METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES FOR ADULT IMMIGRANTS LEARNING THROUGH SOCIAL-COGNITIVE TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

Introduction

We will offer a methodological guideline for adult learning using three theoretical models: Andragogy model (Knowles, 1984), Transformative Learning model (Mezirow, 2000) and Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984). Specifically, the Andragogy model is a comprehensive theory of adult learning, taking into account external and internal variables involved in learning with adult subjects; the Transformative model emphasizes the transformation of the learner's perspective: each learner needs to transform his own perspective in order to learn. Finally, the Learning model illustrates many variables described in the learning cycle (Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization and Active Experimentation).

These three models will furnish specific contents on the adult learning. Afterwards, we will introduce the Social-Cognitive Transactional Analysis (SCTA) model (Scilligo, 2009). This model offers a way to conceptualize interpersonal and intrapersonal relationship and proposes a vision of psychological well-being. Because of it, this model allows us to show how some specific contents of each adult learning model are evident during the learning process. Therefore, the Andragogy and the Transformative Learning models, so as the Learning Theory give us the methodological contents, otherwise the Social-Cognitive Transactional Analysis model offers to us a methodological guideline to read how these contents are evident in the learning processes.

We choose these four models because they ground on a similar anthropological basis coming from a humanist and personalistic frame: all of them consider the person responsible, agent, self-directed, fully involved in the mutually interconnected physical and relational processes, able to construct his own life project taking into account his own values.

Our goal is to apply this frame of reference to immigrants learners in order to facilitate the difficult integration process, enhancing the richness of the cultural differences proper of each country and successfully overcome the challenges they face every day in their teaching, taking into account the specificity of their classroom.

Starting from the three adult learning models, we will introduce SCTA and will offers some applicative considerations about immigrants adult learning useful for trainers/teachers, especially using the Andragogy and Transformative learning models. In a future session we will say more about the application of Kolb's model.

Adult Education: what is Andragogy?

Andragogy literally means leader of man (andr- is Latin for "man" and agogus is Latin for "leader of"). This term is very different in its essence from the term Pedagogy. This word is a derivative of the Greek παιδαγωγία (*paidagōgia*), from παιδαγωγός (*paidagōgos*), itself a synthesis of ἄγω (*ágō*), "I lead", and παῖς (*país*, genitive παιδός, *paidos*) "child": hence, "to lead a child".

Therefore, the main difference between adult and child education is the object of the educator: in the first case it's the child, in the second case it's the adult. This leads to many peculiarities in the educative relationship between the adult learner and the educator, differences that are worthy to be discussed and known.

Andragogy, as defined by Malcolm S. Knowles (1984), is a theory based on the psychological definition of adult, which states that people become psychologically adults when they arrive at a self-concept of being responsible for their own lives, of being self-directed.

Knowles built a comprehensive theory of adult learning that is anchored in the characteristics of adult learners. Beginning with concepts researched by Cross (Adult Learning Theory), Gagne (Conditions of Learning), Houle, Rogers (Experiential Learning), Tough, and others, he developed the andragogical model based on several assumptions that differed from the accepted pedagogical models. These include the following issues from the learner perspective:

1. *Self- direction:* Adults have the need to know what's new from their own perspective – how this new knowledge will solve a problem or be immediately applied.

2. *Self-concept*. Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives. Once they have arrived at that self-concept, they develop a deep psychological need to be seen and treated by others as being capable of self-direction.

3. *Experience role*. Adults come into educational activity with both a greater volume and a different quality of experience from youths.

4. *Readiness to learn*. Adults become ready to learn those things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their real-life situation.

5. *Problem-orientation to learning*. In contrast to children's and youths' subject-centered orientation to learning (at least in school), adults are life-centered (or task-centered or problem-centered) in their orientation to learning.

6. *Motivation*. Adults are responsive to some external motivators (better jobs, promotions, higher salaries, and the like), even if the most potent motivators are internal pressures (the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life and the like) (Knowles, 1990, p. 57-63).

If we think about these issues regarding adult immigrants education we can draw out a few ideas.

1. *Self-direction*. Immigrants need to know how this new knowledge will solve a problem or be immediately applied. They have a very concrete need and are seeking ways to live better.

2. S*elf-concept*. The immigrant self-concepts are different according to his life-experience so far. He has the need to become independent and responsible, but sometimes he is traumatized and his identity is broken.

3. *Experience role*. In the immigrant's life, he has experienced a lot of things that could be more or less traumatizing. For sure he has lived the trauma of leaving his own country and is suffering different kind of adverse life experiencing even now.

4. *Readiness to learn*. They are sometimes very ready to learn in order to deal with life situations and define their social role in the new society. Sometimes their readiness is impaired by traumatic experiences and psychologically they are not yet available to receive the teaching.

5. *Problem-orientation to learning*. The immigrant needs to clearly understand how this learning will be useful in order to solve life problems, such as integration, etc.

6. *Motivation*. Their motivation is both external (having to follow a personal project in order to have house, food, etc. and internal (again work, integration, improving life quality, feeling efficient and useful again).

After a brief presentation of SCTA model we will come back to the andragogical model for methodological guidelines.

Transformative Learning Theory

The Transformative Learning Theory was first articulated by Jack Mezirow after researching factors related to the success, or lack of, of women's reentry to community college programs in the 1970's, with the resulting conclusion that a key factor was perspective transformation. He went on to describe a 10 phase transformation process which emerged as common to many of the women who successfully re-entered community college. In his perspective, learning is a vehicle for emancipation.

"*Transformative learning is the process of effecting change in a frame of reference. Adults have acquired a coherent body of experience—associations, concepts, values, feelings, conditioned responses—frames of reference that define their life world. Frames of reference are the structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences. They selectively shape and delimit expectations, perceptions, cognitions, and feelings. They set our "line of action". Once set, we automatically move from one specific activity (mental or behavioral) to another. We have a strong tendency to reject ideas that fail to fit our preconceptions, labeling those ideas as unworthy of consideration— aberrations, nonsense, irrelevant, weird, or mistaken. When circumstances permit, transformative learners move toward a frame of reference that is more inclusive, discriminating, self-reflective, and integrative of experience*" (Mezirow, 1997, pag. 5).

Mezirow argued that transformations often follow following phases (with variations):

1. A disorienting dilemma: the experience that the persons has doesn't fit with the pre-existing meaning structure. The dilemma can be epochal/all at once, or lights-on experience, or incremental/gradual.

2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame.

3. A critical assessment of assumptions, that is, one's frame of reference (epistemic, sociocultural or psychic assumptions).

4. Recognition that one's discontent and process of transformation are shared and others have negotiated similar changes.

5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions.

6. Planning a course of action.

7. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans.

8. Provisionally trying out new roles.

9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships.

10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective (Mezirow, 2000).

"To facilitate transformative learning, educators must help learners become aware and critical of their own and others' assumptions. Learners need practice in recognizing frames of reference and using their imaginations to redefine problems from a different perspective. Finally, learners need to be assisted to participate effectively in discourse. Discourse is necessary to validate what and how one understands, or to arrive at a best judgment regarding a belief. In this sense, learning is a social process, and discourse becomes central to making meaning.

Effective discourse depends on how well the educator can create a situation in which those participating have full information; are free from coercion; have equal opportunity to assume the various roles of discourse (to advance beliefs, challenge, defend, explain, assess evidence, and judge arguments); become critically reflective of assumptions; are empathic and open to other perspectives; are willing to listen and to search for common ground or a synthesis of different points of view; and can make a tentative best judgment to guide action. These ideal conditions of discourse are also ideal conditions of adult learning and of education.

Transformative learning requires a form of education very different from that commonly associated with children. New information is only a resource in the adult learning process. To become meaningful, learning requires that new information be incorporated by the learner into an already well-developed symbolic frame of reference, an active process involving thought, feelings, and disposition. The learner may also have to be helped to transform his or her frame of reference to fully understand the experience" (Mezirow, 1997, p.10).

We will later see how this approach to adult learning will be applied to teaching in classroom with immigrants learners.

David Kolb's Learning Theory

Experiential Learning Theory is a dynamic view of learning. It is a holistic theory that defines learning as the major process of human adaptation involving the whole person and this means that it operates at all levels of human society from the individual, to the group, to organizations and to society as a whole.
Some principles about learning are the following:
- Learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes.
- All learning is re-learning.
- Learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world.
- Learning is a holistic process of adaptation.
- Learning results from synergetic transactions between the person and the environment.
- Learning is the process of creating knowledge.

Kolb (1984) offers an experiential learning cycle (fig.1), based on the learning models of Lewin, Dewey and Piaget.

The core of Kolb's four-stage model is a simple description of the learning cycle which shows how experience is translated through reflection into concepts, which in turn are used as guides for active experimentation and the choice of new experiences. Kolb refers to these four stages as: concrete experience (CE), reflective observation (RO), abstract conceptualization (AC) and active experimentation (AE). They follow each other in a cycle.

The cycle may be entered at any point, but the stages should be followed in sequence. The learning cycle thus provides feedback, which is the basis for new action and evaluation of the consequences of that action. Learners should go through the cycle several times, so it may best be thought of as a spiral of cycles.

As its name indicates, the 'Experiential Learning Theory' affirms the importance of experiential activities such as fieldwork and laboratory sessions, however it does not prioritise those forms of learning among others. What is important is to systematically take the learner around each stage of the cycle, ensuring that effective links are made between each stage.
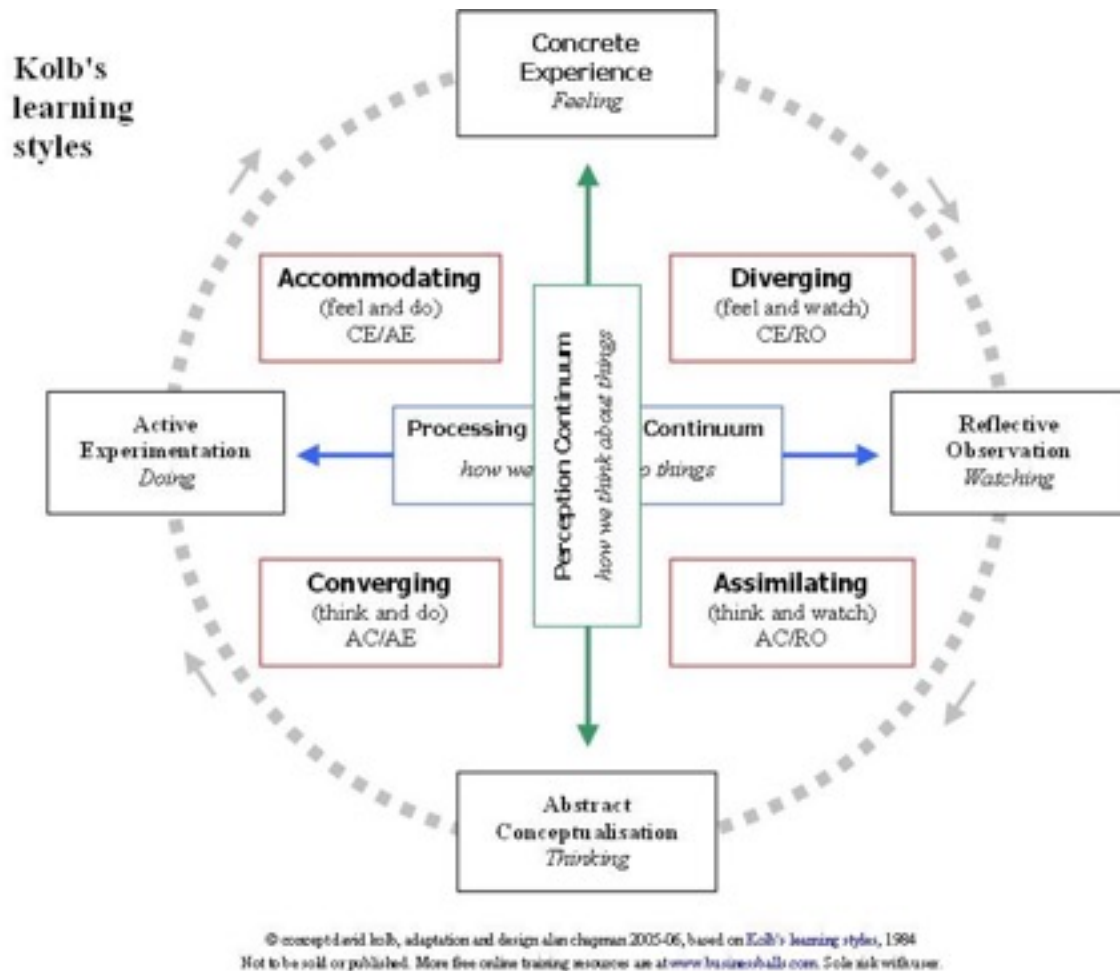

fig. 1: The Experiential Learning cycle (Kolb, 1984).

The model gives value to the prior experience or knowledge of students as well as the importance to offer a consistent and meaningful learning experience throughout the four stages.

There are two primary axes that lie behind the cycle: an 'abstract-concrete' dimension (AC-CE) and an 'active-reflective' (AE-RO) dimension. These reflect the two main dimensions to the learning process which correspond to the two major different ways by which we learn: the first is how we perceive or grasp new information or experience, and the second is how we process or transform what we perceive. The way we perceive or grasp experience ranges from immersing ourselves in the experience using our senses and feelings in a 'concrete' way to thinking 'abstractly' using logic and reason. Having perceived the experience we need to understand it through transforming it. Here individuals differ in their predilection for doing (active experimentation) and watching (reflective observation). When plotted graphically at right angles the two axes give four different clusters, which may be used both to describe the preferred learning styles of students and to identify disciplinary groupings.

Kolb (1984) suggests that students develop a preference for learning in a particular way. The preferred style reflects a tendency rather than an absolute and students may adopt different learning styles in different situations, but they tend to favor some learning behaviors in preference to others. The particular choice reflects the person's abilities, environment and learning history.

According to Kolb, learners learn better when the subject matter is presented in a style consistent with their preferred learning style and that there are conditions to enhance learning considering learning styles (see table 1).

LEARNING STYLES	Ways to solve problems	Conditions for better Learning
DIVERGER	View situations from many perspectives and rely heavily upon brainstorming and generation of ideas	When allowed to observe and gather a wide range of information
ASSIMILATOR	Use inductive reasoning and have the ability to create theoretical models	When presented with sound logical theories to consider
CONVERGER	Rely heavily on hypothetical-deductive reasoning	When provided with practical applications of concepts and theories
ACCOMODATOR	Carry out plans and experiments and adapt to immediate circumstances	When allowed to gain 'hands on' experience

Table 1: Learning style, way to solve problems, conditions for better learning.

Left to their own devices students tend to do what is easiest for them, which is to use their own learning style. Similarly individual teachers may teach in ways that reflect their own learning styles and implicitly assume that all their students learn that way. Kolb affirms that teachers need to encourage students to engage with all four stages of the learning cycle, as this can enhance retention and learning. Kolb (1984) suggests that there are potential long term benefits where there is an intentional mismatch between learning style and instructional style on the grounds that:

"The aim is to make the student self-renewing and self-directed; to focus on integrative development where the person is highly developed in each of the four learning modes; active, reflective, abstract and concrete. Here, the student is taught to experience the tension and conflict among these orientations, for it is from these tensions that creativity springs."

We each have our individual learning styles, made up a mix of the above four modes. The dividing line in the diagram indicates firstly the AC-CE balance (how much more inclined a learner is towards the abstract rather than concrete) and secondly the AE-RO balance (how much the learner is inclined towards active experimentation rather than reflective behavior).

Kolb underlines that these perspectives on learning are not intended to be definitive, that each person's style is not necessarily fixed, and that in using them we should avoid the danger of stereotyping ourselves or others.

Social-Cognitive Transactional Analysis and the relational paradigm

In Social-Cognitive Transactional Analysis (SCTA) the relational paradigm is central, therefore Ego states are considered especially in their relational aspects that can be observed in intrapsychic and interpersonal processes. We refer here broadly to the work of Ceridono and Viale (2012) for a synthetic explanation of the key concepts.
SCTA explains Ego states with the concept of schemas structures of meaning that integrate knowledge (Horowitz, 1991). Ego states are organized by schemas (Scilligo, 2009) which are the bases of representations of self, others, and relationships between self and others. The Ego states are organized into three macro categories identifiable by the prevalence of different activated processes: when we especially use processes of emotional nature, the Child Ego state is activated; when we especially use processes of situation analysis, reality testing, the Adult Ego state is activated; when we especially use processes of normative nature, the Parent Ego state is activated.
Social-Cognitive Transactional Analysis (Scilligo, 2009; Ceridono, Gubinelli, & Scilligo, 2009; De Luca & Tosi, 2011) has developed operational definitions of the Ego states concepts and instruments of observation based on the Structural Analysis of Social Behavior (SASB) (Benjamin, 1974, 1996, 2003) that permit to do empirical research and to orientate in the clinical practice.

SASB is a method to describe interpersonal and intrapsychic behavior by three dimensions.

The first dimension is the *Focus* that distinguishes three different perspective linked to three different direction of the action: two are interpersonal (O*ther* and S*elf*), and the other one is intrapsychic (*Introject*).

Possible examples are:
1. The t*eacher teaches to the student*.
   The observational perspective is on the teacher, his action is directed to the student through the use of a transitive action. The focus is on *Other.*
2. The s*tudent is curious to learn.*
   The observational perspective is on the student, his action is directed on himself through the use of an intransitive action while he is in relationship with the teacher. The focus is on Self.
3. *The student trusts himself: he will learn*.
   The observational perspective is on the student, his action is inward. The focus is on introject.

The table 2 synthesizes the first dimension.

EXAMPLES	OBSERVATIONAL PERSPECTIVE	DIRECTION ACTION	FOCUS
The teacher teaches to the student	Interpersonal	Transitive action	Other
The student is curious to learn	Interpersonal	Intransitive state	Self
The student trusts himself: he will learn	Intrapsychic	Inward action	Introject

Table 2: Examples of different focus.

The second dimension is *Affiliation*, that describes the affectivity of the action on a continuum from hostile to friendly.
The third dimension is *Interdependence*, that describes the power in the action on a continuum from giving power to taking power away in the relationship with the other and with the self. The poles have different names depending on the type of focus: *give autonomy* and *control* for O*ther* focus; *be separate* and *submit* for the S*elf* focus; *let self "be"* and *self-control*, for the I*ntroject* focus.
Affiliation and Interdependence can be graphically drawn in two mutually orthogonal axes: affiliation on abscissa axes, interdependence on ordinate axes.
The intersection between the Affiliation (affectivity) axes and the Interdependence (power) axes, for each type of focus, generates three surfaces**.** Each surface has four wide category of behavior (see fig. 2, from Benjamin, 1986, modified).
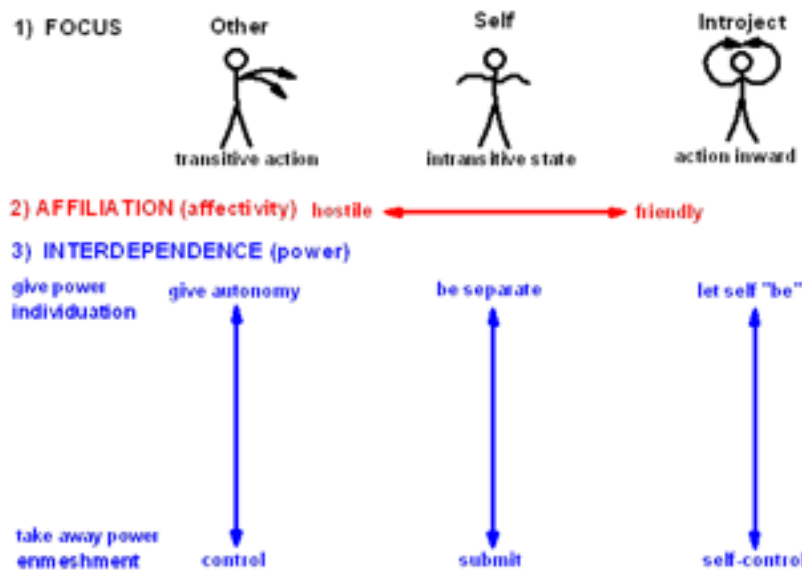

Fig. 2: Three dimensions of SASB to describe interpersonal and intrapsychic behavior.

Combining the two dimensions of Affiliation and Interdependence, we distinguish four quadrants: Free, Protective, Critical, and Rebellious Ego States. Each quadrant we have a Parent, Adult, and Child Ego states so we have 12 Ego states that we represent in a circumplex. The figure 3 shows the use of power and affiliation in the three focus (Other, Self, Introject).
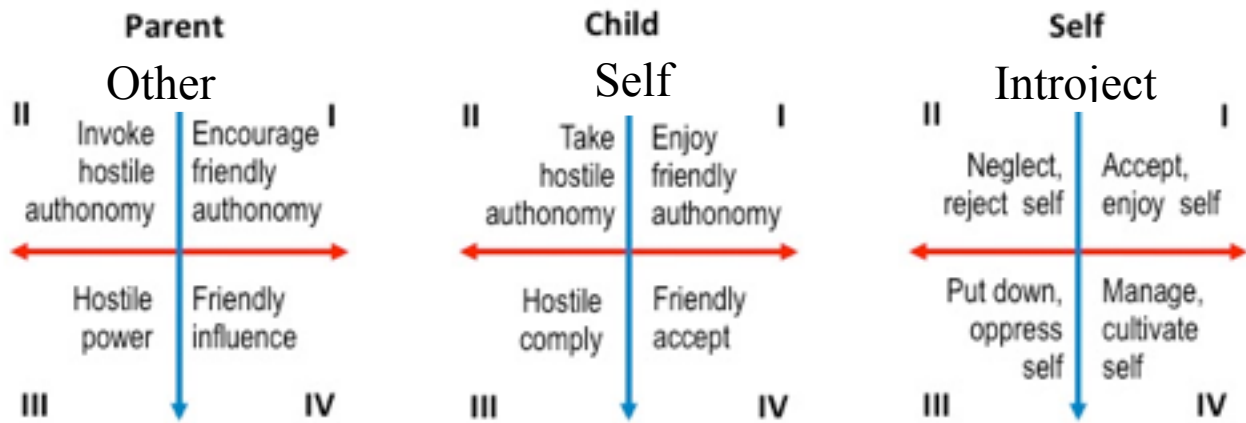

Fig. 3: The use of Affiliation and Interdependence in the three focus.

The Fig. 4 shows the 12 Ego States in the circumplex defined by Affiliation and Interdependence. In the Free Ego States, power is given to the self/or other in a friendly way; in the Protective Ego States, power is taken away to the self/or other in a friendly way; in the Critical Ego state, power is taken away to the self/or other in a hostile way; in the Rebellious Ego States power is given to the self and/or other in a hostile way.
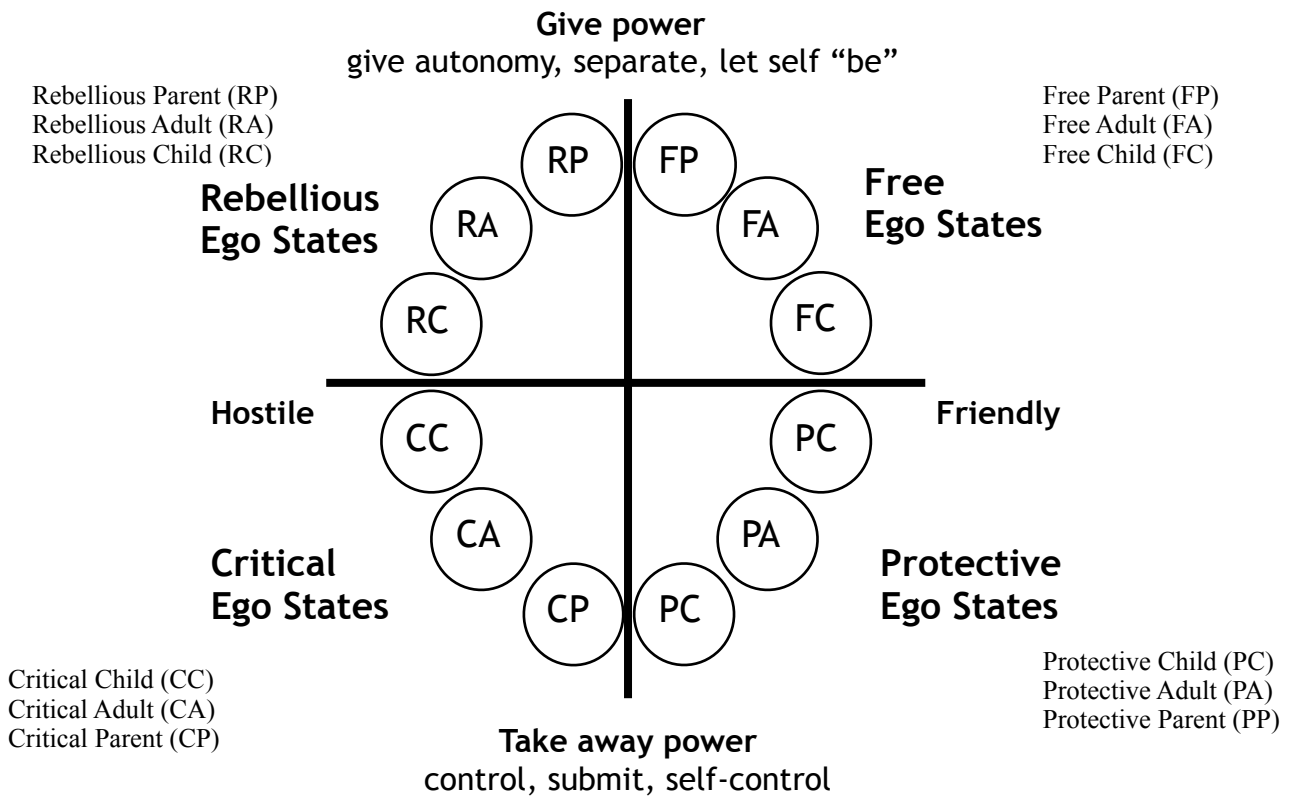

Fig. 4: The 12 Ego States in the circumplex for each focus

A distinction is made between Self Ego States (SES) and Relational Ego States (RES). *SES* are conceptualized as schemas about self and are operationally described by the SASB *Introject* surface, while the RES are schemas about interpersonal relations with others and are operationally described by the SASB *Other* and *Self* surface.

Applicative considerations: look at the adult learning models through the SCTA model

Let's start from the Andragogical perspective: we affirm that this model furnishes categories useful for an effective adult learning through the six mentioned issues (self-direction, self-concept, experience, readiness to learn, problem-orientation to learning, motivation) and also that the SCTA model offers a frame to read the quality of these six dimensions, expressed by behavior manifestations (in SCTA we will describe them through ego states). Because SCTA allows to identify the ego states, becoming familiar with it will facilitate the promotion of an effective learning.

Taking into account both the SCTA and the Andragogy perspectives, we can see how working with adult immigrants learners it implies to energize their Protective and Free Ego States. Indeed, it is possible to observe the activation of Protective Ego states when the person is able to respond constructively to the outside world and protect his own and others' safety. He is specifically able to relate to the physical and interpersonal world using the information mediated by the senses and knowing how to take into account the context (physical and interpersonal). This competence allows to evaluate how to act protectively in his environment taking into account the physical and relational limits. In this way he acts in a constructive way and taking into account the consequences of his act.

In the same way it is possible to observe the activation of Free Ego States when the person is able to choose autonomously and in harmony with himself; he is confident of finding solutions even in difficult situations. Specifically people are in touch with their inner world and is capable to capture their insights. They can read and decode their emotional experiences and knows also to keep in mind their own set of values and aspirations in the construction of personal projects.

Going to the Transformative Learning model, we read some relevant aspects from the immigrant adult learning. We will use also the Transactional Analysis frame and its methodological concepts. Looking at transformational learning through transactional analysis (Barrow 2009), the process of transformational learning is "contracted" for, which clearly has implications for both learners and teachers. It does not "just happen"; rather, it is intended as an outcome of the learning process.

The adult group learning process is a common environment for establishing transformational work.
The description of the qualities of transformational educational discourse can be understood through the Transactional Analysis notion of here-and-now Adult awareness and include:
- More accurate and complete information
- Freedom from coercion and distorting self-deception
- Openness to alternate points of view
- The ability to weigh evidence and assess arguments effectively
- Greater awareness of the context of ideas and more critically reflective of assumptions, including one's own
- An equal opportunity to participate in the various roles of discourse.
-

In considering the migrants' perspective when in a class during a lesson, they shifted from a frame of reference to another one, which is the new and unfamiliar one and the learning experience, "the classroom", can be seen an aspect of it. Considering the phases we could observe:
1. A disorienting dilemma: the classroom, with its unfamiliar components (teacher, others, the topic,...).
2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame: the person might feel lost, disoriented, ashamed.
3. A critical assessment of assumptions, that is, one's frame of reference: the person might become aware that "here things are different than home" and /or finding that the idea of self as competent is not fulfilled in this new learning context.
4. Recognition that one's discontent and process of transformation are shared and others have negotiated similar changes: others can be people in the class, people within the ethnic group in the hosting Country.
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions: possibilities at different levels are seen.
6. Planning a course of action: steps can be thought and organized.
7. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans: competence while accomplish.

8. Provisionally trying out new roles: beginning of realization of new possibilities (for example starting to work).
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships: possibility to increase these factors.
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective: the process of integration leads to a different perspective that the initial one in front of the "the classroom", the disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2000).

We can analyze these phases with Social-Cognitive Transactional Analysis and hypothesize such ego states can be involved:

1. A disorienting dilemma: the classroom, with its unfamiliar components (teacher, others, the topic, etc.).
2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame: the person might feel lost, disoriented, ashamed, (*Critical and Rebellious Child Ego States).*
3. A critical assessment of assumptions, that is, one's frame of reference: the person might become aware that "here things are different than home" and /or finding that the idea of self as competent is not fulfilled in this new learning context, (*Free and Protective Adult Ego states).*
4. Recognition that one's discontent and process of transformation are shared and others have negotiated similar changes: others can be people in the class, people within the ethnic group in the hosting Country, (*Free and Protective Adult Ego state).*
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions: possibilities at different levels are seen, (*Free and Protective Adult Ego states*).
6. Planning a course of action: steps can be thought and organized, (*Free and Protective Adult Ego state).*
7. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans: competence while accomplish, (*Free Parent and Adult*).
8. Provisionally trying out new roles: beginning of realization of new possibilities (for example starting to work), (Protective Adult and Parent Ego state).
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships: possibility to increase these factors, (*Free Child and Adult Ego state*).
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective: the process of integration leads to a different perspective that the initial one in front of the "the classroom", the disorienting dilemma, *(Free and Protective Ego states).*

Conclusions

We have offered an overview of three adult learning models and specially the Andragogical model and the Transformative Learning model through the SCTA. We have shown how SCTA permit an accurate analysis of interpersonal and intrapersonal processes, individuating the ones that are linked to well-being and the ones linked to the psychological disease.

This kind of analysis allows us to effectively promote the key issues of Andragogy model (Self-direction, self-concept, experience role, readiness to learn, problem-orientation to learning, motivation) and the the transformative processes of the Transformative Learning.

In the future we wish to focus on application of Kolb's model in order to propose an integrative model of teaching, useful for trainers.

References

Barrow, G. (2009). Teaching, Learning, Schooling, and Script. *Transactional Analysis Journal*, 39, 4, 298-304.

Benjamin, L. S. (1986). Using SASB to add social parameters to Axis I of DSM-III. In T. Millon & G. L. Klerman (Eds.), *Contemporary directions in psychopathology*. New York: Guilford Press. Copyright 1986 by the Guilford Press.

Ceridono, D., Gubinelli, M., Scilligo, P. (2009). Gli Stati dell'Io nell'Analisi Transazionale Socio-Cognitiva: la definizione dimensionale. *Idee in Psicoterapia*, 2, N° 2, 85-100.

Ceridono, D., Viale, D. "Ego States in the therapeutic relationship and pre- to post-treatment change in Self Ego States". 2nd EATA Transactional Analysis Research Conference, Putteridge Bury Conference Centre, Luton UK 12-13 November 2012, *International Journal of Transactional Analysis*. Volume 4 Issue 1 January 2013, pag. 49-58

De Luca, M.L., Tosi , M.T. (2012). Social-Cognitive Transactional Analysis : An introdution to Pio Scilligo's model of Ego states. *Transactional Analysis Journal,* 41, No 3, 206-220.

de Nitto, C., Bianchini, C., Tosi, M.T. (2012). *Theory, research, clinical practice and training: a virtual circle through SCTA.* 2nd EATA Transactional Analysis Research Conference, Putteridge Bury Conference Centre, Luton UK 12-13 November 2012.

Horowitz, M. J., (Ed.) (1991). *Person schemas and maladaptive interpersonal patterns*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Knowles, M. S. (1980). T*he modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall/Cambridge

Knowles, M. S., et al. (1984). *Andragogy in action: Applying modern principles of adult education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kolb, D (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development.* Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J.

Mezirow, J. (2000). *Learning as transformation*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Scilligo, P. (2009). *Analisi Transazionale Socio-Cognitiva*. Roma: LAS.