

# Basic Discussions about the Study of Education-Work Relationship in Argentina

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**Abstract—** Employee training makes it possible to improve the working and relational practices, and thus, secure social, professional and personal promotion in the framework of the productivity of regional and local economy.

The aim of this article is to provide relevant background to the study of the relationship between education and work, and especially, employee training. Six main discussion points about education and work are recognized in the specialized literature. Although the discussions come mostly from the Argentinean field of study, they are relevant to take into account in all research background on the topic.

**Index Terms—** education and work- training- background - Argentina.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Employee training is related to the processes of modernization, innovation of products and heterogeneity in the field of employment.

On the one hand, and far from the idea of technological determinism, in the recent times there has been a change from an era where the main process to generate value or wealth was the transformation of raw material into products, to an era where knowledge has become a key and distinctive factor which allows transforming consumables into goods and services, and creating new and better products.

On the other hand, it is no longer about characterizing the labor market just between formal and informal workers (registered/ non-registered) [1] since the complexity of the production system presents a variety of forms of organization of the economic activities whose relations are complementary, combined or contradictory [2].

In Argentina, the relationship between training and work is not free from tensions and discussions. In this regard, this article aims to systematize the different contributions to employee training and recognize the discussions on the field of study in question which serve as relevant background to the topic.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study features a descriptive qualitative design whose purpose is to identify the characteristics, properties, dimensions and regularities of the relationship between education and work, labor training and/or work and training market. Documentary analysis is the technique applied to

identify, describe and represent the content of the documents in a way other than the originals', in order to ensure its selective and timely recovery, and facilitate its exchange, diffusion and use. The databases consulted were the following: 1) FLACSO's online catalogs (BIB and REVIS); 2) Memoria Académica: digital repository of magazines, newsletters, theses and audiovisual presentations; 3) e-BIBLIOTECA: access to bibliographic and documentary production in Social Sciences on the Andean region and Latin America in general; 4) EBSCO research databases; mainly: SocINDEX, Professional Development Collection and Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), Portail de revues en sciences humaines et sociales (PERSEE) and Academic Search; 5) JSTOR, SCIELO, Dialnet, Latindex databases; 6) Minutes of conferences on education policies and school management.

For data processing purposes, content analysis was carried out through the categorization, fragmentation and encryption of data. First of all, all contributions to the topic are stated. Secondly, different explanations about the same phenomenon or situation are recognized. And thirdly, contributions from different authors are compared and contrasted.

## III. RESULTS

### *Training Perspectives of Public Policies*

The first discussion responds to *the debate about professional training perspectives that public policies maintain*. The question is whether the configuration of the professional training mainly responds to an educational perspective, a productivity perspective –which have taken place for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century– or a social perspective, originated in the 90's. [3] [4]

The first one recognizes a central role of the educational institutions in the provision of supply, with school certificates which prove knowledge and, eventually, enable the continuity in higher levels of education. Population, depending on the case, access according to an education criteria previously established, or openly.

However, in the productivity perspective, professional training assumes a role in the professional community from the point of view of both the actors in the world of work (unions, companies) and the workers. Population is selected by participation as worker in a given productive sector; in this perspective, certifications are adapted to meet the requirements of demand. There is an attempt to build a bridge between work and productivity needs. The tripartite dialogue (Estate, company, union) is an instrument frequently used to

negotiate this kind of training, close to the labor training itself.

Finally, the social perspective, originated in the 90's with the employment crisis, proposes to compensate a social disadvantage situation and/or aims to greater equity. When it appeared in the employment active policies, the social perspective was oriented to vocational training as a way of contributing to "employability", defined as the ability of a person to get or maintain a job.

*The use of the concepts 'qualifications', 'competences' or 'knowledge'*

A second discussion is about the concepts 'qualifications', 'competences' and 'knowledge' [5] [6], since according to the concept used in the public policies formulation of professional training, some issues are prioritized over others.

The concept of 'knowledge' implies more than the qualifications individuals have or the competences they bring into play in a given job. From the sociology of work, **qualifications** [7] [8] respond to the forms of work management that modern organizations have historically structured from certain connections (at least intended) between hierarchies and knowledge. Qualification approach should take into account the fact that the qualifications presuppose the intertwining of individual, collective, technical, political, spatial dimensions. These dimensions define limits and possible dimensions where actors intertwine and conflict takes place. In the world of work this is translated as power relations between employers and union and the results are revealed in the collective work agreement [8].

On the one hand, the concept of **competence** was first used in the formal education field and labor training, and then spread to work management in companies, understood as the comprehensive set of knowledge, learning, abilities, skills, attitudes and behaviors that individuals bring into play to solve specific problems in work situations which entail certain margins of uncertainty and technical complexity [10] [11] [12].

On the other hand, according to contributions from didactics and psychology of learning, **learning** is made up of three interrelated dimensions [13] [6]. A first dimension refers to *knowledge of reality* (social or natural) which is objectified and constitutes a corpus of learning formally organized in concepts and theories systems. Another dimension refers to the capacity to intervene, *action knowledge*, which is expressed in the opportunities individuals have to transform reality. It is constituted by abilities, skills, and actions. Finally, the third dimension refers to the capacity to face conflict situations where decision-making is required. This learning can be called competences or *situational knowledge* as it is validated by the relevance of the context of intervention.

#### *Coordination and Regulation of Training*

A third discussion or tension is produced by the difficulties of coordination and regulation in the field of knowledge recognition. Knowledge has the distinctive characteristic of

being socially productive [14] since a decisive element for a good training is that the knowledge taught and learnt may be productive for the recipients and the society in the short, medium and long term, recognizing that training practices are a measure of the social culture, scopes, possibilities and perspectives.

In Argentina, the education system has the main role in the issue of certifications which evidence a training experience either in the regular system of formal levels or professional training. Working experiences and other areas of the social life have begun to be considered as source of learning by the education system and/or world of work, taking the form of knowledge recognition or certification of competences. Thus, certifying institutions started to operate working in parallel in different areas (education, work), with different levels of interference (national and provincial) and simultaneously calling the same production and labor actors (unions and entrepreneurs) [5] [15].

#### *Different Approaches to the Relationship Education-work*

The fourth discussion refers to *the different positions on the relationship between education and work* [16] [17] [18] [19]. From one perspective, employment refers to a form of work whose social relations and content have been regulated by a very complex labor legislation which, at the same time, is the result of struggles and negotiations for over more than two centuries between unionized workers and organized entrepreneurs, that with the mediation of the national government, managed to ensure formality in all moments of labor history. It was also formalized the possibility of occupational mobility, promotions and hierarchies among the multiple lines and labor hierarchies (managers, senior technicians, technicians, executives, supervisors, manual workers) sharply pyramidal opened by the wide and complex division of labor in the organization of the company. The aim was not only to respond to the demand expected by the labor sectors but also to anticipate the need of certain kind of human resources, as evidenced in the development of more advanced countries.

But from another perspective, since taking work as reference, it would be necessary to favor the analysis of its comprehensive meaning, from its epistemological basis to its practical applications: incorporate the knowledge of the changes it has suffered throughout history or in different countries, with special reference to the history of specific techniques and technologies that have modified it; analyze the diversity of expressions, ensure the learning of the integral production processes, from supply to product commercialization, of the human relations, the management and the coordination in the collective organization of work, of the personal and collective rights and obligations, of the different world views about the development that employment generates.

#### *The Economic and Social Issues of Employment*

Work is not just what we do, but also who we are given that work forms character and constitutes identity [16] [20] [21] [22].

From an economic point of view, work demands limited to

the ones derived from the employment structures historically consolidated tend to reproduce inequality both in income and living conditions of population. But from a comprehensive point of view, the need for employment responds to multiple needs of an economic, social and cultural development equitable and sustainable, thus demonstrating that employment is just one of the forms of job performance.

In this counterpoint, the decision to compromise worker training beyond the demands of the current employment structures intends that the job offer of qualified workforce would be recognized and recompensed by the economy in terms not only of better income but also better quality and conditions of work. Thus, better living conditions and better working environment are achieved. In other words, quality jobs are those which allow making social, professional and personal promotion compatible with the productivity of national, regional and local economy.

#### *The Conception of Technology at Work*

The sixth discussion is originated between *a professional technical training approach and the command of technological culture*. On the one hand, by means of programs, curriculum, handbooks, and textbooks the education system has strongly contributed to the codification of knowledge needed for modern production and has also spread it to the countries in the region even though in many occasions it was just about copies more or less faithful or more or less adapted from the curriculum of advanced countries and sometimes about indiscriminate import of equipment and materials.

On the other hand, it is acknowledged the interest in finding and building the curricular contents and elements that allow teaching and learning technological culture. In this sense, the aim is to give technological culture the character of a third fundamental cultural element –apart from teaching and learning- equivalent to the transcendental meaning that has been agreed on sciences and humanities throughout the history of education. This third cultural element does not refer to the lineal or mechanical implementation of science to production, as it has traditionally been understood in the educational processes, where learning theory is considered to come first and then comes practical application. As a cultural element, technology implies the science of productive labor and innovation; it rigorously studies the human possibility of identifying problems and solving them by means of the resources society or the particular human group has or even by means of the ones they can design or create.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Why is it important to know the discussions and the points of analysis that have raised around the education-work relationship?

Firstly, it is fundamental to acknowledge that the value of labor training is measured by its relation with society, in broad terms, with the community in which it is located and with the future of the workers. Because of this, it is relevant to know the conceptualizations which best adapt or contribute to educational and labor growth objectives in particular

contexts.

Secondly, the conceptualizations found help to recognize that each approach or each research question about a topic responds to approaches or approximations deliberately thought. Because of this, recognizing the discussions on a subject of study allows not only being aware of the position adopted to address the analysis, but also foreseeing the possible referents of discussion.

Thirdly, the training models that impact on the production system or in the community connect differently the perspectives, knowledge and need of the markets with the tools and social-curricular and pedagogic-didactic strategies that the education field offers. Because of this, the discussions established among the different approaches to the subject do not only serve as basic background for any discussion on the matter, but also contribute to clarify any framework of the public policies of training.

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