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“Philosophy as Educational and Cultural Practice: A New Citizenship”

LIPMAN METHOD FOR INTERGENERATION DIALOGUE

I am a PhD student in Adult Education and at the moment I am working for a post degree course at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milano (Italy). I also work for a centre called CREADA (Centre of Educational Relationship between Adults and Adolescents)¹. I would like to show the possibility of using the Lipman method in educating and training adults and adolescents for a better dialogue. I have held training courses for adults (parents, teachers, social works and youth leaders) who are in some way involved in relations with adolescents. I have applied the Lipman method observing the way adults can learn and the which conditions are necessary for them to learn. I have found out that adults must be motivated to get the full benefit of a training session and that the facilitator must use a variety of strategies to stimulate the discussion. I have also found out interesting things while working with adults. For example:

While children are open to asking questions, adults are more resistant to open to and to reflect about their pre – suppositional of life. Moreover, for a successful dialogue with adults and between adults it is essential to try and to see the others' points of view. The most important thing is to understand their values, their convictions and their actions. Adults always want to know something more in order to solve their problems and they want to learn **how** to do it. Generally they want to solve their problems as a parent, as a teacher or as youth leader. I organized group session aimed at searching some guide lines together with them, using the Lipman method. Each session is organized in the following way.

1. INTRODUCTION

This is a moment to explain the aim of the session, to remember the rules, and to involve everyone in the session. For example: everybody should introduce oneself giving his first name and a brief description of his job. Everyone is invited to remember the best thing that another person have said or have done the previous time; everyone was very involved in saying which the last thing that he had learned actually was. Every session is an important opportunity of social relation, but it is also a special moment to meet the other, in his originality.

2. READING A TEXT

I have experimented with adults various texts:

- a) Lipman's Lisa text
- b) Texts invented using Lipman's model (adapted to the Italian situation) (A)
- c) Texts created from a record session of adolescents using their dialogues and ideas
- d) Exercises from Lipman's manual to Lisa text

3. WRITING THE SESSION'S AGENDA

To stimulate the adults to ask questions, I introduced them the questions asked by adolescents in a previous session. The agenda produced by the adolescents becomes a link between them and the adults, like a painting links the observer and the artist.

I do this because I believe that adults have great difficulty in asking questions. They can make statements and answer questions but **they cannot ask questions**. In others words: they don't know what they don't know! And if they don't know what they don't know it is impossible that they learn something!

¹ www.creada.it

(Is it an Italian problem? Is it a cultural question? Are some adults too proud to admit what they don't know? Is a question of losing face?). The aim of the facilitator is to create a level playing field where everyone is feeling comfortable even with the facilitator.

4. WRITTEN EXERCISES

A community of inquiry with adults is certainly a community of practice both because when adults think they think about practical experience and because adults have a lot of experiences to think about. And last but not least, when adults think about education they think about their knowledge, about their practice and about their values. I work to transform a community of inquiry into a community of educational inquiry.

For example I used some exercises to highlight the differences between what we say and think and what we do in relation with our children. We educate according to our words, by to do and not to do, according to our life, according to our nature. Our thoughts are in our heads but in our instrument, too.

The aim is to help adults to think before they act, by a reflection on their own experiences and on the experiences of others. The best goal for adults is to learn the art of questioning.

At the end of the session everyone is invited to ask a question: everyone writes a question and exchanges the question with the neighbour and then everyone reads the new question. It happened that a girl said: we have thought a lot about love, but is it good for our life?

5. EVALUATION

At the end everyone can reflect about what he learned and he can say how he feels and everyone can make a judgment about this experience.

For adults learning it is necessary to develop metacognition, high order skills, and to create the condition to rethinking the existential meaning of life. I am going to use a questionnaire (QPCC Questionario di percezione di convinzioni e competenze - M. Pellerrey) to prove these goals.

Thank you.

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