

Chapter 11

Learning Methods in Entrepreneurial and Managerial Training

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge Society changes enterprises, and big emphasis is given to persons and human capital. Enterprise becomes a learning organization based on scientific-technical transfer; on human and cybernetic intelligence, on information and communication technologies. Role of entrepreneurs and managers is exalted in this context; they are asked to look, to promote, to exploit, to run all spaces and subjects are able to carry knowledge. As consequence, targets, contents and methodologies of entrepreneurial and managerial training need to be revised; either in scholastic institutions - first university - or in other public and private educational organizations. The distinctive competence of entrepreneurs and managers asks that their training is focalized on relations; as consequence, inter-active teaching methods have to be adopted: learning by doing, by playing and dramatization.

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge Society changes style of life and work of individuals and organizations.

Role of traditional factors of production is revised in economic context: big emphasis is given to human capital, as the main factor able to better the efficiency of enterprise and achieve useful conditions for innovation. As consequence, business

systems and processes are changing, in order to satisfy three kind of exigencies (Ricketts, 2002):

- a. facing continuous changes in external and internal context;
- b. governing transactions connected to opportunistic behaviors;
- c. generating new knowledge.

Nowadays enterprise is asked to become a *learning organization*, and *knowledge* is essential for processes, products, services, in order to satisfy

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consumer's need, to better the competitiveness of markets, to increase the profitability. In "White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness, Employment: The challenges and ways forward into the 21st century" is written:

The key elements in competitiveness....include in particular the quality of education and training, the efficiency of industrial organization, the capacity to make continuous improvements in production processes, the intensity of R&D and its industrial exploitation, the fluidity of the conditions under which markets operate, the availability of competitive service infrastructures, product quality and the way in which corporate strategies take account of the consequences of changes in society, such as improved environmental protection.....

(European Commission, 1993, Chapter 2)

Role of entrepreneurs and managers is exalted in this context; they are asked to run and increase enterprise knowledge and to assure structural and functional conditions for enterprise solidity and development.

In order to pursue these targets, technicalities are not so important; nevertheless courses of study in commercial schools and universities are based on specialist subjects and traditional methods of teaching. It is important that entrepreneurial and managerial training is revised, according to Schumpeter (1942) who suggested reinforcement of high schools, as an important asset in capitalistic system.

About *didactic subjects*, it is necessary to enlarge inter-disciplinary vision, in order to train pupils in transversal approach to problems.

About *modalities and processes of teaching*, e-learning methodologies can integrate entrepreneurial and managerial training, but they are not so good in developing relational and inter-personal skills. This purpose is achieved by learning by doing methodologies: they offer to pupils useful

relational experiences, on engaging them in real entrepreneurial contexts. Nevertheless these methodologies are not so compatible with institutional practices in school and university.

Better integration in institutional teaching is allowed by learning by playing methodologies, when they are based on virtual reality.

In order to reach a good equilibrium among different needs and/or constraints, I consider really useful the experiences of dramatization.

This paper analyzes the new exigencies in entrepreneurial/managerial life, and evaluates some training methodologies that are adopted in European school and university. The purpose is in demonstrating that traditional methodologies in teaching entrepreneurial and managerial disciplines, have to be integrated by new methodologies, able to increase relational feeling and capacities.

KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

Peter Drucker was the first Author (1933) who introduced the concepts of *Knowledge Society* and *Knowledge Economy*: he thought a society where the fundamental resource is knowledge generated by persons, instead of tangible assets.

In Europe, the most authoritative declaration in favor of Knowledge Society was inspired by Jacques Delors: in "White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment" was underlined the central role of:

Investment in education and training: knowledge and know how throughout life..... Preparation for life in tomorrow's world cannot be satisfied by a once-and-for-all acquisition of knowledge and know-how..... Tomorrow's trades will require the ability to make diagnoses and propose improvements at all levels, and the autonomy and independence of spirit and analytical ability which come of knowledge. Hence the need to adapt the

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