

WHAT KIND OF TRAINING? FOR WHAT KIND OF PSYCHOLOGIST?

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Introduction

We will present a theoretical and methodological model of academic psychological training. In our view, the main goal of psychological training is to promote the competence underlying professional know how.

Professional systems base their image on their capacity both to develop the client's own commitment and to manage the demands of society and the representation people have of the role of the psychologist. The degree in Psychology has to be anchored to the profession and its development, to the geographical area and its context, namely to the way this area is culturally and symbolically interpreted (Cfr. Carli & Panicia, 2003), since this interpretation involves constraints and opportunities.

For instance the social representation of psychology in the context of the small town in southern Italy (Lecce) where we work mainly involves the request to intervene in individual cases.

This kind of request is dangerous, for it is not in line with the requirements of the job market, particularly insofar as the intervention is seen within a normative logic (the psychologist has to bridge the gap between what individuals are and what they should be according to social expectations). This kind of representation of Psychology does not help to develop the commitment of schools, social and health services, and other agencies engaged with issues not concerning single individuals.

The acknowledgement of this critical state (from the point of view of employment) goes parallel with the identification of the resources (models and methods of intervention) that Psychology has at its disposal in order to reorganize the professional function in terms of service, that is in order to sustain its users (whoever they are, individuals as well as groups and institutions) to achieve their goals. (Circolo del Cedro, 1991, 1992; Carli & Panicia, 2003; Montesarchio & Venuleo, 2009).

In the present paper, first we will suggest some considerations about the issue of the *product* of psychology and the social expectation people have in regard to psychology; then we will suggest what kind of skills psychologists need to address the social demand concerning their activities (Morozzo della Rocca & Ruggeri, 1997). Last but not least, we will suggest some interpretative and methodological tools and criteria by means of which the psychology degree can work as a professionalizing training.

1. What kind of psychologist do we want to train?

In case of a 1st level degree course in Psychology, we have two choices:

Model A: The 1st level degree has to be aimed at specific professional skills, identified according to specific fields of intervention - for instance, we can define areas (e.g. expert in psychological techniques in school, management, sport, etc.), typology of users (children, adolescents, the elderly, the neurotic, pregnant women and so on), typology of activities (personnel selection, counseling, market survey, organizational analysis, etc)¹.

Model B: The commitment to training experts in technical competences that cut across the fields of intervention (i.e. assessment techniques, observational techniques, qualitative and quantitative data analysis that may be used in the school, in health communities, in firms on individuals, groups and organizations)².

Our hypothesis is related to a third model aimed to develop a methodological competence in conceptualizing in terms of psychological process the different objects underlying the demand for psychology and in steering this request towards the aim. In other words it is a competence anchored to the processes (rather than to the fields), and grounded on a whole set of functions corresponding to the construction of a specific dimension of value (inter alia, Butera, 1991; Norman, 1991), and thus of purpose (development of human resources, guidance to the service, organizational and/or community development; cultural integration processes, net development, government of local systems of community life, political choices about quality of life)

We will try briefly to make it clear why this model might be useful in recognizing strategies for improving social commitment to psychology.

Firstly, we may observe that anchorage to specific problems related to specific contexts (*Model A*), is grounded on the assumption that it is possible to differentiate the psychological processes according to the specific field of commitment. Thus we will find a School Psychology, a Work Psychology, a Sports Psychology and so on. However, as one of the present authors has pointed out (Cfr. Salvatore, 2006), specific fields do not correspond to specific psychological processes (the psychological processes are not specific, but indirect and cross-contextual), but they define the socio-symbolic area within which these processes unfold. For instance, the stereotypic way of thinking doesn't change its organization and functioning according to whether it unfolds in a school or in an organizational context. We can say the same thing for primary process, for semiotic mediation, for causal attribution, and so on.

From a strategic point of view, if we conceive the professional services as a list of activities and/or operations (e.g. test administration, clinical interview, role-playing...) applied to specific problems, we are no longer able to analyze the context in which the student (the future psychologist) will be working. This model is critical in geographical areas where the problems of psychological pertinence concern only traditional fields and where we need to promote social commitment (Salvatore & Potì, 2006).

However, the simple reference to transversal technical competences (*Model B*) would not allow the student to define the techniques (assessment techniques, textual analysis...) in terms of the intervention's specific psychosocial context, which defines the value of the techniques³. We do not have the space to analyze the literature on this point. We will just mention the survey on the image of the profession from the point of view of non-psychologists (Carli & Salvatore, 2001; Guidi, Pasta, Longobardi & Salvatore, 2009). This research shows that the representation of psychology (of its professional function, its tools, its aims...) is strongly linked to the representation of the user's context (system of values, interests, self-interest, social requirements). This global representation organizes the use of professional action and the value deriving from that use.

These results tell us that the construction of the competence supporting the psychologist-client relationship requires a specific model for the understanding and management of the way the socio-symbolic image of the psychological profession is constructed, orienting the request for counseling in a specific context (Cfr. Salvatore & Potì, 2006).

We think that anchorage to a methodological competence might allow us to take these considerations into account. Firstly, this entails the competence to analyze different kinds of request for consultation and different objects within a specific interpretative perspective, and as the need arises, to construct a specific understanding of them related to the social and cultural context, as well as to the aim of the request. Secondly, the process of anchoring to the aim that characterizes methodological competence allows us to recognize in the potential user of a psychological intervention, not a person with specific symptoms/deficit/deficiency, but primarily a "promoter" of developmental projects, in several contexts of daily and social life. So, we can go beyond a "logic of pertinence" (which tends to delimit its objects and its target fields) and apply a "service logic", whose value isn't bound to the result of a specific performance/organizational action (output) but to the value this result can produce depending on the way it is used by the user (outcome).

This change in direction is encouraged by a wide and well-established literature of the last fifty years, that has severely challenged the initial rationalistic faith in the possibility of fixing the outcome of professional action by establishing specific constraints and procedures. This literature has introduced a new and more dialectical vision, according to which the effects of a professional action depend on the relation between the action itself and the shape/direction of the system in which the action unfolds (kind of expectations, culture and interests that models the use of intervention on the part of the user) (inter alia Carli & Paniccia, 2003; Circolo del Cedro, 1992; Hosking, Dachler & Gergen, 1995; Kaneklin & Scaratti, 1998; Montesarchio & Venuleo, 2009; Salvatore & Scotto Di Carlo, 2005; Venza, 2008).

Clinical psychology, community psychology and organizational psychology have pointed out the potentially dangerous effects of a professional action that doesn't consider the interpretative models of the users and doesn't highlight the regulative/mediator power of these models over the intervention.

From this point of view, the first parameter of professional competence is the methodological skill needed to create the organizational and symbolic conditions to allow techniques to unfold and work as a value vector for the user. This is the first (but not the only) condition of a *Theory of Intervention* that can read the organizational, cultural and symbolic specificity of the contexts and obtain from this reading a set of criteria defining orientation and goals (Cfr. Salvatore & Scotto Di Carlo, 2005).

From a strategic point of view, this approach would make the degree course a place to create a professional expert who can move according to an emerging demand and encourage the development of social commitment through policies showing how psychology can help clients to reach their development goals.

2. Which skills do we want encourage?

The professional figure previously outlined involves a training model that gives a central position to the acquisition of *categorical* tools instead of *normative* models. (Guidi & Salvatore, 2006). The basic difference between the two models is the following: the normative models tend to work in an encapsulated way; in other words they are blind to the context, because they focus on screening the correct answer corresponding to the acknowledged type of environment (according to the schema "if... So"). In contrast, categorical tools work globally, making contingent and local interpretations of the context according with the management/development of the relation with it. They are second-order maps, semantic networks organizing the way we think (Salvatore, & Potì, 2006)⁴.

This means passing from a static model of knowledge, grounded on the command/mastery of knowledge (either considered as simple notions or as more complex gnoseological structures) to a model grounded on the methodological power of knowledge, which organizes the experience and supports the orientation to the aim.

The construction of superordinate categorical tools obviously has methodological and operative consequences for the selection of the disciplinary programs, for the form of the training devices, for the goals these devices are aimed to pursue, and for the evaluation criteria which will have to maintain/increase/reward competence in recognizing and/or constructing the context where knowledge is applied.

The Dublin indicators insist on this point when they differentiate the skills that the degree course should promote, as follows:

- *contextual competence relative to the knowledge* – which we interpret in terms of capability to organize in a systematic conceptual schema the baseline notions of the disciplines studied in the degree course (psychological, philosophical, historical, methodological disciplines.....)

- *contextual competence relative to the methods, techniques and instruments* - which we interpret not only as the ability to make systematic use of the main observational and clinical interview procedures as well as psychometric instruments, but also as the ability to interpret theoretical assumptions underlying this kind of instrument, as well as the methodological and operative implications of the results.
- *Autonomy of judgment* – which we see both as the ability to make strategic use of the knowledge gained from the disciplines and as the competence to conceptualize in a psychological key the objects on which the request of the psychologist is motivated (Salvatore, 2006).

We want to make a close examination of this last point, which involves not only a theory of training, but also, and above all, an image of psychology and of its product.

Autonomy of judgment as reflexivity

We will now summarize how the teaching board of the degree course in Science and Psychological techniques of the University of Salento interpreted the concept of *Autonomy of judgment* in the context of the three-year training in Psychology⁵. This training goal is identified first of all as the ability to conceptualize phenomena in a psychological key (Salvatore 2006), that is, to model them with reference to a particular psychological model. In actual fact, if we stop using realistic/referential terms (that is, real world conditions) to consider the experiential data built up in social imagery and underlying the request for psychological intervention, we can see they do not have any autonomous ontological essence (Salvatore & Valsiner, 2006; Salvatore & Venuleo, 2009).

Let us just remember that recognizing the situated, constructive nature of knowledge processes has seriously challenged the idea that a correspondence to the real world should be a guarantee of objectivity and truth (Maturana & Varela). From this point of view, the world cannot be interpreted as something that exists independently from the person observing it: instead it must be considered as “marked” by our interpretative criteria. This requires the development of a reflexive competence, namely the awareness of the historical, cultural and ideological bonds within which knowledge is built up.

The idea that knowledge can be seen as an intersubjective, situated process, rather than a homogeneous, ready-made, unquestionable universe of meanings (Chevillard, 2007), challenges the implicit assumption of the instrumentalist approaches to professional competence. According to instrumentalism, there is only one way to do “the right thing”, and that way can be realized only if the prescribed procedures are followed (D’Cruz, Gillingham & Melendez, 2007). On the contrary, especially as far as professions involving a wide margin of uncertainty and/or unpredictable situations are concerned (Parton & O’Byrne, 2000) - for instance in the field of mental health services (Rolf, 1997) or in clinical-psychology training programs - the idea is gaining ground that the reflexive practitioner must be aware of the assumptions that underlie the way he/she makes sense of practical situations, that is, he/she contributes to define the *what*, the *how* and the *why* of his/her work (Montesarchio & Venuleo, 2006; Sheikh, Milne & Macgregor, 2007; Taylor & White, 2000).

The empirical works investigating the professional culture of psychologists (Bosio, 2004; Palmonari, 1981; Salvatore, 2001) support this point, insofar as they converge on two basic aspects: a) the professional models that shape the way the psychologists organize the intervention are not grounded exclusively on their scientific knowledge and technical skills, but also on their symbolic models or, in other words, on the meaning they give to the professional mission/identity/action; b) these symbolic models have a central role in orienting professional practice, because they work as cognitive meta-models organizing professional goals and the way technical skills have to be used. From this standpoint, the first skill for a psychologist is to be able to identify his/her own language and the models he/she refers to, acknowledging his/her involvement in the process of construction of the shared reality (Smedslund, 1997). On a complementary level, reflexivity is recognizable as the basic element of a theory of professional technique based on a psychodynamic model. This theory identifies the *conditio sine qua non* of professional efficacy as the “suspension of emotional action” (Carli & Paniccchia, 2003) and as the elaboration of the implicit presuppositions. It is not possible to postpone the development of the competences needed to deal with one’s own and someone else’s subjectivity to the time of actual professional experience.

3. Promoting the development of the training commitment

To promote training in professional terms leads to significant consequences for the culture characterizing the relationship between setting and users. We will point out two of them:

- 1) The nearly sacred connection between effort and teaching outcome that supports the mythical pact between teacher and student in the vast majority of training contexts (not only at university) has been invalidated. In other words, we think that effort and hard work are not enough to be successful in training. Our model emphasises an intermediate element – subjectivity – that upsets the traditional ways of conceiving and pursuing training.
- 2) There has been a shift away from a training culture grounded on the task model, on a predetermined pattern of knowledge and on static contents that have to be assimilated. Within the context of professional training, psychology students are increasingly and systematically solicited to get involved in a series of training aspects concerning the link between theory and praxis.

The experience of the STP degree course at the University of Salento

This shift is not so obvious. In fact, the two aspects just mentioned create a structural condition of cultural conflict between training offer and demand.

In the case of the degree course at the University of Salento, in which the authors work, we can outline some elements that we consider circumstantial evidence of this conflict. During the first two years of the degree course (hereafter CDL) - starting from the academic year 2007/2008 - the first-year lessons are attended by approximately 20% of the students for whom attendance was compulsory (approximately 600 students). The integrative activities (workshops, in-depth seminars, summarizing seminars for working students....), that we consider to be basic for the development of the critical and reflexive competence that constitutes an integral part of the target set of competences, are attended by a lower number of students.

b) The criticisms and the reports made by students concern the difficulty of passing the exams, the lack of correlation between the difficulty of the exam and the number of training credits⁶ given to the corresponding subject (as if lower credits should correspond to a lower commitment), and the fact that teachers set questions based on “reasoning”.

On this last point, it is useful to point out that this “reasoning” concerns the process of using information contained in the texts in a new context: the information required of the student during the exam is contained in the textbook, but to be used it must be revised and generalized, that is “freed” from the proposed format. The difficulty of the exams is directly proportional to the level of involvement required of the student. The student is invited to interpret the participation in/use of the training setting in a new manner, very different from what most of the students are used to. The latter consider studying to be an activity based on the acquisition of discrete elements of knowledge, so that the aim and the value of the training are limited to the acquisition of notions that will be assessed and legitimated according to the effort made. However, the link between commitment, study and outcome doesn’t arise from a vacuum. On the contrary, it is the expression of a more general training logic that sees the use of scientific knowledge in terms of application in the teaching-learning process (Salvatore & Poti, 2006).

The professional skill model we took as our training model requires this link to be superceded. Training in Psychology means not only knowing psychology, but above all acquiring a *forma mentis* able to develop critical, reflexive thinking. We therefore have two different points of view about training: while most of the students see the relation between scientific knowledge and its use in terms of application, the training model promoted by the CDL sustains instead that scientific knowledge alone is not enough to regulate the parameters of its implementation. Instead the training process has to be interpreted in a local and contextual key, so it firstly requires the ability to interpret it in its contingent use.

From our point of view the confrontation with the otherness of the students is unavoidable for the CDL. It is unavoidable because the models used by the students are neither bounded, nor fixed according to given roles, nor developed as an act of will. Instead we can say that the role of the student at the beginning of the training course is, by definition, incompetent, hence irresponsible (Cf. Salvatore & Scotto Di Carlo, 2005; Kullasepp, 2006). From this point of view, we are linking the development of the professional training not only to the ability to produce methodological competences, but also to the ability to promote the emergence of a user interested in this kind of competence. Otherwise, if the categories that mediate the learning process are strongly contingent to the context where they emerge, the degree course is not only a passive receptacle/container of the semiotic processes enacted by the students, but also an organizer of these processes (Salvatore, Mossi, Venuleo & Guidi, 2008).

In others words we defined as “*accommodation strategy*” a typology of training that interprets and uses critical events to develop appropriate settings. This strategy can turn the setting into a mediator and a space of contact with otherness (Venuleo, Salvatore, Mossi, et al. 2008).

If we use an accommodation strategy, the socio-symbolic construction of the image and of the meaning of the training is not limited to the mere knowledge of its objects and its functioning parameters, but requires specific training settings to manage – rather than to get rid of – the participation and utilization models espoused by the students.

We are not proposing a specific training device or a specific praxis/activity, but a training model that will produce in the actors a meaningful representation of their “acts-in-the-context”. Generally we can define two kind of methods (Cf. Scotto di Carlo, 2008):

- *organizational devices*: the operations designed to recall and reinforce the strategic and functional content of the positions assumed by the participants. We can include in this sort of device the definition – at the beginning of each degree course – of the training contract with the students (definition of the goals, of the skills that will be assessed and the related evaluation criteria, of the methodological approach); for instance, the way we publicize the exam program is also a specific kind of communication, that performatively transmits/carries a sense, hence a model of training relationship.

- *process devices*: the operations designed on the one hand to provide the CDL with information about the criteria with which the students front up to the training process (e.g., entry survey on the anticipatory images associated to University, student role and professional identity; cf. Salvatore, Mossi, Venuleo & Guidi, 2008) and, on the other hand, to develop reflexive thinking in the students about the cultural position they will assume in dealing with the training path (Cf. Venuleo, Guidi, Mossi, & Salvatore, 2009). This will be on two levels:
 - on a methodological level, dealing with the criteria and the strategies of knowledge and learning, and with the way to interpret and use the competences acquired.
 - on a reflexive level, dealing with the way to represent and to interact with the training context and to envisage the professional context.

We include in the methodological *integrative training devices* (ITD) the workshop on study methods, aimed to develop the training models and strategies used by the students. The workshops – addressed to the freshers and compulsory for the students who have a training debt following the outcome of the entry test – aim to promote a contextual approach to learning and to the value of knowledge, of its objects and goals.

We include, in the reflective *integrative training devices*, activities in which the students express, recognize and revise their (implicit and emotional) images of the student role, university and the profession.

For us this is the specific clinical function of training.....

4. The reframing setting model at University

“I have enrolled in the psychology degree in order to cultivate my personal interest; for me psychology is a science that allows us to understand the secrets of the human mind. It is highly fascinating knowledge and I am ready to study very hard to be a model student. Maybe, one day my loved ones (my family, my friends) will rely on me to be helped to solve their problems. I only want to be able to do it ... It doesn't matter to me whether I'm paid for it...

This excerpt from a bachelor degree student in Psychological Science and Techniques is the answer to our request to write a report on the topic: “what does it mean to be a psychology student?”. This report shows a specific image of training, psychology and student role, generally organized in self-referential models. In fact, this statement highlights that:

- the commitment to academic training is conceived in terms of personal growth;
- psychology is seen as an already made system of knowledge, that one simply has to acquire, independently of any organizational and functional dimensions (for instance, the student imagines being helpful for his loved ones and he doesn't care about payment);
- the student is representing him/herself as a person strongly dependent on someone else's judgements/expectations; in fact he/she hopes to be useful to his/her loved ones (in the future) and to be a model student for his/her teachers (in the present).

In our view, these meanings work as the organizers of the relationship with the objects of the activity system the student is dealing with, on a semiotic and pragmatic level.

Let us look at the passage where being a model student becomes the direct guarantee of a future ability to help others. With this sentence, the student is revealing the strict binomial relationship between his/her personal commitment and the product of the learning process. This will probably involve, for instance: his/her taking part to the lessons, his/her reading all the pages of all the books the teachers recommend to study for an exam, and so forth. However, the same premise will leave out any commitment to: querying him/herself about the usefulness of the lesson; reflecting on the overall significance that holds the different notions together; analyzing the unconscious notion in the light of the historical debate, of the ways it has been deployed over time and in relation to the situated use one could make of that concept in a given clinical conversation.

The meanings that the actors ascribe to the training system are not at all neutral as regards their participation: these meanings organize the use of the training objects, therefore the value that they will assume. From our point of view a specific requirement of the training is therefore to create a space to think about the meanings enacted by the discursive act and by the position taken by the students.

In another work on the educational world, we defined as “reframing setting” (Venuleo, Salvatore, Mossi et al. 2008) a training relational model that can produce thinking about one’s own thinking (about the student’s identity in a specific teaching-learning setting, the professional identity, and so on). The object of the reframing setting is not a set of “declarative representations” (specific knowledge, set of information...) but a set of second order categories that organize these representations. The reframing setting interacts with the (cognitive, emotional, symbolic) bonds produced by the students and, at the same time, promotes their development through a specific methodological choice: these codes are not to be considered as pre-established or foreseeable in themselves, nor predetermined in their value of use.

In the case of professional training in psychology, this requirement is more compulsory. If the meanings fix the way people relate to the social world, psychology is the “science of sense-making”, which analyzes the shapes and the symbolic products that actors use to build up their experience of the world, and also the “science of relating” (Carli, 2006), grounded on the ability to manage shared emotional meanings. This means that – in the case of psychological training – the competence to reflect on one’s own knowledge models is a basic and specific training product (Cf. Carli, Grasso & Panaccia, 2007; Montesarchio & Venuleo, 2009).

Independently of the differences between the specific potential functions, the reflexive devices constitute a setting that helps to learn a way to interpret and perform professional psychology from experience, a way aimed to develop a reflexive position that will work as a basic regulator of the role⁷:

- the trainer doesn’t “talk about Psychology”, instead he performs a psychological function, encouraging a reflexive position on the discursive and behavioural acts the students enact in the here and now of the training. In doing so, he/she suggests that taking part in academic activity is no different from building up the psychological competence the students aim to use in the future.
- The trainer doesn’t aim at revealing hidden objects, or at transmitting any truths or representative contents valid for everyone. Instead, he/she promotes the elaboration of the goals, expectations and meanings that students use to take part in the experience and build up the sense of the activity in which they are involved. In doing so, he/she suggests that the students are fully involved in constructing the meaning of their training experience, then that their subjectivity, their expectations and goals play a primary role in the achievement of the symbolic conditions for their development.

In this way, it is to be hoped that the student learns to consider the university experience as a clinical event: its value and meaning is not predetermined, nor already made, but rather the product of a process that develops within specific setting conditions, regulated by one’s own and other people’s subjectivity.

End notes

The efficacy of a training project is never the direct outcome of an action; rather, it depends on the relation between the action itself and the shape/direction of the (organizational, institutional and cultural) system where the action is carried out. In this sense, testing is a necessary function to orient and regulate the training. The degree course at the University of Salento has activated different testing devices designed not only to analyze the results achieved by single training actions or by the training as a whole, concerning, for instance, the productivity expressed by the students in a certain time, but also in order to produce an organizational-strategic evaluation of the training, that is, an evaluation of utility/pertinence and the meaning it has provided to the students

Some data

The career monitoring system shows us that the students' medium level of productiveness is not to be considered so low: the students enrolled in 2007/2008 acquired 42 CFU by February 2009 (hence by the extraordinary session of the first year course). Furthermore, productiveness, that is the number of credits acquired by the student per each temporal unit, is increasing over time. This seems to be an interesting fact, that could be interpreted as follows: the students are progressively understanding which is the expected standard. On a strategic and theoretical level, this means that a training setting can be conceived as a system where the offer is able to regulate the demand.

The career productiveness of the students who attended the preparatory activity to settle a training debt⁸ is very similar to that of students who began the degree course without a training debt. The productivity of both these groups is higher than that of the students with a training debt assigned but annulled administratively (no debt was assigned to students who are already graduates in other disciplines). Overall this data shows the efficacy of the methodological laboratories, which allowed the students with a debt to fill the gap and to reach a productivity comparable to their colleagues without debts.

The assessment of the symbolic impact of a reflexive device (workshops on the analysis of the demand, activated at the beginning of the first year), shows that the reflexive work on the predictive images about the university, the role of the student and of the profession, allowed the students to modify their idealistic views about Psychology, and therefore to develop a model of client commitment more consistent with the nature of the training context, interpreted as a system of activity regulated by goals (Cf. Venuleo, Guidi, Mossi & Salvatore, 2009).

These results support our choice to pursue professional training in the context of university. This does not mean it is easy.

We need to stress a point.

The theoretical-methodological proposal of university training described above, is the outcome of a lively and stimulating confrontation in the teaching board of the newborn degree course in Psychological Science and Techniques of the University of Salento. As a matter of fact, our teaching board worked on the process of setting up the bachelor degree and elaborated general and shared criteria on what kind of Psychologist we want to shape. This involved not only the sharing of a specific epistemology that organized the definition of each disciplinary program, but also the sharing of management functions, expertise about the context, quality devices and assessment models, which could not have been managed by a single person and were absolutely necessary to guarantee the flexibility and the coherence of the organizational action, allowing interaction between context and client, that is, an intrinsically variable client: internal client (the student) and external client (the local territory where the graduate works).

It's useful to highlight this final point, which from an operative point of view, is the actual premise of the training project described above: whatever the training model taken by a degree course is, considering psychological training (and more in general, academic training) in strategic terms requires the breaking of the autoreferentiality of the single training actions, and the elaboration of specific criteria shared by the teaching staff; criteria that can operate a synthesis between the recognition and optimizing of the plurality of the psychological knowledge and the overcoming of fragmentation. This synthesis must be achieved through the definition of development approaches where different options (methods, theories, epistemological and disciplinary approaches) may find a shared language and a common interpretative key to establish a new dialogue, even when conflictual. The training for the professional psychology needs to be interpreted, managed and pursued as a setting.

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Note

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¹ This kind of model seems to correspond to the training offered in the four 1st level degrees in Science and Psychological Techniques at the University of Padova: Cognitive Psychology and psychobiology - Social and Work Psychology – Psychology of Personality and Interpersonal Relationships - Developmental and Educational Psychology – each organised in several curricula. This is the way the University presents the course in Social and Work Psychology: “the goal of this degree is to train a professional that will be able to understand and to acknowledge *the typical conditions of individual, social and work psychology*. Some examples of these situations are: the wellbeing and improvement of the person, the selection and assessment of personnel, conflict and cooperation problems, psychology of prejudice, communication and marketing, psychosocial tools in public opinion survey, relations with immigrant communities.

² This model seems to correspond to the 2008/2009 training model of CDL in Science and psychological techniques of the Bicocca University of Milano: “the purpose of the 1st level degree in Science and psychological techniques is to provide a general baseline *knowledge about the methods and the contents of the psychological sciences and techniques*, as well as the acquisition of some professional skills needed to operate within the institutions, public and private companies, and organizations”. In this case the five training pathways proposed refer to the main scientific-disciplinary fields - clinical psychology (*course in counseling and mental health*); work psychology (*course in work and organizations*); general psychology (*cognitive applied psychology*); developmental psychology (two courses: *Assessment, support and rehabilitation in the adult and the old man*; *Assessment, support and rehabilitation in the development age*). From this theoretical and technical point of view the development of skills is cross-contextual. For instance, see the skills promoted by the course in Counseling and Mental Health: 1 management of the main theories that allow to understand the psychological processes involved in change and in crisis situations over a lifetime. 2 Acquisition of the observation and assessment techniques allowing in different contexts (family, school, social service, therapeutic community and so on) identify and monitor several aspects (cognitive, emotional and social processes) of the crisis condition over time. 3. Knowledge of the tests that can identify the data needed to assess the ability and skills of the subjects. 4 Ability to participate in prevention programs dealing with distress and psychological pathologies.

³ Consider textual analysis, which has become a useful way of detecting the cultural influence on discourse, in different research and social intervention areas, and the strategic choice made by the speakers in a specific context; the construction of the social reality made by “language in action” in the analysis of the therapeutic process, in the analysis of professional cultures, in research investigating the cultural models that lead to the assessment of customer satisfaction, in the analysis of the communicative devices used in political debates, in the analysis of the image of a city, in studies on behaviors at risk, in projects on social development and citizen improvement. Besides some basic shared criterion, textual analysis is done differently according to the different criteria and interpretative models, and also according to the purpose of the analysis. Let us think to the three different types of logic can drive the textual analysis of interview transcripts: checking the outcomes, monitoring the process, developing a theoretical-methodological scientific corpus improving the professional intervention.

⁴ For instance, the interpretative function is a methodological competence. Developing an interpretative competence means acquiring and using a set of criteria that can orient the hermeneutic activity that unfolds in the contingency of the

intervention setting. This set of criteria is conceivable as a language, therefore provided with a *semantics* (the objects, the interpretative models, the aims), a *syntax* (the rule that on the one hand organizes and on the other hand limits the interpretation) and a *pragmatics* (the parameter referring to the conditions of the relation that have to be considered in the interpretative function). (Salvatore & Poti 2006).

⁵ Cf. Regulation 270 1st level degree in Science and Psychological techniques:
<http://scienzedellaformazione.unile.it/didattica/triennali/stp>

⁶ It is a way used in the Italian University to measure the quantity of time required by a student for the preparation of an exam

⁷ The CDL of the university of Salento has activated:

- workshops of analysis of the demand, that are preparatory to the teaching activities and intended to facilitate the socio-emotional and cognitive elaboration of the integration process for freshers (Carli, 2001, Montesarchio et al., 2003; Salvatore et al. 2008).
- Workshops of training process analysis addressed to the second year students, aimed at reflecting on the process of categorization of the training experience, on the use of the devices activated, therefore on the way of using objects, rules, criteria, training activities, thus developing a capability to intercept developmental and critical contents.

⁸ During the admission phase the students perform a battery of tests designed to identify the symbolic models of foreseeing the role and to analyze the pre-course skill level. Two of the investigation areas are logical thinking and text understanding, and basic English knowledge. The students with low skills in these areas are admitted with a training debt, in the area of Methodology and English respectively.