani, P. (eds.). (2001) *Manuale di educazione familiare: ricerca intervento e formazione*. Trento: Erickson.
- Moro, M. R. (2002) *Enfants d'ici venus d'ailleurs: naître et grandir en France*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Nigris, E. (eds.). (2015) *Pedagogia e didattica interculturale. Culture, contesti e linguaggi*. Milano: Pearson.
- Pepicelli, R. (2010) *Femminismo Islamico: Corano, diritti, riforme*. Roma: Carocci.
- Pessar, P. R. & Mahler, S. J. (2003) Transnational Migration: Bringing Gender. *International Migration Review*, 37(3), 812-846.
- Portera, A. (2013) *Manuale di Pedagogia Interculturale*. Bari-Roma: Editori Laterza.
- Pourtois, J.-P. & Desmet, H. (1989) L'éducation familiale. *Revue Française de Pédagogie*, 86, 69-101.
- Renzaho, A. M. N., McCabe, M. & Sainsbury, W. J. (2011) Parenting, role reversals and the preservation of cultural values among Arabic speaking migrant families in Melbourne, Australia. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(4), 416-424.
- Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon.
- Sameroff, A. (2010) A Unified Theory of Development: A Dialectic Integration of Nature and Nurture. *Society for Research in Child Development*, 81(1), 6-22.
- Silva, C. (2012) Prendersi cura della genitorialità nell'immigrazione (a partire dalla scuola dei piccoli). *Rivista Italiana Di Educazione Familiare*, 1, 39-48.

Interaction with refugees

Padma Ramsamy-Prat

*Centre de Recherche sur la Formation
Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers
41 rue Gay Lussac
75005 Paris
France
padma.prat@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT: This paper addresses some of the challenges of educators interacting with refugees. Language and cultural barriers add to the tricky situations the latter are facing. Thus, gestures offer possibilities of situational learning that both protagonists can benefit from. Paying attention and reading gestures enable to go further and create relationships which practitioners rely on in helping professions.

KEYWORDS: refugee, interaction, gesture, body, perception.

Introduction

This research concerns educators whose job is to welcome and care for refugees in Brescia, Italy. During the Arab Spring crisis in 2016, 120 000 of them entered the country and 80 000 asked for political asylum. Educators are required to care for the primary needs of refugees, but also assist them in starting a biography. Indeed, as undocumented individuals they must appear before a commission, tell their stories, and express about their future in the host country. The commission makes the decision to grant papers, political asylum or reject the request. Despite the increasing number of public in need and the challenge of their profession, the expected acknowledgement of educators' work remains low. Consequently, educators rely on their own motivation and engagement in the profession (Cadei & al. 2013). The authors add that Italian professionals claim the practitioners perform a difficult job. The difficulty resides in the profession itself because educators coach numerous publics who find themselves in precarious situations and are suffering. Moreover, they complete their work in various official programmes within a specified time-frame. This would require that the refugees put their problems aside and focus on the actual programme offered. Therefore, focus on motivation and future project is required, whether meaningful or not. This research goes along improvement of professionalization of educators, showing new didactic actions in training.

How do the professionals guide people in the context of refugees? Through what means do they perform their tasks? How do they pass the difficulties and barriers posed by language and culture in the interaction?

The research question which could guide this study will be: communicate with gestures and learn with and from gestures with a focus on speech and eye gestures. I will present the theories concerning gestures and communication. Then, the methodology will show how the educators were approached. The results will be presented in the third part.

Theoretical framework

Theoretical framework is built in a pluri disciplinary approach. In sociology, Mauss (1934) shows *body techniques* that the individual uses in his ordinary gestures. The body is capable of big and small gestures, in an aim. The *body techniques* reveal their efficiency through the bodily dimension of action. The author suggests apprehending the concept of body technique as a coherent set of plural techniques. However, these techniques may differ from one society to another, from one culture to another. Each body technique is made up from other body techniques. The latter belongs to a set that constitutes a coherent discourse. They form a language and enable to think the question of *communication*.

Communicate by gestures

The body is a tool at the service of the human: it enables to act and embody numerous activities. First, these activities enable an individual to be and communicate. When looking at the other, the body participates to enunciate what it sees, hears and feels. It can produce signal gestures which participate both to an enunciation construct and composition of an enunciation. In Mauss's theory, this constitutes training. The notion of training is investigated by Bourdieu in his habitus concept. For Cosnier (1984), the language results in combining numerous factors which provide a total enunciation. Gestures accompany the dialogue in a form of mediation between thought and speech (Calbris, 2011). In the philosophy of language and speech acts theory, utterances provide meaning while describing reality and changing the social reality described. Austin (1970) considers three activities that

proceed enunciation: locution act (a meaningful production), illocution act (production with intention), perlocution act (production with an act). According to Grice (1975), the logic of conversation follows rules that require minimum understanding and cooperation between the speakers. Therefore, the maxims of quality, quantity, relation and effort appear essential in interaction.

For Merleau-Ponty (1945, p. 1967), our body is not the time and space, it inhabits the time and space. The body scheme is a means for the French philosopher to express that the body is present to the world and has an incidence on perception. We do not create the body scheme; it imposes to us, depending on the situation. It imposes the meaning of being. The body scheme imposes a perception that precedes the experience and imposes its shape to the experience when it happens. He makes a distinction between the primary and secondary expression through the example of looking and looking again at an art piece, which does not appear the same. To perceive is to make a movement between the spoken language (primary expression) the cultural heritage transmitted, and the significant language (secondary expression), the present one where meaning emerges. To make a gesture is to embody an activity. The acting subject apprehends what surrounds him as an objectifiable fact but also as a phenomenon that goes through his existence; he invests this phenomenon in a subjective manner. The corporeality of the subject constitutes a relationship to the world which lets itself be seen and perceived. Gesture is embodied. Trained intelligent body acting makes sense. It can anticipate action or use a detour (Streek & al. 2013). The anticipation or the detour can be found in *embodied arguments* (2013, p. 254). Indeed, when discourse analysis and body movements are put together, there seem to be evidence of arguments. In face-to-face interaction, verbal claims are heard, and the body shows evidence of actions that take part in the communication and can be an intrinsic part during the interaction. Gesture functions thanks to a specific grammar. It covers discursive, cognitive, linguistic and kinesic aspects. Mondada (2015) stresses that the touching gesture presents some normativity in terms of description, evaluation, saying and assessing. Whereas Duranti (2015) points out that the gesture aims at controlling because humans need to control context.

Learning the gesture-learning from the gesture

Education science took interest in the gestures of teachers and trainers in the classroom. Gesture represents a means to decipher an activity and analyse it (Alin, 2010) in the objective of professional action (Jorro, 2016). According to Alin (2010), the teacher unfolds gestures and micro gestures. Professional gestures characterise technical contribution of the actions but also the symbolic behind the actions. As for micro gestures, they represent “a set of little sensory motor gestures, enounced, conscious or unconscious which accompany and/or second the realisation of a professional gesture” (2010, p. 93). Similarly, one gesture can accompany and/or second different micro gestures. It aims at an objective, but what is interesting is the gesture’s symbolic. Speech gesture is necessary as it accompanies the explaining and ensures the comprehension. It also enables to listen and respond in an orderly manner. The conversation ensures a relation between speakers. The quality of the relation may introduce other gestures worth analysing. When studying professionals at work, the listening gesture represents the objective of understanding to provide counselling accordingly. The symbolic of the listening gesture is expressed through the availability and patience displayed by the professional who, while listening, is proceeding to reflexive activity and selecting the pieces of information that help evaluate the required actions (Ramsamy-Prat, 2015). The interest in gestures stems from its primary reason to be in relation with others. Gestures are omnipresent in our daily lives. If they inform on others, they equally allow us to modify what we wish to transmit. A gesture carries an address, it reaches the other. In interaction, the body builds a comprehensive model and addresses the

other. Some gestures frame the discourse which means the gesture *says* the discourse and that the sentence bears no ending, or the latter is not required.

Gestures express knowledge and knowledge-in-action (Jorro, 2016, p.2017). When making the distinction between professional and trade gestures, the author specifies that the body socialises, while performing different tasks. The characteristics of professional gestures are the address (to the self and the other), amplification according to situation, *Kaïros* that stands for justification and leaves its trace. Gestures are addressed to the other who regulates these same gestures by speech or sign of acknowledgement or refusal. When observing teachers' actions, Jorro (2010) observes reflexivity lines and reflexive postures in teaching practices: either backing-up or testifying where the practitioner has the intuition the situation is important and sees the situation requires further feedback but feels deprived by it. Jorro *et al.* (2017) also observes the questioning posture where the practitioner sees meaning in his own practice, and the evaluation-regulation posture, which requires applying alternative strategies, and questioning experiential knowledge to mobilise them in action in a different manner. Through language gesture, the professional explains: in the educator's case, the language is precise but simple. The discourse is made of narration and explanation. The refugee must understand the reason beyond the questioning which enables to provide specific answers. The latter allows the professional to regulate other gestures; he can influence the ongoing activity with other gestures. Those adjustments gestures show anticipation or even an assessment.

Research methodology

The enquiry is carried out in 2 NGOs, from January to April 2017. The Museke Foundation and ADL Zavidovici are both located in Brescia (Italy). They employ educators to welcome refugees, help them in their daily (new) lives and find ways to integrate on the Italian territory. Some volunteers offer their help. I followed 5 educators (3 women, 2 men), observed their work and interviewed each of them. Their experiences range from 2 years (4 educators) to 7 years (1 educator). They all had a previous experience abroad working with immigrants in different organisations. A first meeting was organized with the managers to explain our research and its protocol. A second meeting with each educator was planned; I obtained their agreement and arranged for observations. The third meeting was the observation day. The research was organised in three steps:

- Data collection: as an ethnographer, I sat in the room observing and writing notes. During the commute to the various accommodations, I seized the opportunity to obtain more information on the practice, population and regulations.
- Practitioner's interview: at the end of the day, I used my notes to clarify the actions of each professional. Because the communication was in English, which is not well spoken, I had to adapt the interview. In the *Entretien d'Explicitation*- micro phenomenological interviewing-(Vermersch, 1994, 2011), there are a few moments where comprehensive interviewing crosses the present one. In this case, I used comprehensive interviewing more than expected and kept simple English to ensure comprehension. Data from interviews and observations were criss-crossed for analysis. Nevertheless, because the interview was carried out in English, *l'Entretien d'Explicitation* could not provide with required information. Indeed, verbalisation in another language turned out to challenge the method of inquiry. Consequently, comprehensive inquiry (Kauffman, 1996) was crossed and proved more successful.
- Analysis: all interviews were taped. Speech gestures were separated from other gestures for further analysis.

Presentation of the associations

The choice of investigating in both organisations was accidental but turned interesting. Museke welcomes *all refugees* sent by the public services whereas ADL Zavidovici cares for those in the SPRAR (System of Protection for Refugees) which is a European project. ADL employs 22 people, 15 of them work directly with refugees. 2 of them are qualified as educators, the others have experienced social work and are named *operatore social*. ADL works on 4 projects with other towns around Brescia (Cellatica, Collebeato, Calvisano and Passirano). Museke started its work in Burundi to care for poor populations, a mission is organized every year to train medical staff in Burundi. The NGO employs 2 project managers, 2 part-time educators and 1 social worker.

Ethnographic observation

I followed each educator for half day with the refugees (male Africans at that time). ADL visits them in a flat provided by the town, whereas Museke accommodates 8 men in a house the organisation owns. The educator's work consists in checking the rooms, people present, kitchen and particularly the refrigerator, asking questions and enquiring about their health. At Museke, the practitioner takes them to medical checks, assists with Italian classes. In both cases, there are steps taken to find a job or community work and participate to social life.

At ADL, two other situations occurred while I was enquiring. Therefore, I took the opportunity to observe the case of a young man signing up for the SPRAR programme. Another case shows the educator with a translator, helping to start the biography of a young man for the commission. In both case, I wrote down notes for further analysis. I had to pay more attention to those two cases with the refugees because they were carried out in Italian and I am a beginner. I relied on my knowledge of the French language. The translator acted as a mediator, helping the educator whenever necessary. Sometimes, a short explanatory dialogue took place between the latter and the refugee in an African dialect. Then the translator would explain to the educator, adding sometimes elements of clarification.

Interview

I travelled back and forth with the educator and comprehensive interviewing was carried out during the commute. After their work, at the end of the day, a micro phenomenological interview was carried out in the office for one hour. Entretien d'Explicitation is a method of enquiry that allows the practitioner to explicit his practice (Vermersch, 1994; 2011). Entretien d'Explicitation is based on action (Ramsamy-Prat, 2017). It allows to obtain information on action by describing the experience verbally. The objective is to collect fine data on the actual action and not on a class of action. The tool is based on the previous experience the subject is describing; the subjective evocation relies on guidance. Guidance is essential: it provides abundant information on action, specifies where attention is focused during the process. Distinction is made on what the subject is doing, what he could not carry out, and what he was not allowed to perform. This is where Entretien d'Explicitation normally shows its performance. In our study, the method was challenged.

The researcher observes that body movements or engagement of the body are more numerous than in an ordinary interaction. The educator tries not only to pass the difficulty of the present situation but also the ones that add to the environment, i.e. language and cultural barriers. The speech gesture appeared difficult. How to ensure a fair comprehension of what was being stated? In this study, only the researcher master English. Therefore, the work requires constant repetition of acts of speech (Grice, 1975; Searle, 1969), what appeared

relevant (Sperber & Wilson, 2004) and an elevated level of attention. Some results are provided below.

Results: the educator's gesture analysis

Content analysis becomes difficult because of limited lexical field. During our interview, the educator is struggling to find his words in English, as if he were translating in his mind. This event occurs at times when the practitioner is reflecting on his activity and proceeding to elicitation. Words in the native language (Italian) pop up.

He could...como... S puede el bano... (Vincenzo – 6)

He was...como si dice...(Alessandro – 1)

Nevertheless, semiotic analysis is the primary filter. The other cases emphasize on the speech during interactions with the refugee and the educator. I consider the practitioner's speech, then the refugee's. Afterwards, I observe how speech and gestures are intertwined. Sometimes the gestures follow the speech as to clarify. Sometimes the gestures represent embodied arguments (Streeck & al. 2013).

Speech gesture

I ask him how he's feeling and if he eats... I am responsible for them. (Vincenzo-4).

This utterance is frequent (Grice, 1975; Searle, 1969) and said to be relevant (Sperber & Wilson, 2004). The question starts the dialogue and interaction during each visit. Inquiry about health appears important as it permits to plan activities and act accordingly: make appointments with doctor or hospital, check sanitary problems. The speech gestures show a practitioner like a good parent and concerned by the well-being of the refugees. One could state that the gestures are specific to this profession: the educators satisfy the primary needs of refugees. Speech concerns food, clothes and accommodation. Words such as Food, cook, kitchen are frequently expressed. When visiting the flat, the educator spends some time in the kitchen. He checks the refrigerator, questions on food and cooking. Twice, we found ourselves at cooking time with the group.

They share the meal...I think it reminds them of how it is in their country, they eat in the same plate...Also, they always ask me to eat with them...You know as a guest, they make tea for me (Vincenzo-notes during commute).

When signing the SPAR contract, Guilia inquiries about the young man's cooking abilities. She states how important cooking is but thinks others can help in the task.

Because, they are really, really kind and really helpful (Guilia-3).

Concerning clothes, associations in town offer what they have or were left. Each accommodation has laundry space. Their choice of clothes is specific. Not only they need clothes, but they require the decent quality and fashion ones.

They go to the Mosque, they know where to find nice clothes and good quality. (Alphonso-during commute).

The accommodation is theirs, for a specific time. They clean and take care of things. Each refugee has his own bedroom or shares with a mate. During one visit where the educator controls the room, one refugee shows us around, but makes sure he shuts the door. The sign expresses his room and own universe not to be disturbed, and the educator respects it. Others place photos, books or music on shelves in the bedroom. This space represents a shelter.

Embodied gestures

Hand gestures accompany the discourse, the educator holds the SPRAR contract and turning the pages, she explains. The situation is formal and reflects the importance of the information transmitted. She points the article on the contract, shows different explanations and suggests the refugee reads them later when he is settled. The refugee nods that he understands and agrees to sign the contract. The dialogue takes place in Italian (educator's native language) which sounds like a relief, the young man studied Italian in the previous Centre for refugees. The researcher's understanding is medium. The speech gesture is accompanied by the listening gesture and the look in times of doubt and uncertainty. While observing the interview, I perceive a stressed and silent young man. The educator asks a few times, looking at him:

Are you OK? Do you want some water? Are you alright? (Guilia – written notes)¹

Although the question is asked at various times, the professional keeps repeating it. One notes that the questioning varies but the answer remains the same. The utterance of the enunciation act stands for its importance (Austin, 1970). The refugee remains silent but would sigh at the last request. This sigh represents a last attempt to express something he would not speak out loud. This is their first meeting, he does not know this person, he will not be able to say how worried he is in this unfamiliar environment. Although, the educator is explaining the procedure in the programme, he probably does not understand everything. The amount of information is high, and he probably cannot take all in.

When I questioned the educator about this, she answered:

He looks very worried and very sad to leave his friends. And you could see he was really not comfortable (Guilia -1).

He is very young and very clever. You can see this. He is clever, he is smart. (Guilia -2)

The look provides the information that the practitioner will use to adjust the practice. The evaluation comes from the look: *very worried* that requires adjustment: *do you want some water?* Besides, if the young man does not respond to *ok*, he might get *alright*. The verb to *look* and *see* are repeated. The utterance shows the intention: this is how the practitioner evaluates the action. The entire body participates to the interaction, the same discursive object is enunciated to solicit a response (Cohen-Scali, Ramsamy-Prat, 2015). In addition, the sigh is addressed. During the interaction, the sigh proposes an answer to the questioner as the refugee uses a detour. The sigh stands for an embodied argument to the repetition of the question (Streeck & al. 2013). Moreover, the message is extralinguistic and is produced in the form of a gesture. Referring to Bakhtin's dialogism, there is a link between the speaker and his speech, he stands for his first discussion partner, as in an inner voice. The speech is produced during the interaction with his previous positioning: *silence*. One could also mention his status: he cannot choose, the only option is to follow the rule, if he wishes to live in this new country. Grice's model of cooperation does not apply, the boy does not answer verbally. But he produces a sign (Merleau-Ponty, 1967) he sighs.

Embodiment and Mismatch of meaning

A sigh is heard after the practitioner's repetition of the same question for the fifth time. The refugee keeps silent and looks down. He seems indeed exhausted. The sigh is both addressed and self-addressed: the refugee relies on his culture to respond. Out of respect, he

¹ Personal translation from Italian

looks down, not in the eye. He remains silent. There seems to be a mismatch because he does not dare look during the whole hour-interview. At the end, the body speaks for him. The educator is expecting an answer; doing her job, inquiring about his well-being. Cultural elements are intertwined: one does not look the other in the eye, the mediator will later reveal. We can state here the mismatch is cultural. Meaning is challenged too: the professional is expecting an answer and seems annoyed because the boy is staring at the floor.

He has the chance to be in the programme, he is young, smart (Guilia-3)

The young man does not realise his fortune, his mind is probably clotted with other worries. One could argue he is facing another renouncement: dropping the respect or disrespect from his culture. Indeed, living in another country means renouncement in many ways. The boy may sense the gap between the cultures or even face a cultural shock. The two individuals are not in tune: she is thinking luck and opportunity, compared to many others; he is considering another programme to go through with an unknown future, again. His current stability will last another 6 months. Neither the professional nor he knows the next step which may explain destabilisation.

The eye factor

This result shows that the body technique the practitioner relies on is the eye. While speaking, the educator adds the eye gesture to the speech to understand the language delivered. The communication suggests a total enunciation (Cosnier & Brossard, 1984). The eye gesture addressed to the young man orients towards a symbolic meaningful gesture (Duranti, 2015). In this situation, the role of the educator is processed by sensitive acts (Libois, 2013) which appear meaningful in the educational act. Consequently, the kind look, presence, listening represent professional gestures (Jorro, 2016, 2017) encouraging the young man to respond to the relationship. One can observe a relational knowledge in action (Ramsamy-Prat, 2015) managing the interaction. Furthermore, relational knowledge is supposed to ensure a good future relationship as expressed below:

I need to keep a good relationship with him. (Anna – 1)

Ensuring the good relationship represents a means to obtain (personal) information about the refugee. For most of them, time is an issue. They need time to start expressing themselves, talk about their families and even more time to deliver their stories. Therefore, there is an intention from the subject, the look becomes a professional gesture (Jorro, 2016). It represents a primary experience of a professional posture. The gesture stands for an indicator of competency and shows its performance. In addition, the gesture is addressed to the refugee. The practitioner opts for the moment of interview to display the eye gesture, applying Kairos. The eye gesture leaves its trace for the refugee, as this gesture would not exist in his culture.

We don't look in the eye when speaking. It shows disrespect. This is in our culture
– translator

Eye gesture and comprehension

The observation of another situation provides data. The educator is interviewing a young man in Italian, she needs to prepare him to sit before the commission. She is asking questions, entering data on her computer. A translator is assisting both persons as she communicates in a local African language with the young man. The practitioner addresses the young man, even though the discussion is in a foreign language, Italian. Observing the

situation, I notice the active listening and the look focused solely on the young man. The translator's voice sounds like an "off-voice".

I need to establish a relationship with him...it's important that he knows that the interview is with him and me. I look at him. (Anna -2).

I listen, and I evaluate what's important in the story, this is part of my job. (Anna -2).

The eye gesture helps understanding the situation. The educator points out the numerous questions at the commission and the necessity of a biography that sounds clear, even if it is uncomplete. Her job is to check the events, cross with other pieces of information. The biography session is planned over 4 interviews. Each time, some of the same information is repeated, this is how the learning takes place. The eye gesture accompanies the language gesture in a personal address. The gaze also serves as a coordination device (Mondada, 2015). It serves at facilitating the cognitive process, here of evaluation, but also controlling the veracity of the story (Duranti, 2015). To perceive is to make a movement between the spoken language (primary expression) the cultural heritage transmitted, and the significant language (secondary expression), the present one where meaning emerges. To make a gesture is to embody an activity. Gesture is embodied. A trained intelligent body acting makes sense. It can anticipate action or use a detour (Streek & al. 2013). Gesture functions thanks to a specific grammar. It covers discursive, cognitive, linguistic and kinesics aspects. Mondada (2015) stresses that the touching gesture presents some normativity in terms of description, evaluation, saying and assessing. Whereas Duranti (2015) points out that the gesture aims at controlling because humans need to control context. Here both controlling, and evaluation apply.

Adjusting meaning with the eye

Meaning emerges in the interaction between the refugee and the professional. The eye function offers a stabilisation of meaning, even if it appears to be temporary. The flow of conversation offers additional meaning to the speakers. The two interactors experience and express the movement at the same time. There is a form of rhythm that stems from the speech/movement couple. As in touching, normativity of touch provides description, evaluation, saying and assessing (Mondada, 2015). Here, the perception provides a significant language, the secondary expression (eye) is added to the primary expression (speech) and meaning emerges (Merleau-Ponty, 1945). The eye gesture is embodied. It is used to anticipate action and serves as a detour to capture meaning (Streeck & al. 2013). While listening during the interaction, the educator is evaluating and assessing (Mondada, 2015). At the same time, the eye is exploring other body movements, as in controlling (Duranti, 2015). Alin (2010) considers the word as the key to training in education. The author reminds that teaching is about saying and finding the right words in reformulations. Indeed, the word allows dissipating misunderstanding or wiping out evidence and direct towards understanding. That happens when we master the language. I use the researcher's model (Alin, 2010: 56) to analyse the interaction. I investigate on the interview before the commission. Before the interview, the refugee is provided with pen and paper to write words in his African language or pronunciation that might be difficult to grasp. However, the social operator addresses him in Italian and looks at him. She asks questions, checks answers, double-checks, repeats, asks for clarifications keeping eye contact with him. She does so to assess and evaluate his answers. During the interview with the researcher, she reckons:

I want him to know that the interview is with him and me (Anna-2)

I need to establish a relationship with him...it's important that he knows that the interview is with him and me. I look at him. (Anna -2).

The table shows the model used to decipher meaning and understanding.

Technical act	Symbolic implication	Gesture	Field of action
Telling a story	Personal address	eye	know historical background
Questioning	Help to relate	orient body	educate
Repeating story	pay attention	Listening	learn to communicate
Writing names	veracity	hand	learn to specify
Drawing events	related to difficult	hand	control emotion
Reformulating	clarify	speech	be specific
Controlling the info	check	speech	tell personal story
Using a mediator	(African) Native language	speech	Interaction with a small group
Relationship	Create trust	Speech + eye	Interpersonal communication
Interviewing	In host country language	speech	Communication exercise

Interview with a refugee adapted from Alin's model (2010, p. 56)

Discussion

In this paper, I showed how the professional adjust to communicate to the refugee he/she works with. I show that body movements help both individuals: one to express feelings he cannot voice, the other to understand the communication. They both rely on the body to produce comprehension, understanding and necessary response in the interaction. The act allows the practitioner to adjust, plan and modify his activity. The focus here is placed on the speech and the eye gestures. Reading the movement, one can notice how the eye performs, guides, shows, expresses, thus *speaks* to the other who *reads* the gesture. The cultural aspect reveals that the eye represents respect for some, hierarchy for others. Some other cultural aspects could be studied. The eye helps to capture speech and provides the hints to evaluate and assess veracity of speech. Seeing the other and his body movements enable the control over the speech. Although the eye gesture appears as a technical one, it also reveals a symbolic gesture permitting the co-construction of understanding and meaning. Paying attention to speech and gesture is crucial as other clues may appear and offer other meanings. The latter can lead to more open or more centred dialogue and lead the inquiry. The task can appear challenging as it requires a focus and a professional eye and ear. In the helping professions, reading the body brings about much more information than words. When the demand for documents is rejected, the refugee must quit the programme. The educator feels his job means little. The refugee might start from scratch again and find himself hanging around in town. Even though, some learning took place there is no assessment. The educator loses track of the refugee most of the time. The gap in language and culture challenge the activity of professionals. Besides, the time-frame of 6 months demands motivation, courage and strength to educate in such a brief time. The question of education can be raised but it seems that the cultural gap may inhibit some learning. One could benefit from a learning rhythm that correspond to this population, considering the time frame. It appears we all use our culture and carry it wherever we go. Educating the

refugee also requires helping him renounce some of his culture (at least temporarily) because there is no time to grasp too many cultural differences while educating. Pain can arise from renouncement as the culture represents a form of salvation the refugee can rely on.

Conclusion

This research would need improvement and more cases on assessment with the eye gesture. The educator moves from one place to the other and cannot plan his work which made my observation difficult. Moreover, the visits in the flats at one association were too short, and at the other, sanitary problems prevented from observing more cases associated with gesture. Concerning the speech gesture, one can notice the effort made both by the professional and the refugee to practise the language of the other every day. This provides learning which is not assessed. Besides, it would be interesting to study other cases providing mismatches in speech and gestures. Furthermore, in this study, I was not allowed to interview the refugee who could provide more data on learning processes.

References

- Alin, C. (2010) *La geste formation. Gestes professionnels et analyse des pratiques*. Paris: L'Harmattan
- Cadei, Simone, Sita (2013) S'engager dans le travail éducatif. In : Jorro, A. and De Ketele, J.M. (eds) *L'engagement professionnel en éducation et formation*. Bruxelles : De Boeck pp. 25-37.
- Cohen-Scali, V. and Ramsamy-Prat, P. (2015) Apprendre par le dialogue. Le cas pharmaciens d'officines en interaction avec les clients. *International Review of Education. Unesco*, 61(6), 779-794.
- Cosnier, J. and Brossard, A. (1984) *La communication non-verbale*. Neuchatel : Delachaux et Niestlé.
- Duranti, A. (2015) *Eyeing each other. International Conference on Gesture Studies*. Paris: Sorbonne.
- Grice, H. P. (1975) Logic and conversation. In: Cole, P. and Morgan, J. (eds) *Studies in Syntax and Semantics III: Speech acts*. New York: Academic Press, pp. 183-198.
- Jorro, A. (2016) Postures et gestes professionnels de formateurs dans l'accompagnement professionnel d'enseignants du premier degré. *eJRIEPS*, 38, 114-132.
- Jorro, A., Gocogne, M.J., Al Khatib, J. and Ramsamy-Prat, P. (2017) Professional gestures: A museum educator at work. *Social Science Information*, 56(2). London : SAGE, 270-283.
- Libois, J. (2011) *La part sensible de l'acte*. Thèse de doctorat. Paris : Cnam.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1945, 1967) *Phénoménologie de la perception*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Mondada, L. (2015) *Don't touch. International Conference on Gesture Studies*. Paris: Sorbonne.
- Ramsamy-Prat, P. (2015) *Le savoir relationnel du pharmacien. Scènes, discours et micro-actes professionnels*. Thèse de doctorat. Paris : Cnam.
- Ramsamy-Prat, P. (2017) L'entretien d'explicitation. Une méthode d'enquête originale. *MeTis Mondì educativi. Anno VII-(1)* Milano, pp. 1-10.
- Searle, J. (1969) *Speech acts*. Oxford University Press.
- Sperber D. and Wilson, D. (2004) *Relevance*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Streek, J., Goodwin, C and LeBaron, C. (2013) *Embodied interaction. Language and body in the material world*. Cambridge University Press.
- Vermersch, P. (1994, 2011) *L'entretien d'explicitation*. Paris : ESF.

LEARNING CONTEXTS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

The Medium is The Message. Mediated Learning and Mental Health

Shanti Fernando*, Alyson King **

** Faculty of Social Science & Humanities
University of Ontario Institute of Technology
Oshawa, Ontario, L1H 7K4
CANADA
shanti.fernando@uoit.ca*

*** Faculty of Social Science & Humanities
University of Ontario Institute of Technology
Oshawa, Ontario, L1H 7K4
CANADA
Alyson.king@uoit.ca*

ABSTRACT: In this paper, we argue that the type and quality of learning and policy contexts can affect the possibility of identity transformation for adult learners experiencing mental illness. We discuss our experience interviewing adult students and educators in hospital-based supported education programs which provide mental health supports along with one-on-one learner-centred literacy and basic skills instruction. This type of learning context affords mediated learning through which individuals may experience transformative learning and extend their identity to include that of student. If those students experiencing mental illness get support from educators and policymakers, they can begin to see a different future and transform their identity. Their success depends on individual capacity, educator capacity, policy capacity and learning context.

KEYWORDS: mental health; learning context; supported education

Introduction

Context is comprised of our history, present, and future possibilities. For adult learners, situating themselves in a learning context helps them reflect on these three elements of their lives. Adult educators should, therefore, work to design programs that will create 'mediated' learning contexts in which adult learners can discover, shape, and make explicit their own knowledge while incorporating new knowledge. The adult educator is the mediating agent who can help focus and organize the world of stimuli for the learner. This is especially important for those experiencing mental illness in order to enhance effective functioning through incorporating the learners' developmental needs, ideas, and cultural context into the learning experience. This type of education-based mediation helps confront the ways in which experience complicates learning. Educators can help students problematize and interrogate experience as much as they help students to access and validate it. "The [learning] environment therefore is critical: it may support or alternatively constrain thriving, healthy development" (Kuger & Klieme, 2016, p. 7). This is imperative for those adult students who are consumers, survivors or ex-patients (c/s/x) of the mental health system and who have many stigmatizing experiences that need incorporation and validation. These Supported Education (SEd) programs have been "a launching pad for individuals to enter the community; the future; pursue meaningful goals; and shed narrow, stigmatizing labels that previously defined them as mental patients or simply as their diagnoses" (Thompson 2013, p. 34). This is transformative learning: identity is transformed by learning as students regain lost elements of identity and add new ones.

As part of our ongoing Canadian government SSHRC-funded project on SEd programs, which offer mental health supports alongside educational programming and training in life skills and socialization, we interviewed 97 adult Canadian students in different learning contexts. The interviews, which included open-ended questions about their educational experiences, allowed us to examine non-traditional learning contexts run by three psychiatric hospitals; the settings for these programs included general classrooms, secure forensic unit classrooms (for those legally found to be either Not Criminally Responsible [NCR] or Unfit) and a community-based classroom. We also interviewed the patient educators in these institutions to gain an understanding of the context of and their insights about the programs and students. It is the context of these programs and these educators that we focus on in this paper.

We argue that the type and quality of learning and policy contexts can affect the possibility of identity transformation for adult learners experiencing mental illness. Beginning with an examination of context as curriculum, we then describe the methodology and learning contexts of our study. Next, we discuss which context is most effective for transformative learning (TL) and detail the nature of TL in this context; finally, we look to policy as the creator of a societal learning context and the ways in which all learning contexts determine the level of identity transformation possible for adult learners experiencing mental illness

Context as Curriculum

Viewing knowledge and learning through a context-based learning lens allows adult educators and program planners to create or enhance contexts for egalitarian adult learning that allow learners to share in the design, process, and evaluation of their learning activities. Transformative learning takes place when teachers are 'mediators' who are able to present information in ways that allow students to further construct meaning based on their own

experiences. As Belzer (2004) contends, “learning contexts themselves are a kind of hidden curriculum, implicitly teaching students about appropriate classroom roles, routines, and activities, and they have an important effect on adult learners” (56). This means that the content of any learning experience includes the context in which it is delivered. Marshall McLuhan argued that:

In a culture like ours, long accustomed to splitting and dividing all things as a means of control, it is sometimes a bit of a shock to be reminded that, in operational and practical fact, the medium is the message. This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium - that is, of any extension of ourselves - result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology. (McLuhan, 1964, p. 7)

In this sense, the medium of SEd programs extends our ability to provide educational opportunities and the space for new stimuli that can afford transformative learning. In other words, mediating learning in context allows attention to be paid to the interaction and intersection among people, tools, and context within a learning situation. The extension of self for the learner is new information, skills and technology, in the case of digital literacy, as well as the tools for self-reflection afforded them by the socialization, study skills and literacy advances in SEd programs. This creates new messages in the personal and social lives of SEd students, which can be messages of hope and self-knowledge. The success of SEd programs depends on the student and the educator, as do most education programs. There is, however, an added dimension for SEd programs, which is the necessity for an anti-sanist approach in order to truly facilitate transformative learning.

Educators in SEd programs creating transformative anti-sanist education

Sanism refers to the “systematic subjugation and oppression of people who have received ‘mental health’ diagnoses, or who are otherwise perceived to be ‘mentally ill’” (LeBlanc & Kinsella 2016, p. 62). Education that is anti-sanist combats this oppression, helps students come to terms with its existence, and empowers them to advocate for themselves within the social and educational systems. We argue that the mediation of adult educators can vary in efficacy and that the most effective mediation in supported education learning contexts is done by well-trained certified teachers who provide empathy, relationship-building and transformative, context-based anti-sanist education in a mixture of hospital-based and community classrooms. The context fundamentally changes the learning experience for students. Our analyses of the programs showed the need for hospital-based classrooms for those who are confined to hospital grounds as well as the importance of community-based programming for those who are being reintegrated into the community.

If we support SEd as a medium for affording transformative learning, the message is that we, as a society, value educational opportunities beyond traditional methods and venues – and we value those who need supported education. Increasing career development through SEd may help students both “achieve educational goals they say they want and may also lessen the personal and communal economic consequences associated with mental illness” (Manthey, Goscha & Rapp 2015, p. 249). This mitigation of the negative trajectory for c/s/x students can create a transformative learning context that can allow for anti-sanist activism. A transformative learning (TL) context, as we are using it in the paper, is informed by Illeris’ (2014) definition of TL as comprising “all learning which implies changes in the identity of the learner” (p. 577). This is a process that is the response to changes in personal, social and psychological conditions that demand corresponding changes in identity. Our findings show that SEd is most important in terms of improving motivation, which is central to TL:

The question of motivation is very important in any learning, and in relation to more profound or TL the nature and strength of the motivation involved is crucial—people do not transform elements of themselves or their identities if they do not have serious reasons to do so (Illeris 2014, p. 583).

Not all educators are able to create these types of learning contexts; therefore, students' experiences can vary and so, too, can their ability to thrive and create new messages of self-knowledge. The extra supports that students receive can make them more hopeful and independent, and can change their educational trajectory by creating an educational context that is different from those they have experienced before. The difference in this non-traditional learning context is the one-on-one instruction that allows for learning at their own pace and timelines, as well as having support for the mental health issues the student is experiencing.

The Learning Contexts of our Study

Learning contexts in non-traditional, hospital-led SEd programs can combat the symbolic and structural violence experienced by students living with mental illness. Transitions between hospitals and communities are also interstitial learning contexts that are precarious in terms of accessibility due to the unstable funding and low availability of adult education programs. We visited SEd programs at three hospitals; all were located on the outskirts of the local community and required transportation to travel to the in-hospital programs. **Hospital 1** is about a 20 minute bus ride from the city centre, on beautiful park-like grounds and in a newer building. **Hospital 2** is located in a 19th century building located on sprawling grounds near a penitentiary and mothballed hospital buildings; it is about a 10 minute bus ride to the nearest town and 20-30 minute bus ride to a slightly larger town where community-based programming is provided. **Hospital 3** is located on the grounds of another 19th century former psychiatric hospital, surrounded by shuttered buildings, and is about a 10 minute drive from the city centre.

Table 1: Summary of classroom locations and staff type

Hospital	Location(s)	Staff Type
1	1 classroom located in the hospital	Vocational Rehabilitation trained member as teaching program manager; Mental Health Nurse; generally 1-2 other staff; volunteers
2	3 classrooms; One in general unit of hospital; one in secure unit of the hospital; one in the community	1 non-teaching manager (recreation therapist); 2 Certified Teachers; volunteers
3	1 classroom in the hospital	1 Certified Teacher (special education certificate); volunteers

Locational/Physical Context of Classrooms

The location of the classroom is important in considering the access that patients have, as well as the ambiance or feel of the classroom. While most of our students were regular stream in-patients and out-patients who attended a SEd classroom located in the psychiatric hospital or in its community-based site, a few were currently or had been charged in the legal system and then categorized as mentally unfit and therefore Not Criminally Responsible (NCR). Those with a NCR designation could only attend programs located in higher security areas as they were unable to leave the facility. Two of the three programs

were operated in spaces that was cramped for the number of students being taught. The classrooms located on the hospital grounds had more restrictive opening hours and were more controlled in terms of access.

Hospital 1 offers programming within a modern hospital building in an area easily accessible to out-patients. Any in-patients wishing to attend the SEd program must have permission to move around the building; those who are on locked wards must be escorted to and from the classroom space and must be within sight of an instructor at all times. Those who do not have permission to leave their ward are not able to take part. The classroom is fairly open with a few smaller glassed-in rooms for students to work individually if they are too distracted when in an open space or among other students. There are computers in the open space, as well as educational resources. Students interact although they do not take their classes as a group. The emphasis is on this context with no community hub so students are comfortable in the hospital but community integration is not part of the physical context.

Only **Hospital 2** provided a community-based classroom, in addition to two classrooms located inside the hospital (including one for NCR patients). The one classroom located in the community provided a more positive context for many students because they did not have to return to the hospital setting. The community-based classroom was centrally located and felt more a part of the local community; it also housed other programs, such as a snack bar, computer lab, and drop-in social center and was adjacent to an employment centre. The easier access meant that there was a continual flow of participants to the various programs. The non-teaching manager said it was a place where “we provide more service here than we do at the hospital. Intentionally. What we do is, we look at it as a transitional point, and we don't believe in bringing people back to the hospital for their education, we believe in stretching it the other way. So if there's someone in hospital, we can use it as a transition point to get them into the community” (Staff Interview W01). He also said that they used this community location so that they will begin to feel comfortable in the community. He believes it is good that “they start stretching their legs in terms of even just getting on the bus, getting to their -- in a supported way -- to where they need to go. And then they get the feeling of more of a community integration. And then we will use this as a dropping off point to integrate them into other locations, like Georgian College or the adult learning centre.” This allows for them to not only feel safe in a hospital location but allows for future locations and physical spaces that could move their education forward.

At **Hospital 3**, there was only one classroom and it was located in an older hospital building down a hallway located behind locked doors; in other words, to access the classroom, both in- and out-patient students must pass through security and have the door unlocked by the guards. Once in the classroom area, the space is bright and cheerful with posters and newsletters highlighting student successes. One staff member commented on the importance of having the education program located in the hospital because participants often do not have many privileges. Locating the program anywhere else would mean that most current participants would not have access to its physical location. For many of these students, the SEd program provided “a safe place to begin building confidence” (Staff Interview B001).

Although Hospital 2's community-based classroom was more accessible and welcoming in many ways, we argue that the hospital-based classrooms are still very important in helping patients to make the transition from life in the hospital to life in the community. Indeed, Hospital 2, with both types of classroom locations, provided the most comprehensive support because there was access to the program while still an in-patient and afforded a smooth transition to a community-based SEd program. Programs held in the forensic unit learning contexts are helpful with decreasing an individual's sense of isolation, but their overall benefits in this regard were limited because they were not instruments of community

integration. Yet, if a hospital only provides SEd programming in a community location, those patients who do not have permission to leave hospital grounds are unable to participate. Hospital-based SEd programs, however, are also limiting in that those who have been discharged from the hospital must return in order to attend, which may cause discomfort or distress, especially if required to go through security to reach the classroom, as was the case with Hospital 3.

Educator Context

Most often, the instructors in **Hospital 1** are not trained teachers. The staff person in charge of the education program had been there for nine years (at the time of the study). She started the program as an ad hoc one in which she went to patient's rooms to help with any education goals they had. She then proposed a classroom where students could come regularly and she would be supported by other staff and volunteers. Her rationale was that it would help patients with their recovery efforts. In her proposal, she argued "there is increasing evidence that people with mental illness are more likely to succeed in improving their personal outcomes through programs that support them in meeting their goals. Many require extensions to the standard timelines and a variety of teaching methods in order to understand and integrate the information that they are learning. Supported education offers people with mental illness the best hope for self-support, a life of dignity and the ability to reclaim their rightful position in society." This proposal was accepted by her hospital; she began the classroom program with seven students attending five morning a week for two hours and then three afternoons for two hours sessions. The program has grown and, at the time of our interviews, there were 75-80 students on their roster. There were, however, some difficulties as there had been a high turnover of other staff, especially among those trained as teachers. This turnover seems to have occurred for much the same reasons as we saw at **Hospital 3**: certified teachers are paid less than if they worked for a school board and they have less status than those classed as healthcare professionals. The patient educators in **Hospital 1** concentrate on creating a comfortable and safe environment for their students and help them with either digital or print literacy or with specific high school credits. The focus here is on socialization of students and making them feel secure and comfortable in the hospital classroom. During the interviews, the program manager said that community integration was not a priority. While the educators encourage students they do not always push students forward. Not having a certified teacher running or regularly part of the program meant that the students were part of a 'homework club' rather than an education program. Although we believe that those educators within this program are committed to helping students, they would not be creating anti-sanist education in the sense of transforming their identities beyond that of a patient to being a student or community member. This program seeks to make the students comfortable in the hospital space for learning, which helps them to feel supported, but it does little to move them beyond the hospital-based programming, to motivate them to become involved in their communities, or to create lives outside of the hospital.

Hospital 2 provides the most extensive programming with two well-trained, certified teachers and three classroom spaces: one in the forensic (secure for NCR patients) unit, one in the hospital (but not behind security), and one in a nearby community. This model is perhaps ideal, although it is limited by having only two instructors for three classrooms. Having adequate educational facilities for individuals at the various stages of their recovery (while on a locked ward, while hospitalized but with grounds privileges, and after discharge) means that there is a better chance for ongoing and consistent education. The classroom in the forensic unit was modern and well-designed so that the teacher could easily monitor activities on and off the computer. However, at the time of the interviews, this classroom was

closed due to an institutional security breach. This meant only a few students on the forensic unit were able to maintain their studies with the instructor who had to meet with participants individually on the ward. At the time of interviews, there were about 18 students in the forensic unit. Activities in the other two classrooms were not affected by the breach. The main program began with one student almost 30 years before our visit. It had grown to 30 students by the time we interviewed at the site, but with only one teacher for two sites it cannot grow much more. Connections with the Independent Learning Centre, Adult Learning Centre, some other local learning and counselling centres, local school board and nearby college allow the educators to encourage community integration for those students who are able; the community classroom includes both outpatients and inpatients hoping to become outpatients. The patient educator responsible for the community classroom encourages volunteering, attending community events and connecting with other students. The educator for both the general hospital and community classrooms works diligently to make sure that her students are developing a positive self-image. She believes that programs like this are important and "I think that we are privileged because we get to see people reclaim the part of their life that they might have had to put on hold because of their illness. And from their involvement with our services, I get to see, you know, not just reaching of their educational goals, but also their confidence grow"(Staff Interview W-02). The educator for the community and general programs is therefore practicing anti-sanist transformative education by motivating students to reclaim their lives and create more confident identities whether inside the hospital or in the community.

Hospital 3 introduced a formal SED program with a certified teacher in 1983 after having a staff member work informally with patients on their educational goals; for most of the time since 1985, the same teacher has been the sole instructor. Although the instructor is a certified teacher, she is not considered a healthcare professional. This means that she is not paid at the same level as either a certified teacher working for a school board or a healthcare professional; as well, in spite of her vast experience, she is required to report to someone who is categorized as a healthcare professional. Furthermore, the lack of status and poor pay means that the position will be unattractive to qualified teachers when the current instructor retires; indeed, any turnover in staffing has been because teachers have moved to a position in a school (Staff Interview B005). The current instructor is passionate about what she does, to the point that she has sought Additional Qualification as a Special Education specialist. As the hospital has changed, so too has the SED program. In the early years, the instructor recalled that the classroom was a room in "the tunnel" – "a very tiny, tiny little hole in the hall in the basement" (Staff Interview B005). When she took over the program, there were only seven people participating; since then, the program usually has, on average, about 30 people. After about ten years, a literacy instructor was also brought in to work with small groups of "lower functioning" people. One problem that she faces in working with patients in the forensic unit is that patients are frequently moved after three or four months, and they are often moved with little or no warning making it impossible to ensure that they can continue with their education in any consistent manner. Having NCR students also means that small teacher-student ratios of no more than 1 to 6 must be maintained and she must be able to have them within view at all times. Once a patient is discharged from the hospital, she discourages them from returning to the hospital-based program as an out-patient. She believes that they should be accessing community-run programs. This decision is partly due to the fact that, as the sole teacher, she cannot manage large numbers of participants and so prefers to reserve her space and time for in-patients; more importantly, however, she believes that they will benefit more from being integrated into programs in the community. Furthermore, for most participants, they are working at different levels on different skills, so group work is not possible. Once discharged, if they want to continue with their studies, most get referred to the local school board's adult continuing education program that is co-

located with a community college. Being able to continue their educational pursuits in a supportive environment that is both embedded in the community and is a school for adults rather than a hospital or traditional high school helps to alleviate anxiety and leads to improved success. This again is anti-sanist transformative education, which supports students on the journey to creating less isolated identities and becoming part of their community.

Policy Context: Creation of Societal Learning

The final learning context is the wider society in which the students live and where they will ultimately have to learn to negotiate the barriers in their lives. Corrigan, Druss, and Perlick (2014) identify various barriers associated with the continuous stigma, both structural and societal, surrounding mental illness. These include personal-level barriers, such as attitudes and behaviors that are affected by their stigma which adversely affect health decisions and mental health literacy, and provider and system-level barriers, which constrain access to services and the labour market because of the influence of mental health stigma. The authors emphasize the need to tackle stigma through policy in order for those with mental illness to gain access to proper treatment. Therefore, it is policy that can create the societal learning context.

In Canada, the provincial governments are primarily responsible for policy in health and education; as such, they provide direction for both mental health supports and adult education. In the province in which all our hospitals are located, recent policy includes increased investment in both those areas. The *Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care* marks a recent investment in mental health and housing supports that are needed for job and educational access for those experiencing mental illness. In February 2017, Ontario's Minister of Health and Long-Term Care announced an investment of \$73 million to mental health care programming, which includes new funding for supportive housing (Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, 2017; Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists [OSOT], 2017; The Canadian Press, 2017). In addition, increased support for adult learners is found in Ontario's *Lifelong Learning and Skills Plan*. In June 2017, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development [MAESD] (2017b) announced the provision of "free reading, writing, math and digital skills training to an additional 80,000 adult learners across Ontario over four years." This new funding amounts to a \$185 million investment (MAESD, 2017b). Furthermore, over the next four years, the base funding for the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program will be increased: \$20 million in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, \$25 million in 2018-2019, \$55 million in 2019-2020, and \$85 million in 2020-2021 (MAESD, 2017c). These policies represent increased support for adult education programs that have been without significant investment in Ontario for a number of years; indeed, the funding has either stagnated or programs and centres have been cut. Mental health programs are also important for adult learners experiencing mental illness. The Mental Health Commission of Canada (2012) states that by the time people reach 40 years of age, one in two Canadians will have experienced mental illness (p. 1). This means that adult educators will need to address sanism and mental illness in their learning contexts. Policy can help create better societal contexts through social investment but improvements will take time. This means that although we are moving in the right direction, we will need to continue advocating for the maintenance of mental health and adult education programs at increased funding levels.

Conclusion

Given structural and personal barriers, there are limitations to the benefits of any learning context. As Field and Lynch (2015) articulate:

The question is then whether educational institutions can help learners to use their liminal status not only to understand their own biographies within the social world, but also to imagine their futures differently, and develop resources that allow them to shape as well as cope with change. But it may also mean being open about the limitations of education in the face of the powerful structural forces that impinge upon, and constrain, our agency. (16)

For those with a mental disability, this liminality is felt more keenly than by other adult learners and their social and systemic context can still limit their ability to transform their lives. There are limits to education especially for those experiencing mental illness. Supported education can help students gain self-knowledge, but cannot change the past nor totally remove stigma or systemic discrimination. The programs with certified teachers that focus on moving students beyond the hospital if they are able and getting them more involved in their communities and further education are the most effective at creating transformative learning. The hospital-based SED programs which we examined all helped students, albeit to varying degrees, by being an alternative reality in which they are not discriminated against. Yet, this is not the reality they will likely experience outside of the hospital – where those with mental illness struggle to access adequate supports and to find a welcoming atmosphere. With changing societal attitudes and if government supports are in place, the integrative abilities of students living with mental illness will increase. Policies, like the recent ones in Ontario, Canada, have started to recognize the need to improve financial and social supports for adult learners experiencing mental illness. This will assist and strengthen the work of adult educators in SED programs to create anti-sanist transformative learning contexts in which to provide educational and learning/socialization supports and to motivate those who are able to integrate into their communities and gain greater confidence in their lives. If SED learning contexts and societal contexts become more accessible places then some of the limitations we have discussed can be mitigated to create the best outcomes possible that are commensurate with student capability and desire.

References

- Belzer, A. (2004). "It's Not Like Normal School": The Role of Prior Learning Contexts in Adult Learning. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 55(1), 41-59.
- Corrigan, P. W., Druss, B. G., & Perlick, D. A. (2014). The impact of mental illness stigma on seeking and participating in mental health care. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 15(2), 37-70.
- Field, J. & Lynch, H. (2015) "Getting stuck, becoming unstuck: agency, identity and transition between learning contexts" in *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, Volume 21, 3-17.
- Illeris, K. (2014). Transformative learning re-defined: As changes in elements of the identity. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 33(5), 573-586. doi:10.1080/02601370.2014.917128
- Kuger, S. and Klieme, E. (2016) Chapter 1: Dimensions of Context Assessment. In S. Kuger *et al.* (eds.), *Assessing Contexts of Learning*, Methodology of Educational Measurement and Assessment, (p 4-37) Switzerland: Springer International Publishing. DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-45357-6_1
- Leblanc, S. & Kinsella, E. (2016) Toward Epistemic Justice: A Critically Reflexive Examination of 'Sanism' and Implications for Knowledge Generation. *Studies in Social Justice*, Volume 10, Issue 1, 59-78.

Manthey, T. J., Goscha, R., & Rapp, C. (2015). Barriers to supported education implementation: Implications for administrators and policy makers. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42(3), 245-251. doi:10.1007/s10488-014-0583-z

McLuhan, Marshall. (1964) *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Mental Health Commission of Canada (2012). *Making the Case for Investing in Mental Health in Canada*. Retrieved from [http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/system/files/private/document/Investing in Mental Health FINAL Version ENG.pdf](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/system/files/private/document/Investing_in_Mental_Health_FINAL_Version_ENG.pdf)

Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (2017a). Literacy and Basic Skills Corrections Literacy Initiative Employment Ontario Network Questions and Answers [website]. Retrieved from <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/lbs-cli-qs-as-en.pdf>

Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development. (2017b). *Ontario Equipping More Adults with Essential Job Skills for Free*. Retrieved from the Government of Ontario <https://news.ontario.ca/maesd/en/2017/06/ontario-equipping-more-adults-with-essential-job-skills-for-free-1.html>

Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development. (2017c). Questions and Answers re: Literacy and Basic Skills 2017-2018 Funding Increase. Retrieved from <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/lbs-4years-funding-increase-qs-as-en.pdf>

Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (2017). *Ontario providing faster access to mental health services for thousands of people*. Retrieved from the Government of Ontario <https://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2017/02/ontario-providing-faster-access-to-mental-health-services-for-thousands-of-people.html>

Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists (2017). Ontario budget 2017 key components of interest to occupational therapists [website]. Retrieved from http://www.osot.on.ca/docs/advocacy/ontario_budget_2017.pdf

The Canadian Press. (2017, February 8). Ontario invests an additional \$140M in mental health services. *CBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/140-million-ontario-mental-health-1.3972346>

Thompson, Christa. (2013) Supported Education as a Mental Health Intervention. *Journal of Rural Mental Health*. Vol. 37, No. 1, 25-36.

Life Transitions and Professional Transitions

Micaela Castiglioni

Associate Professor of Continuing Education, Adult Education, and Education for the Elderly, "R. Massa"
Department of Human Sciences and Education
University of Milano-Bicocca

ABSTRACT: Contemporary educational and occupational scenarios, which entail both new knowledge requirements and new professional epistemologies, as well as "alternative" competences, appear to be increasingly dominated by the logic of the marketplace. Most European countries appear to be going through an intellectual and political slowdown, accompanied by an underinvestment in quality systems for human development at the cognitive and emotional levels.

At least in Italy, higher education offerings paradoxically continue to be based on self-referential, theoretical, and subject-disciplinary criteria, with the risk of neglecting practical-occupational knowledge.

Hence, we argue that university curricula need to be redesigned to take into account the competences required for our contemporary era, and to link theory and knowledge with new practices allowing subjects to manage the various challenges in their personal, educational and professional lives.

In educational and occupational settings in the fields of care and healthcare, it has been observed that medical and nursing students entering the professional world urgently need to develop both cognitive and emotional competence (Bert, 2007; Castiglioni, 2014; Moja e Vegni, 2000; Zannini, 2008).

KEYWORDS: Transitions, "silent" competences, internship, protective factors, adult education

“Full” and “empty”: towards a new kind of competence

Hence, we suggest that professional transitions in adulthood always call into question the extremely contemporary theme of competencies: a notion that needs to be reconceptualised within educational theory, with consequent implications for methods and procedures..

“Competences ‘are not things’ (Cepollaro, 2008), they may not be reduced to containers of knowledge and executive abilities that are acquired and accumulated over time” (De Carlo, 2014, p.85).

Competence, indeed, consists of the constant readiness and capacity to use and/or transform one’s knowing, knowing how to be, and knowing how to do, in new, uncertain and unpredictable situations, in the healthcare sector amongst others.

The adult-professional may be defined as competent if he or she is able to think, feel and act “‘in a competent way’ [...] that makes sense of the paths of action undertaken and creates pathways of meaning [...]” (De Carlo, 2014, p.85), something that is increasingly urgent situations characterized by tiredness, suffering and pain, such as care settings.

Given this background, we focus on how what might be defined as an *emptiness* in the care relationship may be transformed into a *fullness*, by leveraging young professionals’ university training, and especially their internship experience, given that “knowing everything about a disease [...] doesn’t automatically mean knowing how to provide care”.

Biographies in transition

The research project presented here concerns two different kinds of biography affected by transition: that of the novice carer, but also that of the elderly person, who is going through a double passage: entering old age, with its inherent gains and losses, and entering the residential care facility, known, in the Italian context, as an RSA.

To this consideration, we must add that the *care encounter* with the elderly person is also an *intergenerational encounter*. This requires the professional to develop a sensitive outlook on and approach to the fragilities of old age, on which and through which it is possible to work, in the educational sense of helping elderly subjects to dynamically adapt to their new life and care contexts.

Hence, future healthcare professionals must learn to attend to the material, organizational, emotional, relational, and symbolic dimensions of the place of care and the care relationship, which means constantly refining their own personal, professional and relational sensibility. This in turn demands that they develop strong self-awareness in relation to how they fulfil their professional role, particularly while they are interns or at the beginning of their careers.

Not only professional transitions

We must not forget that transitions in the work place are not solely professional but also existential in nature, and precisely for this reason all the more complex, delicate, and demanding. For example, transitions within healthcare organizations - the focus of the present research project - whether they involve newly trained practitioners or experienced

practitioners joining the organization, practitioners moving from one area to another, or staff members leaving the organization and their healthcare role, inevitably bring into play the dimension of the self, and an intertwining of professional identity and personal identity that is particularly salient to the caring professions. Hence the need for adult education to take up the theoretical and practical *challenges* posed by transitions as an increasingly crucial feature of our changeable, liquid, and uncertain contemporary era: an era that is itself in a continuous state of transition but often without clear direction or purpose. Clearly, we understand adult education and the *lifelong learning* paradigm as not exclusively (and reductively) concerned with technical and instrumental competences - sometimes referred to as *hard skills* - but as also encompassing crucial protective, emotional, postural, existential, introspective, self-reflexive, and relational resources - or the earlier mentioned *soft skills* or "silent" competences (Biasin, 2012; Castiglioni, 2018; De Carlo, 2014).

While making transitions is something ontologically human, this does not mean that transitions "from...to..." and "beyond..." are always and only experienced in positive, or even neutral, terms. Transitions, including professional ones, introduce "a before and an after", a discontinuity, into the life story of a person, whether a young adult or an older adult: this is why we speak about "before the transition", "during the transition" and "after the transition".

In the case under analysis here, healthcare practitioners joining an organization for the first time need to read and realistically engage with this particular setting, decoding the explicit and, more often, implicit rules and values that are peculiar it, thereby developing an awareness of the workplace culture and a sense of belonging that should not however stifle their own individual professional identities - even if they are inexperienced. Indeed, the novice practitioner can represent a resource for themselves and for others - more experienced colleagues and/or patients, including older patients - and even for the organization, which loses out when self-referential, locked into what is "already known", and hazardously concerned with "sparing" "thought" and "action" (Mortari, 2003) especially when thought and action have to do with care.

Therefore, professional transitions such as the dual transition explored in the research described here (internship and initiation into the workplace/hospital/RSA; the intergenerational encounter between the young healthcare professional and elderly patient) are all-absorbing for the young practitioner: "The adult is engaged in the complex work of reorganizing and attributing meaning to his or her professional experience, which is not isolated in a compartment of its own, but situated within existence as a whole and in relation to components of identity (such as balance, resistance, resilience, adaptability, self-efficacy, emancipation¹) and values/ethics" (Biasin, 2012, p.49).

In other words, making a transition is not always an easy experience, but it nonetheless offers an opportunity for the young practitioner to grow and develop at both the personal and professional levels. Equally, it can be experienced as a crisis, inducing the individual to "stagnate", to use a term coined by Erickson (*ibid.*).

The internship period, and the presence of a formal or informal tutor, are among the aspects we have chosen to explore in our research, to assess whether they can act as external protective or resilience factors that can be pedagogically oriented in support of the transition within the transition: that is to say, the passage from a transition experienced as "undergone" 'to a transition that has been' "constructed" (Biasin, 2012).

It is well known that the ability to adapt resiliently or actively is underpinned by both individual intrapsychic factors and external variables, where the latter in our case include an

¹ Our addition.

intentional educational dispositive designed ad hoc to formally or informally support the inexperienced care professional (doctor, nurse, educator, etc...). In the words of Morin:

Education should respond to the wager of uncertainty [...], with its eyes open to the wager, accepting the challenge, recognizing the risks and working [...] to accommodate the evolving situation by means of appropriate strategies (2001)².

Research focus

Our primary research focus is on the lived experience and representations of care professionals who have recently initiated careers in healthcare contexts. The aim is to foster their awareness of the dimensions and factors that contribute to, or undermine, the construction of their professional identities and by extension the efficacy and breadth of the care they provide to their elderly patients. In order to identify the potential and limitations of the organizational context in which the professionals currently operate, the “conversational coupling” between the research and the professional is also designed to develop realistic proposals for change/improvement, given that the study is informed by a transformative perspective.

We now outline the core themes underpinning our research questions, which have been jointly identified by the SIPED³ research group, whose key interest is the education of (health)care professionals:

- entering the world of professional practice confronts recently qualified professionals with the challenge of having to accept *responsibility* as a function of their specific set of competences technical and non), engage in *decision-making* and make *choices*. Do young professionals agree with this statement? In what situations have they felt challenged by the responsibility associated with providing care? What/who did they find to be of support in these cases?;
- do young professionals believe the knowledge/competences they acquired through their university training are sufficient to provide care interventions that are not purely technical but also draw on existential and emotional knowledge? Do novice healthcare professionals perceive that what they think, feel, know and do, on the one hand, is in line what they should think, feel, know and do, on the other? On the basis of their lived experience, it is more likely that they will report a gap. Are healthcare professionals coming onto a ward or into a residential care facility for the first time well enough equipped to realistically and inductively interpret and take on board the place and the situation in which they are called to work? Or, does the complex and problematic nature of these settings, make them feel so insecure that they have difficulty accepting and

² In Biasin C., (2012).

³ The project team members are: D.Bruzzzone (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore-Piacenza); M.Castiglioni (Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca); B.Gambacorti-Passerini (Università degli Studi di Milano); S.Kanizsa (Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca); A.Lotti (Università degli Studi di Genova); G.Mosconi (Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca); E.Musi (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore-Piacenza); C.Palmieri (Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca); L.Zannini (Università degli Studi di Milano). Part of this research has been presented under the umbrella of the interuniversity project HackUniTO: “La ricerca diventa protagonista con #HackUniTO For Ageing” (M.Castiglioni, C.Girotti and the other members of the research team cited above) <http://www.hu4a.it>. “We design and produce in collaboration with enterprise products and services for healthy and active aging”³. With a view to making our research even more salient to the broader framework of HackUniTo, we focused in detail on the core themes inherent in healthcare practitioners’ transition to working in RSA (this part of our research was presented to the University of Turin under the title: “Joint university research explores the competences needed by welfare and care professionals in nursing homes and healthcare settings”).

See also a volume cited in the references section, edited by G.Bertagna and S.Ulivieri, in which a preliminary report (M.Castiglioni, 2017; S.Kanizsa, 2017) on this study has been published.

managing their conflicting feelings, leading to personal distress, a loss of confidence in their own abilities, disillusionment, loss of motivation, misunderstanding with colleagues, and relational difficulties with patients and/or their families, etc.?

- the transition to working in a hospital or residential care facility for the elderly means coming into contact with the *explicit* and *implicit* organizational culture of these settings: How do the young professionals cope with the cognitive and emotional impact of this encounter?;
- does the newly qualified professional's internship experience act as a sort of protection or resilience factor on which to draw on during the transition from the world of education to that of professional (health) care?

Sample, methods and instruments: brief summary

The various research teams⁴ investigated either university students' (of education and speech therapy) perceptions of their practical training placements (thus tapping into what are perceived to be the flaws in current internship programmes), or issues encountered by young healthcare practitioners, initially including medical interns, on entering the work place.

Next, the researchers homed in on the difficulties identified, and especially on the reasons underlying young healthcare practitioners' - specifically nurses - decision to join the healthcare sector. This in turn necessarily implied focusing once again on the practical training component of the participants' education, viewed as a bridging experience that ideally should facilitate the transition from university to the workplace.

The research is still currently at an early and qualitative stage, and has so far involved administering semi-structured interviews to young recently hired healthcare practitioners (who joined their organization no earlier than 2011, and were offered permanent employment contracts on graduating from university).

We hypothesized that the difficulties experienced by newly recruited healthcare professionals would concern for example the need to take responsibility for decisions that during the internship were handled by tutors, the challenges associated with joining established teams with different habits and practices to those taught at university, and the presence or absence of an initial mentor figure.

Our preliminary findings provided support for the hypotheses outlined above. Furthermore⁵:

- The interviewees reported that it had not been easy for them to fit in with an established work team: depending on the type of healthcare setting (hospital, RSA, etc.), nurses had been inducted over a period of variable length (from 24 hours to 3 months) by a designated colleague who explained the "house rules" to them, initiated them in their duties and "introduced them" to the team. They had thus either been helped to or had "struggled" to learn their jobs. Clearly, this process had either been helped or hindered by the status of the tutor: the induction typically went more smoothly when the person in charge of it was a senior member of the team.
- In relation to university training, and specifically the internship component, the participants suggested ways of simplifying and accelerating interns' transition to the work place.

⁴ See earlier footnote.

⁵ This paragraph outlines the key work of Kanizsa S., (2017).

Finally, the researchers analysed methodological issues concerning the choice of subjects to be interviewed, and the data collection method itself.

A first problem raised and discussed was recruitment of the sample and especially how to contact informants. A shared concern was that if participants were nominated "top-down", that is, by their superiors, they might be more reticent about expressing their views, making it difficult to collect meaningful data. On the other hand, a "bottom up" approach, based on chains of personal acquaintance, might also be at risk of biasing responses in a given direction.

Moreover, it seemed important to contact HR managers and head nurses to obtain precise data on the numbers of new recruits and on the methods of induction implemented across different departments.

One issue that arose immediately, and was promptly addressed by the research team, was participants' type of employment contract: it was decided to exclude practitioners on fixed-term contracts from the research sample, because they are unlikely to receive formal induction and because they are not perceived as and do not perceive themselves as long-term members of staff, and therefore tend to have superficial relations with colleagues.

A further issue concerned the diverse roles associated with working in different departments and settings: district nurses work in very different conditions to their colleagues on hospital wards (for example, they do not work shifts), while residential care facilities for older people demand a different and, in some respects, over-specified set of professional skills.

The research team also reviewed the data collection approach used, which to date has consisted of a "classical" interview method.

It was asked whether it might not be more valuable to adopt an ethnographic method of immersion/observation in the field, an approach that has yielded excellent results in English-speaking contexts. A long debate ensued on the pros and cons of such a method, which on the one hand offers the opportunity to investigate the study topic from multiple perspectives, but on the other, could be difficult to implement in hospital or residential care settings for a number of reasons (the challenges of "cohabitation" for researchers and practitioners, fear of evaluation, and so on)⁶.

The research sample is composed of interns or newly qualified healthcare professionals in hospitals and residential centres for the elderly in Northern Italy. The participating healthcare facilities are all medium-sized. During the current research phase, we are conducting narrative and semi-structured interviews as well as focus group discussions. This qualitative phase, by its nature, is being carried out with a limited number of informants.

State of the art

We expect that the data collected during this phase will advance our understanding of the phenomenon of transitioning from basic training to working in healthcare. In light of this increased understanding, we plan to make realistic proposals for redesigning and improving in-service training for healthcare professionals. Finally, we hope that the published research data will form the basis for enhanced dialogue between educational-pedagogical knowledge and medical-healthcare knowledge, at the academic level.

⁶ See earlier footnote.

References

- AA.VV. (1997) *"Transizioni", Adulità*, 5, aprile, 1997, Milano: Guerini e Associati.
- Bert G. (2007) *Medicina narrativa. Storie e parole nella relazione di cura*. Roma: Il Pensiero Scientifico Editore.
- Biasin C. (2012) *Le transizioni. Modelli e approcci per l'educazione degli adulti*. Lecce: Pensa Multimedia.
- Biasin C. (2010) *L'accompagnamento. Teorie, pratiche, contesti*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Bruzzo, D., Musi, E. (eds.) (2007) *Vissuti di cura. Competenze emotive e formazione nelle professioni sanitarie*. Milano: Guerini & Associati, Milano
- M.Castiglioni (2017) *Pedagogia delle professioni della salute e della cura* in G.Bertagna, S.Ulivieri (Ed.) *La ricerca pedagogica nell'Italia contemporanea. Problemi e prospettive*. Roma: Edizioni Studium.
- Castiglioni M. (2016) *La parola che cura*. Milano: Edizioni Libreria Cortina
- Castiglioni M. (Ed.), (2015) *Figure della cura. Gesti, immagini, parole per narrare*, Milano: Guerini Scientifica.
- Castiglioni M. (Ed.), (2014) *Narrazione e cura*. Milano: Mimesis.
- Castiglioni M. (Ed.) (2011) *L'educazione degli adulti tra crisi e ricerca di senso*. Milano: Unicopli.
- Cepollaro, G. (2008) *Le competenze non sono cose. Lavoro, apprendimento, gestione dei collaboratori*. Milano: Guerini & Associati.
- De Carlo M.E. (2014) *Formarsi <<lifelong>> e <<lifewide>>. Narrazione, innovazione e didattica nell'Università dell'Apprendimento Permanente*. Milano: Edizioni Unicopli.
- De Carlo M.E. (2012) *Competenze e biografie in azione. Proposte operativo-didattiche di Lifelong Learning nelle organizzazioni complesse*. Milano: Franco Angeli
- Formenti L., Castiglioni M., (2014) *Focus on Learners. A Search for Identity and Meaning in Autobiographical Practices*, in Zafiris G.K., Gravani M.N., (eds), *Challenging the "European Area of Lifelong Learning"*. A critical Response. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Gambacorti-Passerini M.B. (2016) *Pedagogia e medicina: un incontro possibile. Un'esperienza di ricerca in salute mentale*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Girotti C. (2016) *La medicina grafica nella formazione e nell'educazione dei professionisti della cura* in *Educational Reflective Practices*, anno 6, n.2.
- Kanizsa S. (2017) *Lo strumento del tirocinio nelle professioni della salute e della cura come strumento di transizione* in G.Bertagna, S.Ulivieri (Ed.), *La ricerca pedagogica nell'Italia contemporanea. Problemi e prospettive*. Roma: Edizioni Studium.
- Marinelli M. (2015). *Trattare le malattie, curare le persone. Idee per una Medicina Narrativa*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Mezirow J.D. (2013) *Apprendimento e Trasformazione*, Milano: Raffaello Cortina Editore.
- Mezirow J.D., Taylor E.W. (2009) *Transformative Learning in practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Moja E., Vegni E. (2000) *La visita medica centrata sul paziente*. Milano: Raffaello Cortina.
- Mortari L. (2003) *Apprendere dall'esperienza. Il pensare riflessivo nella formazione*. Roma: Carocci
- Palmieri C. (2016) *Un'esperienza di aver cura appunti pedagogici sul fare educazione*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Zannini L. (2008) *Medical humanities e medicina narrativa. Nuove prospettive nella formazione dei professionisti della cura*. Milano: Raffaello Cortina.

Mentor regulation activity towards physiotherapist students following a learning clinical situation.

Florence Sartier*

CNAM (Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers), Paris
CRF (Centre de Recherche sur la Formation)
41 Rue Gay Lussac
75005 Paris
France
sartier.florence@neuf.fr

ABSTRACT: This presentation aims to study pedagogical practices in a training course context and more specifically the context of physiotherapists' initial training. It focuses on regulation activity towards physiotherapist students in the third year of training. Good recommended mentoring practices seem to be based on both the quality of interaction between mentor and trainee and the practice of analysis of their own professional activity, which requires student's reasoning and phrasing of it (Allal 2010; 2007; Jorro & al, 2016; Jorro & Mercier-Brunel, 2011; Clot, 2006; Paquay, 2010;). What are the current physiotherapist tutor's regulations practices whose purpose is to train "an autonomous and reflexive practitioner"?

The research qualitative methodology used consists of video regulation interviews plus self-confrontation interviews. The objective is to know and understand regulation process.

After presenting the theoretical framework of the study, the qualitative research methodology will be briefly described. We will report the first results, thus contributing to the discussion of mentor regulation and regulation process.

KEYWORDS: mentor, physiotherapist, regulation of learning

Introduction

The thesis project aims to study physiotherapists mentor's pedagogical practices in the context of physiotherapists' initial training. A new reference-training program was published in September 2015 by the French Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Women's Rights which makes it an official university training. This evolution corresponds to what is recommended in the Bologna report (1999, Conseil de l'Europe) for the creation of a European Higher Education area.

Moreover, this professional training focuses on a skill-based approach. Professional skills can be acquired mainly through professional activity (Tardif, 2006; Scallon, 2007; Le Boterf, 2011).

From now on, the mentor plays an admitted leading part in students' acquisition of knowledge and skills in the course of their training in keeping with the aim to train "an autonomous and reflexive practitioner" having mastered all the skills planned by this new text ruling the profession.

Students' theoretical training is punctuated by professional training – also referred to as clinical training for health professional – which contributes to the development of the future practitioners' skills and professional identity.

The first question which motivated the research was: what are the current assessment practices among physiotherapists' mentors?

Good recommended mentoring practices seem to be based on both the quality of interaction between mentor and trainee and the practice of analysis of their own professional activity, which requires student's reasoning and phrasing of it (Allal 2010; 2007; Jorro & al, 2016; Jorro & Mercier-Brunel, 2011; Clot, 2006; Paquay, 2010;). What are the physiotherapist mentor's current regulation practices whose purpose is to train "an autonomous and reflexive practitioner"?

Regarding the training of physiotherapists, few studies exist about physiotherapist mentor regulation practices.

The purpose of the research is to study mentor regulation activity analysis following in-situ clinical learning. This research project is interested in the activity of physiotherapists' mentors in relation to students, in the context of mentor regulation and exchange between tutor and tutee following a clinical learning situation. In the context of clinical practice, what are the pedagogical mentoring practices implemented for physiotherapists in a clinical situation management to assist students in their learning process? What are the regulation practices among physiotherapists' mentors to guide students through their professional learning? What type of feedbacks does the mentor use to assist students in their learning process? What does the tutor favour in terms of form and substances or content?

The results of this study may contribute to know and understand the mentoring regulation process of professional practices in particular as regards the initial training of physiotherapists.

Context

Physiotherapists initial training's aims

The training of physiotherapists is a sandwich-course training. Its aim is to train autonomous, responsible and reflexive practitioners.

Physiotherapist care requires a medical doctor prescription. There is no access direct in France. The physiotherapist's scope of intervention, is large: rehabilitation, prevention, social and professional reintegration, educational therapy, and care.

These activities contribute to the promotion of health, prevention, screening, diagnostic, treatment and research. The therapeutic approach consists of different sequences including: clinical assessment, physiotherapist's diagnostic, therapy project development, and treatment (Gedda, 2014; Gedda, 2001). The physiotherapist's aim is also to make the patient responsible and autonomous.

The physiotherapist takes care of the patient and considers the patient's psychological, social and cultural context in a global approach (Ministère des Affaires Sociales, de la Santé et des Droits des Femmes, 2015).

Seven roles have been identified in the physiotherapist's occupation: expert, practitioner, health educator, communicator, trainer, supervisor and manager (Gatto, Roquet, & Vincent, 2015). The physiotherapist is not a mere doctor's operator, he/she is a treatment developer with complex skills enabling to guide, raise, and take care of.

The physiotherapist operates in an environment that promotes healthcare cost control, and in a context of assessment of professional practices and evidence-based practices (François, Boussat, Guyomard & Seigneurin, 2015; Massiot, 2005; Parent et al, 2013; Gedda, 2017). Health problems and patient-physiotherapist relationships are changing. The patient becomes an actor of his/her own health, he/she co-decides and co-assesses, he/she is a partner (Gatto, 2006; Pelaccia, 2016). There is also an injunction to lifelong learning for healthcare professionals (Coulet, 2016). The new training referential and the specific context of health professionals contribute to the evolution of the practices of physiotherapists. It entails a continuous adjustment of their practises.

The physiotherapist's tutor

The tutor's role is to assist the trainee in his/her professional skills acquisition and to assess them. The mentor implements the assessment process and helps the student in his/her self-assessment process (Ministère des Affaires Sociales, de la Santé et des Droits des Femmes, 2015). He/she uses regulation of learning in order to facilitate professional practice learning.

The enlargement of the physiotherapist's skills added to these new pedagogical practices have consequences as regards the change of position of all the actors involved in the process of physiotherapist training. Reflexive practice, activity of one's analysis, self-assessment, formative assessment and regulation become the guiding principles of physiotherapist training. The objective is to develop the student's responsibility and his/her autonomy (Ministère des Affaires Sociales, de la Santé et des Droits des Femmes, 2015).

The training of physiotherapist tutors is recommended but not compulsory. The professionalization of the tutors implies acquiring social, relational, pedagogical, reflexive and organisational skills (HAS, 2014).

For some authors (Plazolles, 2016), most physiotherapist tutors have not yet had the opportunity to access pedagogical training, therefore many of them have limited knowledge about pedagogy according to this physiotherapist. They have no formal training and they learn “on the job”, by experiencing.

Physiotherapist tutors currently are physiotherapists in active employment. They work in traditional and independent establishments. They do not have extra time or have not identified specific time to manage tutees, they tutor their trainees during their physiotherapist activity practice.

There are currently roughly as many women as men working in the field of physiotherapy (49% female and 51% male: CNOMK, 2017, 2016, 2011): the profession of physiotherapist is increasingly opening up to women.

French physiotherapist practices are varied. Some of them are specialised, others have some diversified activity (Matharan, Micheau & Rigal, 2009). Their work organisation also differs: practices are varied among physiotherapists.

Theoretical framework and research updated aims

Mentoring

The tutor’s role is to help, guide, introduce to physiotherapist work and participate in the student socialization process (Filliettaz, Rémetry & Trébert, 2014). Some authors identify several duties for tutors: host, support, assessment, transmission, and communication (Adam & Bayle, 2012). They provide psychological and pedagogical assistance (Paul, 2003, 2002).

Some authors consider the main roles are to assist the trainee in the acquisition and assessment of skills (Pelpel, 1995; Benoit, 2011; Berrahou & Roumanet, 2013). Other authors emphasize that the tutee must be active. The mentor guides, adapts the level of the task, motivates, provides arguments (Kunégel, 2011; Orly Louis, 2009; Bruner, 1983). He/she favors the development of understanding. He/she makes sense without substituting himself/herself to the tutee’s reasoning (Mahlaoui & Lorent, 2016). He initiates the tutee into the real activity of the occupation and its further evolution (Bilett, 2011; ChampyRamoussenard, 2005; Oursel, 2016).

The tutor’s task is to involve the tutee in a reflexive process and in the analysis of his/her practice. The tutee assesses himself/herself and makes the situations encountered explicit. He/she explains and increases his/her clinical reasoning (HAS, 2014; Brignon et Ravestein, 2015). The tutor supports the reflection and the logical interlink (Becerril, Ortega, Calmettes, Fraysse, & Lagarrigue, 2009). For that purpose, the tutor questions (Mayen, 2000) and interacts with the tutee in order to trigger the regulation process (Allal, 2007, 2010; Gettliffe & Toffoli, 2011; Guichon & Drissi, 2008).

We note the tutor’s ambiguous position which oscillates between help and assessment, guidance and transmission, formative and normative approaches.

The mentor solicits students’ analysis of their own professional activity. For that, tutors have to manage students’ emotions to maintain a climate of dialogue.

The research question developed to become: what are the regulation practices among physiotherapists’ mentors to guide students through their professional learning?

Regulation of learning as a conceptual framework

The regulation of learning is a concept studied by Allal (2007, 2010). Allal explains that regulation is a gesture to facilitate one's activity analysis in order to perform one's practice. It differs from regularisation which implies a standard, not a personal approach or process. The target of the regulation is to help students to progress in their reflection and practice. It is related to formative assessment and it can facilitate and guide self-regulation. This approach focuses learners' needs and takes into account cognitive, cultural, social dimensions of the individual. The objective is to confirm, redirect the action, redefine the aim in an interactive framework. The goal of the regulation is for the trainee to access a new way of looking at things (Paquay, 2010; Jorro & Mercier-Brunel, 2011). The formative intent of the mentor must be dominant. Allal underlines the psycho-affective aspect of mentoring related to the tutor's assessment task (Allal, 2007, 2010).

Many authors (Crahay, 2007; Jorro & Mercier-Brunel, 2011; Jorro, 2009, 2006, 2002; Schneuwly & Dolz, 2009; Sensevy & Mercier, 2007) consider that students' learning is linked to the quality and efficient delivery of feedback during their exchanges with their tutors. When feedback helps a student to understand his or her errors, to learn from his or her mistakes, and glimpse a new way of looking at things, it can facilitate student self-regulation (Paquay, 2010; Jorro & Mercier-Brunel, 2011).

Allal (2007, 2010) identifies two categories of mental processes: the first one is the metacognition process (the questioning related to practice) and the second one is the socio-cognition process (the questioning related to the reasons inherent to practice).

The tutor who regulates the tutee uses some feedback to communicate with him/her. There are many feedback categorizations: positive or negative; general or specific to the situation; linguistic or corporeal; those with reflexive or judgement criteria; qualitative or quantitative; those which manage cognitive or emotional aspects; those which are related to the person or to his/her production; simple or complex; externally assessment or use self-assessment. They are also ranked by their objectives: guidance, control, adjustment, or task reorientation (Allal & Lopez, 2007) or by their form: prescriptive or not, depending on what element they have an effect. They are also categorized with a specific classification assessment gesture (Georges & Pansu, 2011; Jorro & Mercier-Brunel, 2011).

Trohel and Saury (2009) study mentoring interactions. They highlight several types of interactions between the tutor and the tutee: informative sequences; evaluative sequences; interactional sequences and contractual sequences.

Research updated aims

The updated research questions are:

- What are the types of regulation feedback used by mentors in order to assess a student's professional skills and help him to acquire the necessary skills?
- What are the elements regulated by the mentor, and in what form?

The purpose of this research is the substance and the form of the regulation used by the mentor for tutorial relationships following initial clinical practice, or even the formative goals of this mentoring.

The aim of this thesis is to improve knowledge of physiotherapists mentoring regulation practises and more understand this regulation process. The goal is to study the form and the

substance of the physiotherapists mentoring regulation. Therefore, we explore the topics brought up during the exchanges between tutor and tutee.

We look at the effective realization of the regulation. We also seek to identify the motivation, dilemma, difficulties of the tutor and of the tutee during regulation interviews.

Methodology

Qualitative research methodology

We studied the regulation practice of four tutors who work in traditional and independent establishments. To carry out our survey, we chose four mentors, two of whom are salaried workers and two who are self-employed. It concerns students in the third year of training who do two training courses during the year. The study lasted from September 2018 to April 2018.

We will visit the mentor four times during training course(s) with the aim of producing sixteen video regulation interviews, sixteen self-autoconfrontation interviews with the mentor (four per mentor) and as many with the students (two per student, one in the middle of the training course and one at the end).

Before the regulation interviews, we question mentor and student about their age, completed training courses, career path and family situation. We also ask the mentor about their professional and mentoring experience, their job and training as a tutor, and the circumstances of the clinical situation that he regulates with the student (themes, the reason for this choice, the context, instructions and recommendations given), - thus looking at all the information available.

At first, the tutor prepares a clinical learning situation with a patient. He/she gives instructions to the tutee who must come up with a proposal to take care of the patient. Afterwards we film the regulation interviews between the tutor and the tutee about this clinical learning situation. We follow their evolution in time studying four regulation interviews per tutor (16 all in all) after a learning clinical situation. With this purpose in mind, the methodological approach also to be used is self-confrontation interviews. The survey is completed by 16 self-confrontation interviews with tutors and 16 self-confrontation interviews with tutees.

This method which both combines videos regulation interviews and video self-confrontation interviews enables us to study interactions between mentor and student as well as informing us about mentoring pedagogical practices in the post clinical context. Self-confrontation interviews method allows us to understand the reasons which explains the tutor and tutee's positioning during the interviews. It allows to delve into the tutor and tutee dilemma relative to regulation interviews.

Self-confrontation interviews allow us to show the mentor his activity through video re-runs. This film is commented on by the mentor who explains what he does and his motives, his intentions, his reasoning relative to his choice (knowledge, previous experience...) and his dilemma. The tutor's freedom of speech is very important in order that he/she will tell us what makes sense for him (Pastré, 2007; Barges et Bouthry, 2014; Champy-Remoussenard, 2005).

Analysis of his/her activity is a learning tool as much as the action itself (Pastré, 2007; Carré, & Caspar, 2011; Bonnemain, Perrot, & Kostulski, 2015).

The mentor speaks of what he could have done but didn't, what he would like to do or what he wanted to do but he could not do, what should be done, what is to be redone and even what he unintentionally did. Clot (2001) and Goigoux (2007) call that real activity in opposition to accomplished activity. It also addresses values, what is considered legitimate, and what is well regarded in the physiotherapy profession.

Attention is paid to the mentor's perceptions, to any evidence of astonishment or distress (Clot & Faïta, 2000), and to difficulties, whether internal conflicts or preoccupations (Leblanc, Ria, Dieumegard, Serres & Durand, 2008).

We created a means of interpreting regulation thanks to a grid which is composed of several items regarding the intents of regulation: knowledge (intent of knowledge regulation), activity (intent of activity regulation), psycho-affective (intent of psycho-affective regulation). On top of these direct intents, indirect ones are also identified: metacognitive, socio-cognitive and totally open.

We categorise feedbacks along three types: informative, evaluative or reflexive. We thus study mentor practice regulation and we also examine regulation signs in tutee's speeches which correspond to the regulation intents. The second analysis grid of self-confrontation interviews is based on: motivation, dilemma and difficulties about regulation interviews.

Results and discussion

We have not finished transcribing all of the corpus, so we have not yet finished the processing of the data collected during the survey.

The mentor considers the clinical learning situation as a tool for professional skills assessment as well as a tool which contributes to their acquisition.

We note tutors often take up much more speaking time than tutees. The trainee often shows his/her agreement with the tutor's comments without further substantiating his/her point. When this is the case, we cannot conclude that the trainee's regulation is effective.

During regulation interviews, the mentor does not systematically search for student reasoning and activity analysis. He/she sometimes uses self-assessment, however, the questioning, reflexive practice and metacognition process are not frequently implemented by tutors.

Our first results show that the mentor favours informative feedbacks. Reflexive feedbacks are the least used by the tutors. Psychoaffective regulations are frequent. It appears that regulation focuses as much on efficient relationship activity as on the physical aspect of physiotherapist practice itself.

The topics most often discussed within the framework of regulation interviews are : the structure of the student's oral presentation and the potential ways for improvement and enhancement; the confirmation of the adequacy of the trainee's rehabilitation practices; the quality of interaction between the patient and the physiotherapist (the accuracy of the instructions and guidance, appropriate feedbacks, the patient's confidence-building); the patient's involvement, self-determination, and empowerment (the patient's project, the patient's understanding of the rehabilitation objectives to be achieved); the patient's education and self-rehabilitation; the physiotherapist's practical knowhow in rehabilitation of gesture (the precisions of the physiotherapist's physical stimulation, the correcting of the patient's gesture, the patient's safety); a global and individualized approach with an appropriate rehabilitation of the patient (the consideration of the patient's singular problematic); the prioritization of therapeutic objectives, the pooling of relevant information, the relevance of arguments expounded); the factors influencing the physiotherapist's

practices which are very diverse (evidence based practice, theoretical models, time management, the organisation of the workplace).

We have not yet studied self-confrontation interviews. We can only tell trainees show a real understanding of the tutor's remarks. We will examine the role of self-confrontation interviews as a tool for stimulating reflection about mentoring practice for the tutor and about physiotherapist professional practice for the tutee.

This study is carried out in a specific context.

The main limitations of this survey is the specific regulation context. There are several different approaches to study regulation practices. Indeed, regulation situations which are surveyed are carried out with one mentor and not several, without student peer input. Moreover, the studied regulation situation takes place after the clinical situation and not during the clinical situation.

It does provide suggestions for further research. It might be interesting to undertake studies related to physiotherapists' mentor regulation practices while the trainee implements a patient's care.

Conclusion

This PhD project aims at mentoring pedagogical practices in a training course context. This study concerns physiotherapist initial training. This research focuses on physiotherapist mentors regulation practice towards tutee and also studies exchanges between tutor and tutee after a clinical learning situation.

The interest of this methodology used is twofold: on the one hand we study the interactions between the tutor and the trainees, on the other hand, we gather informations about the mentoring pedagogical practices in a context of management after onstage professional activity.

Mentors make little use of the practice of analysis of their own professional activity, which would allow them to understand the reasons of the trainee's choice related to their practice. Mentors do not frequently search for the tutee's expression of the reasoning related to their practice. The survey results indicate that mentors have a real desire to transfer knowledge and favour sharing their own practice and reasoning.

This research allows us to take stock of the current state of regulation practices among physiotherapists' mentors and this stocktaking could form the basis for the development of a mentor training course.

References

- Adam, R., & Bayle, I., (2012). *Le tutorat infirmier Accompagner l'étudiant en stage*. Paris: De Boeck-Estem.
- Allal, L. (2010). Assessment and the regulation of learning. In: Penelope Peterson, Eva Baker, Barry McGaw, (Editors), *International encyclopedia of education*, 3, pp.348–352. Oxford : Elsevier.
- Allal, L., & Lopez, L. M. (2007). *Régulation des apprentissages en situation scolaire et en formation*. Bruxelles : De Boeck.
- Barges, N., & Bouthry, A. (2014). Co-analyser le travail pour co-évaluer les compétences. *Education permanente hors-série, Les synergies travail-formation*, 75-86
- Becerril Ortega, R., Calmettes, B., Fraysse, B., & Lagarrigue, P. (2009). Des références pour des pratiques de formation. *Activités*, 6(1). Retrieved from <http://activites.revues.org/2101>

- Benoit, C., (2011). *La boîte à outils du tuteur formateur et intégrateur*. Mayenne : Afnor éditions.
- Berrahou, Z., Roumanet, M-C. (2013). Rôle du portfolio dans l'évaluation des compétences, Dossier Bilan de la réforme infirmière. *La revue de l'infirmière*, 191(62), 22-23. Doi: 10.1016/j.revinf.2013.02.028
- Billett, S. (2011). Learning in the circumstances of work: the didactics of practice". *Éducation et didactique*, 5(2), 2-20. Retrieved from [http //educationdidactique.revues.org/1251](http://educationdidactique.revues.org/1251)
- Bonnemain, A., Perrot, E., & Kostulski, K. (2015). Le processus d'observation, son développement et ses effets dans la méthode des autoconfrontations croisées en clinique de l'activité. *Activités*, 12(2), 98-124. <http://www.activites.org/v12n2/v12n2.pdf>
- Brignon, B., & Ravestein, J. (2015). Apports et limites de la clinique de l'activité au développement de l'identité professionnelle des étudiants infirmiers. *Le travail humain*, 78(3), 257-283. Doi10.3917/th.783.0257
- Bruner, J. S. (1983). Le rôle de l'interaction de tutelle dans la résolution de problème. *J. S Bruner, Le développement de l'enfant : Savoir faire savoir dire*, 261-280.
- Carré, P., & Caspar, P. (2011). *Traité des sciences et des techniques de la Formation* (3è éd.). Paris : Dunod.
- Champy-Remoussenard, P. (2005). Les théories de l'activité entre travail et formation. *Savoirs*, 8 (2), 9-50.
- Clot, Y. (2006). Clinique du travail et clinique de l'activité. *Nouvelle revue de psychosociologie*, 1(1), 165-177. Doi 10.3917/nrp.001.0165
- Clot, Y. (2001). *Clinique de l'activité et pouvoir d'agir*. Revue" Education permanente".
- Clot, Y., & Fata, D. (2000). Genres et styles en, analyse du travail. Concepts et méthodes. *Travailler*, 4, 7-42
- CNOMK. (2017). Rapport d'activité 2016. Consulté 01 Septembre 2017, à l'adresse <http://www.ordremk.fr/actualites/ordre/rapport-dactivite-2016/>
- CNOMK. (2016). Rapport d'activité 2015. Consulté 24 Janvier 2017, à l'adresse <http://publications.ordremk.fr/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Rapport-Annuel-2015.pdf>
- CNOMK. (2011). *Le livre vers.... de la masso-kinésithérapie*. Paris : CNOMK.
- Crahay, M. (2007). Feedback de l'enseignant et apprentissage des élèves : revue critique de la littérature de recherche. In L. Allal & L. Mottier-Lopez. *Régulation des apprentissages en situation scolaire et formation*. Bruxelles, De Boeck, pp 45-70.
- Dolz, J., & Schneuwly, B. (2009). *Pour un enseignement de l'oral : initiation aux genres formels à l'école*. ESF éditeur.
- Filliettaz, L., & Durand, I. (2016). L'activité de conception des tuteurs comme modalisation de l'expérience du travail: le cas de la formation des techniciens en radiologie médicale. *Les Sciences de l'éducation - Pour l'Ère nouvelle*, 49(2), 83. <https://doi.org/10.3917/lsdle.492.0083>
- François, P., Boussat, B., Guyomard, A., & Seigneurin, A. (2015). De l'évaluation des pratiques professionnelles au développement professionnel continu : engagement et opinion des praticiens hospitaliers dans les activités d'évaluation des pratiques professionnelles. *Santé Publique*, 27(2), 187-194.
- Gatto, F., Roquet, P., & Vincent, S. (2015). *L'identification et la reconnaissance des rôles et des identités des masseurs-kinésithérapeutes*. Rapport de recherche. Conservatoire national des arts et métiers (CNAM) ; Centre de recherche sur la formation (CRF).
- Gatto, F. (2006). *Enseigner la santé*. Editions L'Harmattan.
- Gedda, M. (2017). Médecine factuelle, pratique factuelle et indice de factualité. *Kinésithérapie, la Revue*, 17(187), 9-16.

- Gedda, M. (2014). Atelier de décision kinésithérapique : un espace de progression collective. *Kinésithérapie, la Revue*, 14(145), 26-30.
- Gedda, M. (2001). *Décision kinésithérapique : identité, démarche, chaînes logiques*. Elsevier Masson.
- Georges, F., & Pansu, P. (2011). Les feedbacks à l'école : un gage de régulation des comportements scolaires. *Revue française de pédagogie*, 3, 101-124.
- Gettliffe, N., & Toffoli, D. (2011). Régulations pédagogiques et formations de tuteurs dans un dispositif de visioconférence poste à poste pour étudiants débutants en Français Langue Etrangère. In *Actes du colloque Epal*.
- Goigoux, R. (2007). Un modèle d'analyse de l'activité des enseignants. *Education et didactique*, 3(1), 47-69. Retrieved from [http:// : educationdidactique.revues.org/232](http://educationdidactique.revues.org/232)
- Guichon, N., & Drissi, S. (2008). Tutorat de langue par visioconférence : comment former aux régulations pédagogiques. *Recherches en Didactique des Langues et Cultures: les Cahiers de l'acedle*, 5, 185-217.
- Haute Autorité de Santé. (2014). L'encadrement des stages. La maitrise de stage/le tutorat. Consulté à l'adresse https://www.has-sante.fr/portail/upload/docs/application/pdf/2014-06/fiche_dpc_mds_2014-06-24_11-26-39_836.pdf
- Jorro, A., De Ketele J-M. & Merhan F. (2016). *Les apprentissages professionnels accompagnés. De l'évaluation à la reconnaissance professionnelle en formation*. De Boeck.
- Jorro, A. (2015). De l'évaluation à la reconnaissance professionnelle en formation. *Revue française de pédagogie*, 190, 41-50.
- Jorro, A. & Mercier-Brunel, Y. (2011). Les gestes évaluatifs de l'enseignant dans une tâche de correction collective., *Mesure et évaluation en éducation*, 34 (3), 27-50.
- Jorro, A. (Ed.). (2009). *La reconnaissance professionnelle en éducation: évaluer, valoriser, légitimer*. University of Ottawa Press.
- Jorro, A. (2006, February). L'agir professionnel de l'enseignant. In *Séminaire de recherche du Centre de Recherche sur la formation-CNAM*.
- Jorro, A. (2002). *Professionaliser le métier d'enseignant*. ESF éd.
- Kloetzer, L. & Henry, M. (2010). Quand les instruments de métier deviennent objets de discours : une condition de l'analyse du travail en autoconfrontation croisée ? *Activités*, 7(2), 44-62, <http://www.activites.org/v7n2/v7n2.pdf>.
- Kunégel, P. (2011). *Les maîtres d'apprentissage : Analyse des pratiques tutorales en situation de travail*. Paris : L'Harmattan.
- Leblanc, S., Ria, L., Dieumegard, G., Serres, G., & Durand, M., (2008). « Concevoir des dispositifs de formation professionnelle des enseignants à partir de l'analyse de l'activité dans une approche enactive. *@ctivités*, 5 (1), 58-78. Retrieved from <http://www.activites.org/v5n1/v5n1.pdf>
- Le Boterf, G., (2011). Apprendre à agir et à interagir en professionnel compétent et responsables, *Éducation permanente*, 188. 97-11.
- Mahlaoui, S. & Lorent P. (2016). [Ces maïeuticiens que sont les tuteurs. Le cas des cadres du travail social](#). *Education permanente*, 206(1), 75-85.
- Matharan, J., Micheau, J., & Rigal, E. (2009). Rapport d'étude de l'Observatoire National de la Démographie des Professionnels de Santé : Le métier de masseur-kinésithérapeute. *Plein Sens*. Consulté le 22/03/2017 http://social-sante.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/ONDPS_etude_masseur-kinesitherapeute.pdf
- Ministère des Affaires Sociales, de la Santé. Direction Générale de l'Offre des Soins. (2016) Instruction n° DGOS/RH1/2016/330 du 4 novembre 2016 relative à la formation des tuteurs de stages paramédicaux consulté le 17/02/2016 <http://circulaires.legifrance.gouv.fr/index.php?action=afficherCirculaire&hit=1&retourAccueil=1&r=41479>

- Ministère des Affaires Sociales, de la Santé et des Droits des Femmes. (2015) Bulletin Officiel Santé-Protection Sociale- Solidarité n°2015/8 du 15 Septembre 2015, Arrêté du 2 Septembre 2015 relatif au diplôme d'Etat de masseur-kinésithérapeute (JORF n°0204 du 4 Septembre 2015 : 172-305).
- Mayen, P. (2000). Interactions tutorales au travail et négociations formatives, *Recherche et Formation*, 35, 59-73
- Olry-Louis, I. (2009). Les activités communicatives des tuteurs en psychologie du développement et en pratiques à l'université. *Recherche et formation*, 62. Retrieved from <http://rechercheformation.revues.org/429>
- Oursel, F. (2016). Du monitorat au tutorat. *Education Permanente*, 206 (1), 11-18.
- Paquay, L., Van Nieuwenhoven, C., & Wouters, P. (dir.). (2010). *L'évaluation levier du développement professionnel ?* Bruxelles : De Boeck.
- Parent, F., Jouquan, J., De Ketele, J. M., & de Vincent Dumez, P. (2013). *Penser la formation des professionnels de santé. Une perspective intégrative*. Bruxelles:De Boeck.
- Pastré, P. (2007). Analyse du travail et formation. *Recherches en Education*, 4, Dossier Apprentissage et développement : apprendre, se former et agir, 23-27. Retrieved from <http://www.recherches-en-education.net/IMG/pdf/REE-no4.pdf>.
- Paul, M., (2003). *L'accompagnement, une posture professionnelle spécifique*. Paris: L'Harmattan
- Pelaccia, T. (2016). *Comment (mieux) former et évaluer les étudiants en médecine et en sciences de la santé ?* De Boeck Supérieur.
- Pelpel, P., (1995). *Guide de la fonction tutorale*. Paris : Les éditions d'organisation ; coll. Les guides du métier d'enseignant.
- Plazolles, M., (2016). Les pratiques d'encadrement des « tuteurs de stage » en masso-kinésithérapie. *Revue Kinésithérapie*, 173, 2-8.
- Scallon, G. (2007). *L'évaluation des apprentissages dans une approche par compétences*. Paris : De Boeck.
- Sensevy, G., & Mercier, A. (Eds.). (2007). *Agir ensemble: l'action didactique conjointe du professeur et des élèves*. Presses universitaires de Rennes.
- Tardif, J. (2006). *L'évaluation des compétences. Documenter le parcours de développement*. Montréal: Chenelière Éducation.
- Trohel, J. & Saury, J. (2009). Évolution des interactions tuteur-stagiaire au cours des entretiens de conseil pédagogique. *Movement & Sport Sciences*, 66(1), 9-23. Doi10.3917 /sm.066.0009

A formative proposal through the professional identity mapping

Paola Zonca*, Emanuela Guarcello**

** University of Turin,
Department of Philosophy and Educational Sciences
Via Gaudenzio Ferrari 9
10124 – Turin
Italy
paola.zonca@unito.it*

*** University of Turin
Department of Philosophy and Educational Sciences
Via Gaudenzio Ferrari 9
10124 – Turin
Italy
emanuela.guarcello@unito.it*

The following persons have contributed to contents elaboration: Federico Peretti (C.I.di S. educator- Complexity Family and Child Area), Silvana Ravina (social and health worker at Martini Hospital of Turin-Mental Health), Nicolò Valenzano (Ph. D. Philosophy and Education Sciences Department of Turin – Philosopher and Teacher), Laura Vola (laboratory technical coordinator in Ancient San Giovanni Hospital of Turin – Oncological Radioteraphy Department).

ABSTRACT: The essay intends to propose the creation of learning contests for students and professionals in the care field, to work on professional identity construction and consolidation. The elaborated proposal is based on the results of a focus group carried out at the Philosophy and Education Sciences Department of Turin University. On the bases of the focus group analysis, this paper aims at deepening a proposal of learning contests creation with expert professionals.

KEYWORDS: learning biography, lifewide learning, visual narration, maps, professional identity.

Introduction

The paper is set in research field on adult learning, which is centered on the complexity and reflexive interaction. This adult learning develops “learning itineraries by living” (Formenti, 2017, p. 48), where you can also learn to interact with other people and with the contest we live in. These learning routes promote the adult transformation through autobiographical learning types (connected to life histories and life – based methods), lifelong and lifewide learning.

In this way, a transformative learning (Mezirow, 2003, 2016) is created and it goes beyond the already thought, it defies the involved person sense perspectives. Such learning itineraries aim to answer to an authentic knowledge question, elaborated by participants (Knowles, 2010; Schon 1983, 2006) on matters, practices, situations interesting from a personal/professional level and also important for their own communities. Within this framework, the paper wants to establish a connection between an autobiographical narration and an image (Garrino, 2010; Strepparava, 2010), through a learning proposal consistent with the presented background. Geographical maps are drawn in order to represent metaphorically some essential elements of care and educational workers.

Motivations and study aims

In care professional formation, the interconnection experimentation among different learning contests (formal, non formal, informal) is particularly crucial. This is necessary to build competence through a systemic vision ‘theory&practice’. Considering this point from this perspective, mapping professional identity through metaphorical geography (Bruno, 2015, Lori, 2009, Musi, 2011) has the advantage of visual immediacy (Mirzoeff, 2002) and, at the same time, it provides overview on competence, that is contextualized and connected with various professional and personal aspects of the care workers (lifelong&lifewide).

The geographic map is a contest itself, meant both as a premise for the realization of a significative learning and as expression of an opportunity within a wider practice set which can promote the interconnection among learning contests. One of the most known examples of these mapping forms is the Inner world atlas (Van Swaaij & Klare, 2001) that, however, hasn’t been elaborated on professional identity formation. Therefore, it isn’t fully adequate to the specific learning towards which the present study aims. Consequently, we mean to plan and draw a map about professional identity of educational and care workers, outlining the meaning and the use methods within an autobiographical formation for students and professionals. Through the reading and reflection of these maps, the worker can develop both a mental attitude to move through “thought” itineraries and the competence of sinking into unexpected landscapes on which he/she can carry out an endless reflexivity with other explorers/workers.

In the field of the contemporary geographic studies the current of the participatory geography takes its place (Burini, 2016; Casti, 2013) and it expects the maps construction and the awareness of the territories to start from below. In the same way we try to create a map of professional identity together with professionals because, as geographic spaces cannot be only defined by geographers or cartographers, also the construction of the professional identity is a totally personal and changeable process which develops in a singular way for every involved subject. We can say that the objective of the map is the one to give shape to shapeless in order to hold possession and render it communicable (Castoldi, 2011, pp. 84-85), because sometimes some ideas can be caught only through an image; Castoldi (2011) hints at the “novelty of a glance that turning into an image is able to develop a totally visual reflection” (p. 57). The mapping of a territory involves the social values its

inhabitants and reproduces the sense of the places. One of the main elements of this mapping, built in the contest, is the reappropriation of the places while they are represented.

This links the map to the narration because both allow to take possession of the experience: as Jedlowski states “the experience comes to an end when it is narrated” (2009, p.9) or more, to connect maps and narrations: “narrative helps not lose one’s way (p. 10) and as in the map you put space in order, the narrative speech gives order to its material assigning a plot to it. We can underline finally as, with respect to a widespread tendency to “learnification” (Biesta, 2010) of the formation - in particular of the continuous formation - the definition of a map of the professional identity helps go beyond a technical instrumental vision in favor of a more reflective and contextualized approach.

The map as learning contest

Images and cartography to do a simulated formative travel

Images have always gone with human communication both before and after the language birth (Faccioli, Losacco, 2010). In contemporary society images use involves all private and professional existence fields, going to enrich and integrate the verbal language and making the communication more complex and articulate. Indeed, the image is faster to understand, more touching, you can memorize it better than a text and often the image goes beyond the language barrier. From this point of view, in initial and permanent learning, you can suppose to promote the subjectivity emergence through the images use.

In particular, you can propose to care professionals a map which represents the professional essential elements, drawn as metaphorical places. The basic hypothesis is that a cartographic image can have a contest function: the map is immediate, it shows the whole within a synchronous perception and, looking at it, you can imagine the path definition and find out the contiguity among its elements (Zonca, 2016). Indeed, the worker moves/will move in the professional world spaces; he will also have to stay in a particular environment and to know resources and dangers; in the same way, the maps user consults them to know what will happen to him and to plan his action. Planning as well as reading a map means to find out the best way to reach your own goals.

Through a map you can also make a simulated learning travel since the represented places are a space to interpret, to safeguard, possibly to transform. In the history of geography and cartography maps have frequently been enriched with new explorations, in a continuous process, but explorers updated them and not the people who used them. In the same way the spreading of knowledge and competence of the professional has followed for a long time - at least in formal educational paths - the model of technical rationality (Schön, 1983) which left little room to the contribution of the professional. In the last decades instead the contribution of the people who live the maps has gained importance, together with the definition coming from the formative system. In the field of the participatory cartography, to define a map is to witness a way how to see the world, even because a map does not only reproduce but builds (Castoldi, 2011, p. 21); the moment you create and use a map, you may “show both potentiality and criticality of a territory and start a platform of comparison among the involved people in its planning” (Burini, 2016, p.9)

Indeed, when you are in front of a cartography you can re-appropriate your competence to live in a territory (Dematteis, 2011) and also to reconstruct it, to take care of it, to recognize and one more time to plan its own elements. Cartography is a drawing but also a tale, it describes the present but it also visualizes a future hypothetical space, a configuration of possibility, of parallel or alternative scenes (Quaggiotto, 2012, p. 133). In this way,

considering the professional identity map, you will be able to make a reflective path and to understand deeply some crucial parts of the profession and to recognize its value.

Finally – through the look which gives a clear picture connecting spirit, body and observed space (Gennari, 1994) – observing the depicted landscape on the map influences the relationship with the represented world, it produces meaning and raises emotions.

To promote professional identity through the maps

Overview on the international literature

The literature presents some main areas of interconnection between the art of mapping and promotion of professional identity, especially concerned with the scholastic field. Some international studies (Chen & Wang, 2011; Hargreaves, 2001) examine the “spatial” relationships of proximity/distance in the school system, between teachers and students or parents, based on the experience of the professionals, subsequently translated by researchers into graphic terms of proximity/distance perceived by teachers with respect to colleagues, students of parents, based on the emotions experienced in the relationship. The visual representation is presented using linear diagrams, similar to conceptual maps. Remaining studies area regards the use of maps (posters made with college) to analyze the aspects of personal identity (Litvin, 2005), with particular reference to adolescents and young people in schools. None of the studies however presents tangible experimentations relating to the use of real geographic maps to work with operators and university students on their professional identity, although theoretic studies and reviews of literature highlight interesting links between mapping, narration and reflection on personal history (Caquard & Cartwright, 2014), with particular potential for transformation and learning.

Maps and professional identity as contest

The identity geographical map realization can represent a real itinerary of a re-construction and re-vision of the self, building a setting which connects personal, relational, cultural and contextual aspects and paths. They are set in transition spaces within formal, non formal and informal education. In fact, “our identity [...] is a theory of the self. Telling about ourselves, we highlight the complex relationships – entangled between what we think and what we are, our personal values, points of view and soul motions, our emotions (Formenti, 2017, p. XIII, personal translation). Geographical identity maps can be an opportunity of creating a narrative plot about your own theory of the self, not only on a personal level but also through the comparison among life histories (geographically translated), through the self-narration inside the relationship of the different professional and personal contests we live in.

The map (understood as visual text and “pretext” for a self- narration) can be used not only in school field but also in care and educational professions one. In this context, identity and competence aren’t established a priori, thanks to universal and final knowledge. They must be created in a recurring synthesis (never seen and visible before), which is realized also thanks to personal experiences narration that creates impressive theories and gives sense to our actions.

The map: graphical representation and formative scenario

Map design and creation

On the basis of the previous reflections, we have realized a specific world map of the professional identity of educational and care workers.



Figure 1. Professional identity map¹

This map was created thanks to the analysis of the educational skills of the professionals working in assistance and caring, divided among main macro areas² (Capo, 2017; Fabbri, L. & Melacarne, 2015; Grimaldi, 2016; Milani, 2000; Nussbaum, 2007; Quaglino, 1992):

- Technical or procedural and instrumental skills (represented on the right through the “multi-center theory&practice”);
- Self-awareness (represented in the central area through the “urban identity center”);
- Interpersonal relations with teams and people (represented on the left through the “relationship setting”);
- Intentionality (represented down through the “intentionality city district”)³.

¹ Roberto Quarisa contributed to design the map and realized the visual tool's construction. He is a Professor in Nursing applied to therapeutic education at Turin University. He is an expert in narrative medicine and creation and use of visual and artistic stimuli in caring relationships and in the training of professionals and students.

² The outlined macro areas are not exclusive and they don't fully describe every possible aspect of the educational and care professionals capacities, aiming only at tracing a first image (Figure 1) that can be graphically translated in terms of geography and can be more broadened in subsequent phases of analysis and research.

³ For further details on the competence represented in the map you can refer to Guarcello E., Zonca P., A Map on the World of Professional Identity. Visual Narration for Education and Care Workers, in PROCEEDINGS, DOI 10.3390/proceedings1090869, n.1/2017, pp. 1 – 9. The map and some supplementary materials are available online at <https://blootes.deviantart.com/art/Professional-identity-s-map-isometric-703438290>.



Figure 2. A zoom on “relationship setting”.



Figure 3. A zoom on “relationship setting” only with images.



Figure 4. Some details on “relationship setting”.

Learning contests through the identity map

With this map, we intend to propose the creation of learning contests for students and professionals, to work on professional identity construction and consolidation. We have elaborated a proposal based on the focus group results. It met in September 2017 at the Philosophy and Education Sciences Department of Turin University. All the authors of the paper took part in the focus with four professionals who work in different fields: extra – scholastic education, childhood education, nursing, mental health, medical radiology techniques. These fields stand for some potential ones in order to propose the designed learning contests.

The involved persons have reflected on two levels:

- the map power to propose a learning contest which satisfactorily stand for the care and educative professional identity and its transversal competence,
- the students and professionals training realization methods.

Through the focus group analysis, we were able to change the unsuitable map parts and to outline some different learning contests, addressed to students/young professionals or to expert workers. We can't exhaustively deepen the details of each. So, in this paper, we aim at examining the results on the learning contests creation with expert professionals. The learning contest, in which we use the professional identity map, can involve mono-professional groups of about fifteen people, led by a trainer, and can analyze, through a series of sessions (which has to last at least eight hours) the different professional identity macro areas. The training course can be arranged into an initial welcome phase, followed by a brief theoretic look at the maps meaning and function, referring to professional experiences.

Then, we advise to write an autobiographical reflection, starting from an authentic knowledge question (matters, practices, situations) which really is personally and

professionally interesting for participants and their community (for example, professional/personal experiences lived about death, conflict, ...). This opportunity means to promote the autobiographical (connected to life histories and to life – based methods) and lifelong/lifewide learning as occasions to make the formal learning contest a setting that can be able to interconnect non formal and informal fields in which the professional has built his own identity.

Therefore, the autobiographical learning can be the precondition to identify the aspects/competence on the map that:

- we mean crucial to handle on the debated situation,
- we disagree,
- we would have in the debated situation, but we feel weak about them,
- we should have in the debated situation, but we can't learn them due to personal traits.

This individual phase is followed by the confrontation in small groups and the plenary discussion (Bruner, 1967; Vygotskij, 1966; Wenger, 2006). After that, the professionals will go on using the map not only as a narrative image (static map), but also as a path opportunity and proposal (dynamic map) to promote the construction of complex, deep and prospective points of view on professional reality:

Complexity's emphasis nonlinearity, unpredictability and recursivity is not meant as an argument against or a denial of order. [...] something that emerges in genuinely generative ways. (Biesta, 2010, p. 2).

From this point of view, the professionals will reflect on how and where to inhabit their "Identity City" and on the priority itineraries to explore this new living and learning contest.

Conclusion: the map as autobiographic image to promote learning contest

The map as the narration does not claim to define in a univocal way how to explore the territory or how to interpret history, it is in case an instrument to take possession of places and experiences, a way to orient and re-orient oneself always more as protagonists; as Mortari states (2002): "Existing is not to follow a map, but to build a personal one, hazarding an unforeseen event step by step" (p. 147). And this incessant construction will be possible only if every participant will explore unknown areas or will narrate unheard-of stories, without simplifying or categorizing.

The training facilitates the creation of learning contests which connect formal, non formal and informal learning and allows to reflect upon the competence areas nature and to promote their development. Moreover, this permits to cope with frailties, extending their complexity and depth, since the training brings forward the different points of view and improves systemic synthesis and connection processes in opposition to the simplification and to the unilateral views. Finally, the mapping action is a collective sharing process, meanings deconstruction and reconstruction concerning imagination and professional action.

References

- Bateson, G. (1972) *Steps to an ecology of mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Biesta, G. (2010) *Good Education in an Age of Measurement. Ethics, Politics, Democracy*. Boulder and London: Paradigm Publishers.

- Biesta, G. and Osberg, D. (2010) *Complexity Theory and the Politics of Education*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Bruner, J. (1967) *Verso una teoria dell'istruzione*. Roma: Armando.
- Bruno, G. (2015) *Atlante delle emozioni. In viaggio tra arte, architettura e cinema*. Milano: Mondadori.
- Burini, F. (2016) *Cartografia partecipativa. Mapping per la governance ambientale e urbana*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Capo, M. (2017) Un percorso di promozione all'occupabilità sostenibile: non troppo dietro le quinte ... il potenziale interno di occupabilità, le soft skills, il network, e le récit de soi. *Metis*, VII, 1, on line publication.
- Caquard, S. and Cartwright, W. (2014) Narrative Cartography: From Mapping Stories to the Narrative of Maps and Mapping. *The Cartographic Journal*, 51 (2), 101-106.
- Casti, E. (2013) *Cartografia critica dal topos alla chora*. Milano: Guerini.
- Castoldi, A. (2011) *L'immaginario delle mappe*. Bergamo: Sestante.
- Chen, H. & Wang, Y. – H. (2011). Emotional Geographies of Teacher-Parent Relations: Three Teachers' Perceptions in Taiwan. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 12 (2), 185-195.
- Dematteis, G. (2011) La geografia nella scuola: sapere geografico, territorio, educazione. In: Giorda C. and Puttilli M. (a cura di), *Educare al territorio, Educare il territorio. Geografia per la formazione*. Roma: Carocci, 23-32.
- Fabbri, L. and Melacarne, C. (2015) *Apprendere a scuola. Metodologie attive di sviluppo e dispositivi riflessivi*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Faccioli, P. and Losacco, G. (2010) *Nuovo manuale di sociologia visuale. Dall'analogico al digitale*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Formenti, L. (2017) *Formazione e trasformazione*. Milano: Raffaello Cortina.
- Garrino, L. (2010) *La medicina narrativa nei luoghi di formazione e di cura*. Milano: Ermes.
- Gennari, M. (1994) *L'educazione estetica*. Milano: Bompiani.
- Grimaldi, A. (2016) *Dall'autovalutazione dell'occupabilità al progetto professionale – la pratica Isfol di orientamento specialistico*. Roma: Isfol.
- Guarcello, E. and Zonca, P. (2017) A map on the world of professional identity. Visual narration for education and care workers, *PROCEEDINGS*, 869 (1), 1-9. DOI 10.3390/proceedings1090869.
- Hargreaves, A. (2001) Emotional geographies of teaching. *Teachers college record*. 103, 6, 1056-1080.
- Iori, V. (2009) *Quaderno della vita emotiva. Strumenti per il lavoro di cura*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Jedlowski, P. (2009) *Il racconto come dimora. Heimat e le memorie d'Europa*, Torino: Bollati Boringhieri.
- Knowles, M. (2010) *Quando l'adulto impara. Andragogia e sviluppo della persona*, Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Litvin, D. R. and Betters-Reed, B. L. (2005) The personal map. *Journal of Management Education*. 29 (2), 199-217.
- Mezirow, J. (2003) *Apprendimento e trasformazione. Il significato dell'esperienza e il valore della riflessione nell'apprendimento degli adulti*. Milano: Raffaello Cortina.
- Mezirow, J. (2016) *La teoria dell'apprendimento trasformativo. Imparare a pensare come un adulto*. Milano: Raffaello Cortina.
- Milani, L. (2000) *Competenza pedagogica e progettualità educativa*. Brescia: La Scuola.
- Mirzoeff, N. (2002) *Introduzione alla cultura visuale*. Roma: Meltemi.
- Musi, E. (2011) *Invisibili sapienze: pratiche di cura al nido*. Bergamo: Junior.

- Nosari, S. (2013) *Capire l'educazione. Lessico, contesti, scenari*. Milano: Mondadori.
- Nosari, S. (2017) La creatività e le sue storie. In: Alastra V. and Bruschi B. (a cura di). *Immagini nella cura e nella formazione. Cinema, fotografia e digital story telling*. Lecce: Pensa Multimedia, 233-241.
- Nussbaum, M. (2007) *Le nuove frontiere della giustizia*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Quaggiotto, M. (2012) *Cartografie del sapere. Interfacce per l'accesso agli spazi della conoscenza*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Quaglino, G.P. (1992) *Gruppo di lavoro lavoro di gruppo*. Milano: Raffaello Cortina.
- Schön, D. (1983) *Il professionista riflessivo*. Bari: Dedalo.
- Schön, D. (2006) *Formare il professionista riflessivo*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Sen, A. (2000) *Lo Sviluppo è libertà. Perché non c'è crescita senza democrazia*. Milano: Mondadori.
- Smorti, A. (2007) *Narrazioni. Cultura, memorie, formazione del Sé*. Firenze: Giunti.
- Strepparava, M.G. (2010) L'arte, la musica e la letteratura come strumenti per educare l'attenzione, la sensibilità e la capacità di entrare in empatia con i pazienti. In: Garrino L. (a cura di). *La medicina narrativa nei luoghi di formazione e di cura*. Milano: Ermes.
- Trinchero, R. (2002) *Manuale di ricerca educativa*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Van Swaaij, L. and Klare, J. (2001) *Atlante del mondo interiore*. Bologna: Pendragon.
- Vygotskij, L. (1966) *Pensiero e linguaggio*. Firenze: Giunti.
- Wenger, E. (2006) *Comunità di pratica. Apprendimento, significato e identità*. Milano: Cortina.
- Zonca, P. (2016) Esplorare la professionalità dell'educatore di nido: l'ipotesi di una mappa geografica per rappresentarla, *Metis 2* (12). DOI 10.30557/mt000001

Navigating Career Trajectories: A Longitudinal Study in Professional Re-Formation

Lois Meyer

*School of Public Health and Community Medicine
University of New South Wales
Sydney NSW 2052
Australia
l.meyer@unsw.edu.au*

ABSTRACT: Professional formation is usually associated with a linear trajectory from an initial context in an educational institution to that of the workplace and taking up a particular professional field. Such unitary notions ignore how individuals might engage in a series of career transitions over time and how broader occupational structures might shape the re-formation of professional identity. The longitudinal study outlined here investigated the professional dynamics of transitioning from clinical domains of practice into senior public health in an Australian health service. The research drew on three intersecting approaches to the concept of context and their interplay for tracing professional re-formation. It found the importance of taking a multidimensional perspective in interpreting how careers and professional identities are navigated and re-formed over time and space.

KEYWORDS: contexts, careers, life course; professional re-formation; trajectory

Introduction

Research on learning and careers in the health professions has focused predominantly on initial professional education with limited attention to how clinically based professionals navigate their careers and practices across the life course. There is currently little known about how health professionals who choose to undertake a career transition re-form their professional perspectives and identities and in what ways particular contexts might shape that re-formation. This paper focuses on a study that investigated the professional identity dynamics of transitioning from clinical domains of practice into senior public health roles through a workforce development Programme in a government health system. The Public Health Programme (PHP) offered as a professional doctorate between the health system and its new university partner provided a unique context for investigating the processes of professional re-formation in the Australian context.

Those in the field of public health have received little empirical research within Australia and internationally (Kimberley, 2011; L. Meyer, 2012; Tulchinsky & McKee, 2011). Although it is generally agreed that public health aims to prevent disease, prolong life, and protect and promote the health of the population (Beaglehole & Poz, 2003; MacKian, Elliott, Busby, & Popay, 2003) how the field is organized and who is included in its practice is much less certain (Gadiel *et al.*, 2012; Lin, Watson, & Oldenburg, 2009; Ridoutt, Gadiel, & Cook, 2002). Public health has been described as “everywhere and nowhere” given it can be hard to recognise, does not neatly fit into formal institutional domains and in some sense can be considered everyone’s business (MacKian *et al.*, 2003, p. 221). Given this ambiguity, who belongs to the public health workforce has been described as ill-defined and difficult to enumerate (Lin *et al.*, 2009; Ridoutt *et al.*, 2002; Sim, Lock, & McKee, 2007).

In Australia although a Master of Public Health (MPH) has been said to be the expected degree for those entering into the field as a public health professional there are no formal professional certification recognition requirements. Medical doctors can seek formal professional status as a specialist in public health; for those who are not medical practitioners there is no well-defined career path into public health and certainly not into advanced levels in a public health career. The PHP is one of only a few workforce development Programmes in Australia that provides a pathway for advancing into senior multidisciplinary public health practice.

Although it is well understood that the field of public health in Australia is usually entered not as an initial career but at a later stage in a professional trajectory through medicine or other clinical professional roles after completing a Master of Public Health (MPH) (Ridoutt *et al.*, 2002; Rotem *et al.*, 1995), the subjective experience of making the transition into public health had not been researched prior to this study. A national quantitative study of the public health workforce and educational pathways by Rotem *et al.* (1995) had identified that “the transition to the public health workforce appears to involve a shift in (occupational) identity” (1995, p. 6). However what that process might entail for individual practitioners, and just how and when such an ‘identity transition’ (Ibarra, 2007) occurs within educational and workplace contexts across the professional life course and its possible implication for professional becoming and practice had not been investigated.

The research context: The Public Health Programme

This research inquiry was located within the setting of the PHP. Since its inception in 1990, the Programme had functioned as a three-year service-based traineeship for nurturing senior public health professionals for strengthening the state health system. Originally

modelled on the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Programme from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in the United States, it was designed to develop a cadre of advanced public health professionals who could undertake high-level roles in population health within the state government (Madden, 2007). In 2009 the Programme underwent a significant transition with the state health system partnering with a university to achieve formal recognition of the Programme within higher education for the awarding of a professional doctorate. Trainees commencing the Programme from that year were enrolled in a Professional Doctorate in Public Health (DrPH) to be undertaken as part of their three-year field-based training. This represented a major shift in the expectations, processes and learning sites for participating in the Programme.

In keeping with its multidisciplinary ethos those coming into the PHP came from diverse clinically related professional backgrounds and were only selected after a highly rigorous process given the aim of the Programme. From 2009 this continued but now there was the added complexity of seeking those who could also undertake a professional doctorate as future public health leaders who could produce applied research within the state health system. From 2009 those in the PHP were both trainees and doctoral candidates needing to engage with and move between the state health service and university contexts and requirements. In keeping with the traditional format of the Programme PHP trainees were required in their three year Programme to undergo a series of different work placements and projects in different sites in the health system to deepen their understanding of public health practice and be supervised by different workplace supervisors. As DrPH candidates they were also required to attend university workshops to strengthen their research capacity and meet with academic and workplace supervisors to develop and produce applied research based on their workplace projects.

It is within this new form of provision of hybrid institutional provision between the health service and the university that the fieldwork of the research study was conducted over a four-year period. In this paper I focus principally on those aspects of the study that highlight the conceptual background to the inquiry. My purpose here is not to provide a full description of the research findings or outcomes; rather it is how I conceptually approached the study for investigating the collective and individual professional identity dynamics of shifting across multiples sites of practice into public health through the PHP and the perceived value of taking this approach.

First I outline the concept of professional identity formation that drove the research. Then I consider the three theoretical approaches selected for the study that intersected to provide a set of complementary lenses within which to view and interrogate the multiple and manifold contexts through which the research participants moved in coming into the field of public health and the PHP. I then provide an overview to the research methods and the key thematic findings distilled from the collective narrative biographies of the research participants' trajectories across time and space. I conclude with a discussion of the complexities of professional identity re-formation found in this research study and the value provided in employing the multidimensional contextual perspective to inform the study.

Professional identity formation

The concept of 'professional formation' is usually associated with the process of an individual moving through an educational qualification and achieving formal recognition in a particular field, such as nursing or medicine (Eraut, 1994; Eraut & du Boulay, 2000; Louie, Roberts, & Coverdale, 2007). It is associated with an individual being enculturated into a professional group where they internalise the norms and values of the profession, acquire professional knowledge and approaches to decision-making and through identification

develop a professional identity (Adams, Hean, Sturgis, & Macleod, 2006; Ajjawi & Higgs, 2008).

Much of the literature on professional formation has focused on how well professional education has supported students' capacities to make the transition to the workplace focusing narrowly on notions of 'preparedness' and 'transfer' from theory-based professional educational contexts to the complexities of real-world practice (see for example Dahlgren, Hult, Dahlgren, Hard, & Johansson, 2006; Nerland & Jensen, 2007; Tynjälä, Välimaa, & Sarja, 2003). Although relevant to one form of professional transition this ignores how individuals might engage in a series of career transitions over time and omits how broader occupational structures and status can evolve and shape the formation of professional identity within particular settings and times.

The research used the key concept of professional identity formation to interpret how those coming from diverse health-related professions, self-identified and sought to reconfigure who they were and where they saw themselves located in coming into the broad, complex and dynamic field of multidisciplinary public health. From this perspective professional identity formation was understood as neither fixed nor in constant flux but rather a dynamic process where individuals sought to define themselves within one or more professional landscapes as they engaged in situated practices of learning and work (Chreim, Williams, & Hinings, 2007; Ibarra, 2003; Wenger-Trayner, Fenton-O'Creevy, Hutchinson, Kubiak, & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). That is the study assumed that in seeking to interpret how individuals navigated who they are and where they might be located in relation to their professional lives there may be highly complex transitional processes of learning, sense-making and reforming identities across time and space in multiple domains of practice (Brown, 2015; Heinz, 2003; Zittoun, 2015).

Further, that in seeking to interpret how practitioners engaged in navigating their professional lives the broader contexts of the professional field/s of practice needed to be considered not as stable constructs but rather evolving and contested spaces of occupational knowledge, boundaries and status. Drawing from the French concept of "professional formation" (Dubar & Tripier, 1998; Paquette, 2012) it was understood there is an intersection between individual and occupational professional formation (Bévort & Suddaby, 2016; Passarinho, 2008; Salling Olesen, 2007). That is, the PHP study took the view that professional identity formation is a dynamic nested process where individuals learn and are shaped in local contexts embedded within the wider evolving landscape of occupational status, structures and claims for professional legitimacy (Brown, 1997; Noordengraaf, 2013).

Three intersecting conceptual approaches

To interpret how those in the study made sense of transitioning into the field of public health three key conceptual approaches were drawn upon to illuminate the interplay of contexts in shaping professional re-formation. The first approach was a life course perspective that takes as a given the interconnection between the unfolding lives of individuals and the wider socio-cultural contexts within which they are embedded (Heinz, Huinink, Swader, & Weyman, 2009). The second drew from the work of Dreier (2003) and his empirical work in cultural psychology on the way individuals learn in their ongoing personal trajectories of participation across different contexts. The third approach drew from Akkerman and Bakker (2011) in considering the productive potential of spanning across contextual boundaries for transforming identities and practices. I argue that collectively these three approaches provided a multifaceted framework for informing this research inquiry and the ways in which multilevel and manifold understandings of contexts might support interpreting professional re-formation.

A life course perspective

A life course approach provides a theoretical and methodological basis for undertaking research that investigates how lives unfold within the social context of time and place (Heinz, Huinink, Swader, & Weyman, 2009). Drawn from the seminal study by Elder on the life course of children of the Great Depression is the central understanding that lives are patterned through being embedded within particular historical and politico-economic contexts that over time shape life trajectories (Heinz *et al.*, 2009; Wings & Herwig, 2011).

The life course perspective takes as a given that life is lived within the complexity of nested systems of experience shaping individual and collective biographies across time and space (Levy, Ghisletta, Le Goff, Spini, & Widmer, 2005; Worth & Hardill, 2015). It recognises the link between macro and micro where the broader political, social and cultural contexts in which lives are located can bear upon individual decisions and opportunities. In this way institutional arrangements in education, professional structures and careers can all influence opportunity structures, create risks and shape learning and work biographies (Heinz *et al.*, 2009; Sawchuk & Taylor, 2010). The life course is understood as not fully determined by institutional regimes nor simply open to individual choice but rather involves a loose coupling between the constraints of social structures and some degree of agency of “biographical actors” (Heinz, 2009a, p. 485-486). In this way the life course can be understood as navigated through “bounded agency” (Evans, 2007) leading to largely common and yet distinctive patterning of life outcomes across particular times and places.

Research in the field of professional learning and careers from a life course perspective have emphasised the importance of multiple and dynamic interconnected contexts unfolding over time in reshaping professional identities (Brown, Bimrose, Barnes, & Hughes, 2012; Kakavelakis & Edwards, 2012). Navigating a professional life course is presented as processual over time and space involving “becoming” rather than “being” (Scanlon, 2011). Transitions in professional education and careers within the life course have been presented as a complex and subtle set of processes of both “unbecoming” and “becoming somebody” personally and professionally in iterative and possibly contradictory ways (Ecclestone, 2009, p. 13).

The life course perspective provided a means for considering how the historical and structural context of the field of public health and the PHP within it, offered certain affordances and constraints for learning and careers in the lives of those in the study. The perceived strength of this approach was in illuminating the complex layering of the dynamic contexts shaping professional lives across time and space for those seeking to take up a public health identity through the PHP and in what ways it might be re-forming professional identities. Despite this, the life course perspective was seen as having potential limitations. This approach tends to focus on interpreting the cumulative patterns of continuity and change at the collective level rather than seeking rich detail of how an individual navigates across multiple contexts of learning and practice within a life course.

Personal trajectories of participation

The work of Dreier (2003) provided a means for taking a closer focus at the “multicontextuality of people’s lives” (p. 306) and the ways an individuals seek to make meaning and have a sense of continuity as they shift across different spaces in their life. The focus here is on understanding how the individual conducts his or her life across a trajectory of participation in and across social contexts.

Dreier argues for the importance of understanding how we are all participants situated within local practices. He suggests that as individuals move from contexts to contexts such as the workplace to the university so too can their mode of participation because their positions, relationships, scope of possibilities, obligations and concerns can change with the different contexts (Dreier, 2003). In so doing he offers a personalised and dynamic contextual lens for considering how individuals potentially engage in different ways in different sites of practice and the importance of appreciating their shifting mobility and changing levels of concern and participation within and across different locations of activity.

To better interpret how individuals participate within and across particular contexts Dreier proposed it was useful to distinguish between an individual's personal location, position and stance. A personal location concerned where a person takes part in some activity, a physical place for participating in a practice. A position indicated a person's particular social role within a setting. Connecting location and position was the concept of a stance where an individual brought to one or more contexts a way of thinking - the values and orientation formed through one's personal social practices (Dreier, 1999, p. 15). An individual's orientation to practice, their personal stance was developed through personal experiences grounded in complex sometimes contradictory participation in and across different social contexts.

Dreier's schema of location/position/stance provided a nuanced approach to trace an individual's trajectory of participation in and across the contexts of his or her life course coming into and participating into the PHP. It brought into focus the importance of recognising that as individuals participated in the differing social practices of the PHP health service placements and the DrPH university requirements it would be useful to consider to what extent their positions, relationships, scope of possibilities, obligations and concerns might change. It also suggested to consider how individuals might take up particular orientations to practice, perhaps say based on their former clinical experience and values as they shifted across the multiple sites of practice coming into the field of public health. Despite the considerable strengths of Dreier's work, as Jurow (2009) has argued, attention to the connections and disconnections between the spaces of different contexts could have been more productively addressed to enhance this theoretical approach.

Boundary crossing

The work of Akkerman and Bakker (2011) provided a means for taking up the potential limits of Dreier's conceptual approach to contexts by focusing on the notion of "boundary crossing" between different sites of practice. They claimed that boundary crossing offered opportunities for individuals to learn to overcome inherent ambiguities between different contexts and practices so that new hybrid identities could be forged that melded knowledge and practice from across boundaries into a new third space (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011, p.146).

Akkerman and Bakker described the boundary crossing process between different sites of practice as involving four key mechanisms of learning: first, that of identification where the learner distinguishes the practice in one context in light of the difference to that in another; second, that of co-ordination where there is an attempt to establish a connection between the diverse practices or perspectives; third, that of reflection where the learner comes to understand something new about their own practice; and fourth, transformation which can lead to profound changes in practices, potentially even the creation of new, in-between practice and a hybrid identity (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011, p.142-146).

The work by Akkerman and Bakker allowed for a deeper interrogation of the potentially liminal and fuzzy spaces (Field, 2012; Ragin, 2008) through which the research participants

sought to shift their identities and practices coming into and moving through the PHP. It provided a strong conceptual lens for exploring how the research participants navigated boundary crossing from former clinical sites of practice across to those in public health as they took up the PHP and in crossing between their work placements and the university as they engaged in the Programme.

Research Method

The research was conducted as an interpretive case study of the Public Health Programme and sought to draw out detailed narratives of those living the case (Stake, 2010). It was focused on the individual and collective lived experiences of those undertaking the Programme in the first three years of the new institutional partnership between the health system and the university.

Between 2009 and 2011 three separate cohorts commenced the Programme with a total of sixteen practitioners from diverse professional backgrounds as set out in Table 1. Each of the sixteen trainee-candidates chose to participate in the longitudinal study as they undertook the three year workforce development Programme within the health system and the requirements to achieve their professional doctorate in public health.

Cohort	Initial discipline/educational background
Cohort 1 n = 4	Nursing
	Nursing
	Sciences (Biochemistry)
	Sciences (Health Sciences)
Cohort 2 n = 6	Nursing
	Physiotherapy
	Clinical Sciences and Education
	Medical Science (PhD in Immunology)
	Economics and Paramedical Science
	Environmental Health
Cohort 3 n = 6	Dentistry
	Occupational Therapy
	Speech Pathology
	Sciences and Immunology
	Psychology and Social Work
	Psychology

Table 1: Research participant cohorts

The principal method of inquiry was a set of iterative longitudinal qualitative biographical interviews (Hermanowicz, 2013) supplemented by informal observations and field notes. The in-depth interviews were conducted approximately one year apart across a three-year interval commencing with each cohort as they entered and continued as they participated through the Programme.

Biographical methods are particularly suited to the task of exploring transitions in the life course (see Harrison, 2008; Heinz, 2009b; West, Alheit, Andersen, & Merrill, 2007). Within the research they offered opportunity to compare participants' narratives on how they navigated, made sense of and responded to critical moments in their professional life course (Boldt, 2012; Kupferberg, 2012). The use of a longitudinal approach allowed for tracing change and continuity over time in terms of perspectives and professional identification as

participants traversed across multiple sites of practice leading into and moving through the Programme.

The interview data was analysed using biographic and thematic analysis in an iterative relationship (Adriansen, 2012; Shirani & Henwood, 2010). The biographic analysis focused on in-depth analysis of individuals and their learning and career narrative trajectories. The thematic analysis focused on the sixteen biographical cases and

used synchronic and diachronic cross-case analysis both theoretically and data driven (Holland, 2011; Thomson & Holland, 2003). In undertaking this analysis I drew on the narrative qualities of temporality and place unfolding collectively and individually and sensitizing concepts (Blaikie, 2000) from the three conceptual contextual approaches informing the study. Below I present a summary of the findings of the thematic findings from this aspect of the study. The biographical narrative analysis with detailed discussion of individual biographical narratives is presented elsewhere (see L Meyer, 2016).

Thematic findings

One central overarching theme emerged from the full corpus of the longitudinal qualitative biographical narratives of the sixteen research participants telling their stories each year over three years: Navigating transitions. Despite their individual life histories and diversity in clinical backgrounds, theirs was a common story of multiple transitions across the professional lifecourse requiring agency and resourcesfulness to successfully navigate a career into public health and re-form a professional identity through the Programme.

Four key sub-themes were found in interpreting the subjective experience of navigating across the multidimensional contexts across the professional lifecourse in coming into and moving through the Program: 'Searching and changing locations'; 'Dilemmas and seeking congruence'; 'Practices and developing capacities'; and 'Transforming and doing identity work'.

Each of the four themes are seen as imbued with the influence of shifting time, space and sense-making in the complex unfolding of nested biographies, the Programme and the wider public health field and institutional landscape. Importantly the four themes are not intended as a sequential process of linear development and professional identity re-formation. Rather, the processes of navigating transitions across space and time in becoming an advanced public health professional in this research was found to be a highly complex iterative process of learning, sense-making, continuity and discontinuity, ambiguity and reconfiguration of professional understandings, purposes, abilities and identities mediated by individual biographies and experiences.

As set out in the figure below Navigating transitions and the sub-themes were understood from the study as occurring for the research participants within an iterative process of sense-making, learning and redefining professional identity.



Figure 1: Navigating Transitions and Professional Re-formation

Searching and changing locations

This theme related to the individual and collective narrative biographies of relocating into public health and moving through the Programme. A strong theme across many of the biographical narratives was an initial unawareness of public health as a field of practice when working in a clinically related domain and often serendipity in then coming across it.

I was working in a laboratory on TB doing scientific research using animal models and reading these journals on the burden of disease in populations and I wondered how did people do work like that...the authors seemed to have a MPH ...I looked it up...that's how I first came across this field of public health (Research participant 4 in Cohort 2)

For many there was uncertainty about how to access a career and advance within it and a strong recurring collective motif of movement, searching, a quest for the best way forward and differing paths and resources on how the PHP is located.

After working as a dentist here and in the UK and having my MPH from Cambridge I thought I'd be able to get a job here in public health but there was no Royal College to help...I stayed working as a dentist unsure what to do until after a few years someone told me about the PHP (Research participant 1 in Cohort 3)

Dilemmas and seeking congruence

This theme related to the research participants' attitudes and interpretations of reinterpreting their professional purpose and orientation to practice in their trajectory into the field of public health as they moved through the multiple sites of the Programme. Particularly in the earlier stages of being in the Programme participants were confronted with the dilemma of the differing temporal rhythms and impact of their new practices in public health. This was very evident in those still holding a strong affiliation with their clinical identity and the very different location and position in being a trainee in a state bureaucracy to that of a health professional in a clinic.

You're moving from an area where you have a satisfying relationship with a patient – the therapeutic relationship.... all of a sudden those patients aren't in front of you (Research participant 1 in Cohort 1).

Notions of seeking congruence were woven through the narratives as participants sought to make sense between their past, present and potential future professional lives and was captured in the metaphor of shifting 'from the bedside to the desk'. They strove to connect to aspects of their initial discipline, professional biography, and orientation to practice in their personal trajectory of participation in the Programme.

Coming from OT it would be good if my next placement was the one to do with researching sittingsomething... more in health promotion... that's more me. (Research participant 4 in Cohort 2).

Participants also spoke of the dilemma of seeking to make sense between what they perceived as the very different sites of practice between operational public health in the workplace and academic public health at the university. How to cross and bridge these two very different contexts occupied considerable effort by most with strategies generally veering from initially engaging in boundary work by mentally segmenting doctoral tasks off as having little relationship to their Programme. Later, participants usually spoke to an increasingly sustained sense of coherence. This was achieved through better understanding and negotiating the affordances provided through the Programme and learning to boundary cross including the achievement of melding workplace and scholarly requirements in producing applied research publications for the field.

Practices and developing capacities

This theme related to the subjective perception of what enabled and constrained participants' learning and change in coming to and contributing to the field of public health. Central to this theme and the overarching theme of Navigating transitions was the common storyline of the MPH as a turning point in enabling change in the participants' professional lifecourse. The MPH qualification became an enabling catalyst for redirecting participants towards contemplating a career in public health. Their narratives uniformly told of being constrained by lack of a clear career path in the field of public health up at the wider structural level that shaped a similar trajectory in their professional life course. Once participants were accepted into the PHP, their ability to learn and develop their capacities was strongly mediated by the nature of their work placements and in what ways they resonated with their professional biography and orientation to practice.

I've been lucky, I've ended up in placements really along my own leanings... lots of descriptive epi, You know, disease patterns – it's fascinating stuff!...I've learnt so much and my supervisor was great. (Research participant 3 in Cohort 1)

Transforming and doing identity work

This theme emerged strongly from the narratives of participants as involving a complex dynamic of working to envisage and make claims for where one belongs for achieving a legitimate identity within the Programme and more broadly, a place in advanced public health. How participants expressed how they saw themselves and hoped to be unfolded in varying patterns of clarity and comfort. Their stories revealed the Programme was evidently a significant transitional space of unbecoming and becoming involving considerable identity work as participants sought to navigate a potentially valued and credible new professional identity to both themselves and those in the field.

I... I'd like to call myself an epidemiologist... but I don't feel ready yet... even though I'm finishing now. (Research participant 3 in Cohort 1)

The participants' narratives revealed however tentative, that most participants engaged in a transformation in their professional self-identification during their engagement in the Programme. These participants went from seeing themselves as not having a public health identity on entering to self-identify, however diffidently, with some role within the public health field upon completing. As the doctoral component of the Programme became more established the narratives of self-identification also changed with the later biographical narratives revealing a stronger emphasis on the research role and an increasing evidence of taking up hybrid identities as scholar-practitioners in public health.

I see myself working as a dental public health researcher... combining policy and research for oral public health (Research participant 1 in Cohort 3)

Discussion

In this study it was found that professional re-formation from clinical to public health practice involved navigating multiple transitions across the professional life course in coming to and moving through the Programme. In keeping with the life course perspective it was found that the transition to public health involved an interrelationship between the research participants as actors seeking to shape their own career biographies on the one hand and institutional opportunities and constraints that framed subjective understandings and orientations to the field on the other (Bird & Krüger, 2005; Field, 2012; Heinz, 2009c). In the absence of a well-defined professional field and career structures, undertaking the move across to public health and the PHP was a personally mediated process involving personal agency (Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2015) educational and career transitions and happenstance (Bright, Pryor, & Harpham, 2005). Within the professional life course the Programme could be understood as a transitional space providing opportunity for participants to engage in a liminal period in their careers where they were betwixt and between with time to learn to take up a new self for re-entering the health sector (Ecclestone, 2009; C. Evans & Kevern, 2015).

Dreier's approach of interpreting persons in motion across contexts of participation provided an important complementary perspective to the life course approach for the research study. It opened up the inquiry to considering how research participants located themselves in and across particular contexts coming into and participating in the learning affordances of the Programme paying attention to ideas of physical location, roles and orientations to practice (Dreier, 2003). It was found that as participants relocated to a number of different sites within the Programme over a three year period both in terms of work placements and between the health service and the university their positions shifted, at times criss crossing between trainee and candidate, all the while seeking to retain their sense of values and a coherent stance on their purpose in wanting to make a difference in the world. As they moved in and across locations, the patterns of individuals' personal trajectories of participation bore the traces of their earlier professional biographies and their emerging sense of future intentions. Learning to become a public health professional through the Programme was deeply tied to issues of personal meaning and how particular sites of practice were valued and provided potency for action and development (Nielsen, 2008).

The work of Akkerman and Bakker (2011) offered an important complementary lens for interpreting how participants navigated across boundaries in re-forming their professional identity. In navigating across boundaries the study identified that boundary crossing between the university and the workplace figured strongly in participants' biographical

narratives. It was found that the research participants engaged in significant boundary work as a means to cope with the challenge of the differing practices and requirements of the workplace and the university in undertaking their doctorate. This boundary work involved segmenting professional doctorate tasks and identities in terms of “time, place and behaviour” (Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009, p. 129). Only as participants crossed multiple times across the years of the Program did a change begin to emerge where for most a third space opened up providing a means for forging a hybrid identity as scholar-practitioner in the field of public health. With the Programme as a partnership between the state health system and the university the professional re-formation of identity of those undertaking the Programme was being reconfigured through boundary crossing taking on an additional complexity with enriched new capacities spanning scholarship and practice (Caza & Wilson, 2009).

Brief concluding comment

This study is to my knowledge the first time these three conceptual approaches of a ‘life course perspective’, ‘personal trajectories of participation’ and ‘boundary crossing’ have been drawn together for informing a qualitative research inquiry. Each provided a strong theoretical underpinning and perspective conceptually to the notion of context and arguably may have been able to be used alone, simplifying the interpretive process. However given the highly complex and dynamic environment of the study, seeking to trace continuity and change in sixteen research participants across three years in real-time, a contextual approach was needed sensitive to scale, time and space. Collectively the three approaches provided a multifaceted framework for informing the analysis of this longitudinal research study. Working these perspectives in concert, I found them of strong value in illuminating the subjective perceptions of how a group of practitioners understood and navigated the multifold contexts within which they moved, engaged and were transformed in their professional re-formation in public health.

References

- Adams, K., Hean, S., Sturgis, P., and Macleod, J. (2006) Investigating the factors influencing professional identity of first-year health and social care students. *Learning in Health and Social Care*, 5 (2), 55-68.
- Adriansen, H. (2012) Timeline interviews: A tool for conducting life history research. *Qualitative Studies*, 3(1), 40-55. Retrieved from <https://frama.link/zG1PVU0Z>
- Ajjawi, R., and Higgs, J. (2008) Learning to reason: A journey of professional socialisation. *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, 13, 133-150.
- Akkerman, S., and Bakker, A. (2011) Boundary Crossing and Boundary Objects. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(2), 132-169. doi:10.3102/0034654311404435
- Beaglehole, R., and Poz, R. (2003) Public health workforce: challenges and policy issues. *Human Resources for Health* (Vol. 1).
- Bévort, F., and Suddaby, R. (2016) Scripting professional identities: how individuals make sense of contradictory institutional logics. *Journal of Professions and Organization*, 3, 17-38. doi:10.1093/jpo/jov007
- Bird, K., and Krüger, H. (2005) The secret of transitions: the interplay of complexity and reduction in life course analysis. In R. Levy, P. Ghisletta, J. Le Goff, D. Spini, & E. Widmer (Eds.), *Advances in Life course research: Towards an Interdisciplinary perspective on the life course* (Vol. 10, pp. 173-194). Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Blaikie, N. (2000) *Designing Social Inquiry: The logic of Anticipation*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Boldt, T. (2012). Migration biography and ethnic identity: on the discontinuity of biographical experience and how turning points affect the ethnicisation of identity. In K. Hackstaff, F. Kupferberg, & C. Négroni (Eds.), *Biography and turning points in Europe and America* (pp. 93–124). Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Bright, J., Pryor, R., and Harpham, L. (2005) The role of chance events in career decision making. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 66(3), 561–576. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2004.05.001
- Brown, A. (1997) A dynamic model of occupational identity formation. In A. Brown (Ed.), *Promoting Vocational Education and training: European perspectives* (pp. 59–67). Tampere: University of Tampere.
- Brown, A. (2015) Identities and Identity Work in Organisations. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 17(1), 20–40. doi:10.1111/ijmr.12035
- Brown, A., Bimrose, J., Barnes, S., and Hughes, D. (2012) The role of career adaptabilities for mid-career changers. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 80(3), 754–761.
- Caza, B., and Wilson, M. (2009) Me, Myself, and I: The Benefits of Work-Identity Complexity. In L. Roberts & J. Dutton (Eds.), *Exploring Positive Identities and Organizations: Building a Theoretical and Research Foundation* (pp. 99–123). New York: Routledge.
- Chreim, S., Williams, B., and Hinings, C. (2007) Interlevel Influences on the Reconstruction of Professional Role Identity. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 50(6), pp. 1515–1539.
- Dahlgren, M., Hult, H., Dahlgren, L., Hard, H., and Johansson, K. (2006) From senior student to novice worker: Learning trajectories in political science, psychology and mechanical engineering. *Studies in Higher Education*, 31(5), 569–586.
- Dreier, O. (2003) Learning in personal trajectories of participation. In N. Stephenson, H. L. Radtke, R. J. Jorna, & H. Stam (Eds.), *Theoretical Psychology: Critical Contributions* (pp. 20–29). Toronto: Captus University Press.
- Dubar, C., and Tripier, P. (1998) *Sociologie des professions*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- Ecclestone, K. (2009) Lost and found in transition: educational implications of concerns about 'identity', agency' and 'structure'. In J. Field, J. Gallacher, & R. Ingram (Eds.), *Researching Transitions in Lifelong Learning*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Eraut, M. (1994). *Developing Professional Knowledge and Competence*. London: Falmer.
- Eraut, M., and du Boulay, B. (2000) Developing the Attributes of Medical Professional Judgement and Competence: A Literature Review. *Cognitive Sciences Research Paper*. Retrieved from <http://www.cogs.susx.ac.uk/users/bend/doh/index.html>
- Evans, C., and Kevern, P. (2015) Liminality in preregistration mental health nurse education: a review of the literature. *Nurse Education in Practice*. doi:10.1016/j.nepr.2014.08.004.
- Evans, K. (2007) Concepts of bounded agency in education, work, and the personal lives of young adults. *International Journal of Psychology*, 42(2), 85–93. doi:10.1080/00207590600991237
- Field, J. (2012) Transitions and lifelong learning: signposts, pathways, road closed? *Lifelong Learning in Europe*, 1, 1–5.
- Gadiel, D., Ridoutt, L., Lin, V., Shilton, T., Wise, A., and Bagnulo, J. (2012) *Audit of the Preventive Health Workforce in Australia*. Retrieved from <http://health.gov.au/internet/anpha/publishingnsf/Content/workforce-audit-toc>
- Harrison, B. (Ed.) (2008) *Life Story Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Heinz, W. (2003) From Work Trajectories to Negotiated Careers: The Contingent Work Life Course. In J. T. Mortimer and M. J. Shanahan (Eds.), *Handbook of the Lifecourse* (pp. 185–204). New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers
- Heinz, W. (2009a) Status Passages as Micro-Macro Linkages in Life Course Research. In W. Heinz, J. Huinink, and A. Weyman (Eds.), *The Life Course Reader* (pp. 473–486). Frankfurt: Campus Verlag.

- Heinz, W. (2009b) Transitions: Biography and Agency. In W. Heinz, J. Huinink, and A. Weyman (Eds.), *The Life Course reader: Individuals and Societies across time* (pp. 421–429). Frankfurt: Campus Verlag.
- Heinz, W. (2009c) Vocational Identity and Flexible Work: A Contradicting or Constructive Relation? In F. Rauner, E. Smith, U. Hauschildt, and H. Zelloth (Eds.), *Innovative Apprenticeships: Promoting Successful School-to-Work Transitions* (pp. 35–50). Berlin: LIT Verlag.
- Heinz, W., Huinink, J., Swader, C., and Weyman, A. (2009) General Introduction: Fundamental conceptual frameworks. In W. Heinz, J. Huinink, and A. Weyman (Eds.), *The Life Course reader: Individuals and Societies across time* (pp. 15–22). Frankfurt: Campus Verlag.
- Holland, J. (2011) Timescapes: Living a Qualitative Longitudinal Study. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 12 (3), Retrieved from: <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs110392>.
- Ibarra, H. (2003) *Working Identity*. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Press.
- Jurow, S. (2009) How People Live and Learn Across Contexts. *Mind, Culture and Activity*, 17, 88–91.
- Kakavelakis, K., and Edwards, T. (2012) Situated learning theory and agentic orientation: A relational sociology approach. *Management Learning*, 43(5), 475–494.
- Kimberley, J. (2011) Preparing Leaders in Public Health for Success in a Flatter, More Distributed and Collaborative World. *Public Health Reviews*, 33(1), 289–299.
- Kupferberg, F. (2012) Conclusion: theorising turning points and decoding narratives. In K. Hackstaff, F. Kupferberg, and C. Négroni (Eds.), *Biography and turning points in Europe and America* (pp. 227–259). Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Levy, R., Ghisletta, P., Le Goff, J., Spini, D., and Widmer, E. (2005) Incitations for Interdisciplinarity in Life Course Research. In R. Levy, P. Ghisletta, J. Le Goff, D. Spini, and E. Widmer (Eds.), *Advances in Life course research: Towards an Interdisciplinary perspective on the life course* (Vol. 10, pp. 361–391). Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Lin, V., Watson, R., and Oldenburg, B. (2009) The future of the public health: the importance of workforce *Australia and New Zealand Health Policy*, 6(4). doi:10.1186/1743-8462-6-4
- Louie, A., Roberts, L., and Coverdale, J. (2007) The Enculturation of Medical Students and Residents. *Academic Psychiatry*, 31(4), 253–257.
- MacKian, S., Elliott, H., Busby, H., and Popay, J. (2003) ‘Everywhere and nowhere’: locating and understanding the ‘new’ public health. *Health and Place*, 9, pp. 219–229.
- Meyer, L. (2012) Shifting professional identities and perspectives: negotiating learning transitions from the field of public health. *Contemporary Learning Society: A Quarterly of Social and Educational Ideas*, 1(57), 93–110.
- Meyer, L. (2016) *Narratives of professional formation in public health: A case study*. (PhD Public Health), University of New South Wales, Sydney.
- Nerland, M., and Jensen, K. (2007) The Construction of a New Professional Self: A Critical Reading of the Curricula for Nurses and Engineers in Norway. In A. Brown, S. Kirpal, & F. Rauner (Eds.), *Identities at Work* (pp. 339–390). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.
- Nielsen, K. (2008) Learning, Trajectories of Participation and Social Practice. *Critical Social Studies*, 1(1), 22–36.
- Noordengraaf, M. (2013) Reconfiguring Professional Work: Changing Forms of Professionalism in Public Services. *Administration & Society*, XX(X), 1–28. doi:10.1177/0095399713509242
- Paquette, J. (2012). Theories of professional identity: Bringing Cultural Policy in Perspective. In J. Paquette (Ed.), *Cultural Policy, Work and Identity: The Creation, renewal and negotiation of professional subjectivities* (pp. 1–24). Surrey, England: Ashgate.
- Passarinho, I. (2008) Social Worker — Paths and Identity Construction. *Sísifo. Education Sciences Journal*, 6(May/August), 21–34.

- Ragin, C. (2008) *Redesigning Social Inquiry: Fuzzy Sets and Beyond*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ridoutt, L., Gadiel, D., and Cook, K. (2002). *Planning Framework for the Public Health Workforce*. Melbourne: National Public Health Partnership.
- Salling Olesen, H. (2007) Professional Identities, Subjectivity and Learning: Be(com)ing a General Practitioner. In L. West, P. Alheit, A. Andersen, and B. Merrill (Eds.), *Using Biographical and Life History Approaches in the Study of Adult and Lifelong Learning: European Perspectives* (pp. 125–141). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Sawchuk, P., and Taylor, A. (2010) Understanding challenging transitions in learning and work. In P. Sawchuk & A. Taylor (Eds.), *Challenging Transitions in Learning and Work* (pp. 1–24). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Scanlon, L. (2011) 'Becoming' a professional. In L. Scanlon (Ed.), *"Becoming" a Professional: An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Professional Learning* (Vol. Lifelong Learning Series pp. 13–32). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Shirani, F., and Henwood, K. (2010) Continuity and change in a qualitative longitudinal study of fatherhood: relevance without responsibility. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 14(1), 17–29. doi:10.1080/13645571003690876
- Sim, F., Lock, K., and McKee, M. (2007) Maximizing the contribution of the public health workforce: The English experience. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 85(12), 935–940. doi:10.2471/BLT.07.044289
- Stake, R. (2010) *Qualitative Research: Studying How things Work* (3rd ed.). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Thomson, R., and Holland, J. (2003) Hindsight, foresight and insight: The challenges of longitudinal qualitative research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 6(3), 233–244.
- Tulchinsky, T., and McKee, M. (2011) Education for a Public Health Workforce in Europe and Globally. *Public Health Reviews*, 33(1).
- Tynjälä, P., Välimaa, J., and Sarja, A. (2003) Pedagogical perspectives on the relationships between higher education and working life. *Higher Education*, 46(2), 147–166.
- Vähäsantanen, K., and Eteläpelto, A. (2015) Professional agency, identity, and emotions while leaving one's work organization. *Professions & Professionalism*, 5(3).
- Wenger-Trayner, E., Fenton-O'Creevy, M., Hutchinson, S., Kubiak, C., and Wenger-Trayner, B. (Eds.). (2015) *Learning in landscapes of practice. Boundaries, identity, and knowledgeability in practice-based learning*. London: Routledge.
- West, L., Alheit, P., Andersen, A., and Merrill, B. (Eds.) (2007) *Using Biographical and Life History Approaches in the Study of Adult and Lifelong Learning: European Perspectives*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Wingens, M., and Herwig, R. (2011) The life course approach - it's about time! *BIOS - Zeitschrift für Biographieforschung, Oral History und Lebensverlaufsanalysen*, 24(2), 187–203. Retrieved from <http://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/39233>
- Worth, N., and Hardill, I. (2015) Introduction. In N. Worth and I. Hardill (Eds.), *Researching the Lifecourse: Critical Reflections from the social sciences* (pp. 1–22). Bristol: Policy Press.
- Zittoun, T. (2015) *Imagining one's life: imagination, transitions and developmental trajectories* Paper presented at the 9th CONSPI Conference: A Psicologia e os desafios do mundo contemporâneo, Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador, Brazil. Retrieved from <http://doc.rero.ch/record/257860?ln=fr>

**TRAINING CONTEXTS FOR EDUCATIONAL
PROFESSIONALS IN HIGHER AND FURTHER
EDUCATION**

Educational professionalism: a lifelong learning process of constructing educators' professional identity in multiple learning contexts

Francesca Oggionni

Department of Human Sciences for Education

University of Milano-Bicocca

Piazza dell'Ateneo Nuovo, 1

20126 Milan

Italy

francesca.oggionni@unimib.it

ABSTRACT: The educational professionalism is the result of a process of continuous acquiring of theoretical knowledge, methodological tools and experiential skills, but most important it's the concrete evidence of a solid professional identity.

In a lifelong learning process, a period of training – seen as a starting point – offers the opportunity to come in contact with social work and its complexity, but above all to exchange knowledge and negotiate its sense with professionals, in order to examine opinions and expectations related to the professional profile. The experience of training provides the basis for the development of professional reflective skills, by analysing educational phenomena and bringing into question the significance of actions, in order to go beyond the technicalities and reach deeper levels of understanding. The different learning contexts, experienced both at university and in the field, introduce students to the observation of educational actions and their experimentation, but also stimulate a reflective elaboration: pedagogical supervision stimulates social educators to think critically about their identity, role and professionalism, enabling them to conceptualize knowledge acquired in the field and to formulate connections between theories and intervention strategies.

KEYWORDS: educational professionalism, reflective skills, learning and training experience, pedagogical supervision

Introduction

Educational professionalism is based on a continuous process of learning and, most important, it is the concrete evidence of a solid professional identity, built in different learning contexts, experienced both at university and in the field, where students and educators are introduced and become used to observation of educational actions, experimentation, reflective elaboration through a pedagogical supervision proposed in different forms: informally or structured, individually and/or in groups. A period of training can be considered the starting point of a lifelong learning process because it offers the opportunity to come in contact with social work and its complexity; it activates a professional (and learning) relationship with professionals thorough the exchange of knowledge and the negotiation of its sense, by taking into exam and discussion opinions and expectations related to the professional profile. By bringing into question the significance of action, students learn to go beyond the technicalities and reach deeper levels of understanding because the experience of training provides the basis for the development of professional reflective skills, by analysing educational phenomena by focusing on meanings and intervention aim, in order to read events and educational needs in multiple contexts, and therefore to design appropriate interventions and provide suitable responses to the emerging problems of contemporary society.

Academic paths: dissimilar learning shaping models produce different forms of knowledge

The academic programs are designed to convey theoretical and practical knowledge that can support a functional analysis of social, cultural and territorial realities, as well as to develop pedagogical and design skills, methodological and operational abilities, organizational and institutional competences, in order to enable students to carry out complex programming and planning tasks (such as the needs analysis, the structuring of educational interventions, their organization and ongoing monitoring, the evaluation of the results achieved). Furthermore, as professionals, they should be able to assume different functions in relation with disadvantaged people requiring support, accompaniment, facilitation, assistance, treatment and rehabilitation (often in collaboration with other professionals). They also should take on the role of coordinator and/or manager of projects, activities and services through the integration and enhancement of local resources. These are complex professional tasks for which a basic training is a preliminary experience, that has to be read and inserted in a lifelong learning programme. In fact, the complexity of social work and educational intervention requires the development of analytical and interpretative skills in order to figure out social dynamics in different contexts, and a multidimensional approach to problems and social needs, according to specific characteristics of people and territories. The educators' professional skills must be transversal and specific, on social, educational and health issues, acquired at university and in the field. Academic studies provide the theoretical framework; in the field it is actively possible to make experience of the professional role and reflectively to proceed with the construction of a solid professional identity. In fact, the educational professionalism is built through a recursive process of connection between theories and praxis. By virtue of the constant evolution of its contents, it comes out from a continuous process of in-depth study and integration of partial knowledge; it can be accomplished by a trial of the educational role and the acquisition of meta-reflective tools, leading to the development of local theories from experimental praxis. Not considered only as an individual process, the dialogue and a fair exchange among colleagues (in training and in service) are recommended, in adoption of a capitalization logic, to draw up a gradually shared and transmitted professional knowledge.

Looking at the history of social educators' profession, since the fifties has emerged the awareness of the need for a solid educational preparation, supported by methodological tools and reflective abilities, that can provide transversal and specific knowledge and skills in relation to different areas of intervention. In the sixties, professional schools for educators were created by provincial or municipal governments; they defined a theoretical and practical training model based on a multi-disciplinary knowledge and closely tied to local services.

The most recent transition to the academic education sets the existence of a double-track learning and training academic system: for the acquisition of knowledge and skills in education, the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) admits the possibility of choosing between two parallel profiles, corresponding to two different degree classes:

- L-19, class in Educational Sciences, oriented to a pedagogical and humanistic profile;
- SNT/2, class in Health Professions and Rehabilitation, oriented to a technical medical profile.

The educational proposals are different in subject contents, according to their distinct focuses of interest: Educational Sciences courses are oriented towards a multidisciplinary approach to social problems, pursued by stimulating the connection between pedagogical, anthropological, sociological and psychological knowledge; in curricula related to the Departments of Medicine, however, the scientific and medical disciplines are in the foreground, with pedagogical knowledge in the background. In both academic paths, it can be recognized the intention to promote the recursion between theories and practice, starting from the opportunity of trial the professional role within socio-educational services. However, there is huge difference in the number of hours reserved for training activities; this quantitative gap reveals two different functional attributions to theoretical and practical knowledge: academic studies can be planned to introduce to the educational profession by moving towards its theoretical and reflective foundations or, assuming a more pragmatic approach, through the acquisition of specific operational-methodological competences. Despite the similarities in terms of characteristics of the professional profiles and the recipients of their educational actions, there is a deep distance between the social paradigm and the health one; consequently, they give to educational work different shapes: it mainly seems to regard transformative projects rather than diagnostic or rehabilitative actions of assistance.

The coexistence of social and health dimensions in life stories of disadvantaged people is evident in multidimensional social needs; the introduction of a dichotomy between them is likely to reduce the complexity of problems and the range of possibilities of intervention, ending with the weakening of educational professionalism itself. It is no coincidence that the international orientation, by encouraging the sharing of common competency models, is designed to closely link the health professions with the human sciences and, therefore, to support the search for substantive responses to the growing complexity of contemporary life, rather than their simplification and fragmentation. In Italy, an impasse in legislation has justified a different attribution of value to social or health qualifications; the disparity of recognition and legitimacy has led and allowed the formalization of an imbalance of power and the consequent inequalities in employment opportunities.

New ways of thinking about educational professionalism, in terms of working possibilities as well as learning and training opportunities, recommend the adoption of a systemic approach: a particular problem has to be brought in an overall framework, in order to revise the contradictions and to seek coherent and sustainable new strategies of intervention. Everyday life offers occasions of learning and constructing personal and

professional identities in a widespread social and territorial way. The informal dimensions of education have to be taken into consideration as well as the intentional and institutional ones. The complexity of educational events challenges educators to maintain an “ecological sensitivity” and become aware of the relevance of social context on human activity. Assuming a research encompassing perspective during the fieldwork, educators have also to highlight the “gravitational world” that impacts over their agency in their everyday practice (for example: past experiences, the complex texture of the situation, the tools and the events in the setting). In this perspective, the ongoing situation needs to be analysed through the connection of multiple interpretations and meanings. Contextual dimensions have to be taken into consideration because they potentially affect human experiences. Appropriate and coherent educational intervention come out from the recognition of limits and perspectives of people and territories. It is complex, but it is necessary in order to preserve and develop the quality of educational work and to increase the social, cultural and economic recognition of educational professionalism.

Pedagogical supervision: a strategical professional tool

Pedagogical supervision is a strategical professional tool that is experienced at first by students in a training context, individually and/or in groups; it plays a decisive role in building their professional profile and becomes an effective method in activating processes of analysis of educational practices observed and experienced within the services. By reflecting on what is being observed, in search of the multiplicity of its meanings, it is possible to dynamically reach different levels of knowledge, more or less explicit and aware, in the intersection between several levels: personal and professional, emotional and rational, theoretical and practical, cognitive and operational, individual and collective.

Students and (future) educators may be guided to awareness of their mode of intervention through identification of a repertoire of operational tools, but above all by development of their communication, reflective and re-elaboration skills. They learn that educators’ professionalism is strengthened by ensuring specific knowledge of a variety of educational situations and contexts, along with the ability to comparatively analyse social representations, the personal characteristics of subjects involved in an educational scenario and the complex overall system of culture, ethics and values. Therefore, an experience must be related to the (individual and collective) meanings and motivations within which it arises and define its perceived worth.

The educational professionalism is based on intentional thought processes that give a meaningful orientation to work techniques and praxis. Tools that activate and oversee reflective and dialogical processes of (self)evaluation and practical transformation, leading to the development of theories, are essential for educators: pedagogically-centred reflection shared within work teams, services and organizations gives them the means and skills required to review their praxis in terms of the intentional aims brought to bear on educational projects. A professional reflection can make educators aware about the importance of changing the aims of (too) structured projects when desirable or necessary. Through pedagogically-centred reflection, educators learn to conceptualize the knowledge they have gained from experience, thereby broadening their framework of expertise and strengthening their professional identity. They acquire their professionalism via a lifelong learning process which needs to be recognized, constructed and supported with a view to enhancing these professionals’ technical skills and pedagogical competences.

Pedagogical supervision can play a strategic role in the process of constructing professional identity because it facilitates processes of communication and interaction among work group members, thereby enhancing levels of collaboration as well as individual

and collective professional educational competences, making them visible and communicable. In a supervisory setting, it is possible to suspend actions temporarily – not looking for immediate solution to problems – and to analyse the dynamics that regulate professional relationships between professionals and their clients and/or among colleagues; it is possible to search for connections among different points of view and theories, motivations and choices, doubts and feelings, objectives and methodologies, in order to investigate their influence on processes of defining roles and functions both internally and externally to multilevel structures (whether personal, professional, managerial, institutional). Pedagogical supervision is an exercise of self-assessment skills, with increasing awareness of personal and professional limits and resources, doubts and resistances, which can produce implicit opposition if not taken into due consideration in negotiation processes. The supervisory setting has a communication structure that facilitates resolution of the difficulties inherent in the process of comparing multiple viewpoints on events and educational problems; fragmentation may be reconstructed into a “partial and temporary knowledge” that reduces the distance between representations, proposed objectives (sometimes not realistically achievable) and the feasible possibilities for change displayed in a given situation. Supervisees – students or expert educators, individuals or working teams – become used to recognize and negotiate the meanings of educational praxis, but above all they understand “who they are” and “how they work as professionals”.

Supervision consists of a process of reflection, learning, evaluation and control, that is developed through the relationship between an expert professional and a social worker or group of workers seeking professional support, a suitable place and a time for (re)elaborating knowledge acquired on the job and an ad hoc setting for reflecting on the effectiveness of their professional behaviours, choices of methods and instruments, so as to constantly review the quality of their work and identify new ways of conceptualizing and planning it. In supervision, it is possible to work at a technical job-related level, focusing on managerial or methodological competences, or at a personal level, targeting professional well-being. By trying to identify connections among different levels, work groups develop the ability to compare many different points of view and meanings – both individual and collective – and to negotiate possible new interpretations of reality and options for future intervention. Furthermore, social educators acquire competence in performing complex analyses of how specific educational actions correspond to the social mandate received, in terms of the meaning and coherence of given projects, objectives, methodologies etc.

The content of pedagogical supervision can be multiple and complex, but essentially it has three main chief concerns: educational intentionality, ownership of educational interventions and the activation of relational and educational resources. Educational intervention should not be a mere reaction to contingent factors and cannot be implemented randomly. The analysis of work methods has to be made in terms of approaches, multilevel relationships and organization in order to foster the taking on of higher levels of responsibility and autonomy in operating and making decisions. The main objective of pedagogical supervision, therefore, is to promote educators' professional development, helping them to become more aware of their own method of intervention and to attain knowledge and skills pertaining to specific educational fields; in particular: educational design and planning, the educational relationship, competence in collaborating within work teams, the production of professional documentation, the activation of territorial resources and networks, the conceptualization of knowledge acquired in their everyday working. In fact, by creating opportunities for the re-elaboration of experience, pedagogical supervision enables educators to produce a reflective, complex and systematized knowledge, which provides praxis with theoretical depth and brings out their specific educational role in interaction with other professionals.

Nowadays organizations continuously face new social emergencies, driven by both relational and economic factors, and therefore analysing clients' needs is a complex task; the current precariousness in employment creates a rapid turnover of professionals in social working groups too, and so managerial aspects become predominant and structured reflexivity is not always guaranteed. Supervision thus becomes essential, because it can reactivate the circuits of connection and exchange between theories and praxis, and between explicit and implicit knowledge, reconnecting actions to educational meanings and enhancing possibilities for change, through a continuous balancing and rebalancing of mental movements.

The professional figure of the supervisor is not neutral but crucial: his/her conceptual framework directs the focus of attention onto educational processes and his/her methods of constructing the setting and managing work group dynamics (sometimes complex and compromised) determine the course and the effectiveness of the supervisory process. The supervisor, then, is required to possess abstraction and modelling abilities, to use multiple conceptual and experiential contributions in order to lead to a good level of theorization, beginning from the analysis of a particular case, situation or contest. The introduction of new models of observation and analysis can open up many possibilities for interpretation and operational strategies. Supervisors must acquire a complete knowledge of theoretical contents, in order to use them implicitly in discussing specific situations; they must also have mastered appropriate methodologies for helping work teams to form their own local theories on educational phenomena. Reflexive processes are found to be fundamental and must be effective at several levels: in relation to communicative and relational dynamics, planning and decision-making strategies, methodological and organizational choices, and speculative and theoretical assumptions.

Multiple meta-reflective experiences in socio-educational services

Educational events are so complex that it is useful to adopt a multidisciplinary approach with a view to extending the framework of analysis to include a range of possible interpretations, meanings and forms of intervention.

For example, the constant intersection between the personal and professional dimensions, problems and reflections involved in social work require both a psychological and a pedagogical approach. In fact, only a functional balance in the emotional involvement inherent to educational relationships can safeguard the characteristics of authenticity and asymmetry, through a highly complex combination of respect, awareness of limits and responsibilities in caring for (not invading) an individual's personal freedom to make plans and decisions. Emotions and the affective implications of educational relationships could be perceived as a potential problem needing to be brought under control, and when it comes to reflection, this often takes precedence over the educational subject's needs and objectives. Psychological supervision focuses on the individual and collective feelings surrounding an educational experience; it analyses personal and relational dynamics, in order to point up their effects on personal and professional choices and actions. Pedagogical supervision, on the other hand, stimulates the analysis of educational actions and events, identifying the elements that can make sense within an educational design and planning framework. Despite not directly focused on practical problems, it produces significant effects on praxis via the implementation of reflective processes that increase educators' levels of awareness and professionalism. It is a tool which supports the process of constructing a professional identity and role, because it tends to produce pedagogical knowledge; in being transversal to different areas and contexts of intervention, it supports educators by enabling them to observe, analyse and critically reflect on their own work in pedagogical terms.

Furthermore, in socio-educational services, multiple meta-reflective experiences related to professional lifelong learning are in use: counselling, learning and training, coordination, supervision and research processes. Taken together, these practices form a second level of professionalism and can be considered learning contexts related to each other and sometimes (confusingly) overlapping, because they share some functions: they can enhance professional identity and role, develop skills and generate connections between theory and praxis. What they mainly have in common is the aim of giving professional support to social workers and the tendency to be made up of transversal elements, related to problem-solving, activating connections among different organizational and institutional levels, recognizing the potential to change educational experiences. Despite their similarities, the different practices are modulated and structured differently, in relation to the role of subject involved in the process (which defines the type of intervention), the objectives and expected results. A proper choice has to be made in different situations, avoiding simplification and above all to think only in terms of cost reduction, with the risk that organizational objectives might be given priority over educational ones. In fact, it is important to aware about the fact that standard techniques are more manageable but reduce the possibilities of thinking about complex actions and innovations. However, the creation of reflective learning contexts leads to a growth in knowledge about educational phenomena, which in turn raises the level of effectiveness and coherence of educational interventions.

References

- Adams R., Dominelli L., Payne M. (edited by) (III ed. 2009) *Social work: themes, issues and critical debate*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Belardi N., Wallnöfer G. (2007) *La supervisione nelle professioni educative. Potenzialità e risorse*. Gardolo (TN): Erickson.
- Brandani W., Tramma S. (directed by) (2014) *Dizionario del lavoro educativo*. Roma: Carocci.
- Brunori P., Peirone M., Poffa F., Ronda L. (2001) *La professione di educatore. Ruolo e percorsi formativi*. Roma: Carocci.
- Callari Galli M., Cambi F., Ceruti M. (2003) *Formare alla complessità. Prospettive dell'educazione nelle società globali*. Roma: Carocci.
- Cambi F., Catarsi E., Colicchi E., Fratini C., Muzi M. (2003) *Le professionalità educative. Tipologia, interpretazione e modello*. Roma: Carocci.
- Cardini M., Molteni L. (2003) *L'educatore professionale. Guida per orientarsi nella formazione e nel lavoro*. Roma: Carocci.
- Demetrio D. (1988) *Lavoro sociale e competenze educative. Modelli teorici e metodi di intervento*. Roma: La Nuova Italia Scientifica.
- Ferrario P. (2014) *Politiche sociali e servizi. Metodi di analisi e regole istituzionali*. Roma: Carocci.
- Grosso M. (1990) *L'educatore professionale oggi. Figura, funzione, formazione*. Milano: Vita e Pensiero.
- Grosso M. (1994) *Professione: educatore. L'operatore socio-psico-pedagogico*. Milano: Vita e Pensiero.
- Hawkins P., Shohet R. (2000) *Supervision in the helping professions*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Kanizsa S., Tramma S. (2011) *Introduzione alla pedagogia e al lavoro educativo*. Roma: Carocci.
- Maurizio R., Rei D. (1991) *Professioni nel sociale*. Torino: Gruppo Abele.
- Oggionni F. (2013) *La supervisione pedagogica*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Oggionni F. (2014) *Il profilo dell'educatore. Formazione e ambiti di intervento*. Roma: Carocci.

- Oggionni F. (2016) (Ri)formare la professionalità educativa. *Annali online della Didattica e della Formazione Docente*. Vol.8 n.11, pp. 55-68.
- Orefice P., Carullo A., Calaprice S. (2011) *Le professioni educative e formative: dalla domanda sociale alla risposta legislativa*. Padova: CEDAM.
- Palmieri C., Pozzoli B., Rossetti S.A., Tognetti S. (2009) *Pensare e fare tirocinio. Manuale di Tirocinio per l'educatore professionale*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Reggio P. (2009) *Apprendimento esperienziale: fondamenti e didattiche*. Milano: EDUCatt.
- Saraceno C. (2013) *Il welfare. Modelli e dilemmi della cittadinanza sociale*. Bologna: il Mulino.
- Sumini A. (2008) La supervisione educativa nei servizi. *Prospettive Sociali e Sanitarie*, 7, pp. 17-20.
- Tramma S. (2008) *L'educatore imperfetto. Senso e complessità del lavoro educativo*. Roma: Carocci.
- Tramma S. (2010) *Pedagogia sociale*. Milano: Guerini.
- Tramma S. (2015) *Pedagogia della contemporaneità. Educare al tempo della crisi*. Roma: Carocci.
- Ulivieri S., Cambi F., Orefice P. (2010) *Cultura e professionalità educative nella società complessa*. Firenze: Firenze University Press.
- Villa L. (2008) *Il lavoro pedagogico nei servizi educativi. Tra promozione, controllo e protezione*. Milano: Franco Angeli.

Competency of Adult Educators with the Changing Learning Contexts in India

Pawan Sahu*, Pushpa Kumari**, Geetanjali Baswani***, Koshy Jacob****

* Doctoral Student in Adult Education
Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalya
470003-Sagar India
pawan20092010@gmail.com

** Doctoral Student in Adult Education
Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalya
470003-Sagar India
pushpa.nayan@gmail.com

*** Doctoral Student in Adult Education
Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalya
470003-Sagar India
daisiesgeeta@gmail.com

**** Faculty, College of Education
Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalya
470003-Sagar India
susheeljacob@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: Adult educators are people with specialized knowledge, skills or interests in specific fields, and they practice the profession of facilitating the learning of adult learners. Adults have preconceived notions about education, learning styles and subject matter. Adult learners possess different needs, interests, expertise and experiences (Knowles, 1980). This necessitates adult educators to modify their roles and methods in response to meet the learner's diverse individual characteristics. Adult educators need to adapt their philosophy and roles to facilitate adult learners' transformative and experiential learning. They must be well-trained to understand how learning event takes place; how the content and context generate each other and so are interdependent. This paper is an attempt to critically reflect whether the training of the adult educators of the adult teaching-learning institutions i.e., District Institution of Education and Training, Anganwadi, Jan Shikshan Sansthan and Lok Shiksha Kendra run by Government of India, equip them to meet the ever-changing learning needs and demands of the learners by creating and managing appropriate learning context.

KEYWORDS: Adult Educators, Adult Learners, Transformative Learning, Experiential Learning, Learning Context

Introduction

Adult educators are people with specialized knowledge, skills or interests in specific fields, and they practice the profession of facilitating the learning of adult learners. Adult learners usually attend by choice and are thus highly motivated. Also, being custodian of culture and traditional knowledge, they bring years of experience to the classroom, which makes teaching these learners rewarding and satisfying. Adult Learners are characterized by their need to know, self-concept, role of their experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning and motivation. Adults have preconceived notions about education, learning styles and subject matter. Adult learners possess different needs, interests, expertise and experiences (Knowles, 1980). This necessitates adult educators to modify their roles and methods in response to meet the learner's diverse individual characteristics. They need to adapt their philosophy and roles to facilitate adult learners' transformative and experiential learning. The role of adult educators can be explained in two ways- how they perceive their roles themselves and how their roles are described in the literature. They must be well-trained to understand how learning event takes place; how the content and context generate each other and so are interdependent. Hull (1993) gave a more general statement about contextual learning, by claiming that learning occurs only when learners are able to connect information to their own frame of reference, which is supposed to reflect their inner world of memory, experience, and response. Naturally, such personal frame of reference is largely fostered by the individual's experiences and interactions with the real world so far.

Objectives of the study

In the light of the above, this paper is an attempt (a) to give an overview of the adult teaching-learning institutions i.e., District Institution of Education and Training, Anganwadi, Jan Shikshan Sansthan and Lok Shiksha Kendra run by Government of India, (b) to do comparative analysis of these institutions and; (c) to critically reflect whether the training of the adult educators equip them to meet the ever-changing learning needs and demands of the learners by creating and managing appropriate learning context.

Theoretical framework

Education is the only tool by which every corner of the country can be enlightened. This necessitates spreading adult education/learning awareness in the society to realize the concept of productive ageing, thereby having empowered citizens who can contribute for community well-being. Indian have had the tradition of social education from the ancient times, wherein they were not only made literate, but were also embellished in ideas and behavior for a well-planned, happy and prosperous society. Gurus, rishis, storytellers, orators etc, created awareness in people towards social organization, morality and social responsibilities by various methods – discourses, debates, religious songs, ramlila, raslila, etc (Singh, 1999, p. 01). Similar role is being played by the adult education institutions.

Now, let's have a look at the adult education institutions.

Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSSs) / Institute of People's Education (IPE):

JSSs are registered societies established as Non-Governmental Organization by Human Resource Department first in Mumbai in 1967. It provides vocational training and skill upgradation programme to people for their social and economical development. It includes

most of the basic courses from general education to household knowledge with total 36 vocational courses. In the initial years, it was known as “Shramik Vidhyapeeth” for organizing programme for industrial workers. This institution trains illiterate and neo-literate unemployed/ underemployed as well as school drop outs by identifying skills as would have a market in the region of their establishment and creates skilled manpower (Solanki & Ansari, 2015).

JSS organizes training and orientation programmes for Key Resource Persons, Master Trainers and Trainees in vocational courses and also for neo-literates with a polyvalent / multidimensional approach. JSSs co-operate with educational, cultural and other social organizations involved in organizing programmes and activities to meet educational, vocational, social & cultural and welfare needs of target groups (MHRD, 2004).

Public Teaching Centres (Lok Shiksha Kendra) - Motivators (Preraks):

At the grassroot level, by Lok Shiksha Kendra, two Preraks may be engaged on payment of honorarium to discharge administrative and academic tasks at their training centres. The Prerak is a volunteer with 10 years of schooling, with leadership qualities, acceptable to the community, aptitude for community work etc. The Prerak is expected to discharge a number of functions such as literacy teaching, post literacy, maintenance of library and reading room, discussion group, organizing sports, games, cultural and recreational activities, disseminates information on developmental programmes etc. Together with volunteer teachers they constitute the resource group motivating people around to be a lifelong learner in a village. Prerak also goes to the workplace of learner and teaches them at their convenience making use of their traditional knowledge.

The training of prerak is conducted in two phases. The prominent training needs of the preraks includes to know more about different programmes of Continuing Education, ways and means of publicizing the activities of the centres, using local resources for the centre, promoting peoples participation, creating awareness among the community about the importance of education, teaching techniques to adults, maintaining records, understanding the participants etc. (Reddy & Devi, 2005).

District Institute of Education and Training (DIET):

Kothari Commission (1964-66) the earliest policy formulation on education emphasized the need for teacher education, reiterated by The National Policy on Education 1986 for the improvement in status and professional competence of teachers is cornerstone of educational reconstruction. It emphasized the significance and need for a decentralized system for the professional preparation of teachers. This policy was put in place proactively by the Central Government in the 8th plan with the establishment of District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs), Institute of Advance Studies in Education (IASEs) and Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs). The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Restructuring and Reorganization of Teacher Education aimed at providing academic resource support to elementary and secondary teachers through training, action research and experimentation and developing institutional infrastructure for pre-service and in-service training. The vision of a DIET as planned under the Scheme is to restructure and reorganize the elementary teacher education to make it more responsive and to realize universalization of elementary education (Gogoi & Khanikor, 2016).

Recruitment criteria for DIETs specified that staff should have two Master’s degrees and seven years of elementary teaching experience. Professional development opportunities for DIET staff are very limited and appropriated by a handful of staff. In addition to the

recommended review of recruitment procedures, there is a need to develop a policy strategy to address teacher educators' ongoing professional development needs (Dyer, 2004).

ANGANWADI:

The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) is the largest community based outreach programme initiated in October 1975 by Central Government was a response to the problems of persistent hunger and malnutrition among children. The programme is a package of six services viz., supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check up, referral services, and nutrition and health education for mothers / pregnant mothers, nursing mothers and to adolescent girls (kishoris). The Anganwadi Worker is the community - based voluntary frontline workers of the ICDS Programme. Selected from the community, she assumes the pivotal role due to her close and continuous contact with the beneficiaries. (Sandhyarani and Usha Rao, 2013).

The job training module for Anganwadi Workers focuses only on the early childhood care and education (ECCE) part of the training. It is designed to provide the Anganwadi Worker a basic understanding of the ECCE curriculum and pedagogical approaches to ensure optimal and holistic development of young children so that they are ready to start formal schooling at the age of six years. It also includes a component on psychosocial development of children below the age of 3 years, to help Anganwadi Workers counsel parents/caregivers on early stimulation. It is expected that this training will be followed by periodic refresher or thematic trainings for further knowledge and skill enhancement.

So, we had an overview of the purpose, scope and the establishment of the institutions where an adult educator facilitates learning of the adults. The training programmes prescribed are of different durations, at different intervals. The pre-training programmes are aimed to create awareness about the programme, develops self-confidence and to bring change in their attitudes and to develop competencies and skills required to discharge their functions. The in-service training programmes organized at different intervals are aimed to review their performance and to infuse innovations to improve their performance.

Reviewed literature

Borah (2016) conducted a study to understand and appreciate the importance of skill based education and how it helps in productive employment. It was found that vocational education is a wonderful creation for helping people in making themselves self employed. Skill based education improves functional and analytical ability and thereby opens up opportunities for individuals and also groups to achieve greater access to labour markets and livelihoods.

Gogoi and Khanikor (2016) conducted a study to see how far the DIETs have been able to provide the necessary facilities to the teacher trainees and faculty members of these institutions. It was found that availability of educational facilities in DIETs is satisfactory in respect of teacher training program.

Reddy and Devi (2012) examines the background characteristics of the teachers involved at various levels of adult education programmes and the nature of training received by them. Training plays predominant role in shaping educators capabilities in handling men and materials under his/her disposal. Hence, the training programmes should be formulated keeping in view of the training needs, roles to be performed and background of the educator (volunteer).

Sandhyarani and Usha Rao (2013) undertook a study with the objective of assessing the role and responsibilities of anganwadi workers in Mysore district, India. The results found that workers are very active in rendering their services to the beneficiaries. But the Department of Women and Child Welfare has to look into the matter of remuneration and very importantly providing accurate knowledge with regard to the responsibilities of anganwadi workers through organizing all the anganwadi workers under one roof.

Solanki and Ansari (2015) in a descriptive study stated objective, function and role of Jan Shikshan Sansthan in society. Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) provides vocational education and training to people for their social and economical development.

Methodology

Adult educators of the above mentioned institutions had been interviewed using a brief interview schedule and the content analysis done of the data collected through interview (primary data) and the secondary data collected from the internet and website of Ministry of Human Resource Development, GOI.

This study has critically analysed and understood about training of adult educators and their teaching-learning performances, highlighting the lacunas and the strengths of the training of adult educators and the changing role of adult educators with the changing learning contexts. Also, would assist the authority to relook into the existing policies and programmes.

Findings

Training is a process to assist an adult educator to gain the theoretical and practical knowledge of the project, he/she develops a desire and an attitude for self-learning and self-development and he/she acquires the competence, to impart to the best of his/her ability and experience, the benefit of his/her theoretical and practical skills to the target group of the programme (Singh, 1999, p.268-269). Training equips to understand and deliver the content according to the changing learning contexts over the time and among different age-groups.

The views expressed by the adult educators of different institutions regarding their training are summarized as follows;

Jan Shikshan Sansthan

Training and follow up	Through an expert resource person as per the requirement of the course, training is provided. On regular basis, follow up is done.
Competency developed to cater needs of learner	Adult educators feel the training needs to be enriched and improved.
Instructional Methods and Techniques	Field visit, Group discussion, Collaborative study, printed instructional material
Suggestion/s if any	They feel they are not being sufficiently trained as per the demands of the programme.

Lok Shiksha Kendra (Prerak)

Training and follow up	Pre-service training given, is just a formality to carry out the work anyhow.
Competency developed to cater needs of learner	Lack of sufficient training does not develop competency
Instructional Methods and Techniques	Field visit, Group discussion, Chalkboard, Printed instructional material, Collaborative study
Suggestion/s if any	In-service training and follow ups should be provided

District Institute of Education and Training

Training and follow up	Educators who join DIET have qualified teacher training programme (B.Ed. / M.Ed.). No additional training is provided on joining DIET.
Competency developed to cater needs of learner	They are fully satisfied with the training they have received in the teacher training programme. They are competent to meet the needs of learner.
Instructional Methods and Techniques	Internship (Teaching Practice in schools), Field visits, Collaborative study, Group discussion, Tutorials, Report writing
Suggestion/s if any	-----

Anganwadi Workers and helpers

Training and follow up	Training is more focused on the early childhood care and education up to age of six years. With the training provided, they could not carry out their responsibilities properly.
Competency developed to cater needs of learner	They feel partially competent to carry out the assigned administrative and academic tasks.
Instructional Methods and Techniques	Field visit, Group discussion, Chalkboard, Printed instructional material, Collaborative study
Suggestion/s if any	Additional workload is a barrier in carrying out the main duties properly.

Discussion

All the four institutions are entirely distinct in their purpose, but the adult educators do require proper training to enhance competency to meet the objectives of the programme and changing needs of the learners. Almost similar instructional methods and techniques are being used for the training of the adult educator.

Jan Shikshan Sansthan:

In JSS, no. of members is fixed. Same members are trained by resource person regularly for the courses in demand in their region. And these members in turn train their target group. This is not possible for a person to acquire all the skills at higher level. This limitation may act as a barrier for the target learner to acquire right set of skills and transform into a skilled workforce. Adult educators (members) lack the kind of rigorous training they require to discharge their responsibilities successfully.

Lok Shiksha Kendra:

The training provided does not prepare prerak (motivators) completely to handle the workload and discharge their assigned duties and responsibilities successfully to meet the programme objectives. The facilities and the honorarium provided is inadequate and could not motivate them to work with dedication. One time training could not keep prerak competent enough to meet the changing learning contexts of the learner.

One of the prerak we met, was financially sound and with his consistent hard work and experience has excelled in his performances. In spite of lacunas, we had success story to share.

Story 01: A person (Bhoorelal) was an illiterate, on motivating becomes literate and experienced the power of learning. Though his financial condition does not permit, he buys newspaper and is a regular reader and keeping himself updated. He has become a lifelong learner. Whenever he finds or feels something wrong being done around him, he always reacts in writing in a calm manner with the people. Now, he is empowered enough to resolve the problems of his routine life.

Story 02: An illiterate lady (Shama), was motivated by prerak to become educated. She participated in the programme, learnt how to interact and respond to routine life activities. She herself filled application and applied for the elections of village panchayat. She won and presently she is excellently discharging her duties.

District Institute of Education and Training:

The eligibility to join DIET is to have two masters' degree and seven years of elementary teaching experience. The purpose of B.Ed. is to prepare teachers for school teaching. So, we feel that an additional training or orientation course should be organized to make them familiar with the working environment of DIET on joining.

Anganwadi:

The duties and responsibilities of an AWW should be clearly marked out. An orientation / refresher programme is required under one roof at least once a year for all the anganwadi workers, to restrain the differences of opinion among anganwadi workers with regard to the responsibilities/ programmes.

Conclusion

These institutions have largely addressed the issues of multiculturalism and pluralistic society. In all the four institutions surveyed, most of the adult educators were unsatisfied with the training they are receiving. Training provided is not assisting them to become

competent; they don't know how to correlate content with learning context. To develop competency with the changing learning contexts of learner, there is an urgent need to enrich and improve their training aspect. Though, we also came across few model institutions. It could be concluded that on one hand, adult educators are not able to have expected outcomes, but on the other hand we do have many adult educators working successfully with their success stories to share. The credit is given to the training and their experience.

Almost similar findings have been reported in the research articles reviewed. Here also researchers have found the educators giving good performances as well as those who could not perform as expected. For that, all of them have equally emphasized on the quality training.

It is recommended that greater emphasis has to be laid on attracting the best possible persons as instructors and to provide them with good training and satisfactory conditions of work and service. Training is an indispensable tool to realize the objectives of the programmes successfully and to meet the upcoming challenges in adult education.

References

- Borah, Gobinda Krishna (2016) Importance of Skill Based Education on Generating Employment, Special Reference to Subdivision Majuli, Jorhat, Assam. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, 4(1), 668-672.
- Ministry of Human Resource Development (n.d.) *Functioning of anganwadi centres in Assam and Meghalaya*. New Delhi:GOI.
- Dyer, Caroline., Choksi, Archana., Awasty, Vinita., Iyer, Uma., Moyade, Renu., Nigam, Neerja., Purohit, Neetu., Shah, Swati. & Sheth, Swati (2004) *District institutes of Education and training: A comparative study in three Indian states*. Glasgow (UK): DFID.
- Gogoi, Probin Kumar and Khanikar, Sangeeta (2016) A Study of Educational Facilities Available In District Institute of Education and Training in Assam. Research Inventory: *International Journal of Engineering and Science*, 6(4), 78-82.
- Ministry of Human Resource Development (2004) *Scheme Of Jan Shikshan Sansthan*. New Delhi: Directorate of Adult Education. Viewed 11 September 2017, <documents.gov.in/central/15618.pdf>.
- Hippel, Aiga von and Tippelt, Rudolf (2010) The role of adult educators towards (potential) participants and their contribution to increasing participation in adult education - insights into existing research. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 1(1-2), 33-51.
- Ministry of Women and Child Development (2017) *ECCE Training Module for Anganwadi Workers*. New Delhi: GOI.
- Reddy, P. Adinarayana and Devi, D. Uma (2012) Adult Education Teachers: Characteristics and Training. *Bulgarian Journal of Science and Education Policy (BJSEP)*, 6(1), pp. 229-238.
- Sandhyarani, M.C. and Usha Rao, C. (2013) Role and responsibilities of anganwadi workers, with Special reference to Mysore district. *International Journal of Science, Environment and Technology*, 2(6), 1277 – 1296.
- Singh, Madan (1999) *Companion to Adult Educators*. New Delhi: National Literacy Mission.
- Solanki, Ashok and Ansari, Ekhalak (2015) Role of Jan Shikshan Sansthan: a descriptive study. *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 3(11), 1619 – 1622.
- Wang, Victor C. X. and Sarbo, Linda (2004) Philosophy, Role of Adult Educators, and Learning: How Contextually Adapted Philosophies and the Situational Role of Adult Educators Affect Learners' Transformation and Emancipation. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 2(3), 204-214.

Empowerers, Inspirers, Knowledge Providers # living the dream

FE Teachers' Professional Identity in Challenging Times

Carol Thompson*, Peter Wolstencroft **

** University of Bedfordshire
Polhill Avenue
Bedford
MK41 9EA
England
carol.thompson@bedford.ac.uk*

*** Coventry University
Priory Street
Coventry
CV1 5FB
ac343@coventry.ac.uk*

ABSTRACT: The dynamic nature of English Further Education (FE) has caused a crisis of identity for many teachers in the sector due to a cultural shift which advocates the measurement of success via statistics. This has changed the role of the educator to one which has a focus on the product rather than the process of education and in turn has had an impact on teachers' professional agency. In the first stage of this research, semi-structured interviews were used to compare teacher experiences in two diverse FE organisations. This was followed up by focus groups and questionnaire to explore the initial findings. The initial findings depicted a group of professionals constrained by rigorously monitored working environments, who, after completing teacher education had limited involvement in wider professional communities. Similarly, participants in the second phase of the research depicted professional identities which were clearly set in context. The research also revealed practitioners' aspirations in relation to the purpose of their professional roles alongside a pragmatic acceptance of the constraints which detracted from achieving this purpose.

KEYWORDS: Agency, professionalism, identity, Further Education, pragmatism.

Introduction

The dynamic nature of English Further Education (FE) has caused a crisis of identity for many Teachers in the sector. The reduction in funding (Tickle, 2014) and the focus on the product, rather than the process of learning, has changed the role of the educator and also their ability to articulate their professional status. Recent research (Thompson and Wolstencroft, 2017) found that there has been a significant shift in role perception for FE practitioners. Previously, teachers in the sector identified themselves within an educational paradigm underpinned by notions of social justice which prioritised student achievement from a developmental perspective. Through progressive cultural shifts towards a more data driven focus this perspective now acknowledges a different definition of '*achievement*' which in turn has had an impact on teachers' agency and professional identity..

Since the implementation of the Further and Higher Education Act (1992) and the removal of further education colleges from Local Education Authorities' control, the expectation has been that colleges operate as independent institutions. As a result, there has been an increase in the use of discourse normally associated with private sector leadership and management (Hopkins 2013). This move, viewed by some as essential to reduce the wastage associated with public sector organisations, could also be viewed as part of an extended project by successive governments to control and regulate public spending. The result has been a highly managed funding methodology and an increase in a target driven approach to education. Subsequently, the sector has been depicted as the ignored 'middle sibling' between compulsory and higher education, a somewhat neglected relation given limited funding and strategic direction (Lucas 1996).

A significant effect of these changes has been the evolution of a culture in which teaching and learning have become clearly defined products. For teachers this has led to increased emphasis being placed on the being recognised, by students and managers, as a 'good teacher', a term which on the surface may seem fluid but in reality is often associated with the behaviours outlined in the quality assurance processes associated with teaching observations. In addition, a key expectation of teaching appears to be its role in supporting students to attain qualifications, described as a 'pass the class' approach. (Thompson and Wolstencroft, 2012) This in turn moves the emphasis away from broader to educational aims to those which have a clearly measurable outcome. Such clear definition, in terms of the teacher's role and purpose, rather than providing scope for the exploration of professional identity, appears to have restricted teachers' views of the profession and created an identity in which teachers have become 'deliverers' of learning and the passport to student achievement.

Methods

The research was carried out using interviews and focus groups from two diverse organisations. Organisation A is a specialised training establishment based in the south of England and Organisation B is a College of Further Education based in the East Midlands. The sample contained two managers and four tutors in organisation A, and in organisation B there were six tutors and one manager. A second phase of the research was based on a questionnaire circulated to recently qualified teachers working within an FE context and not limited to the case study organisations. There were 72 responses to the questionnaires, 91% from participants working in FE colleges and 9% in charities, university and 'other' settings.

Literature Review

Context

English further education continues to evolve as persistent funding cuts drive change (Tickle, 2014; Howse, 2015). This, coupled with increased pressure on the sector to boost the country's skills bank (BIS, 2016) and a continued steer towards enhanced achievement has brought about a more technical-rational approach to management (Bush *et al.*, 2010) whereby 'outputs', in terms of results have become dominant (Gunter, 2004). Subsequently, this has influenced the overall approach to teaching with increased value being placed on examination and certification (Coffield and Williamson, 2011). It has also created a phase of English education which is still seen as the 'poor relation' (BIS 2016, p. 5), as illustrated by Kennedy: 'I fear for further education because it is still being neglected—it is poorly funded and never given the esteem it deserves—and yet it is so fundamental to the well-being of this nation and the opportunities it provides for so many.' (2016 online) It would be very easy to agree with this statement and to acknowledge the centrality of the sector in providing opportunities for a diverse population, yet, this also reinforces the somewhat 'helpless' persona depicted by the metaphor of Cinderella and contested in recent literature (Daley *et al.*, 2015 & 2017; Exley, 2016).

According to Elliott (in Daley *et al.*, 2017) 'Education has at its core a moral purpose - to make a difference, to bring about improvements, to be transformational' (2017:xxii) and, the argument continues, should be managed in a way which allows this purpose to be realised, something which seems difficult to achieve in the current regime of management, dominated by a 'means-end calculation, and the consequences of actions for teaching and learning are secondary to compliance, meeting targets and personal gain' (Ibid. 2017, p. xxiii).

Agency

One outcome of the control mechanisms dominant in current regimes is the limitations placed on tutor and manager agency. The notion of active agency suggests a scenario where professionals can make some choices about how to carry out their professional roles, or as outlined by Biesta and Tedder something which allows individuals to 'critically shape their responses to problematic situations.' (2006, p. 11). In Emirbayer and Mische's view, agency is not one dimensional but has distinctive elements and is described as 'A temporally embedded process of social engagement.' (1998:963) and something which is informed by past habits but also oriented to the future in its ability to imagine alternatives, as well as the present in its need to contextualise actions. (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) Whereas Bourdieu sees agency as habitual and linked to routines, the engrained habits, practices and attitudes learnt through our experiences (Bourdieu, 1984). In the closely controlled environments in which teaching and learning are 'secondary to compliance' (ibid.) it is difficult to see how tutors and managers in the sector are enabled to have active agency in their day to day activities. According to Biesta this has resulted in the '... erosion of a certain understanding of teaching and the teacher ...' (Biesta, 2012, p. 35). In this respect Biesta *et al.*, see agency as part of the role that people play within the professional context, as part of an 'actor-situation transaction', describing it as something people 'do', rather than something they 'have'. (Biesta *et al.*, 2015).

Professional Identity

As outlined by Bathmaker and Avis (2007) the formation of a clear professional identity in the English Further Education Sector is clouded by the context in which teachers work. Their study found that new teachers were often marginalised and were not, as expected, offered apprenticeship into communities of practice as a way of forming their professional identities. The participants also experienced a mismatch between their presupposed professional identities (often linked to adopting the role of a 'facilitator of learning with mature, motivated students'), to the working practices of colleagues, who they saw as being uninterested in their students and unable to adapt to change (ibid.).

The tight controls enforced by a managerialist culture have had a significant influence on how tutors and managers' roles are constructed and enacted. The diversity of the sector and subsequent impact on professional identity is explored by James and Biesta (2007) who consider the ways in which tutor interventions are employed to improve learning. A specific category of intervention highlighted was the ways in which tutors tried to mitigate negative change. Such interventions were based on firmly held beliefs about the professional role and were aimed at maintaining professional practice which might be considered in conflict with new demands set out by the organisation. These might include edicts from college managers, new funding arrangements or further requirements from other stakeholders such as awarding bodies or Ofsted.

Although, there are examples of individual tutors having clear professional values to guide their practice (ibid.) clarity in relation to a collective notion of professional identity is blurred by conflicting ideas of what it means to be a professional teacher or manager within FE and if indeed, these roles are considered to be a profession at all (Sachs, 2001). According to Clow (2001) there may be little evidence to suggest that FE teachers belong to a profession as there is no guarantee that they have any theoretical knowledge about teaching. This was, of course, written prior to the implementation of the 2004 DfES reforms of teacher education in the sector but perhaps remains pertinent in the light of the Lingfield Review of 2012 which de-regulated FE teacher education (BIS, 2012).

Robson *et al.* (2004) provide evidence to suggest that FE teachers identify themselves as professionals, particularly in terms of their responsibilities towards vocational training which provides the opportunity to "induct trainees into a world of practices and values they themselves esteem." (2006, p. 191) In this study, respondents outlined the main ways in which they enacted their professional roles, these included; 'adding value', which involved teaching beyond the requirements of a particular award, 'protecting standards' which made reference to the industry they were preparing students to enter and 'sharing expertise' describing how tutors' experiences in a particular industry were used to enhance learning. This demonstrates the impact of vocational habitus by highlighting the ways in which previous experience determines approaches to current roles (Colley *et al.* 2003) and could be seen as supporting the neo-liberalist regime by prizing the development of human capital (Becker, 1993) over the provision of a wider educational experience. As one respondent in the study asserted, the purpose of vocational education (in his view) was to: "push them [the students] into a job, but not to educate the whole person" (2004, p. 189)

Describing professional identity for those working in FE does not seem to be a simple task, despite many attempts to outline the scope of professional roles through the introduction of standards and qualification requirements (DfES, 2004; BIS, 2012). Taking Furlong's definition (2000), professionalism is depicted as an autonomous and intrinsic state that is not merely bestowed and the literature does support this by providing examples of where professional values have influenced practice (Biesta *et al.*, 2015; Robson *et al.*, 2004).

The lack of a clear professional identity, or in some cases, a clearly defined professional role, within FE does present some challenges. The various attempts to 'professionalise' the sector have included the enforced attainment of teaching qualifications (DfES, 2004) and the introduction of a form of qualified status through QTLS (Wolf, 2011) through to the revocation of qualification requirements which has in turn been described as a way of enhancing professionalism by encouraging professional autonomy:

Both employers and employees will flourish in an atmosphere of flexibility and autonomy. It is the task of the former to ensure that this new 'freedom to excel' is enjoyed by the latter. (BIS 2012, p. 23)

Findings

Professional roles or official titles?

Data from the focus groups and interviews presented a consistent picture in terms of how respondents described their professional identity. In the initial case study, participants from both organisations portrayed their role in terms of their official titles, with little reference to, or recognition of, the wider profession. This created the impression of a professional identity which was bestowed by others, rather than acquired through study and experience. In addition, there was limited evidence that individuals considered themselves to be part of a wider professional community and reference was not made to the overall profession, indeed some responses deliberately diminished the description of the role, for example: *I think the perception is it is professional... so I will go with that* (interview participant organisation B). This pattern was reinforced in the second phase of the data in which participants described their identity within a specific context, something which is at odds with common discourse around professionalism. Becker, for example, describes professionalism as a way of thinking about an occupation (1970), suggesting a collective approach. This is similar to the concept of 'democratic professionalism' (Sachs, 2001) which is based on the collaboration and co-operation between teachers and other stakeholders. When teachers are developing their professional identity it might be assumed that they are also constructing their understanding of their roles, boundaries and ways in which they might interact with other professionals, in a sense this can be likened to Erikson's (1968) ideas about construction of self-identity, a process which requires the autonomy to evaluate and adjust practice as needed.

Identity, Agency and Aspirations

The questionnaire data, drawn from a sample of participants who had completed a full teaching qualification within the last two years, presented a similar picture. Of the 72 responses, 79% were in teaching roles, 12% in management roles and 9% in support roles. In this data, 60% of respondents used their official titles to describe their professional identity and did not offer any further clarification on their own perception of the function of the role. However, a significant number of respondents (40%) used a range of descriptors which provided further insight into individual perceptions. These descriptors, are categorised in table 1 as 'key aspects', which outline how the respondents view their day to day activities and 'key functions' showing the perceived purpose of the role.

Key Aspects	Key Functions
Challenging	Empowering learners
Dull	Knowledge provider, Pedagogical development, Conduit for learning
Creative	Sharing experience, Giving young people skills for life
Madness	'Go to' person, Pastoral support, Care
Employment	Quality
Busy	Life Coach, Developing others
Diverse	Inspirer

The evidence presented in the interview responses did suggest that professional identity was seen as a concept or idea, rather than something tangible. Indeed several respondents requested clarification of the term. Similarly professionalism was contextualised within the organisation's structure and articulated in terms which represented a specific organisation approach or policy, for example two respondents in organisation B described professionalism in terms of modelling the behaviours expected by students (and embedded in college policy), such as: '*...no swearing or cursing*', and '*...being punctual, also the way you convey yourself to students, the way you speak, hold conversations ...*'

In organisation A, this pattern was replicated by making reference to policy and practice within the organisation, for example: '*We are expected to be subject matter experts....*' In both cases, professional identity was clearly influenced by organisation policy as well as the expected norms of practice associated with these. This was particularly noticeable in approaches to teaching, which in both settings were controlled at an organisational, rather than individual level. In organisation A, this was done through the production of generic teaching materials which, according to policy, must be approved by a course design team, in organisation B, the approach was directed by a team of teaching and learning coaches whose role was focussed on preparing teachers for graded lesson observations: '*...I feel they are telling you how they want you to teach and I want to develop my own way... I want more freedom and more trust that I know what I am doing. I feel like there is a very narrow view of what teaching is...*'

In both cases the focus was placed on the enhancement of competencies aligned to the development of accepted styles of teaching. This approach, whilst predicated on a desire to improve the quality of teaching and learning is usually implemented through management processes in what Hodkinson (1998) describes as a technicist approach. As a result, instructions about what is acceptable are laid down by quality or management teams, rather than teachers and very often based on guidance provided by highly regarded (or feared) external bodies such as OfSTED. One significant outcome of this was the value placed on the craft of teaching above other aspects of the role, creating a much narrower professional identity and limiting individual teacher's agency in making judgements about many of the day to day activities undertaken in their roles. According to the literature (Becker, 1970, Hoyle and John, 1995) professionalism also requires a level of autonomy, which whilst negotiated within contexts does remain a feature of how professionals carry out their roles. This suggests that professionals are trusted to make appropriate decisions in relation to their professional practice, something which was not clearly evident in the data presented in this research.

In table one the key functions listed do provide some insight into the respondents identities in relation to their immediate roles. Many of these could be likened to a supply and

demand model with the teachers seeing themselves as suppliers of knowledge, care and personal development opportunities, services which are very much in demand within a consumer-driven environment. The reduction of funding and introduction of higher fees within the sector only serve to strengthen this link and many of the questionnaire responses described their roles in these terms, using phrases such as *I deliver..... I supply knowledge, Delivering learning and assessment ...* and showed an awareness of the factors which had a distinct influence on how they conducted their roles: *The learner is still at the heart of what I do but financially, and for companies to make a profit, Ofsted and SFA regulations apply.*

The responses do highlight connections between professional identity and teacher agency, which in turn is influenced by the multitude of controls in place in order to meet the requirements of senior managers and external stakeholders. Furthermore, professional identity as a concept does not appear to be something which is on the radar for many FE teachers. There was limited recognition of the wider professional role and respondents in both phases of the research aligned their responses closely to the organisations in which they worked. Added to this, the heavy workloads endured by most FE staff suggest that there is limited time to spend thinking about the role as so much time and energy is taken up doing it! Many of the interview and questionnaire responses confirmed this:

There is always so much to do, to consider. Life as a teacher is complex, tiring....

and

Start work at 7.30 am every day, no breaks and two days I leave at 9.30 pm,
making two of my working days 14 hours long #living the dream

Although, a percentage of the questionnaire responses highlighted an aspirational image of professional roles, using words such as 'inspirer', 'empowerer' or 'conduit for learning' this was not prevalent in the interview responses, where a large majority of participants articulated the number of constraints which restrained their day to day activities.

Final Thoughts

The conclusions drawn from the literature and the data depict a group of professionals who have demonstrated compliance in undertaking their roles within the constraints set out by their employers. As a result, many teachers remain inhibited by a diminished sense of agency and a limited professional identity. Despite this, staff in the sector remain optimistic about the potential of teaching, in particular, aspects of student care and the ability to inspire others. This suggests that many FE teachers are driven by strong values which underpin their professional identity, what is less clear is their ability to articulate this. This may well be a reflection of the continued pressure on the sector to provide the nation's human capital in a cost effective manner. The result of which is a workforce which remains overstretched and unable to benefit from the benefits of interacting in the wider professional community or even to reflect on how and why they enact their professional duties in the ways that they do.

References

- Becker, H. (1970) *Sociological Work*, Chicago, Aldine.
- Becker, G. S., (1993) *Human Capital, A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education* (3rd edn.), London: University of Chicago Press Ltd.
- Biesta, G., Priestly, M., and Robinson, S. (2015), 'The role of beliefs in teacher agency', *Teachers and Teaching*, 21(6), pp.624-640.

- Biesta, G., J., J., (2012) Giving Teaching Back to Education: Responding to the Disappearance of the Teacher', *Phenomenology and Practice*, 6(2), pp.35:49.
- Biesta, G.J.J and Tedder, M. (2006) 'How is agency possible? Towards an ecological understanding of agency-asachievement'. Working paper 5, Exeter: *The Learning Lives project*.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London, Routledge.
- Bush, T., Bell, L. and Middlewood, D. (2010) *The Principles of Educational Leadership and Management (2nd edn.)*, London: SAGE.
- Clow, R. (2001) Further education teachers' constructions of professionalism, *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*, 53(3), 407-420.
- Coffield, F. and Williamson, B. (2011) *From Exam Factories to Communities of Discovery: The Democratic Route*, Institute of Education Publications.
- Colley H, James D, Tedder M and Diment K (2003), Learning as becoming in vocational education and training: class, gender and the role of vocational habitus, *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 55(4), 471-497.
- Daley, M. Orr, K. and Petrie, J. (Eds) (2015) *Further Education and the Twelve Dancing Princesses*, London: IOE Press.
- Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2004), *Equipping our Teachers for the Future: Reforming Initial Teacher Training for the Learning and Skills Sector*. London: DfES Publications.
- Department for Business Innovation and Skills a (2012) *Evaluation of FE Teachers Qualifications (England) Regulations 2007*, BIS Research Paper No 66, March 2012. London: BIS.
- Department for Business Innovation and Skills (2012), *Professionalism in Further Education Final Report of the Independent Review Panel*, October 2012. London: BIS
- Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2016) Post 16 Skills Plan, online, available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/536068/56259_Cm_9280_print.pdf (date accessed 1/10/17)
- Emirbayer, M. & Mischle, A. (1998) What is agency? *American Journal of Sociology*, 103, 962-1023.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: Norton.
- Furlong, J., Barton, L., Miles, S., Whiting, C. & Whitty, G. (2000) *Teacher Education in Transition: re-forming professionalism?* Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Gunter, H. (2004) Labels and Labelling in the Field of Educational Leadership and Management, *Educational Management and Administration*, 27(3), 253-266.
- Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (2015) 'The Future of FE colleges in England: The case for a new post-incorporation model'. In Hodgson, A. (eds) *The Coming of Tickle* (2014)
- Hodkinson, P. 1998. 'Technicism, Teachers and Teaching Quality in Vocational Education and Training.' *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 50(2): 193-208.
- Howse, P. (2015) *Colleges say 'swathe of cuts' threatens adult education*. [Online] BBC. Available from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-32017137> (Accessed 17th October 2017).
- Hoyle, E. & John, P. (1995) *Professional Knowledge and Professional Practice*, London: Cassell.
- James, D. & Biesta, G. (2007) *Improving Learning Cultures in Further Education*, Abingdon: Routledge.
- Robson, J., Bailey, B., & Larkin, S. (2004), 'Adding value: investigating the discourse of professionalism adopted by vocational teachers in further education colleges', *Journal of Education and Work*, 17:2, pp.183-195.
- Robson, J. & Bailey, B. (2009). "Bowling from the heart": an investigation into discourses of professionalism and the work of caring for students in further education. *British Educational Research Journal* 35(1), pp. 99-117.

Sachs, J. (2001) Teacher professional identity: competing discourses, competing outcomes, *Journal of Education Policy*, 16(2), 149-161.

Wolstencroft, P. & Thompson, C. (2017) *(No more) Superheroes, only avatars... survival role play in English further education*, RELA-ESREA (in press).

Wolf, A. (2011) *Review of Vocational Education - The Wolf Report*, DfES. London: DfES Publications.

**EXPANDING CONTEXTS: FORMAL AND
INFORMAL LEARNING PROCESSES AT PLAY**

The community of philosophical inquiry as a learning context between adults

Federico Zamengo*, Nicolò Valenzano **

** Department of Philosophy and Educational Sciences
University of Turin
10124 – Torino, Italy
federico.zamengo@unito.it*

*** Department of Philosophy and Educational Sciences
University of Turin
12038 – Savigliano (CN), Italy
nicolo.valenzano@unito.it*

ABSTRACT: According to M. Lipman and A. Sharp, the Philosophy for Children (p4c) is an educational proposal remains somehow flexible and successfully applies to diverse contexts, including informal education involving adults. For this reason, we believe that the “c” in the acronym refers not only to “children”, but may be broadened to “community”. This model is based on a dialogic approach: we focus on the importance of community discussion (Community of Inquiry). Building a “Community of Inquiry” between adults can lead to an inclusive and democratic process, even in the contemporary scenario. The Community of Inquiry becomes a learning context between adults.

KEYWORDS: Philosophy for Children, Community of Inquiry, Lipman, Philosophy for Community, dialogic approach

Introduction

The affirmation of long-life and long-wide learning processes has recently increased adults training opportunities both in formal and in informal education, from the professional dimension to the wider and ever-flourishing “supermarket offers” of spare time (Field 2006; Brookfield 2011). This explosion, however, has a distinctive feature: in fact, these learning opportunities especially focus on individualistic learning, in which the learner is increasingly regarded as a potential buyer and the training provider focuses mainly on responses capable of meeting the needs of the learner-customer, both in individual terms and in relation to the economic and productive demands (Biesta, 2010; Nussbaum, 2010). In short, there seems to be a:

redescription of the process of education in terms of an economic transaction in which (1) the learner in the (potential) consumer, the one who has certain “needs”, in which (2) the teacher, the educator, or the educational institution is seen as the provider, that is, the one who is there to meet the needs of the learner, and where (3) education itself becomes a commodity – a “thing” – to be provided or delivered by the teacher or educational institutions and to be consumed by the learner (Biesta 2006, p. 20).

In this scenario, the research team¹ has supported the idea of education as a process strictly related to the human ability to change, capable of involving the ethical and social dimension of existence, in problematic and relational terms. For this reason, we support the extension of the Lipman-Sharp Philosophy for Children model also in informal contexts and between adults (Lipman 2003). The core proposal identifies the community of philosophical inquiry as a specific learning context for adult-educators.

In the first part of this paper, we will introduce the concept of Philosophy for Children and describe its main features and its structure. Moreover, looking at the Lipman-Sharp approach, we will show how Philosophy for Communities derives from Philosophy for Children. In the second part, we will analyse the concept of community of philosophical inquiry as a learning context. In this theoretical framework, we will briefly describe our action-research project. In conclusions, we will underline some topics that characterize the community of philosophical inquiry as an educational place for adult-educators.

From Philosophy for Children to Philosophy for Communities

Philosophy for Children (p4c) is an educational proposal, invented by the American thinkers Matthew Lipman and Ann Sharp in the Seventies (Lipman, Sharp, Oscanyan, 1980; Lipman 1988; Lipman 2003). This proposal was initially implemented in the primary school, but later it was also extended to secondary and to the high school. P4c consists of a real curriculum structured in a series of philosophical tales, each of which is complemented by supplementary teaching material and a teacher's guide. Lipman and Sharp's aim was to help children to acquire the reasoning ability and moral qualities necessary to live together and to be “more reasonably and more capable of exercising good judgment” (Lipman 2008, p. 107).

P4C aims therefore to develop in its participants complex thinking, with a special regard to critical, creative and caring skills: in this sense, it requires a truly extended notion of

¹ This paper starts from the action-research project “Filosofia e pratica di comunità. Progetto di ricerca, formazione ed empowerment sociale” of University of Turin, Department of Philosophy and Educational Sciences. The study carried out from September 2015 to September 2017 and funded by Fondazione CRT (Turin, Italy). For more details see Franzini Tibaldeo R., Lingua, G. (eds.) (2017), *Philosophy and Community Practices*, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang. In this paper, Federico Zamengo wrote sects. 1 and 2; Nicolò Valenzano wrote sects. 3, 4 and 5.

“thinking”. On the one hand, the critical dimension of thought is the one most directly linked to reflectivity: in fact, it represents the choice of not taking anything for granted, and it is consequently the search for the conditions of possibility and the limits of any given rule, content or belief. Furthermore, it is also related to creative reasoning. In a world made of given data, thinking would have no alternative but to passively accept what already exists. By contrast, in a critical context every standpoint and rule has an inherently processual nature. In this case, thinking proves to be active in a twofold sense: first of all, there is always the chance to question the data and to create new questions and problems; secondly, one also has to generate new answers and solutions that are suitable for the new circumstances and for the shape that the problem has assumed in the community of inquiry. On the other hand, the caring aspect of thought is also a key aspect of philosophical inquiry: in this model the emotions are not separable from rationality. In order to profitably think about something, everyone must in fact care about “what” is being discussed and “how” other people think about it (Lipman, 2003, pp. 262-263; Creel, 2001, pp. 69-70; Sharp, 2007). Furthermore, being part of a community also entails sharing a personal and emotional engagement with other fellow inquirers.

A p4c session follows an organised, although flexible, structure based on particular aspects (divided in different phases). Firstly, it always moves from a text reading: the texts have “ability to serve as both a stimulus for, and a model of, philosophical sensitivity and multidimensional thinking” (Oyler, 2016, pp. 3-4). After having read the text, questioning is a pivotal moment of p4c. By asking a question stimulated by the text, each member of the community of inquiry can contribute to the ensuing discussion by introducing a topic or underlining a problematic aspect of what has been read (Lipman, 2003, p. 98). In the Lipman-Sharp approach, questioning plays a central role in—shaping complex thought, because it is a necessary requirement to develop an autonomous way of thinking and a useful mean for questioning (analysing and criticising) oneself in an act of self-reflection. In the third phase of a P4C session, the participants start a discussion from the precedent questions. According to Lipman, the aim of the community-based philosophical discussion is the reinforcement of the community in a pluralistic and democratic sense (Lipman, 2003, p. 102): the participation of each member takes place within a dialogical context, where his or her perspective mutually interacts with the interventions of other members. A p4c session usually ends with a phase of metacognitive reflection or self-evaluation, during which the facilitator suggests that the community of inquiry’s members reflect on the practice itself.

P4C out of classroom and with adults

As is well-known, the pedagogical proposal made by M. Lipman and A.M. Sharp, practised as Philosophy for children, has resulted in the construction of a curriculum that is aimed at children within the field of formal education. According to M. Lipman, p4c’s educational proposal remains somehow flexible and successfully applies to diverse contexts, including informal education involving adults (Lipman, 2008; Lipman, 1987). For this reason, we believe that the “c” in the acronym refers not only to “children”, but may be broadened to “community”.

It is clear that there are, at least, two explicit differences between Philosophy for Children and Philosophy for Communities: more specifically, they involve different participants and take place in different social context. On the one hand, the first discontinuity is also implicitly revealed by Lipman himself: pointing out that, in this experience, he rarely found children dissatisfied with philosophical discussion, he argues: “children unlikes adults, do not insistently for answers or conclusion” (Lipman, 2003, p. 86). The difference between adults and children, also noted Lipman, is obviously not found at the level of human dignity, but originates, at least in a preliminary and intuitive way, from the mere fact that adults have

lived for a wider portion of time compared to minors. This “experience” translates into a different relationship and a particular stance towards existence: unlike children, adults would be more oriented towards finding answers or immediate solutions to problems (Knowles, Swanson, Holton, 2005). On the other hand, the second difference is linked to the possible different places where to promote the experience of community of philosophical inquiry, which can be settled “inside” or “outside a classroom”: in this case, it seems that the emancipatory effects identified by Lipman within education to complex thought do not change in relation to the place where it is practiced (Lipman, 2003). However, building a “community of inquiry” outside an institutional path may seem more difficult: the continuous participation of the subjects involved in the proposal can indeed be a critical element.

Community of philosophical inquiry as learning context

The p4c (*Children and Communities*) setting is composed by a “community of inquiry”: this is the core proposal. Indeed, the final remarks on the multidimensionality of thinking and philosophical inquiry have to be understood in interpersonal terms, since p4c entails a community-based involvement of each participant. The relationship between the individual and the community is one of great interest, both in theoretical and practical terms. Regarding the first aspect, the community of philosophical inquiry aims at overcome the current dualism between individualism and communitarianism. As for the second aspect, the practice of p4c displays the dynamic relationship between freedom and commitment, willingness and obligation, truthfulness and respect, inclusion and dissent.

Lipman’s proposal derives from Pierce’s and Dewey’s ideas of “community of inquiry”, and describes their meaning, with specific topics like, for example, inclusiveness, participation, shared cognition, face-to-face relationships, the quest of meaning, feelings of social solidarity, deliberation, impartiality, modelling, thinking for oneself, challenging as a procedure and reasonableness (Lipman, 2003, pp. 96-97). The session structure, reading-questioning-discussion, finds meaning just because these elements are belong to the community of inquiry. If this statement inevitably calls for a more general reflection on the potential formative role of philosophy, as well as the role it can play within a community, from the pedagogical standpoint the educational potential of the Philosophy for Communities is mainly expressed as the *experience* of a specific setting aiming to be inclusive and community-driven. The construction of community of inquiry, in fact, cannot of course be traced back to the field of formal education; however, it remains an intentionally promoted activity: the setting, for example – to refer to one of the simplest and most obvious elements – the circular disposition that allows all participants to look at each other, or the construction of an informal atmosphere, are very important elements within the organization of a session. Indeed, they implicitly express the connotations of that specific experience: in Deweyan terms, the latter becomes the “means and goals of education” also among adults (Dewey, 1938, pp. 61-62). And it is precisely based on the enhancement of experience, then, that it seems interesting to place the proposal of Philosophy for Communities within the broadest reflective turn that has affected the field of adult education.

Considering this perspective, we can notice a close relationship between Lipman’s “reframing” and a conception of education as a science and as an art, in according to Dewey’s thinking (Dewey, 1929): education is not only a process of learnification (Biesta, 2010), but it also cultivates a reflective attitude and increases one’s awareness and reasonableness (Lipman, 2003; Nussbaum, 2010). For this reasons, it seems interesting to place the proposal of p4c within the broadest reflective turn that as affected the field of adult education. Since the late 1980s, as is well-known, many researcher, united by a revitalization of Deweyan

thinking, have analysed the relationship between experience and learning in adulthood, enhancing the moment of reflection in action. These contributions arise from the scope of professional epistemologies and focus, for example, on learning in organizations (Schön, 1983; Argyris, Schön, 1996). However, being an interpretative and analytical construct, the paradigm of reflexivity can be transformed into a specific mode of cultivation of reflective skills within a community, not just in a professional terms. The reflexive and self-corrective way of retrieving a topic dear to the Lipmanian proposal does not allow for “shortcuts”: it requires patience, time, participation, and implies decentralization.

The contribution that p4c can certainly provide in this field is alternative to the possible individualistic and learnification outcomes of adult education. Rather, the presupposition of a community and the attention to the exercise of a social practice could meet the field of community development.

The case study of MondoQui

In this theoretical framework, our research was based on a collaboration with the association *MondoQui Onlus*, located in Mondovì, a city in the northwestern part of Italy, on the border with France.

The decision to partner up with *MondoQui* was dictated by the characteristics of the association, which make it a cross-section of Italian society and an ideal place to implement the project. *MondoQui* in fact has operated since 2008 in the context of social animation including non-formal and informal education. There are three reasons because we considered interesting *MondoQui* from an educational point of view: (a) it is a meeting point between Italian and foreign nationals immigrated from North Africa and Central and Eastern Europe; (b) it is a meeting point between generations; (c) it is a meeting point between different educational figures (parents, teachers, educators, coaches).

In the Italian educational landscape, it is not uncommon for both pedagogical literature and media attention to emphasise the conflict between different educational figures and agencies: between teachers and parents or between formal and non-formal education environments. In short, the plurality of spaces, times, and educators, as well as representing a precious educational resource, can prove to be a place of tension and clashes. In this perspective, could p4c build educating community between different adult educators? How?

In MondoQui, there have been sixteen sessions of p4c, according to Lipman’s setting. They were attended by twelve to twenty adults, of various cultural backgrounds, social class and age. No one had ever studied philosophy or previously attended p4c sessions. The meetings took all place at *MondoQui*, managed and moderated by members of the research group: taking turns, a member would moderate the session as a facilitator, another would observe (recording and then transcribing the session), while the others participated as part of the group.

In the framework of active planning that characterises many community development experiences, the first four sessions were dedicated to acknowledging the participants’ needs (Twelvetrees 2002). In the light of the participants’ needs and the reflections of the research group, over the next twelve sessions – with the same group of people – we have overall changed the selection of stimulus texts. The sessions proceeded to deal with more strictly educational issues, with reference to intercultural, inter- and intragenerational variables (e.g. the dilemma between interventism and *laissez-faire*, the difference between educating and teaching, the dimension of power inherent in educational relationships, the connection between habit and education). The intergenerational issue has been an important theme of dialogue that was tackled over several sessions: for example, the participants have reflected

on the importance of having a common vocabulary between generations but also on the possibility of dialogue, regardless of such shared vocabulary. The construction of the latter vocabulary has been one of the goals of this series of meetings: within the intercultural context of *MondoQui*, the intergenerational variable has made the relationships between different parties more dynamic and complex.

Conclusions

The possibility of having different points of reference can only be positive for younger generations: it is an existential wealth to be protected and promoted also in the educational sphere. In this perspective, building a community of philosophical inquiry that knows how to involve the various components of the educative community seems to be a valuable asset. Three elements describe the community of philosophical inquiry as educating community and define it as a learning context between adult-educators.

(1) It supports the creation of a "space" that is not intended to homologise the different views of the adults involved, but, on the contrary, aims to bring out the reasons and arguments of the different positions. Community of philosophical inquiry allows for the emergence of educational disagreement in a controlled manner.

(2) Building a community of philosophical inquiry that includes those adults involved in education also seems important for two specific reasons: firstly, it is an opportunity to support a wider and more vital perspective, aimed at making the idea of education comprehensive; secondly, with reference to one of the pillars of future education identified by the Delors report, this approach seems to encourage learning to live together.

(3) Community of philosophical inquiry is a context where attendees come to light their folk pedagogy (Bruner 1996, pp. 44-65). The logic of inquiry inspiring Philosophy for Communities connects experience and education, triggering a "movement of thought": what adds meaning to the experience of the community of inquiry is therefore a reflective action among the participants by which they are able to rethink their position, mainly encouraging the questioning of whatever they have taken for granted. In a community of philosophical inquiry, adults could reflect about their position through the dialogue to each other and the setting of p4c may become an occasion of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991).

References

- Argyris, C. and Schön, D. A. (1996) *Organizational Learning II. Theory, Methods and Practice*. Boston: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company Inc.
- Biesta, G. J. J. (2006) *Beyond Learning. Democratic Education for Human Future*. Boulder: Paradigm.
- Biesta, G. J. J. (2010) *Good Education in an Age of Measurement*. Boulder: Paradigm.
- Bleazby, J. (2006) Autonomy, Democratic Community, and Citizenship in Philosophy for Children: Dewey and Philosophy for Children's Rejection of the Individual/Community Dualism. *Analytic Teaching*, 26 (1), 30-52.
- Brookfield, S. and Holst J. (2011) *Radicalizing Learning: Adult Education for a Just World*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Bruner, J. S. (1996) *The Culture of Education*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Creel, R. E. (2001) *Thinking Philosophically*. Malden: Blackwell.
- Dewey, J. (1929) The Source of a Science of Education. In *Later Works 1925-1953*, edited by J. A. Boydston, Vol. 5: Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980.

- Dewey, J. (1938) Experience and Education. In *The Later Works 1925-1953*, edited by J. A. Boydston, Vol. 13. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988.
- Field, J. (2006) *Lifelong Learning and the New Educational Order*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.
- Franzini Tibaldeo, R. and Lingua, G. (eds.) (2017) *Philosophy and Community Practices*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Knowles, M. S., Holton III, E. F. and Swanson, R. A. (2005) *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development*. Burlington: Elsevier.
- Lipman, M. (1987) *Harry Prime*. Montclair: Iapc.
- Lipman, M. (1988) *Philosophy goes to School*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Lipman, M. (2003) *Thinking in Education*. Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lipman, M. (2008) *A Life Teaching Thinking*. Montclair: Iapc.
- Lipman, M., Sharp, A. M., Oscanyan, F. S. (1980) *Philosophy in the Classroom*. Second edition. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Mezirow, J. (1991) *Transformative Dimension of Adult Learning*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2010) *Not for Profit. Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Oyler, J. (2016) Philosophy with Children: The Lipman-Sharp Approach to Philosophy for Children. In Peters, M. A. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory*. Dordrecht: Springer, 1-7.
- Schön, D. A. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Book.
- Sharp, A. M. (2007) Education of Emotions in the Classroom Community of Inquiry. *Gifted Education International*, 22 (2-3), 248-257.
- Twelvetrees, A. (2002) *Community Work*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

“If You Stand for Nothing, You Will Fall for Anything” The maintenance of self-identity in times of change.

Peter Wolstencroft

Coventry University
Priory St, Coventry CV1 5FB
England
ac3430@coventry.ac.uk

ABSTRACT: The self-identity of managers within English post compulsory education has been the subject of much debate. A combination of a highly volatile sector and a job made up of a myriad of different parts means that the role involves a number of competing pressures which can leave managers feeling isolated, confused and adrift from previous certainties. Many managers speak of ‘putting on an act’ or hiding their true thoughts from those around them at work (Fried-Buchalter, 1997).

Using the work of Goffman (1959), Ecclestone (2007) and Bimrose and Brown (2010), this paper explores the self-identity of a group of twenty managers in the sector who have made the transition from lecturer to manager. Using semi-structured questionnaires and a thematic analysis of results, the research concluded that many of the managers overcame the pressures of their new role by establishing a philosophical driver that could be defined as a set of values, beliefs and personal goals that influenced all decision made as a manager. Those managers who had a clearly defined philosophical driver appeared to cope far better with the role than those who lacked this support.

KEYWORDS: self-Identity, philosophical driver, manager, post-compulsory education, transition

Setting the Scene

The concept of identity, may be defined as ‘The ways in which the self is represented and understood in dynamic, multi-dimensional and evolving ways’ (Ecclestone, 2007, p. 4) and as such it is important to recognise that identity is not necessarily a stable concept and that it is influenced by a variety of factors (Ferguson, 2009). Giddens (1991) suggests that self-identity is a fluid construct that is dependent on a range of factors (both internal and external). He also talked about the importance of ‘reclaiming’ your self-identity after any change (commonly known as a transition) such as a change from lecturer to manager in English post compulsory education (PCE).

The English PCE sector, a phase that encompasses areas as diverse as general further education colleges, prison education and community learning, is often characterised by change, instability and ‘...the efficacy of the free market’ (Simmons, 2008, p. 429). This means that those working within it have become accustomed to working flexibly within a neo-liberalism framework, responding quickly to any changes and not establishing patterns of behaviour that are too deeply engrained (Mezirow, 1997). Whilst this has resulted in a sector that is responsive and able to meet the needs of learners, it does create a culture that, looking from the outside, is fluid and prone to change. Orr (2015), suggests that neoliberalism ‘has pervasive effects on ways of thought, to the point where it has been incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world’ (Orr, 2015 quoting Harvey, 2005, p. 3). This is certainly true of many new recruits to the sector who often focus on success that are measured in managerial terms (Thompson & Wolstencroft, 2012) rather than the broader, educational aims of the sector. Whilst this might be a slightly simplistic view of English PCE (Daley *et al.*, 2015), it is the perception of many, both internal and external to the sector and according to Bimrose and Brown (2010) this is further embedded by the way in which many workers define themselves (at least in part) by their work and this can act as a psychological anchor to their lives. Work provides a purpose and stability for employees and is used as a key construct of an individual’s self-identity (Hodkinson & Hodkinson (2002) and Hodkinson *et al* (2004)).

Whilst having this anchor might help some people, there is a danger that too much reliance on defining oneself with reference to work might hold individuals in chains whereby they are unable (or unwilling) to deal with change for fear of losing the comfort of their psychological frame of reference (Bimrose & Brown, 2010, Mezirow, 1997). This can create significant problems when transitioning from a lecturing job in the English PCE sector to a managerial job as the switch in roles can impact on an individual’s self-identity (Ahlgreen and Tett, 2010). As with many transitions, there are a number of iterative elements (Biesta and Tedder, 2006) in moving from being a lecturer to a manager, which can be tracked, mapped and predicted. This means that support for those making this journey can be put in place. However, there will also be elements which are less predictable and a failure to adapt can often affect all parts of a person’s life (Bimrose & Brown, 2010).

The Participants

Twenty managers within the English PCE sector were interviewed during 2015 and 2016 for this paper. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that the demographical profile selected mirrored the national profile (ETF, 2016). 67% of interviewees were female (this is slightly higher than the national figure of 63%) and in order to ensure that as many geographical regions were represented as possible, managers from five areas of the country (namely the West Country, London, the East and West Midlands and the North of England) were included in the sample.

The interviewees had a wide range of managerial experience. One person was newly appointed to the role (they had been doing the job for approximately a month), the majority had been in the job for 1-5 years and the most experienced manager had over 10 years of middle management experience. Two interviewees had recently left the sector and reflected back from their new roles, both of these managers were now in the Higher Education sector. What they all had in common is that they had gone through the transition from lecturer to manager.

Each person was asked to describe the problems and the highlights of their role and were also asked about how they coped with the myriad of challenges that the role of manager presents (Bush, 2008). The aim was to build up a picture of how the self-identity of managers within a sector where role ambiguity (Murphy & Curtis, 2013) and excessive workloads (Thompson and Wolstencroft, 2013) were common were constructed and how it changed when lecturers transition to become managers.

Constructing Self-Identity

The construction of self-identity has been the subject of much debate and the responses from the interviews highlighted many of the issues from literature. The formal construct of identity was seen by the majority of interviewees as being of vital importance in the sector with participants talking about a tendency for organisations to label roles and view managers as separate to lecturers. An example of this separation was that in many colleges much time was spent describing and defining the various job titles Corbett (2017). The two roles 'are often seen as distinct separates' (Corbett, 2017, p.2011), indeed, when transitioning, participants talked about being expected to adopt the characteristics of the new role (Page, 2013).

The anchoring of themselves in the job (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2002) meant that there was a split in responses from interviewees with managers talking about transitioning from one identity to another or alternatively attempting to ensure that they kept their previous identity rather than being subsumed by the demands of management. One participant articulated this feeling of clinging to a previous identity very clearly.

I am still a teacher, I will always see myself as a teacher because that way I will always put the students first. As a manager, you get side-tracked into pointless activities that detract from the students. Frankly I only took the job because nobody else wanted it and I will never see myself as a manager.

This manager was in the minority however, most spoke of the difficulty in transitioning and how this affected their own self-identity and also the way in which other perceived them. One notable example came from a manager who was promoted to a head of school role from within the department:

I was very naïve when I got the job and imagined that things wouldn't change and looking back, in one sense, I wouldn't have gone for the job. The problem I had was that I was promoted within the college in the department I was working with so the people I now line manage are people who knew me when I was an NQT (sic), who mentored me and supported me through that process so they know me, and they know me on a personal level as well as professional level, so therefore I had the added dynamic that I had to alter their relationship with them and that has taken a few years to do. In hindsight, I should have taken on the role but with a team I didn't know, so I could set out my stall.

Alongside the difficulties encountered by the fluidity of self-identity when moving roles, the interviews also highlighted the problems managers faced when carrying out their day to day jobs and how this impacted on self-identity. Middle managers in particular, felt as

though they needed to 'put on an act' when carrying out their duties. This mirrors Goffman's dramaturgical approach (1959) which described how self-identity evolves through interpersonal interaction and how individuals may 'perform' in order to project a desirable image. This was certainly true amongst interviewees where participants talked about the need to adopt a different persona in different situations.

The self-identity of managers contained both 'front stage' and 'back stage' elements (Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013). Goffman (1959) describes the front stage elements in terms akin to an actor playing a part and presenting a self-identity to the audience. In extreme cases this can lead to 'identity tourism' whereby participants adopt a different persona, attitudes or even gender (Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013, p.103). This was certainly true of many interviewees who felt the need to modify their self-identity when dealing with both their own staff and their line manager and only revealing their true feelings to trusted confidantes:

There is another manager I can say that I am getting really upset about this and this is stressful and she just accepts that and helps me through it, whereas I wouldn't necessarily admit that to my line manager as she might see that as a sign of weakness.

Of course, an individual's presentation of self-identity is not the full picture with the back stage self also important (Goffman, 1959). This goes beyond the self-presentation that is implied in the front stage part (Brown, 1998) and was represented by interviewees in their responses to how they dealt with problems when they left work and went home. In many cases the 'back stage' responses were typified by negative behaviour and thoughts and feeling of being an 'imposter' who would be 'found out' at some point.

In some cases, a change in self-identity was perceived to be a positive one, indeed for a minority, education itself had been used as a transformative tool (Merrill, 2009). This view of growth through their promotion was expressed most clearly by one manager who had become a manager after a long and distinguished career as a lecturer:

I truly believe that I have grown in the last year, I have learnt so much and think I can help students more than I could before.

Philosophical Drivers for Managers in the Sector

Whilst the impact of transition on self-identity was often significant amongst the managers interviewed, it was their reaction to the challenges that provided a key point of interest. Those working and studying within the English FE sector cannot be viewed as a single entity and any attempt to generalise findings into a 'typical' approach is fraught with difficulty as well as likely to lead to an incomplete and potentially incorrect picture being presented. Despite this, there was one commonality that those who had successfully transitioned between lecturing and managing shared and that was a consistency of beliefs, values and constants that may be termed their 'philosophical driver'. The actual nature of this driver was individual to the participant, but what was common was that those who had a strong philosophical driver were able to thrive within demanding environments.

At first glance, the fact that there is no such thing as a 'typical' middle manager within the sector might seem surprising. Given the increased use of 'compliance' in much of the sector, it is to be expected that a degree of conformity would be present, however, there is only limited evidence to suggest that this has had a significant impact on the role in terms of producing a compliant, homogeneous group of managers.

Whilst each manager responded in subtly different ways there were commonalities in drivers, with a student-centred approach being stressed by many managers whilst others

talked repeatedly about their own department or the trajectory of their own career. What became clear is that the response of managers was influenced more by these internal drivers than external factors. This led in some instances with managers taking decisions that brought them into direct conflict with senior managers. Many of those interviewed had formed their drivers in their subconscious but when analysing transcripts of interviews, they responded enthusiastically to the idea that they had these deeply held beliefs and were able to explain how their self-identity was influenced by them.

An example of how philosophical drivers influenced behaviour can be seen by the numerous approaches that are taken to direct requests from senior managers. These ranged from an instrumental, goal focused approach that stressed the importance of the career of the manager, through to a non-compliant, almost rebellious approach that sought to put the needs of the students above everything else, even if this leads to conflict with organisational objectives.

Two interviewees in particular, highlighted the impact their philosophical driver can have on their self-identity. The first manager, a veteran of the sector who had been promoted to their new managerial role within the last twelve months explained how they dealt with demands from their seniors:

I tend to focus on them (the learners) first, so if there is a class that doesn't have a tutor for a day, I will cover the class, so that the learners are having the experience they should have.... this week for instance, it was our self-assessment moderation panel and I said 'I can't go to it because I have got to cover a class' and to me it was more important to cover the class than actually stand up in front of a group of senior management people and explain my self-assessment report because they can read that themselves and if they want to argue it, they can come and argue it another time.

His refusal to attend a meeting that he saw as having no direct relevance to his learners was an instinctive one and also one that he saw as giving him comfort in the job. When asked about whether he feared the consequences of a refusal to follow the instructions his reply was to the point:

I don't really matter, it's all about the learners.

There were plenty of similar examples of how a philosophical driver can provide the anchor in the self-identity of a manager. One manager interviewed had a very strong career focus that permeated many of her answers. Her interview contained numerous references to OFSTED terminology and even her own personal goals were framed with references to 'grade one outcomes' and 'outstanding'. Yet, when analysing her interview, a dichotomy between the initial impression given and her actions began to emerge. Whilst she talked about the importance of meeting key performance indicators in words that suggested she had the 'ability to speak fluently the language of performativity' (Orr, 2012, p. 58), her actions were dictated by her own personal goals and opinions, in other words, her philosophical driver. She talked at length about her own career and how her current job would help her achieve her goals and she also talked about her work/life balance and how she would not do something if that was being affected. This indicated that although she did attempt to comply, it was on her terms and related to her drivers. As such, the underlying approach did not differ greatly to any of the other managers interviewed, it was only how she presented herself that differed.

These two interviews, as well as many of the other responses, brought to mind a strategic compliance approach to the job (Gleeson & Shain, 1999). Where it differed was that whilst a minority of managers did take a pragmatic approach to whether they should complete a request from their senior management team, the majority appeared to decide on their

compliance based on their philosophical approach to education and by extension, the job. The impression was of a collective group who were principled, hardworking, aware of the culture of the organisation and reasonably compliant, as long as the request given did not contradict any belief structure that they held. The heterogeneity of the role can be shown by the fact that these philosophies varied according to the individual manager.

Concluding Thoughts

Given the fact that a key construct of self-identity is the anchor of an individual's job (Bimrose & Brown, 2010), any transition has the potential to alter how an individual views themselves, and how others view them. This appears to be especially true when looking at the transition from lecturer to manager. The fact that they are seen as very separate jobs (Corbett, 2017) means that there is a strong possibility that there will be an alteration in the self-identity of the manager. This should not necessarily be viewed in a negative light. Transitions can often be a positive occurrence and lead to personal growth for the manager as well as transforming the way in which an individual perceives the world.

There are concerns however, and if not supported through the transition, the changing self-identity can lead to the front stage and back stage of the manager (Goffman, 1957) diverging. This situation might well impact on the new manager's perception of the role, their enjoyment of the role and their own stability. What this research has shown is that a strong set of values, beliefs and personal goals can provide a new anchor for managers in a challenging role. This philosophical driver can support the decision making process and provide them with a strong and stable self-identity which helps them complete the job and ensures that are able to deal with both the transition and also the uncertainty inherent in the English PCE sector.

References

- Ahlgreen, L. & Tett, L. (2010) Work-based learning, identity and organisational culture, *Studies in Continuing Education*, 32(1), 17-27.
- Biesta, G. & Teder, M. (2008) *Learning from life in the learning economy: The role of narrative* In: Crowther, J., Edwards, V., Galloway, V., Shaw, M., Tett, L. (eds.) SCUTREA 2008 38th Annual Conference Whither Adult Education in the, Edinburgh, UK: Moray House School of Education.
- Bimrose, J. & Brown, A. (2010) Older workers' transitions in work-related learning, careers and identities, in *Transitions and learning through the lifecourse*, Editors: Ecclestone, K., Biesta, G. & Hughes, M. New York: Routledge.
- Brown, J.D. (1998), *The self*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Bullingham, L. & Vasconcelos, A. (2013) The presentation of self in the online world: Goffman and the study of online identities, *Journal of Information Science*, 39(1), 101-114.
- Bush, T. (2008) From Management to Leadership: semantic or meaningful change? *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership*, 36(2), 271-288.
- Corbett, S. (2017) From teacher to manager: expectations and challenge in the further education sector. a relationship model, *Research in Post Compulsory Education*, 22(2), 208-220.
- Daley, M., Orr, K. and Petrie, J. (2015), *Further Education and the Twelve Dancing Princesses*, London: IOE.
- Ecclestone, K. (2007) An identity crisis? Using concepts of 'identity', 'agency' and 'structure' in the education of adults, *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 39(2), 121-131.

- Education and Teaching Foundation (2016) *Workforce Data for the Further Education and Training Sector*, Coventry: ETF.
- Ferguson, H. (2009) *Self-identity and everyday life*. London: Routledge.
- Fried-Buchalter, S. (1997) Fear of Success, Fear of Failure and the Imposter Phenomenon among male and female marketing managers, *Sex Roles*, 37(11-12), 847-859.
- Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Gleeson D and Shain F (1999), 'Managing Ambiguity: Between Markets and Managerialism. A case study of middle managers in FE', *The Sociological Review*, 47(3), 461-90.
- Goffman, E. (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, London: Penguin.
- Hodgkinson, C. (1991), *Educational Leadership: The moral art*. New York: SUNY Press.
- Hodkinson, P.M. and Hodkinson, H.D. (2002), Case Study Research 1: Strengths, Learning and Skills Research: *Journal for Further Education and Lifelong Learning*, 5(3), 48-49.
- Merrill, B. (ed.) (2009) *Learning to Change? The Role of Identity and Learning Careers in Adult Education*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Mezirow, J. (1997) Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 74(1), 5-12.
- Murphy, M. and Curtis, W. (2013) The micro-politics of micro-leadership: exploring the role of the programme leader in English universities, *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 35(1), pp.34-44.
- Orr, K. (2012) 'Coping, Confidence and Alienation: the early experience of trainee teachers in English FE', *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 38(1), 51-65.
- Page, D. (2013) Managers Coping in Further Educational Colleges, *Journal of Management Development*, 32 (7), 705-720.
- Simmons, R. (2008), Golden years? Further education colleges under local authority control, *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 32(4), 359-371.
- Thompson, C.A. and Wolstencroft, P. (2012) A Year on the Frontline: Despatches from new FE Teachers, *Journal of Pedagogical Development*, 2(3) 16-23.
- Thompson, C.A. and Wolstencroft, P. (2013) Promises and Lies, *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 38(1) 1-18.

The relationship between formal and informal adult learning.

The case of 78 Breton entrepreneurs

Jean-Michel Mégret*, Jérôme Eneau**

* University of Rennes
Place du recteur Henry Le Moal
CS 24307
35043 Rennes cedex - France
megret.jm@wanadoo.fr

** Supervisor, University of Rennes
Place du recteur Henry Le Moal
CS 24307
35043 Rennes cedex - France
jerome.eneau@univ-rennes2.fr

ABSTRACT: Can an entrepreneurial context be a source of learning? To explore these questions, we will first look into formal and informal learning in an entrepreneurial context. Secondly, in reference to the concept of "Apprenance" developed by Carré (2005), we will look at how individual commitment influences learning. Referring to Mezirow (1991/2001)'s transformative learning we will also discuss the ontological dimensions of informal learning in an entrepreneurial context. Finally, we will take a more empirical approach and discuss two studies (Mégret, 2016), one built around a questionnaire administered to 68 Breton entrepreneurs, and one designed as a qualitative study with ten exploratory conversations with 10 Breton entrepreneurs. We intend with this article to explore the importance of informal learning contexts and the influence of the entrepreneur's commitment and capacity to learn transformatively within the entrepreneurial process.

KEYWORDS: entrepreneurship, informal learning, incidental learning, motivation to learn, emancipation.

Introduction

Formal, non-formal and informal learning are common concepts when thinking about adult education and lifelong learning (Hart, 2013). Building on this proposition and on definitions of formal and informal learning, we will attempt to identify factors of informal learning as perceived by 78 Breton entrepreneurs. What in their environment is the source of informal learning (professional group, encircle station wagon, leisure activity, ICTS, etc...)? How does it support their entrepreneurial project? Are there interactions between formal and informal learnings? According to Colley et al. (2003), any situation of learning is characterized by a combination of formal and informal elements (see fig. 1).

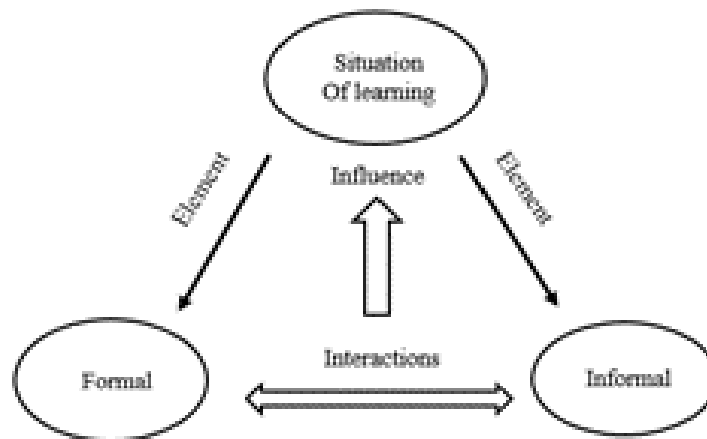


Figure 1. Characterization of learning situation

These characteristics interact in various ways, in various situations of learning and these interactions influence the nature and the efficiency of learning in every situation. Offering a different perspective, Billet (2002) calls for a clarification of the ontological assumptions behind formal and informal learning and a deeper understanding between the circumstances according to which every individual commits to a learning activity and the consequences on his/her thought, his/her action and his/her learning.

In the context of the study of 78 Breton entrepreneurs, we can then wonder whether their entrepreneurial context is a source of learning and if this is the case, what the characteristics of such an environment are, is the interaction between the entrepreneurs and their entrepreneurial environment a source of learning? To answer those questions, we will first look into formal and informal learning (apprenticeship) in an entrepreneurial context. Secondly, referring to Carré (2005)'s concept of "apprenance" we will look at the notion of commitment and how it refers to Mezirow's (1991/2001) transformative learning. We will also discuss the ontological dimensions of informal learning in an entrepreneurial context. Finally, we will take a more empirical approach and discuss two studies (Mégret, 2016), one built around a questionnaire administered to 68 Breton entrepreneurs, and one designed as a qualitative, study with ten exploratory conversations with 10 Breton entrepreneurs. We intend with this article to explore the importance of informal learning contexts and the influence of the entrepreneur's commitment and capacity to learn transformatively within the entrepreneurial process.

Formal and informal learning in an entrepreneurial context

According to Boutinet (2013): “We always learn on the job or of his experience. What the psychologists called formerly incidental learning and we call today informal, at the level of the everyday life, gave rise during the last decades to attempts of theorization [...] to stabilize [...] a notion gives a complex, vague and unstable, that of informal learnings” (Boutinet, 2013, p. 7).

Based on the review of a French and a Dutch study, Cristol and Muller (2013) note that “to learn, the entrepreneurs have not much time, because they dedicate themselves at first to the development of their business. That is why they would be inclined to mix the various forms of formal, not formal and informal learnings. They would arbitrate their choices according to a parameter of management of time and of their commitment in training” (Cristol & Muller, 2013, p. 40).

Furthermore, although it is common to consider “professional and social” entrepreneurship as an “individual activity”, we cannot omit the continuous interaction between the entrepreneurs and their environment. Their ecosystem both biotic (alive) and abiotic (not alive) interact with and react to their choices and action... Toutain and Verzat (2016) underline the importance of roles as diverse as “friends, family, suppliers, sponsors, mentors, guides, prospects” and note that their implication “is central to the success of the entrepreneurial project before, during and after the creation of the activity” (Toutain & Verzat, 2016, p. 50).

Research conducted by Granovetter (1973) showed that weak ties (extended professional network), “often denounced as generative of alienation are here as indispensable to individuals' opportunities and to their integration into communities; and strong ties (family and very close relationship), local breeding cohesion, lead to overall fragmentation” (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1378). For Silberzahn (2014) it is critical to create, activate and develop social networks as they are the foundations for the emergence of the entrepreneurial project. The crucial effect of the relationship between the entrepreneurs and their environment was theorized by Sarasvathy (2001). Her contribution which is widely accepted today by scholars in entrepreneurship led to the development in France and in the world of new collective organizations of support for the entrepreneurship. “Those structures provide a space for entrepreneurs to exchange with various stakeholders, other entrepreneurs, and benefit from more formal learning (e.g., training, regular meetings) as well as informal learning opportunities (e.g., exchange with other entrepreneurs, coaching or mentoring during lunch time or breaks)” (Toutain & Verzat, 2016, p. 51).

According to a 2004 study of Dutch agribusiness leaders, there is even a hierarchy in informal learning preferences starting with: exchange with colleagues, professional journals, on-the-job learning, self-analysis, exchanges with customers, suppliers and production and finally bookstores, management games and other CD-ROMs. “Non-formal learning is also popular with visits to companies or research and development centers, study groups and conferences. Formal learning such as courses in universities, vocational training or e-learning come after informal learning in the field of professional activities” (Cristol & Muller, 2013, p. 40).

Barette (2008) who studied informal learning in an organizational context offers some ways to distinguish between formal and informal learning. Applying those distinctions in an entrepreneurial context, informal learning could thus be distinguished from formal learning by:

- “A type of learning that is always self-initiated (or a result of the learner's own initiative) implicitly, or explicitly and consciously” (Barette, 2008, p. 522).

Informal learning therefore creates the opportunity for the entrepreneur to adapt to unique situations and challenges met throughout the entrepreneurial process. In this context, learning and commitment to learning are evaluated and activated by the entrepreneur based on his or her own perception of risks, challenges or difficulties.

- “A type of learning that is often “self-managed”. The learner is active in defining and accessing the resources needed for learning without the immediate help of a guide” (ibid). In the business environment demand for autonomy is only getting greater. As Ehrenberg notes: “the norm is no longer based on guilt and discipline but on responsibility and initiative” (Verzat, 2012, p. 68), taking responsibility and building autonomy are essential”.
- Presence of a dialectic process of generating knowledge including: “An implicit and explicit back and forth between action and reflection, with an intent to generate perspective and explanation in action”. This reflexive approach allows the entrepreneur to analyze his practice, to bring out the characteristics of something new modifying his/her own representations to learn.
- “Realization of a back and forth between experience and theoretical knowledge, indicating a process of integration / internalization of knowledge through practice” (Barrette, 2008, p. 522).

This research supports Carré (2005)'s claim that individuals in daily work situations have the capacity to become “proactive agents of their own conduct through ongoing interactions with the environments in which they evolve. They can change the characteristics of the latter and adapt their own attitudes according to the goals and evaluations of their actions. This stresses the importance of the pedagogical applications of “sociocognitive” theory in the field of self-directed learning” (Carré, 2005, p. 139).

Commitment and self-motivation

Research conducted over the last thirty years has shown that informal learning and self-directed learning play a crucial - yet not always visible - role in adult education (Carré, 2005).

In the entrepreneurial field, Scottish researchers studying a group of managers in the insurance industry found that they engaged in learning activities in different ways. Differences were caused by either intrinsic (perceptive, emotional, cognitive) or extrinsic factors (organizational culture, managers' development culture, resources) (Cristol & Muller, 2013).

In an entrepreneurial context, we then need not only to look at the capacity for autonomy and responsibility but also at the capacity to “learn” to be autonomous and responsible. To learn to be an entrepreneur, Carré (2015) states that one needs to exhibit a high level of self-motivation so to take the initiative of one's own learning, and show consistent commitment in the project (see fig. 2).

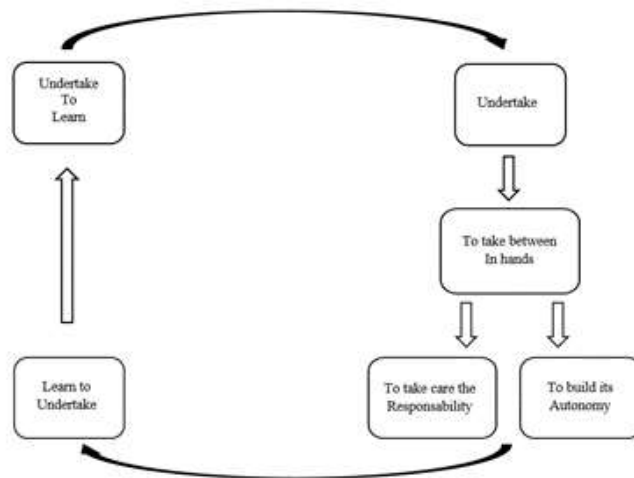


Figure 2. A commitment like a persistent self-motivation

Fayolle (2012) also stresses commitment as "determining" in the success of the entrepreneurial project. Commitment means that one can plan and act in connection with the will and show tenacity in action. The term is close to concepts of motivation, emotion, and "self-respect" (Raynal & Rieunier, 1997). Carré (2005) refers to two forms of motivation: "intrinsic motivation" which he considers as a key factor for self-determination in the sense that it involves no external pressure, demand, or stimulation. Curiosity, needed for exploration are good illustrations of intrinsic motivation in the field of learning. Extrinsic forms of the motivation refer to actions validated by others. In the field of learning, getting a degree, being promoted, getting a good grade or the recognition of others (trainers, manager, peers) are forms of extrinsic motivation, just like the search for professional qualification (Carré, 2005). Building on Knowles' work, Carré (2005) refers to self-directed learning as a process by which learners take the initiative, with or without the help of others, to identify their needs, formulate their learning objectives, identify human and material resources for learning, and choose and implement the appropriate strategies of learning, and to estimate the results of the realized learning (see fig. 3).

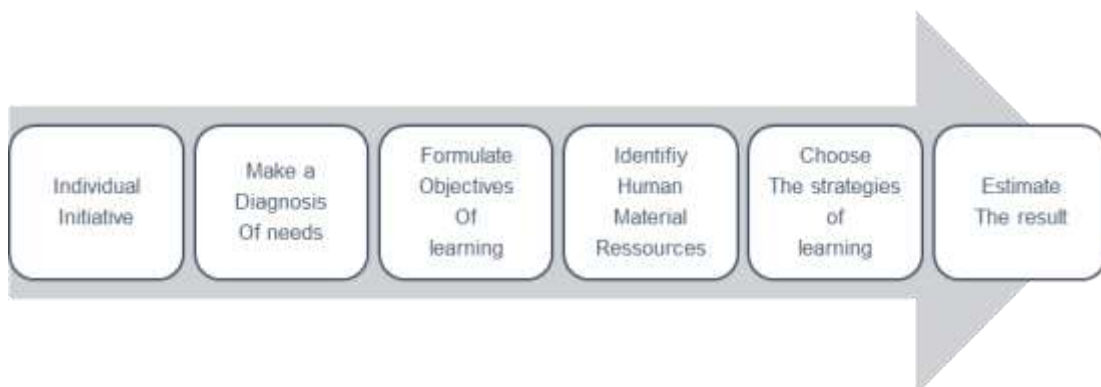


Figure 3. Attempt of modelling self-supervised learning

As underlined by Toutain and Verzat (2016), entrepreneurs are more "self-directed" than most people. Dimensions of choice, initiative, proactivity and responsibility for learning are at the centre of what Bandura (2003) calls agency in adult learning (Carré, 2005). Taking initiative, conducting a diagnosis, defining objectives, implementing a strategy and estimating the results are skills necessary for the entrepreneurs in the exercise of their activity (Mégret, 2016). On the other hand, Fayolle (2012) postulates that "entrepreneurship is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon and that its characteristics are only understandable by observing a diversity of the entrepreneurial situations and projects" (Fayolle, 2012, p. 45). He also calls for paying attention to the difference between teaching and educating as they do not respond to the same objectives. While education is more suited to situations where we try to awaken the learner, teaching is more appropriate in contexts where transfer of knowledge is involved. However, he calls for not excluding one and warns that it can only works against the interests of the domain.

According to Carré (2005), research in adult education highlights the important role played by the "prior knowledge and learner's assumptions in their ability to learn and succeed in their learning. This shows the importance of paying attention when designing courses to two critical dimensions in the process of learning: preliminary representations or assumptions regarding a specific content area and the capacity to reflect on one's own ways of learning" (Carré, 2005, p. 152).

Ontological dimensions of informal learning in an entrepreneurial context

Making sense from one's experience is another critical capacity for learning. For Mezirow (1991/2001) "to learn, is to produce meaning". Mezirow (1991/2001)' transformative learning is a process by which a learner develops the capacity to interpret and reinterpret his/her experience. The challenge for the learner is to confront his/her assumptions in face of a real problem and examine his/her frames of reference in order to determine if those might be true. Learning in this process is enhanced by critical reflection and communicative action (test old and new assumptions with other people).

In an entrepreneurial context, critical reflection means that entrepreneurs can reflect in a discriminating way on linguistic, epistemic, institutional and environmental forces which might reduce the range of options and actions, preventing them from acting as they would like in certain situations.

It is a different kind of learning from instrumental learning and Communicative learning. Instrumental learning aims to help the entrepreneur to better control her/his professional and personal environment (both are in a very interdependent entrepreneurial context) by solving problems by responding to indeterminate situations "by imagining lines of conduct possible, anticipating the consequences of each of them, by acting on the most plausible hypothesis and judging its validity as a test of the results of our action" (Mezirow, 1991/2001, p. 115). Communicative learning would focus on helping the entrepreneur understand and be understood by others (customers, suppliers, bankers, family, friends). Also, it is by working in search of agreement, consensus or joint action with peers, partners, family, friends or others that the entrepreneur will be able to increase her/his communicative competence by developing listening skills and argument.

Inspired by Mezirow's work, Hoggan (2016) was able to establish a typology of six categories resulting from transformative learning and representing a common vocabulary that learners can use when discussing the results of their learning. The broad categories (Hoggan, 2016, p. 10) represent changes in:

1. Worldview, depicted in the following subcategories
 - Assumptions, beliefs, attitudes, expectations
 - Ways of interpreting experience
 - More comprehensive or complex worldview
 - New awareness, new understanding.
 - Self, depicted in the following subcategories
2. Self-in relation
 - Empowerment and responsibility
 - Identity, view of self
 - Self-knowledge
 - Personal narratives.
 - Meaning, purpose
 - Personality change
3. Epistemology
 - More discriminating
 - Utilizing extra-rational ways of knowing
 - More open
4. Ontology
 - Affective experience of life
 - Ways of being
 - Attributes
5. Behavior
 - Actions consistent with new perspective
 - Social action
 - Professional practices
 - Skills
6. Capacity
 - Cognitive development
 - Consciousness
 - Spirituality.

These six categories could give meaning to a characterization of the changes involved in informal learning in an entrepreneurial context.

In analyzing Linderman's work, Brookfield (1984) highlights another definition of adult education and suggests a "co-operative and non-authoritarian, informal learning with the purpose to discover the meaning of experience; a quest of the mind which digs down to the roots of the preconceptions which formulate our conduct; a technique of learning for adults which make education coterminous with life, and hence elevate living itself to the level of an experiment" (Brookfield, 1984, p. 187).

With transformative learning, the learners therefore move from developing an awareness of their experience to developing an awareness of the conditions of this experience, processes through which they develop new perceptions, thoughts, emotions, and actions by engaging in reflection (Mezirow, 1991/2001).

This process is based on the consideration, in the formative support offered to the adulthood, and various crucial dimensions for the learning and the transformation of these schemas of sense: autonomy, responsibility, choice, feeling of control or still intrinsic motivation are so many internal resources on whom it is necessary to be able to work.

Empirical study and first results

In this study, 78 Breton entrepreneurs were questioned within the framework of our ongoing study, if these internal resources are well mobilized and if the notions of initiative, choice and commitment are actually part of their informal learning. From a methodological point of view, the use of both qualitative and quantitative methodological approach were set to document both informal and formal learning in the entrepreneurial context.

On the one hand from a quantitative point of view, a questionnaire with 25 items was administered to 68 Breton entrepreneurs. The main results are as follows:

- 69.1% of entrepreneurs feel overwhelmed by time;
- 38.2% of entrepreneurs feel overwhelmed by loneliness;
- 70.6% of the entrepreneurs did a formal training course in the new business start-up (the training was compulsory for 85, 4 % of them);
- 81% do not wish to follow additional trainings to the ones they followed at the time of the creation of their company;
- 47.1% are a part of a network (among which 75 % for more than three years).

On the other hand, semi-directive exploratory interviews about one-hour long each were realized from November, 2016 to February, 2017 with 10 Breton entrepreneurs (six women and four men, age 33 to 56). This study group was built using snowball sampling. The verbatim analysis processed with Iramuteq and Nvivo software emphasized four elements:

- The decision to undertake is not the result of a social construct but the response to a felt "injunction" given by a "moment of life". It is based around the following words: "envy", "life", "moment", "begin", "think", "husband family", "parent", etc.;
- If the verb "to go" is the most used occurrence, the statistical analysis of active forms shows that the highest noun and adjective frequencies are "time" and "lonely";
- Time is most frequently related to the words "work", "entrepreneur" and "boss".

And then, what's interesting is really interesting things but for which I'm not trained and so it generates a lot of stress and anguish for me because I want to learn I want to do things well and at the same time I am not always helped (Interview 1).

- Loneliness is mainly linked to the words "entrepreneur" and "risk". Loneliness is used here in relation to the situation of a single person, in a momentary or lasting way and in the Latin sense, by designating the state of abandonment, solitude or isolation in which this person feels towards society (Rey, 2012).

I know what it's like to be a traditional entrepreneur, the risks that you run, the loneliness of the entrepreneur. And there, I discovered that I could continue to be an entrepreneur but more with risks or risks in another way, a way that suits me more today (Interview 7).

Cristol and Muller (2013) specify the permanent interactions between the entrepreneur and its environment as well as the importance of the implication of this environment in the success of the entrepreneurial project. Sarasvathy (2001) indicate that these interactions are a source of formal and informal learning for the entrepreneur in contexts of training, which we qualify as "hybrid" because they could take place within the family circle, professional groups or peers.

Carré (2005) and Mezirow (1991/2001) show the importance of intrinsic motivation in the learning process without notable differences between formal and informal learning.

The results of this ongoing study are shedding light on the importance of the extrinsic motivation in the "choices" that lead the individual to embark upon the entrepreneurial process and in both formal and informal learning process.

Conclusion

With regard to our sample, if it appears that the commitment in the entrepreneurship rests on more or less forced "choices" or extrinsic motivations for the adults, a great majority follow a compulsory formal learning and almost half of them informally learn via a membership in a network in the sense of Sarasvathy (2001).

These first results are in agreement with Carré (2005) when he considers that the existence of informal learning practices, even when recognized, is rarely taken into account in the reflections, research and training practices of adults. It also reminds us that "the network [...] is the organizational receptacle of a mobilizing collective intelligence, nobody knows everything and everyone knows something" (Carré, 2005, p.168). Referring to the OECD (2000), Carré (2005) adds that this "community of practice" for a shared purpose is "ideally suited to the many forms of learning, including informal and occasional learning, which will characterize learning at any level age in knowledge-based economies" (ibid).

Entrepreneurial education is entering a new era (Toutain & Verzat, 2016). If it continues to rely on existing research such as "the attention paid to the typical portrait of the entrepreneur, the company created or the way of acting and thinking of the entrepreneur", it seems to have to consider the entrepreneurial process as a collective process involving the entrepreneur "with the actors of a community who engage, formally or not (thus playing) a crucial role in its progress" (Toutain & Verzat, 2016, p. 44).

Intrinsic motivation is necessary in the process of apprenance (Carré, 2005) and therefore for a successful transformative learning. However, our first results tend to show that intrinsic motivation is out of the entrepreneurial learning context (see fig. 4).

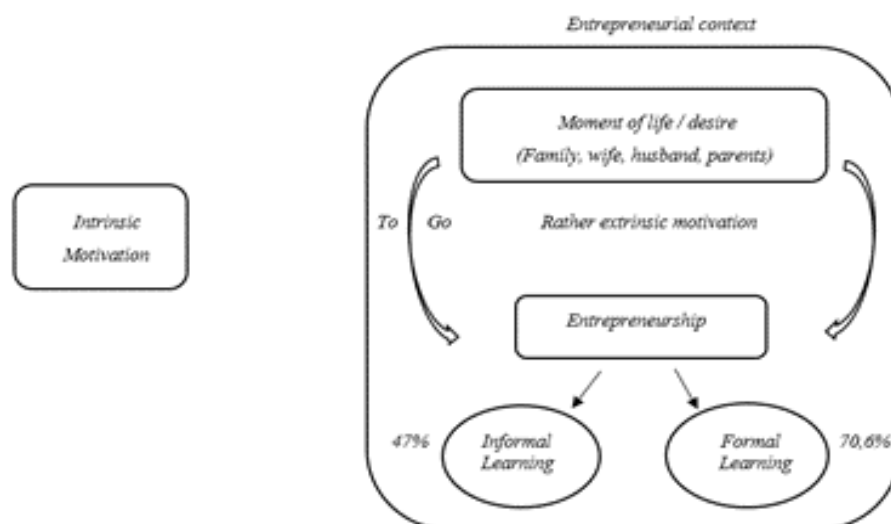


Figure 4. Formal and informal learning in entrepreneurial context
(Attempt of modelling of a part of the first results of the study ground)

Further research should focus on establishing how formal and informal learning in the entrepreneurial context could stimulate/enhance the intrinsic motivation of entrepreneurs, which may lead them to a "chosen commitment" and therefore contribute to their own emancipation.

References

- Barette, J. (2008). *Etude de l'explicitation de l'apprentissage informel chez des adultes dans le contexte d'une entreprise: un parcours dialectique de construction située de la connaissance*. Doctoral thesis in sciences of education. Université du Québec à Montréal.
- Billet, S. (2002). Critiquing workplace learning discourses: participation and continuity at work. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 34(1), 56-67.
- Boutinet, J.-P. (2013). Les apprentissages informels dans la formation d'adultes. *Savoirs*, 32, 7-9.
- Brookfield, S. (1984). The contribution of Eduard Lindeman to the development of theory and philosophy in adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 34(4), 185-196.
- Carré, P. (2005). *L'apprenance, vers un nouveau rapport au savoir*. Paris: Dunod.
- Colley, H., Hodkinson, P. & Malcom, J. (2003). *Informality and formality in learning: a report for the Learning and Skills Research Centre*. London: Learning and Skills Research Centre.
- Cristol, D. & Muller, A. (2013). Les apprentissages informels dans la formation pour adultes. *Savoirs*, 32, 11-59.
- Fayolle, A. (2012). *Apprendre à entreprendre*. Paris: Dunod.
- Granovetter, M.-S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6), 1360-1380.
- Hart, S.A. (2013). *Apprentissage formel, informel, non-formel, des notions difficiles à utiliser... pourquoi?* Article retrieved from URL: <https://oce.uqam.ca/article/apprentissage-formel-informel-non-formel-des-notions-difficiles-a-utiliser-pourquoi/> Vol. 4, (2).
- Hoggan, C. D. (2016). Transformative learning as a metatheory: definition, criteria, and typology. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 66(1), 57-75.
- Mégret, J.-M. (2016). *Formation à l'entrepreneuriat des dirigeants non diplômés de Très Petites Entreprises (TPE) : Les compétences nécessaires de l'entrepreneur aguerri*. Master degree dissertation in sciences of education. Université de Rennes2. Rennes.
- Mezirow, J. (1991/2001). *Transformative dimensions of Adult learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (English version 1991, published in French in 2001: *Penser son expérience. Une voie vers l'autoformation*. Lyon: Chronique Sociale).
- Raynal, F., & Rieunier, A. (1997). *Pédagogie, dictionnaire des concepts clés: apprentissage, formation, psychologie cognitive*. Paris : ESF.
- Rey, A., & (dir). (2012). *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*. Tome 1 et 3, 4^{ème} édition. Paris: Le Robert.
- Sarasvathy, S. D. (2001). Causation end effectuation: toward a theoretical shift from economic inevitability to entrepreneurial contingency. *Academy of Management Review*, 26(2), 243-263.
- Silberzahn, P. (2014). *Effectuation. Les principes de l'entrepreneuriat pour tous*. Paris: Pearson Education.
- Toutain, O. & Verzat, C. (2016). Former et accompagner des entrepreneurs potentiels, diktat ou défi ? *Savoirs*, 39(3), 11-63.
- Verzat, C. (2012). *Eduquer l'esprit d'entreprendre. Bilan et questionnements de recherche*. Note de synthèse des travaux de recherche, Université Pierre Mendès-France, Grenoble.

Diffused and joyful education: An experimentation of informal learning

Mottana Paolo*, Barioglio Marina, Martino Francesca,
Pedrazzini Eletta**

** Department of Human Sciences for Education
Milano Bicocca University
Piazza dell'Ateneo Nuovo 1
20126 – Milano
Italy
paolo.mottana@unimib.it*

*** Department of Human Sciences for Education
Milano Bicocca University
Piazza dell'Ateneo Nuovo 1
20126 – Milano
Italy
marina.barioglio@unimib.it*

ABSTRACT: The text presents a radical proposition called “widespread education” or “educational district”, already testified and articulated in two volumes (Mottana, Campagnoli, 2017; Mottana, Gallo 2017); the idea is to rethink the urban fabric and the real territory as areas of educational experience for children and teenagers, in order to free them from school imprisonment and to elaborate training paths through real and meaningful experiences in the territory in which they live and have the right to be protagonists. It is the overthrow of the idea that children and young people have to be kept in strictly closed structures to learn, claiming instead that the real experience, enriched by ad hoc paths and opportunities, can be an inexhaustible opportunity for motivating and effective learning. If, on the one hand, it is create partnerships between school structures, public bodies and private entities available in the sense of increasing the opportunities of experience outside the school enclosure, on the other hand, it is a great effort to rethink the urban fabric that goes in the direction of the reception of flows of children and young people inside it. Their return to the community's social life would be profoundly motivating for them but it would also bring a precious contribution to the entire society in terms of ideas, creativity, and participation to a re-imagination of the town, in order to make it a more welcoming, vital and less detached place to live and to learn.

KEYWORDS: Education, school, town, children, young people.

Introduction

We are not used to seeing children, boys and girls crossing the public space anymore. They were confined into special places a long time ago and now they are monitored, surveyed, they are always under guard.

We are not used to the invasive and sometimes insolent presence of young people anymore, because we moved them away from us, confining and putting them in the hands of people who, in most of the cases, had no respect and no comprehension for them.

But it is time to change. It's time to reverse this prison way of considering education and it is necessary that they can return to loving places, first of all to the town, which is a collection of places, occasions of learning, searching, wandering, observing, acting and sharing, recognizing one another.

All our education, and not only the scholastic one, need to be thought again. We need to demystify some basic ideas about kids', teenagers', and young people's life which became too fossilized.

This group of the population is not unable, it is not devoid of resources and not made of "lacking subjects". It is a part of population whom our society decided to reserve a particularly severe fate. Why? Why were children, boys and girls banned by our society? Why were they locked into places from which they cannot escape, often guarded by insensitive adults and obliged to live human experience of debatable quality? How did it happen that, at a certain point, our world rid of the social scene this amazing, polymath, lively and colorful universe?

Let's face it. It is useful to everyone to knock out children, teenagers and young people. It is useful to everyone to leave them in reserve; this operation allows to make room and time because those who have already abandoned that condition – the so called adults – can, without excessive concerning, completely devote themselves to their job of "power unit" of the uninterrupted working until, aged and unworkable, they will put in reserve themselves, somewhere else, obviously in an enclosed space, before the end.

It is useful to the fast circulation of goods to know that there is no kid, no teenager, nobody who is moving at a different pace from the one prescribed by efficiency and consumption. It is useful to the authority to guard who is moving in unpredictable ways, who is still free from the order of the work. It is useful to their parents to know they are protected, cared, nor left to themselves, to their urging and fickle impulses; to know they won't adventure into wild and unknown regions at the mercy of anything is unexpected and surprising. It is useful for everybody to know that kids and teenagers are out of the world.

In our civilization adults think and treat kids and young people as they were unable, incompetent, inadequate, not up to the complexity of the world. Adults don't want children in the way until they got elder and, without having actually attended the world and having stored abstract and fragmentary information about it, having absorbed the hard laws of threat and control, nervously and distressingly entered it.

But after having been kept in captivity for a long time they have lost any opportunity to acclimate to a different environment.

An experimentation of diffused education

Everybody knows that schools and educational institutions are not a Paradise in which each of us can loosely discover his/her own desires and talents or find himself/herself

helped by caring and sensible adults. Our educational institutions are not “kindergarten” or “teenager garden” which can give wings to their dreams.

On the contrary they are disciplinary places whose walls and whose desks accustom young generations to the laws of passivity, price, punishment, competition, threat, dependence, of the incorporation of pulverized and unpicked knowledge which will make them unable to discover the interactions among different aspects of life, slavers of an equally shattered sanity, of an equally split policy, of a probably unintelligible job at the mercy of laws they never completely understand.

We believe that children and teenagers have to come back to the society and our society has to do whatever it takes to allow children and young people to have learning experience inside it. We all need children because we are sadly accustomed to measuring people's contribution in terms of working productions, and they can give us a different contribution in terms of lively, curious, observing, questioning, creative and imaginative presence. We have to change in a deep way, we have to give them host and create the conditions for hosting them, living, participating and deciding with them. The energy that this imprisoned population could give to the social life its enormous if only we could really set it in motion.

A *diffused* education wants children and young people to learn inside the society, in its complex cobweb of opportunities, all to be adapted to their presence, but just for this reason they could change the face of our world making alive, fresh, loving, rich, colorful and spontaneous. They deserve to grow up close to us, to come with us finding their own room, a learning room, but also a living room in which they can live their own age, away from the persecution of continued exams, tyrannical rules, away from physiologically and psychologically unjustifiable timetables.

The learning experience can be rich, pleasant and gratifying if made in real contexts, if it is involving, if we feel as players and not only spectators, if we feel we can give our contribution in any different fields: in the social services, in cleaning and caring the territory, in musical and cultural events, in games and dancing occasions, in the creation of interchange zones, of conviviality places, of integration areas with all generations and cultures.

We need to re-learn to host them so that they can re-teach us how to live, to stay together with their rhythm, their imagination, their energy, because they are not anesthetized by the imperative of work, of production and survival.

A joyful and diffused education implemented in the living social tissue has to redeem the body of this age who really need to live it, to experience it in many different ways. It has to redeem imagination, sensation, creativity not in an abstract way, but through concrete, palpable, enjoyable works. It has to indulge its desires, vocations creating the opportunities to make them true, to fulfill them.

From this point of view the challenge we are looking at is amazing and the stake is great: a reality able to confront, able to host such a delicate, sensitive, open-minded subjects can only be much more livable than the one in which we are sadly surviving now. Let's welcome then their passion, their fervor, their inexhaustible difference.

Why don't we accept the challenge of a school without walls, of a school beyond the walls?

Like once, perhaps much more than nowadays, the real classrooms were the field, the river, the courtyard, the street, the quad and our mentors were many other teachers besides the official, the formal, the not chosen one.

The actual school building could realistically become the doorway to many different formal or informal learning places for each of us, for each citizen in each phase of his/her life.

Each town could have a “monument” leading to different cultural places in the urban, rural, mountain, marine, real or virtual territory; in a complex system where the never out-of-date “*non scholae sed vitae discimus*” can be heard. Let's quickly clear away the misunderstanding that even at an institutional level there can only exist specialized and functionally dedicated learning spaces.

Here it is the “diffuse school” then. Meaning with “school” a time devoted to research and discovery, to play, to leisure time, to growing.

We want real, immediate experience able to fertilize the future, able to prevent future to be only a place of a reward coming from previous privations and sufferings. A reward which is always denied because the law of postponement always delay a possible enjoyment until it becomes an hypothesis, a mirage. On the contrary we need flesh of live now, we need real experience forcing us “to be here” in a complete way, inside our body, through our sensations, feelings, heart and belly.

We would not hear about the separation between cognitive, motor, practical, theoretical learning any longer. We need experiences, contexts, situations able to involve (as a real situation does) all these abilities together. We do not need segments of life, but multidimensional scenes, rich textures, complex cases of life. Even play, art, reading are possible situation of life, but only when the real succeed in touching us, in involving us, when they are full of sense for us and only when they are not inexplicably mandatory.

Let's stop with obligation, let's stop with sacrifice, with submission, each fatigue, each difficulty should store inside its own reward. Let's stop with postponements at “a later date”, we need certain, expected, desired dates.

We won't allow to steal time and life to the children and young people any more. We all need to claim, for them and for us, much more intensity, much more quality, much more density of feelings. We must claim the universal right to be enthusiastic, amazed, awakened, involved, protagonist in dwelling the world. Only complex and living experiences can do that, not little homework, little tasks, little exams, labs or oral examinations.

What we have to do is complex and amazing: to radically re-think childhood and youth no more as a tortured parking and waiting age, but as a period of true, full, global and rich life.

The town has to become an experience place an young people can participate to the social life claiming that the town itself changes. Villages, small towns an metropolis have to be re-imagined to welcome the flow of young people eager to learn. Towns have to change their times, their rhythms, their spaces. We need free or very cheap services to allow them to go around; we need proper spaces and paths, fast lanes (cycling lanes, sheltered paths, electric buses, pedestrian zone, living areas, clearings, buildings to be modeled by girls and boys themselves). The urban bureaucratic tissue has to change to allow students move around freely.

In the usual scenario of workers, citizens, adults, aged people moving around town we need to add groups of children, boys and girls sometimes led by wise “Indian guides” swarming in the streets, entering shops, going under the arches, under tunnels, into museum, filling buses, electric trains, little undergrounds, stations... we can imagine more and more cycling paths, more and more scooters, more and more young people moving together with whom is moving for work, for tourism, for leisure or to find some meaning for one's old age.

In this way we could also overcome the dangerous cultural and actual separation among generations because the spaces would become joining places good for social and cultural integration, good for joining people, experiences, different kinds of knowledge.

Kids and young people themselves would be protagonists of more and more actions: from street art to music, from inner-city beautification to artistic performances, from the maintenance of little woods, gardens, orchards, to the aid for people.

Kids and young people will inoculate in our towns the bud of a more friendly, intense style of life inviting us to stop, to stay, to chat, to embrace each other. Boys and girls will open shops, they can scatter their ideas and their opinions through newspapers and magazines. They have to go back to being, as Majakovski said in one of his poems "new blood in the arteries of the city" (2012) and they need to have the chance to talk, to decide, to change.

We can be sure that, once made them free from the thread of a forced learning, their sensibility will become a precious source for everybody, such as their energy, their imagination, their vitality.

Obviously we need to consider school as a base, a hole, a meeting point, a starting point, a good place to go and come back, to leave from in small gangs, to return to meet again, to talk, discuss and so on.

We need to involve public educational institutions, we need to project with them one or more programs of "diffuse education".

We need to create small groups guided by a devoted educator/mentor leading, supporting, organizing the paths for them for all the time they need.

We need to create teams of teachers and educators who develop programs of "diffuse education" on the field, joining together contents, abilities, practical works and helping kids and young people to become more and more independent every day.

We need to display a network of experiences connected to Cultural Associations, Community Centers, libraries, museum, farms, workshops, commercial services where young people can observe, express themselves, give their contribution.

We need to negotiate educational spaces, times, contexts with public and private enterprises, to ask forms of "light viability" in order to let them move around their zone and then, little by little, go more and more distant. We need to claim spaces in which they can cultivate their own passions, they can participate, cooperate, help, care nature, environment, the beauty of the places, of little markets, of the playgrounds and so on.

We need to reconfigure the net of learning according to areas of contents which are close to young generations' life in order to encourage, to stimulate and involve them in many different activities and works: from symbolic expression such as theatre, art, dance, music, poetry, photography to the experiences of love and sex, grief and pain, happiness and sadness, health and sickness; to the political system, to the world of violence, nature, drug, travels, technology and so on. In addition we have to enhance the great amount of "accidental" learning the activity in the concrete society produces.

We need to raise awareness among everybody, among each public and private subjects who can be involved in the common responsibility to educate the young generations, in order to offer them the best opportunities to learn and make experience.

Conclusion

This experimental project would like to promote a new art of schooling, creating learning experiences in the town and closely related to the social tissue and to the different kinds of services that work in the territory. Students would be real protagonists of many experiences, from which they would develop reflections, discussions and theoretical studies in a less enclosed and fixed school. We expect to let children and young people grow and develop free from any arbitrary examination, improving independence, creativity, authentic citizenship, knowledge, awareness and competences rooted in the living heart of the contemporary community.

In short with these theoretical reflections and this experimental project we would like to start a cultural and social revolution able to put back adults and kids, aged and young people to live together in a less detached, hierarchical and punitive society, creating all together a more respectful world.

References

- Mottana, P. and Campagnoli, G. (2017) *La città educante. Manifesto dell'educazione diffusa. Come oltrepassare la scuola*. Trieste: Asterios.
- Mottana, P. and Gallo, L., (2017) *Educazione diffusa. Per salvare i bambini e il mondo*. Roma : Dissensi.
- Mottana, P. (2015) *Cattivi maestri. La controeducazione di René Schérer, Raoul Vaneigem e Hakim Bey*. Roma: Castelvechi.
- Mottana, P. (2014) *La gaia educazione*. Milano: Mimesis.
- Mottana, P. (2012) *Piccolo manuale di controeducazione*. Milano: Mimesis.

The concept of learning contexts is underpinned by different theoretical approaches and is open to a range of meanings in adult education. On the one hand, we can think about learning contexts as a phenomenon distributed across the social order of educational institutions, the workplace, home or community: they are embedded in practices. On the other hand, the learning context can be seen as an outcome of activity or a set of practices itself.

At another level it is important to consider that the notion of lifewide learning and the distinction between formal/non-formal/informal learning are not universally accepted. Different scholars have warned that if the whole of life becomes "pedagogised" many aspects belonging to the private sphere are at risk of being exposed to external scrutiny, evaluation and intervention with related issues of power and control. Furthermore a vision in which learning contexts are everywhere, without a general agreement on their specificity risks to reduce the concept to an empty signifier without real meaning and significance. This raises questions of: What is specific to a learning context which is not to be found in other contexts? And who names these contexts as learning contexts?

This e-book offers different perspectives to face these questions. Developed from the ESREA Access, Learning Careers and Identities Network conference "*Exploring Learning Contexts: Implications For Access, Learning Careers And Identities*," the book presents in 6 sections and 20 chapters the contributions of 36 contributors from Europe, Australia, Canada and India some complementary answers to these complex questions.

The Conference was held 2-4 November 2017 in Rennes (Brittany), with the support of ESREA, of the University Rennes 2 and the involvement of the doctoral students in Adult Education of the research team CREAD.

About the authors

Barbara MERRILL - Associate Professor, University of Warwick, ESREA Steering Committee member, Convenor of Access, Learning Careers and Identities network

Adrianna NIZINSKA - Senior Lecturer, University of Gothenburg, ESREA Steering Committee member, Convenor of Access, Learning Careers and Identities network

Andrea GALIMBERTI - Researcher, University of Milano-Bicocca, ESREA member, Convenor of Access, Learning Careers and Identities network

Jérôme ENEAU - Professor, University of Rennes 2, ESREA member: Access, Learning Careers and Identities network

Elzbieta SANOJCA - Post-Doc Researcher, University of Rennes 2, ESREA member: Access, Learning Careers and Identities network

Samira BEZZARI - Associate Professor, University of Ibn Zohr – Agadir, ESREA member: Access, Learning Careers and Identities network