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**Training and Promotion
of adults.
Correct Aims and Methods.**

Br. Paul Griéger

The story of adult Training is fairly recent. It is linked especially to the succession of models or solutions put forward by industrial psychologists to bring about an improved reciprocal adaptation between man and his work (cf. Unesco 1972)

From this practical point of view, adult Training needs to take account of two main requirements.

On the one hand, the trainees must be prepared for clear professional (or promotional) responsibilities; which implies an apprenticeship in behaviour corresponding to professional situations defined beforehand. This requirement is almost absolute in certain cases: for example, the apprenticeship in new apparatus or procedures, the transformation of a position by the use of computers, etc.

On the other hand, the trainees must be prepared effectively for evolution itself; "in the formation for tomorrow, it will no longer be essentially a matter of acquiring knowledge, but 'of learning how to evolve'" (Colloquy of Amiens, 1967).

These two requirements appear contradictory, but they are not. Creativity is not the growth in oneself of difference and challenge, it is the capacity for inserting the me in the creative evolution and for co-operating with it by remaining in touch with reality...

Training which is directed towards the mastery of a defined professional situation, is not a list of behavioural attitudes to put into practice, it joins the prospective of positions and that of human aspiration.

In all these steps, the essential thing remains the attitude, the frame of mind, the genuineness of the search for improvement. It is the "personal promotion" which remains one of the essential aspects of ongoing Training.

What are the realistic possibilities for an adult? Up to what point is an adult capable of taking up study again? Is he sufficiently intellectually supple at the age of 40 or 50?

Experiments over the last decades enable us to give a positive answer to these questions. The psychology of the adult, combined with his professional and pastoral experience, are usually in his favour. If one knows how to make the most of this situation by adapted methods, the possibilities of change, of improvement in adults are more important than seem possible at first sight. It is important to take their personal "evolution" into account, and the psycho-social level they are at.

Pedagogical and pastoral consequences: the most important variable, in this area, is the structure of the person: emotional and personal balance, dynamic and gradual, spiritual and moral evolution and one capable of integration... The community is normally created, only if the persons who compose it have qualities and abilities which allow them to promote the freely chosen values.

The new type of community life takes this basic principle into account: "the disciple" who is called to live and fulfil himself in community and personal communion with others, finds his completeness precisely in interpersonal relations: an ideal of life which is based on an idea of "reciprocity". The development of the person and of the community affect one another: "to give and receive" is the dual tendency which leads the member to the community.

1. Psychology of adults

How are we to characterise the mentality of adults? Is it necessary to stress that in this area every measure remains imprecise? The term "adult", used widely, is scarcely adequate for evaluating the intimate aspects of the person.

Many will agree that in making an assessment, the adult age includes the ability to anticipate danger, to master sexual and aggressive instincts. It also has a good measure of initiative, patience, ability to deal with frustration, to tolerate solitude, setbacks and refusal, the ability to express feelings...

Social roles mark the adult and in certain ways, deform him and there is even a danger of them stifling him. Motivations (needs, ambitions, expectations) change. The suppleness of the me, its powers of adaptation, shrink and are replaced by a kind of defensive equilibrium; resistance to change strengthens.

These are general characteristics, that should be completed by the data of differential psychology, gender and age in life; as also by the "deep" psychology of the personality and the difficulties linked to adult age "crisis".

Adult age crisis: moral crisis. Profound changes can be seen in the members of an active life (40-50 years of age) at a certain moment in their lives, identity "crises" properly so-called. A first part of the apostolic life will normally have been intense, professionally committed, but not always with sufficient spiritual motivation. The second part can be seriously disturbed by a moral or religious crisis which often affects the vocation itself: frustration, general personal dissatisfaction, discouragement, temptation to give up...

This abnormal situation contributes to creating "tension" and that specific, psycho-nervous suffering which culminates in moral solitude.

The results of surveys and numerous interviews show that it is doubt which constitutes the most complex and most painful aspect of this psychological situation. According to recent in-depth studies, the religious doubts of the adult have three main sources:

— **Search for autonomy:** "to be free of all supervision". So, then, in order to affirm his autonomy, the tendency of the individual could take this rebellious form of a rejection of authority, at least limiting itself to questioning authority.

— **Pressure of sexuality:** with certain characters, the intensity of erotic emotion adds a further doubt factor. It does happen that the desire for joy, for a complete possession of oneself, and for affective union with the other, shatters the attitude of faith.

— *Crisis of confidence*: with interior peace shaken, doubting the love of others, the troubled individual sometimes experiences the intense feeling of the absurdity of life. This experience of the absurd, and anguish in the face of the nonsense of life can, it is true, equally arouse a movement of hope in God.

To maintain cerebral control becomes, then, an important problem for the adult. Vatican II puts at the basis of this constructive work, the necessity of a true conversion, the “conversion of the heart”, one which allows you to pass from speculation to faith.

According to the Gospel, the heart is the centre of personality: the seat of action and communication of people with God; the nub of the decisions which engage the mind as well as the will, freedom as much as loyalty; moral conscience as the call and judgement of God. It is with his deepest being, with all that makes up an “adult person”, with his heart, that the apostle must take up position opposite the Word of God who is calling him. The heart which welcomes the Word becomes a heart inhabited by God (Eph 3, 17).

2. Special training of adults

The difficulties or setbacks of certain attempts in adult training are often imputed to the absence of specific teaching methods, adapted for adults. Many authors, therefore, suggest freeing the formation of adults of certain models or methods thought up long ago for the educating children. “The picture of the school or, at best, University”, writes R. Mucchielli (op. Cit. p. 9), “intrudes with an insistence which is all the stranger as proof is manifest that adaptation of school or university style of teaching to adults is a failure. It is time to consider this failure as a fact (and not as a risk or a scandal), and to analyse the causes and to set up a special method of teaching for adults.”

Depending on the case, the concern for working-out a methodology suitable for the formation of adults lies in the disparity of educational aims, in the specificity of motives, in the sources of efficiency proper to an adult. A good number of specialists in the formation of adults make the distinction between the needs of the person and the needs of the function. The apostolic life today often demands undertaking the study of a new, or poorly understood, area and to acquire one or several necessary specialities; a methodological and intellectual training is necessary, which allow new acquisitions.

Principles of teaching for adults. As has been said, the Training of adults needs to be organised with regard to a type of concrete professional situations, to a well-defined practical behaviour.

So the first pedagogical step consists in making the adult himself define his needs and aims. It requires a constant pedagogical operation, the formation appearing as the uninterrupted adaptation of unfelt needs into felt needs.

Another important step must be mentioned: the personal responsibility and commitment of the trainee at every stage of his own formation. It is the problem of active participation which surfaces here: the necessity of profound motivation, that is to say a need for formation, for improvement, which implies changes for the subject.

One last step must be indicated: the use of the energy of the group as it is. In the pedagogy of children, the group is usually neutral and dissociated. The class exists

administratively, but its reality as a group is not used. In adult pedagogy, on the other hand, the resources of the group need to be used in many ways.

The preceding reflection highlighted one of the fundamental necessities of permanent formation: that of having precise aims and of making those in charge of a pedagogical Institution aware of them.

Active methods and self-improvement. In practical terms it means giving the trainee more autonomy, more initiative, more creativity. Here, in brief, are the main characteristics of the active methods.

1° Activity of the subject to instruct: it is the application of the principle according to which the subject learns better if he is personally engaged wholly in an action.

2° Intrinsic motivation of the trainees, that is that they feel engaged, implicated and not simply intellectually “interested”; what is acquired will then be a change at the level of the being and of behaviour, more than an intellectual knowledge or a memory.

3° Participation in a group: the active methods constitute an apprenticeship in social life, a continuing formation in interpersonal relationships, an apprenticeship in knowing how to live, at the same time as a professional acquisition properly so-called.

Control, as a check on intellectual knowledge or practice, disappears. It becomes a self-assessment by the individuals or groups. The evaluation of what is acquired should serve to feed their reflection on the procedures which they use.

These characteristics justify the adaptation of new techniques to the pedagogy of adults, more capable than adolescents and, even more, than children of taking advantage of and profiting by the great autonomy which the active methods presume.

These reflections on the psychopedagogy of adults, will allow those in charge to see better the spirit in which they should work, the climate of pedagogical situations to inaugurate, the direction of their own change to be better and better adapted in their mission.

What appears of first importance today is the organisation of permanent Formation, whether at personal level, or community, regional or national level. It will be the fact of a solid information to integrate systematically, adding to a renewed initial formation, programmed in this sense. Unification of life imposes itself on the apostle today more than ever...

The main aim of Training must be the service of the person, the human and spiritual promotion of the person.

Basic works

- Active methods in the pedagogy of adults, R. Mucchielli, ESF.
- Practice of the Training of adults, P. Caspar, Ed. d'Organisation.
- The training of adults, A. Léon, PUF, Paris.
- Permanent Formation, P. Griéger, Ancora, Milan.
- The permanent Formation of the clergy, P. Huot, Ed. Epi, Paris. •