

Abstract

In this paper we initially present the facilitative conditions (genuineness, unconditional positive regard and empathic understanding) of the adult educator towards the learner, and the way they are proposed by the humanistic approach in the adults education field. We thereafter search for the reasons why a part of the educators turn to techniques that create, develop and renovate the social skills. Predominant reasons include the threat, the lack of experience, as well as the attraction of power. Moreover, first we suggest and then we analyse the question whether facilitative conditions, such as empathic understanding, can be taught through certain techniques. We support the idea that the educator's genuineness is the capstone of her/his job and that's something that pre-organised techniques simply can not do. We continue with analysing the Martin Buber's philosophical dialogical approach, which provides us with the educator's-adult's relationship "ideal" (Jarvis, 2003, 206). The paper is completed with the discussion of the meaning of mutuality under the perspective of Buber's and Rogers's views, in the framework of the roles inequality that exists between the educator and the learner. This inequality, nevertheless, does not block the "moments" of mutuality, which are defined by the roles' transcendence, the acceptance of the otherness and also the possibility for change for both parties of the relationship.

Key Words: technical, social skills, convenient attitudes-attributes, "I-Thou" relation, mutuality.

Introduction

For Jarvis (1995), teaching adults is "an invitation to explore human relationships and education is itself a humanistic process" (34). Humanistic theories and approaches on adults education (Martin Buber, Malcolm Knowles, Jack Mezirow, Carl Rogers), strengthens the ideal of adulthood: qualify the confidence to the trainee, to his potentials and his positive tendencies. Moreover, they offer great consideration in the educational effect and more generally, in the developmental effect in the trainee of the pedagogical relationship, which unfolds in three distinguishable phases: 1. the establishment of confidence from the trainee, which can shortly befall or even delay, 2. The growth of familiarity in which the trainee becomes capable to reveal some levels of his experience and 3. The establishment of an increasing mutuality between the trainee and the adult educator (Mearns & Thorne, 1996, 42). According to this approach, the adult educator's main mission is the facilitation of the trainee's personal effort for learning. This particular mission takes place via the adult educator's delicate guidance – who allows the trainee – triggered by his interests – to move towards new directions and release his mood for research. In order to do this, the adult educator should possess the following basic attitudes-attributes. 1. realness, genuineness and congruence with himself 2. unconditional positive regard, that means confidence, appreciation and acceptance to the trainee and 3. empathic understanding communicated with precision and sensitivity to the trainee (Rogers, 1983). If the adult educator has these attitudes, he creates a psychologically safe atmosphere that encourages the learning is characterized by appreciation, mutual respect and freedom of expression. The Condition for the success of the adult educator's work is the insurance he feels with himself and with the participants, which allows him to trust the ability of each member of the group to decide for the direction he desires (Rogers, 1983).

Reasons for appealing in techniques

As Jarvis alleges (2004) "our society today needs discovers again humanitarially ideal the education adult" (27). Therefore it is not fortuitous that Patterson (1986) distinguishes two dissident approaches in the helping relationships, we would also add in the relationship between the adult educator and the adult: The first one, the comprehensive, is characterized by the respect to the consulted and his autonomy and also by the factual recognition of his right for free choices, self-

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determination and personal responsibility. The second one, the manipulative approach, considers the consulted not capable of responsibility and decision-making so it judges that he needs guidance and direction from the others. Our days demands for "quick" and "easy" solutions seems to have influenced the AE already "the interest with regard to the questions of human relations in the teaching and the learning, have not constituted a important factor at the preparation of adult educators" (Jarvis, 1995, 34). Thereby certain adult educators apply in their work the second approach and this befalls for the following reasons (Rogers, 1983, 245-250):

1. *The threat.* The comprehensive approach in A.E. perhaps is threatening for some involvers. The threat exists because persons appear to prefer, for various reasons, the pyramidal system in which there is a leader at the top, who checks the remainders. Thus the adult educators, who attempt to apply this approach, have to face two serious problems: on one hand the loss of power and control, and on the other hand the common practise with the trainees. The adult educators are not the only ones who face problems using the comprehensive approach. There are also some learners who demand more freedom, and are coming to confusion and resign from this demand, when freedom regarding their personal responsibility is granted to them. Few of them feel that they should be controlled. They feel sure with traditional ways of education, they have learned how to be directed and it appears that they wish to continue this safe arrangement for themselves. So it is easier for them to fit in the existing practise and complain about it, than to assume responsibility for their choices. Therefore the threat that the involved parties feel in the educational process from the application of comprehensive approach is translated, most of the times, either in fear of loss of power and control, or in fear of the unknown for them situation.

2. *The lack of experience.* Certain adult educators do not know the route that a self-guided team of adult trainees follows in practise. The first difficulties by virtue of lack of experience make the educator use the traditional methods.

3. *The attraction of power.* Some of the educators' priority appears to be the grasp and the control of the trainees rather than the promotion of learning, even if they allege that they labour for this. This attitude has its roots in the negative perceptions and mistrust of the person and his potential.

Can facilitative attitudes be taught through techniques?

It is deliberate to start with two conceptual clarifications: The first is related with the term "skill" which is included in "faculty" (Kokkos, 2005, 22). The second is related to the term "technical" which means "the total scientific or empiric methods with which [a person] executes a work or achieves a certain result" (Dictionary of Common Modern Greek, 2001, 1336). Consequently, techniques are actions that are practised with tendentiousness and consideration without spontaneity in order to achieve certain results. Techniques are gained progressively by repeated exercise. They do not include any basic philosophy, any theory and they aim at the change of the trainee, sometimes even without his will. It is worth to mention that the perception for the acquisition of a skill through techniques, usually implies that we begin from a zero point by the admission "I do not know nothing", so that we become gradual capable, like when we learn how to drive a car. Moreover, the intense wish of the person to control the experience through objectification, often, leads group leaders to decide the use of techniques "as a way of assuaging their anxious uncertainty about their own effectiveness" (Friedman, 1976, 23).

Carl Rogers emphasizes his antithesis in every artificial way the adult educator uses like various techniques, exercises or planed activities. He considers this ways as an attempt of direction, that impose the trainee to participate: "I am well aware that certain exercises, tasks set up by the facilitator, can practically force the group to more of a here-and-now communication or more of a feelings level. There are leaders who do these things very skilfully, and with good effect at the time... At its best it may lead to a discipleship (which I happen not to like): 'What a marvellous leader he is to have *made* me open up when I had no intention of doing it!' It can also lead to a rejection of the whole experience. 'Why did I do those silly things, he asked me to?' At worst, it can make the person feel that his private self has been violated, and he will be careful never to expose

himself to a group again" (Rogers, 1980a, 54). Rogers believes that each adult, as member of the group should have the chance to abstain from any activity, and it is the adult educator's job to clarify it. Moreover, Rogers emphasizes the importance of the genuineness of the helper: activities like role playing, bodily contact and psychodrama are proved to be effective and they are not "gimmicks", if they occur spontaneously (Rogers, 1980a, 61-62). According to these, we could say that adult education takes place through the authentic notification of facilitative attitudes from the adult educator to the trainee. These "are not technical and their communication requires the most refined faculties, make that in the bigger part should emanate from the personality of educator..." (Thorne, 1991, 42). If they were simple techniques, they could be acquired with training processes. However they are *attitudes*, that is to say the roots of behaviours which have cognitive, sentimental and actional content. This presupposes the self-knowledge and self-acceptance of the adult educator. Moreover, there is one more question to be asked: can the genuineness and the agreement of the adult educator with himself, be produced or reproduced via techniques? Accordingly, the adult educator is asked by himself to be an authentic existence in his work and his authenticity "is not taught" through techniques. Consequently, the implementation of facilitative attitudes is a matter of choice, the adult educator's attitude proceeds, he does not predetermine his operation, but honours the natural process and development of the trainees. The adult educator's respect and acceptance for the trainee are expressed by the possibility of empathy and the trainee receives the genuineness. In order to achieve this – before he involves in AE's practise – the educator should be familiar with the philosophy and the basic theoretical principles of empathy. More specifically regarding the empathic understanding which worthiness is recognised particularly the last years, we could say that each person has this capability, but his defences prevents him to expressing it. The empathic understanding is often confused or even coincided with the technique of listening the adult, but such a perception is a false interpretation. Because empathic understanding as an attitude is much more wider and qualitative. Its notification is unacquired and possibly does not need a long term practise from the adult educator, but a "dive" into himself – so that he learns more of him – and recognition and awareness of the internal obstacles, in order that these obstacles to be limited or even erased.

Therefore, it is obvious that when the facilitative attitudes are perceived as an emanation of "recipes" or/and techniques then they would not function. This does not mean that the adult educator should be born with the ability of empathy, but is preferable that empathy comes "from inside" and not from the brain. Consequently, the adult educator's adoption of the humanistic philosophy, removes his needs for techniques. Despite that, adult educators can be educated in the facilitative attitudes so that they can promulgate it, if they wish, to the trainees. This can occur through a theoretical and experiential – intensive – education of at least 10 days. The duration of these programs oscillate roughly from 32 until 100 hours, divided in eight days of education (Mouladoudis, 2005; Rogers, 1980b; Thayer, 1981).

The description of dialogic approach of the philosopher Martin Buber, which provides the "ideal" (Jarvis, 2003, 206) in the relationship between the adult educator and the learner, will follow.

The relationship between the adult educator and the learner as an *I-Thou* relationship.

According to Buber the "*I-Thou*" relationship or "encounter", is comprehended as a particular event, as a deep and essential connection of two persons (Buber, 1965a, 168). The philosopher claims that this relationship does not exist neither in the subjective internal world of *I*, nor in the subjective world of *Thou*, but in the communication among them. It is about the movement towards the "encounter", from the objectification of the experience, to the emancipated for *I* presence of *Thou*. The means that enriches the relation and contributes in the participants' completion is the "dialogue". It includes as a concept and as an action the duration of the relationship and the respect in their potential. Even though this can't be programmed, the participants should be in a readiness for this "dialogue" (Buber, 1958, 110-111; 1965a, 19-20; 1965b, 87-88).

Buber founded the Institute of Education of Adults in the University of Jerusalem (1949) and his opinions influenced this field in a theoretical, as well as in a practical level. Following these ideas, the AE process, takes place without biases in the adult educator's entrance in the relationship with the trainee. The relationship itself allows and can create a new perception of *I* by *Thou*, which combines, the positive recognition for the trainee and himself. In order for the educator to have a complete presence, he should invest deeply in the relation and be open in anything this brings, so he and the trainee might change. Characteristically, Buber says in his dialogue with Rogers: "... I have not the right to want to change another if I am not open to be changed by him as far as it is legitimate. Something is to be changed and his touch, his contact, is able to change it more or less. I cannot be, so to say, above him, and say, 'No! I'm out of the play. You are mad'" (Buber in Anderson & Cissna, 1997, 21).

The cooperation as an *I-Thou* relationship, is structured between the adult educator and the learner, with the learning object as mediator. The learner "rises" to the position of *Thou* thereby the adult educator and the learner are in simultaneity, as well as in a common communicative sphere, where the *I* and *Thou* meet the sphere of "between". This emerges and is created by the entirety, the reciprocal action and the authenticity of the participants. This area of communication, after its construction, allows the educator's and the learner's coexistence beyond the diversity of time, the place, the culture and the experiences. With particular process and because "is impossible a purely individual existence without relation with the other" (Jarvis, 1997, 89), each participant exceeds his self-absorption taking into account the variety and the needs of the other. In its substance it is a mental "encounter", which can't be defined or measured.

Equality and mutuality in the relation between the adult educator and the learner.

Even though two authentic persons are available for each other, this does not mean that the relation in AE – as well as in the other helping relationships – is equal. The roles and the limits of the educator and the learner that exist in the relation and concern both of them, make the absolute equality impossible. Nevertheless, these parts – as we will see below – do not reverse the probability of mutuality between them, which is a basic feature of the "encounter". The relation in the AE is not unilateral, but mutuality moments exist. The "encounter" is in its development reciprocally or, at least, expects the mutuality, even though this direction is not expressed in the same degree by the two members. Usually, in the beginning, the adult educator – and not the learner – is the one who provides the possibility for the "encounter". However, the objective of pedagogical process is the mutual "encounter", in which they recognize positively one the other with personal responsibility. The mutuality can not be programmed, but develops progressively, it can be present, in some degree in – as for the rest unequal – the top "moments of" communication of pedagogical relation. It does not constitute unity or coincidence of the participants, but turn to the other and experience the relation – as long as this is feasible for the limited possibilities of the person – as this is experienced by the other. Buber's and Rogers' view of mutuality will follow in brief.

Buber comprehends mutuality as the plenitude between person and person and he equates it with relationship: "Relation means mutuality. My *Sy*, affects in me'na, as i I affect in this. Our students us teach and our work us shape" (Buber, 1958, 15-16). Mutuality is expressed through mental extension (inclusion) at which the *I* engages the experience and the perception of the other and adopts them: "... this gift is not a looking at the other, but a bold swinging - demanding the most intensive stirring of one's being - into the life of the other" (Buber, 1965b, 81). Rogers alleges that the inequality of roles, does not exclude mutuality which is raised when "his deep authenticity of one meets the deep authenticity of other" (Rogers, 1969, 232). For him mutuality is an "instant" matter. The educator can create the conditions for the "short moments" of the "direct person to person relation" to come and the change befalls in these "moments" (Rogers & Stevens, 1967, 191-192).

Consequently, the "real dialogue can occur in role-defined relationships" (Johannesen, 2000, 2), as that of the adult educator and the learner. The inequality of roles between them does not block the "moments" of mutuality, which are characterised by the excess of roles acceptance of variation

but also by a break for a change in both members of the relationship. Even though it could be comprehended as an *I-Thou* relation, in the top moments of communication mutuality emerges, which can not be limited by objective criteria like what real mutuality is or is not. It exceeds the roles of the adult educator (helper) and the trainee (assisted) and each one “exists” in a unique way and replies freely to the other, so that continuous change and co-development will come (Buber, 1965a, 19-20)

Conclusion

The Education of Adults is a field of dynamics and auspicious prospects. From all the above it emerges – that doesn’t constitute aphorism on the techniques of production and reproduction of social skills – that adult educator’s function is more than practicing on some techniques. In this point a vital question arise that the adult educator should answer before his entanglement (Patterson, 1986): how much confidence do I have in the other person and his potentials?

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