Autobiographical methods in pedagogical research for lifelong learning

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Introduction

• Recently, both international and European Union educational policies agreed and emphasize about the crucial importance of wide-spreading lifelong and life-wide learning. In Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (‘ET 2020’), 2009/C 119/02, the Council recognized the need to strengthening national reforms of lifelong learning in a cooperative and flexible way in order to make lifelong learning a reality (strategic objective 1).
Methodology

• The autobiographical methods in a contemporary pedagogical research, turn out to be fruitful in various fields of life of every person. "The autobiographical approach in education falls within the qualitative methodological paths, whose scientific strategy is embedded in the concrete factual action nature educational." (Demetrio, 1992)

• An autobiographical writing original format has been administered to different 30-50 people samples of all ages, socio-cultural-economic background, different educational levels achievements.

• After fulfilled the format, a final questionnaire has been administered to know their thoughts and appreciance abou the writing experience through the format

• A mixed method has been used for the format analysis: a quantitative method, through the main statistical methods, qualitative method, taking the grounded theory of Glaser and Strauss as a basis. The latter contains: the reading and analysis of the records; the coding and the decoding; the labels to grasp the explicit meaning. Then we moved to the identification of categories and main categories, up to the identification of so-called "core categories", enclosing all the other categories.
Results

• First, from the early data obtained from the survey, it had shown that almost all the subjects:
  – have a great desire to reflect on their past,
  – to stop and think about their life path and
  – to want to plan the future with enthusiasm in a positive and productive manner
because they felt stimulated and involved in a process of discovery or rediscovery of the self that guides them in recovering or building an identity dimension rich in experiences and memories that have marked important moments of their life paths.
Results

• Above all data obtained from all samples participating in the research project clearly show that each person have a great need and desire to reflect about ownself, his relationship and lived experiences, to communicate and to tell. In connection with the use of autobiographical writing, in fact, almost all said they had felt different sensations: 1) interest, 2) pleasure, 4) curiosity, 5) wellbeing, 6) relief.
Implications for policy/Practice

• There are many functions that the autobiographical writing allows: "first to leave a trace of oneself and be known by others, to stimulate and invigorate the memory not to lose one’s roots, to give meaning to their life experiences and to rediscover themselves and to orient in new projects." (Aleandri, 2012).
Implications for policy/Practice

• Autobiographical methods, in contemporary pedagogical research, have proved be effective and efficient useful tools, as they can become a valuable reference point for mature and customized, lifelong and lifewide education. Indeed, they emphasizes formal, non-formal and informal education and training and encourage a process of regeneration and transformation of his/her self, to design / redesign his/her future in a positive way.
Conclusion

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The use of autobiographical methods applied in different contexts, has allowed to grasp the usefulness and effectiveness of tools that aim to track the educational and training potential inside subject, by narrating one’s own life story.
Conclusion

• In conclusion we can see that thanks to the activation of an intimate dialogue with oneself, but also with others, communicating both positive and negative experiences, it was concluded that self-writing helps to redefine one’s own identity. The construction and reconstruction of one’s own plot has reassembled the main events of one’s own life, giving them deeper and deeper but also new or renewed meanings.
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