



SOCIOCOGNITIVE STIMULATION FOR ELDERLY THROUGH AN INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMME BASED ON THE RECOVERY OF TRADITIONS AND POPULAR CUSTOMS

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims, amongst other things, to recover the historical content of the rich and ample memory that we have in Extremadura, using the memory of the cultural traditions and customs, of our elders. At the same time, with these efforts to remember and describe the different situations we will also exercise cognitive functions as well as developing a sense of usefulness and activeness, thanks to the transmission of such customs to their second generation, i.e. grandchildren. The following programme proposal details how to work with all of the involved groups, to meet goals and achieve satisfactory results.

KEYWORDS: Elderly, Intergenerational Programs, Active Ageing

INTRODUCTION

In the current context of the European area of lifelong learning (priority convergence process and the Lisbon agreements), interest in the study of intergenerational learning habits throughout life grows ever wider. We think that this is so, because now, we understand the true importance of these teachings and now it's also when we know how to promote them, within a dynamic integration and social inclusion and recognition of the value of the experience of life learning, as well as the social construction exchange. In today's society we recognize that intergenerational exchange is good and necessary for development that promotes integration and welfare of its members.

If we analyze the literature on this subject we can observe that in the 80s there was a boom in research on the relationships between grandparents and their grandchildren and from that time it



shows the importance of the family as a privileged framework for relations between generations. Likewise, other research has shown that school children relationships with older people suffering from cognitive impairment, has provided beneficial effects that were measured by the number of smiles and other gestures of appreciation .

There are many realities that speak to us today, in a world of accelerating change and rapid advances.

Younger generations restlessly weave their life around innovation and new developments, often leaving behind their roots, origins and traditions of their own group.

Sometimes this new-born culture has no real knowledge of its deep root on which it relies. Maybe we can say that the greater sense of understanding the present is given by the past. It is on the ruins of a dying culture, where a new culture must be born. And over the years, in experience, having lived and known, is where we can substantiate that rooting

We are aware that many of the traditions and customs are already in the depths of our memory. To prevent this from continuing, that we allow the loss of our culture, our history, our roots...One of the purposes of this programme is to try to retrieve and transmit them to our children and to future generations, who will fight for persistence and avoid insofar as possible, the extinction of these signs of cultural identity, character, personality, lifestyle and habits that make the people.

Recovering the tradition from the hands of those who have shaped it over the last years, of those who have lived it, enjoyed and participated in it, supposes as well as the corresponding year of learning and documentation, a deep sense of emotion, awakens deep concerns, longings, hopes and dreams.

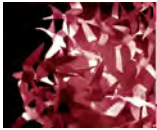
All new information, each history, legends and stories that come from personal experience offer us a trip inside the soul of the past of Extremadura. This allows us to recover and recognize not only the past but the why of the most intimate reasons that have shaped daily life, approaches to our rituals, our idea about process and life cycles of the Extremadura way to celebrate, to express joy, to translate respect, in retrospect, our way of being and living .

That trip can happily materialize on the ground, active and participatory, involving who can teach us and who must learn, being an example of love for both rigor and knowing about how do things with interest and zeal for everything related to the most important of our legacies, popular culture.

In the words of Professor Buxó (1984 : 33), culture. "Is a program for social action and a control system that acts on man in the process of socialization and adult social interaction ... " In this sense, folk customs and traditions, constitute an entire program that guides the conduct of following members, clarifying the attitude that they are expected to maintain during certain events and acting as a point of reference, as a " symbolic code of behaviour." According to her "... culture is the system of knowledge, from whose meaning, human beings screens and selects their understanding of reality, in a broad sense, interprets and regulates the facts and data of social behaviour ". Thus, all the folk customs and traditions, through the program proposed here, will study the fulfilment of that screening function that surrounds the individual, classifying their true meaning and facilitate intra and inter control.

In the same way as quotes Professor Claudio Esteva Fabregat, indicating that culture is " ... the organized mindset of individuals in a society, in order to produce coherent social activities, both as material action as spiritual action (1984: 65). This mindset is articulated and transmitted through language and modes of action of the members of a community (1984: 33). "We agree in thinking that this language is a previous requirement for the intergenerational transmission of traditions and customs environment. Therefore, oral communication will be an integral and indispensable part of the methodology linked to our programme.

Anthropology defines culture as "... a system of knowledge that gives us a model of reality, through which we make sense of our behaviour. This system consists in generated feedback and



shared by the group they identify (ethnicity), which are transmitted to new members (enculturation), and are effective in solving different problems "(Aguirre, 1997: 7). All this is the result of the ability to externalize the need for human interaction, which manifests on an analytical level in the field of ideas, actions and concrete products; customs, and folklore cultural traditions, other.

According to the previous lines, to be a member in a particular group, we must share a (their) culture. This requires access. Enculturation is a process by which every community transmits its new members their customs, traditions, social norms, knowledge and habits, making them participants of group ethnic identity. It is a process of cultural grupalization, access to a community with a homogeneous culture.

The start of enculturation begins from the early years. Following some behavioural patterns that in many cases are acquired vicariously, by observing the behaviour of the adult members of the community in specific situations. The child will grow-up immersed in a culture that will be endorsing. From the cot, the infant listens to tender traditional poems, the parent sings lullabies, short poems filled with music lessons, submerging the baby in a process of continuous education that will help them grow-up to be an accepted member of the community. When the child begins to grow and mature, the folk music follows in his footsteps: with brief rhymes children begin to eat, to learn about hygiene, social values, etc... Amongst popular songs and games the child will grow immersed in a culture that will make him or her man or woman.

It may be surprising that in a society like ours, in a constant state of change, defined as a society of information and means of communication and information, to find that traditions and customs have persisted through the centuries. Today, past century cultural traditions are still alive, and society can still identify them with it. Boasting of its history. This is the secret identity of the people, that despite the cultural change and the times, it keeps alive the traditions, captivating new individuals from different times and eras.

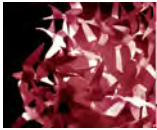
So we think that the traditions and customs are carriers of powerful narrative identities. The whole set of customs and a tradition are part of the body of knowledge in a society, and has a key role in the cognitive orientation of its members, both regarding, the understanding of reality and interpersonal relationships.

Therefore, given the importance of knowing about our roots and its presents in our development, we propose a program dedicated to the intergenerational transmission of folk customs and traditions of the rich culture of Extremadura.

Intergenerational Programmes based on the concept of the existence of a synergy between children and elders is mutually beneficial for both parties, while being natural and timely. It has been shown that these programs contribute to the aging process in an active way of improving self-esteem and self-concept of the participants. Thereby it furthers transmission of learning as well as ensuring communication and establishing new social ties and a shared dialogue.

The International Consortium for Intergenerational Programmes (CIPI) defines intergenerational programs as means for intentional and ongoing exchange of resources and learning among older and younger generations in order to achieve individual and social benefits. Intergenerational programming refers to activities or programmes that increase cooperation, interaction and exchanges between people of different generations. Through these programs, individuals from different generations share their talents and resources and support each other through relationships that benefit both the individual and the community.

If we focus now on analyzing the concept of intergenerational relationships we could say that it refers, generally, to any interaction that occurs between individuals or groups belonging to different generations, as Villar says(2007), we must also establish the difference between intergenerational and multigenerational, who also says:



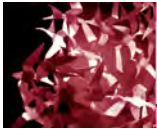
The term "intergenerational" implies the involvement of members of two or more generations in activities that can potentially make them aware of their different (generational)perspectives .It implies increasing interaction and cooperation to achieve common goals, mutual influence and the possibility of change (it is desirable that it is a change that represents an improvement) . In contrast, " multigenerational " is usually used with a related but broader sense, which means sharing activities or characteristics between generations but not necessarily involves interaction and influence between them (Villar, 2007: 115-116) .

We are also convinced that the term intergenerationality not only intends to translate the idea of being with someone, but it goes beyond that. This is a modelling together and go at each other is doing and be together, going beyond a interaction and passing relationship. Following this line we can say that intergenerational relationships should be those in which, either by consensus, cooperation or conflict, we can see several people involved from different generations or age groups. That is, as Newman and Sanchez (2007) said: belonging to a particular generation is considered a reference trait of individuals invited to interact and to be involved in the relationship, at the end of the day, although we talk of relations between generation. In real life they are individuals, people. Therefore, the key term (inter) generation is not so much about in the generational but the inter, the in between.

Taking into account the previous our ultimate goal is to recover our own cultural community samples, showing children some more important aspects of life of our past societies and at the same time to remind our elders, in presence of their grandchildren, about their lives and experiences that undoubtedly were significant. The fundamental idea is to avoid losing customs, folklore, songs, forms of social interaction, parties and other popular activities that give the frontier town its identity and personality.

OBJECTIVES

1. The workshop of traditions and customs, intends to be a scientific, cultural and social development programme of the University of Extremadura aimed on discovering the popular customs and traditions (craft, folklore, customs, traditions, recipes, parties, songs, dances ...) that characterize the frontier culture.
2. The second objective is connection by linking and enriching intergenerational relations, seeking the appreciation of the value of folk customs and traditions by the participating students as well as fostering attitudes of respect, appreciation and consideration for major groups in our society
3. The Main objective of this work will prevent the extinction of these cultural signs that make us people. Thus causing intergenerational contact, we will provide the grandparents to narrate events of their childhood and youth to participant, school children who are excited about such stories and experiences take notes and become efficient transmitters of popular wisdom.
4. In addition, we consider that it has been scientifically proven that those who, under certain circumstances, are forced to remember, to think, to keep his memory and attention in order, are the last to lose and / or falling into dementia that many older people suffer today. It is also to maintain an active social life that is a source of great satisfaction and healthy living. Our program provides a useful collective and participative role; they will soon feel the benefits, significantly improving their quality of life. We would make them, in context; feel as social facilitators and transmitters on the sense of cultural tradition seriously threatened with extinction as a result of new technologies and rapidly changing society.
5. Provide a space for discussion of mutual enrichment, scientific and cultural participation of those involved.



6. This intergenerational cultural transmission program also aims to promote a meeting and meeting place to share our greatest desires and past experiences amongst ourselves as well as groups of the population.

TARGET GROUP

The proposal presented here involves various groups in our society that will participate in a coordinated, joint and active way in achieving the proposal objectives.

- On the one hand, elderly people in involved populations, transmitters of information that will be the protagonists of the activities that we will develop in the workshops.
- Other program participants will be the students of Primary Education, grandchildren of the elderly, who are enrolled in public schools in Arroyo de la Luz, Casar de Cáceres, Guarenya, Malpartida de Cáceres, Olivenza, Salvatierra los Barros, Valdetorres, Villagonzalo and La Zarza, where we will put into practise traditional and popular custom workshops.
- In each workshop we will also have a speaker, an expert in the field, which will delve, more profoundly, in a given subject. Through a general conference, we will speak of traditional culture, we will transmit knowledge about social anthropology, museums and other issues associated with the workshop.
- The activity must always be coordinated by teachers and other professionals in schools that, from the beginning, become interested in actively participating in the workshops. They will be responsible for the task to put into effect the most richest, serious and rigorous way as possible, so that we never lose sight of the program objectives.
- Finally, we must not forget that an essential part of this proposal is the total number of employees of the town where the project is to be carried out; members of the public may participate if desired. Their collaboration can be important for certain proposals to be carried out.

METHODOLOGY

The program briefly presented in this document is a workshop - seminar to be held, to achieve its goals, as an eminently active and participative methodology. Everyone involved in the workshop have a function, previously defined and agreed to favour mutual benefit.

On one hand, the expert speaker in the selected skill will schedule and design a range of topics associated with popular traditions. After transmitting certain knowledge that serves as an introduction for the participants, he or she will give way to the elderly person to evoke everything about it as they can. This will serve to motivate workers, guide the activities, providing material support and indicate the most appropriate way to follow the theme of the chosen methodology.

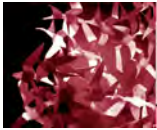
Furthermore, the group of older participants will be responsible for relaying their experiences, memories, knowledge, life histories, cultural aspects of society, sayings, traditions, customs, craft activities, baking, embroidery, cooking, museums, etc... to the younger members of society .

This is so that, after attending the lectures of the speakers involved, our elderly either individually or in groups, can prepare an intervention as a lecture or symposium on a previously established day, to make a speech in, directed mainly to young school children

The Elderly Participants will choose the topics that, in their opinion, are best suited for each session, prepare support materials and share their knowledge, telling stories of life and growing traditions and customs of the people, either to their family, in their peer group or in extracurricular activities.

Thus, the children discover the history of their culture in an entertaining, motivational and emotional way, getting drenched in caring wisdom from their loved ones, their grandparents.

Third and most important group involved in this workshop, the school children. They will attend, along with the elderly and other people of the village, talks of the speakers and experts involved.



They will cooperate by compiling information on the workshops prepared for this purpose, in the homes of the elderly participants or within their own family they can gather information about the traditions and customs. Coordinated by a participating teacher in the workshop, develop thematic booklets, writing facts, stories, writing down memories, proverbs, sayings and nicknames, collecting recipes, parties, songs, legends ... They will therefore primarily be responsible for collecting all these traditions and popular and transmit to future generations, customs, facilitating their persistence throughout history.

In order to motivate our young participants and encourage their involvement in the workshop of older traditions and customs, the organization will create competitions on some of the topics and texts written, the best redacted texts will be awarded.

The workshop traditions and customs should serve as a space designed for students to express freely and autonomously their cultural concerns, allowing them to propose themes of interest, ask their questions, seek alternatives to the situation and get involved and create a mutual cooperation and respectful work environment

All these activities will be led by school teachers who will have received prior instructions from the organization about; coordination issues, lectures and meetings, excerpted the main ideas, define the field, emphasizing the need to discover and convey certain customs and the structure each session.

An activity like this with similar characteristics has in our opinion two main connotations:

The first is its experiential nature, which makes it not a "trunk of memories" but a school of life. As the largest of the Latin classics, Cicero, said "history is the teacher of life."

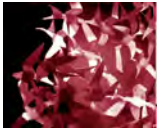
The second is the general and synthesizing nature of their exposure. It is a part of common knowledge what counts, as if they could have the full meaning of all loose particles. It is the people, their culture and reality, integrity and experience which are, in a necessary realization of his work and his life.

It is well known that people make up their collective life with the combination of the past, the present and "the forth coming". Society lives with learned lessons in the book of their history, their experiences are contemporary utopias and dreams that shape its future.

This amalgam of feelings, thoughts and experiences, has more than enough justification to involve generations. Generations ones that have to transmit evoke the previous ways of life traditions, customs, legends, folklore ... Other generations who have to live, to learn, collect and record the roots of the culture to which they belong.

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