



Cap sur l'école inclusive
en Europe



Resource sheet

The counseling learning and the humanistic emotional approach in education :share to increase the value of each learner

Section D for /Define

1/ Report

The complexity of the contemporary world and the different educational needs of the students require to the inclusive school the development of new strategies and methods of intervention in the sign of the personalization of the educational proposals. The setting I wish to consider here is that of education, in particular I wish to analyze the specificity of the educational needs of each student.

2/ Démonstration

The present analysis yearns to demonstrate that through the Humanistic-Affective approach and the Counseling Learning theory you can achieve a good level of school inclusion due to the fact that the teacher must activate the psychological dynamics of every learner to achieve an ideal learning.

The theory of C. L. arises, therefore, as an helpful tool to recognize the students potential, diversify the training action and ensure to everyone opportunities for success.

To demonstrate this, I will sketch the main features of Psychological Counseling and Counseling Learning.

Then, I will highlight the implications of C.L. in the educational field, pointing to its actual applications in the classroom, or at different stages of learning, and finally I will talk about the development of innovative and alternative teaching strategies and methodologies that place the learner at the center of the learning process.

1. PREFACE

The educational model of the Counseling Learning (C / L), developed by Charles A. Curran and his assistants, has been recently the main focus of educators and teachers.

The present reflection on this model is designed to detect the main components and psychological dynamics that emerge in creative learning, to trace the relationship between teacher and student, to think about the conditions in which learning takes place, the obstacles that might interpose in training programs and the role played by those who learn new contents.

The main purpose of my reflection is to clarify how the unitary conception of man, with all his underlying psychological components, coming from counseling and therapy, is related to learning.

Some teachers use this method, or consider using it, but just few of them use to analyze its nature, range and importance. The Counseling-Learning is an intervention than can't be identified with psychotherapy or with the simple teaching, but it can have deep therapeutic effects in the learning process.

It can't be identified as a loving support: if the empathy between counselor (teacher) and client (learner) is missing and the desire to support each other doesn't produce satisfactory results.

It's not simply to provide advice or support; often it is the listening component and the availability that matters. But it is not even a pure listening, full of empathy and references, it also needs ruling stages, method and a project that manages it.

We as teachers use to work in the delicate field of counseling learning every day. Talking, direct learners, help people who basically do not know very well what is the purpose of learning, it is certainly not an easy task for us.

Students that are going to study a new subject, a new topic, need a lesson that should not be imposed, but rather shared and understood.

In this concept, we can notice one of the central aspects of the curranian activity.

Giving a status to this report is not an easy task. In Italy the literature on Counseling Learning is definitely poor. The methodology used in schools, I would dare to say, almost insignificant.

2. CHARLES A. CURRAN

Curran, as well as other representatives of humanistic language teaching, hadn't a professional training in teaching.

He took a doctorate in psychology at Ohio State University, and has been active for over twenty-five years in the counseling field.

During the last fifteen years he carried out researches on adults learning in order to verify and develop his own theories of psychology in learning.

He approached teaching trying to apply the humanistic psychology and psychotherapy offered by the psychological counseling, learned from Carl R. Rogers.

Transferred to the pedagogical-linguistic field, the method developed by Curran suggests that the best relationship to be established between teacher and student is similar to that which is established between counselor (therapist) and client (patient).

The client when psychotherapy is thus equated the learner as an adult struggling with learning problems, while the counselor teacher.

Attention is then focused on the affective sphere of the learner, the elimination or at least the attenuation of every source of stress and anxiety is the main concern of this method as well as of all other humanistic-affective approaches.

The client in psychotherapy is similar to the learner as an adult struggling with learning problems, while the counselor is similar to the teacher.

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3. A PSYCHOLOGICAL TECHNIQUE: COUNSELOR AND CLIENT.

Counseling is a psychological technique that is realized through a well-defined procedure and shared into five distinct phases:

1. Formulation of the problem: the person is negative towards itself and has to forthcoming.
2. Analysis: is a more positive introspection phase, where the person, once the negative reaction has lapsed, can look into a positive light goods and values previously hidden.
3. Summary: This is the stage where the person begins to connect his problems all together and understand from its past and actual condition the way in which his problems took form.
4. Planning: the person is planning new choices and more appropriate way of acting
5. Re-evaluation: the person re-evaluates the experiences happened to him and internalizes them, becoming aware.

The attitude of the counselor towards the client, is opened without prejudice, in a positive way.

The way in which he works towards the other is to propose, in his own words, what the customer says (almost translating it), acting as a mirror.

The client, observing himself in the counsellor, alienates from his problems (which seemed unsolvable), looking at them with a sort of detachment and from another point of view.

The feedback provided by the counselor enables the client to see new perspectives and design new solutions, thanks to the understanding and the acceptance received.

The definitive goal of this process is the self-realization.

The counsellor should not give orders or directives, but help you grow up, to become aware and to breed independent choices.

The self-realization, the thought over himself as a PERSON as a whole, the individual value of each one is crucial, according to Curran, for the learning process.

In this sense, the practice of the psychological counseling deeply influences the practice of counseling learning.

4. COUNSELING TERAPEUTICO E COUNSELING LEARNING

In the late '50s, the educational model of the counseling learning, aimed to study the psychological dynamics involved in adult learning, especially the learning of foreign languages, rather than to develop a teaching model.

Because many of the obstacles mentioned by the learners were very similar to those reported by people approached to psychotherapy and psychological counseling, they thought that if the expert teachers were trained to implement sensitivity and abilities typical of the counseling, this double experience would bring significant changes in the learning and in the mutual relationship between teacher and learner.

The hyphen between counseling and learning means the integrated approach to education, which refers to the awareness and the peculiarity borrowed from the field of counseling and psychotherapy and their integration in the learning.

5. DIFFERENT STAGES OF LEARNING

The Curran method is based on the belief that the relationship between teacher and student should be similar to the existing one between the clinical consultant and the client.

The counselling learning, as well as the clinical counseling, has five stages during which students obtain more autonomy and control of the learned subjects:

- 1) Students are grouped together in the class: at the beginning, they are completely dependent on the teacher-counsellor, but they are encouraged to establish a relationship with the teacher and with each other. They discuss ideas, matters of grammar, syntax, maths, etc. on which he provides slowly and "gently" the corresponding words, structures, formulas;
- 2) as the students begin to take courage and to become familiar between themselves, they make attempts to use such structures: during this phase, the teacher keep on providing advices;
- 3) as the students make further progress, they become less and less dependent on the teacher's suggestions, who now becomes a source that feeds the mistakes correction;
- 4) when students became very familiar with the subject, they need the teacher only in the most difficult areas: grammar, vocabulary, maths formulas, etc;
- 5) in the last stage of the learning process, students become fully independent and the spontaneous communication emerges: the 'silent' presence of the teacher is simply limited to support the grammatical, lexical, mathematics, correctness...

Ultimately, paying a careful attention to the needs of the student, the teacher helps him to move from the total dependence to the independence and the self-confidence.

NEW TEACHING METHOD

During the first three stages the learner is helped by the teacher as the conversation between the learners is not direct, but mediated by the teacher by means of his own aid.

The learners formulate the messages that are being repeated to the other students.

These messages are recorded, heard and later written down. The transcription, which is the "text" on which the whole class has to work later, contains the words next to the explanation of the equivalent words in a mathematical or a specific language.

The spoken language has therefore the top priority, the written code is thus relegated to the margins of the pedagogic practice.

The students are the real actors of the learning process; the content of their dialogues is decided by themselves and their interests lead their linguistic activities.

6. HUMANISTIC TEACHING

While taking care of the learner "needs", the communicative methods of the 70s and 80s aren't still able to carry out the didactics way of the direct methods opposite to the formalist methods: from one side we assist to the increasing attention to the learner and from the other side to the learning process.

On the contrary, in the same period, the decisive step in this direction are performed by the approaches that go under the name of "humanistic-affective", which, refers to the theoretical reference the humanistic psychology of A.H. Maslow and C. Rogers. They place the learner at the center of the learning process and consider the psychological factors that may be present positively or negatively in this process.

From one side, they look for educational proposals able to reduce the psycho-affective resistance (the negative perception of oneself, a competitive relationship with the class, a conflicting relationship with the teacher), from the other side, the learning is added into a larger context of development and personal growth, connecting it to the interests, the motivations, the relevance of what they have learned in their own life, to their own learning style, but before the ability to take the reins of their own learning, because the question isn't to learn but, first of all, the learner has mainly learning to learn.

So, is it possible to create a positive climate promoting the learning, rather than blocking it? And when you experience these blocks?

The answer to these questions is different from method to method, for example, the "Total physical response" approach proposes the connection between language and action, for which the 'orders' given by the teacher match the physical responses (sit down, stand up, go to the window) of the students, who, for a small period of time, listen and internalize the provided input without being forced to 'produce' in turn.

In the "Silent Way" of Gattegno, however, the teacher, after having proposed certain activities, (typical is the work with levels), put himself aside, letting the students play, describe and comment on what they are doing, confirming them with simple nods of the head.

With the Suggestopedic method of the Bulgarian G. Lozanov, the work is subliminal and it consists preparing a cosy setting, using music, relaxation techniques, dance, movement, etc.

The materials suggested by the teacher (and stored on a subconscious level) are subsequently revised thanks to conversations, games, role plays, etc.; the teacher tries not to 'invade' the sphere of the learner but rather to suggest (hence the name "suggestopedia") and recommend.

7. INTELLECTUAL KNOWLEDGE AND HUMANISTIC KNOWLEDGE

The counselling and the therapy are not fresh inventions, but date back to the times of Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, who first described the counselling as a process to take counsel with themselves as it happens in the person who use to think before taking a decision. The pre-Cartesian Occidental tradition had already postulated the value of the human being as a unit.

Curran believes that this tradition should be integrated and improved with new knowledge offered by human sciences. From this century, the development of psychotherapy and counselling has promoted a

greater understanding of the totality of man, soul and body. This path helped us to better understand the way in which the physical and emotional functions are all integrated, in particular in learning activities.

Modern thought has addressed, starting from Descartes, towards a clear division between material reality (res extensa - person who knows, behaviorism) and spiritual – intellectual reality (res cogitans - knowledge, cognitive psychology). Knowledge is designed in a sharp and distinct way, beyond the person himself, his affective and emotional elements.

In addition, at the origin of knowledge there is the doubt. The man of Descartes is a divided man, dichotomized.

According to Curran you don't learn doubting, on the contrary this way of thinking leads to a negative approach between student and teacher.

Instead of listening to and try to understand, we focus on objections and difficulties to be lifted. This doubt clashes with the way the counselor understands the client in his counselling-therapy.

The counsellor is deeply involved in an unconditionally positive relationship with the other person.

In addition, the acquisitions of psychology and psychotherapy that refer to counselling push Curran to recover the meaning and the value of the human person as a unit.

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