Integral Systemic Coaching applicability study: Integral Systemic Coaching as an active learning methodology in higher education distance learning (e-learning)

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ABSTRACT

Active learning methods are an alternative for boosting and facilitating distance learning (e-learning) in higher education contexts, where the student, in an active way, reflects upon and comes up with answers to the dilemmas of the contemporary world. However, it is a complex and heterogeneous process, with different methods, tools, and strategies. In this sense, this paper analyzes the Integral Systemic Coaching methodology (CIS) as an active learning option and its suitability for higher education. Analyzing the CIS from the standpoint of active learning theories, this paper proposes an alternative to facilitate teaching in undergraduate courses and disciplines, promoting an integral and systemic development. In its conclusion, this paper defends that the CIS may contribute to a reconfiguration in the roles of professors, students, and higher education institutions.

Index Terms: Distance Learning, Active Learning Methodologies, Integral Systemic Coaching.

I - INTRODUCTION

The purpose of active learning methodologies is to increase student engagement in learning processes, through pedagogical strategies guided by problem solving, hands-on group assignments, cooperative projects, simulations and case studies, which references are based on theoretical schools of teaching/learning processes, subject to analysis and evaluation (1, 2, 3, 4). Active learning methodologies present a new approach for how of mental processes and their meanings are built, comprehended, transformed, and stored, as well as for how cognitive information is used (5). Active learning methodologies are also part of a innovative approach to teaching, both in off-line and on-line contexts, presenting changes on concepts and lines of action, emphasizing students’ transdisciplinary and integral formation (6). However, despite the many successful reports with the application of active learning methodologies in higher education classrooms, it may show limitations depending on the approach used (7, 8). The central issue is to transform information into knowledge, which can occur in many ways, from redefinitions of time, space, and activities in courses and disciplines. In order to do so, active learning methodologies are emphasized as promoters of self-knowledge and dialogue among the participants of this process (9). Active learning methodologies are
highlighted as promoters of transdisciplinarity, entrepreneurship, knowledge, new ideas and thoughts that develop new skills both in personal and work related contexts (10). However, the success of such methodologies does not depend only on the effort to adopt active learning methodologies. It depends on the perception that those involved have about the different ways to teach and learn (11). In this sense, the systemic perspective gains relevance and its proposals become an object to be analyzed for the redefinition of the roles of professors, learners, and institutions. The main issue to be addressed, which is present in global forums, is the necessity for the adoption of a holistic model for teaching and learning, one that is inclusive, diverse, and able to transform lives, prompting responses to the global challenge of sustainable development as proposed by UNESCO in 2016 and OCDE in 2018. Such approaches point to the need for an education that is based on multiple skills and competencies of technical, behavioral, and emotional nature, with a new attitude and new values, able to responsibly reconcile tensions and dilemmas. As an attempt to expand the field of active learning methodologies, especially for distance learning processes, this paper focuses on the applicability of the Integral Systemic Coaching method (CIS), as developed by Paulo Vieira (12). The objective is to evaluate the possibility of the CIS to represent an alternative for higher education institutions that offer on-line options, adapted to the new global contexts, which is dynamic and strongly based on information technology.

II. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

A. Validation

This study takes into account the methodologies that are considered active, that is, the ones based not only on teaching and learning methodologies with implications on the process, but also on the strategies and roles of the ones involved in it. In this context, those methodologies in which professors and learners play diverse roles with constant changes, maintaining the tone of social interactions but adding new variants and norms in the sequence of actions are considered active (13, 14, 15). It is an initial parameter that an applicable active learning methodology in a higher education distance learning context needs to be planned considering all facts (learners, syllabus, and physical context), goals, activities, lesson structure, grading system and contingency plans (Fig. 1). Then, it was considered that an active learning methodology must present methods, techniques and resources, educational technology and teaching strategies in order to facilitate the learning process, considering the focus of the student and tone of the social interaction. It was also considered that techniques and resources can be structured from a range of options such as case studies, group work, directed guidance, problem solving, among others. Because such process involves a dynamic interaction between student and teacher, it must present a methodology that is based on a set rules agreed by both students and professors (16).

![Fig. 1 - Higher education on-line course plan](image)

B. Procedure

The proposed active learning methodology is based on coaching techniques, it is defined as a facilitating learning methodology that must be structured, non-imposing, individual, able to develop multiple competencies and improve performance, and heavily based on problem-solving (17, 18). In a broad context, coaching is considered to be a gateway to transformation with discipline and motivation, considering multiple personal and environmental variables, with different approaches (19, 20). In this sense, the CIS, as developed by Paulo Vieira (21) is an alternative that shows evidences of positive results to its participants, even after relative periods after its conclusion (22). The CIS methodology presents an ecosystem of techniques and solutions based on a synergy among people, companies and the whole society.
III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The emergence of a new proposal to facilitate learning in higher education depends on a number of factors, in which people, their emotions, behaviors, beliefs, values, and life goals represent each a nodal point. People have various forms of knowledge – empirical, rational, and intuitive – which tend to be continually confronted with new information from courses, disciplines, and classes. Humans do not always react positively to new content, it can be observed in the apathy and stress shown by students in traditional teaching environments. This reveals how inefficient are the strategies used by professors and the need for a reconfiguration on the roles of both professors and students. Detachment from traditional models is not simple, due to emotional factors and personal experiences of both professors and students. As a coaching-based approach, the CIS methodology is grounded on references from psychology and neuro-linguistics, as well as from emotional intelligence and abilities such as understanding, managing, and learning about emotions, favoring self-awareness, decision-making, and focus on results, first planned for professors, then for students. Developed from a multidisciplinary approach, the CIS methodology also presents references from other scientific fields, within a holistic human development perspective. The methodology proposed by CIS provides support for self-analysis within a continuous learning process, defining, prioritizing, and achieving goals to promote fulfillment and happiness. Although coaching may be part of a group of active learning methodologies that have the potential to break with traditional higher education practices, the CIS techniques stand out for transforming not only the mind, but the whole individual in its multiple features. On its approach to professors, the CIS builds the foundations for the design of an holistic academic planning, which extends to students and institutional environments. Emphasizing individuality within a systemic perspective, the CIS methodology broadens and relates all areas of life and work, taking thoughts, feelings, and actions into consideration. The focus of the CIS methodology on thoughts, feelings, and actions is justified by the potential that these features have to influence the process of change, transformation, learning. In the CIS methodology, cognitive transformation is not an isolated fact, it is related to emotional dynamics, beliefs, values, and behaviors. Emotional transformation, according to the CIS references, is a determining variable for cognitive processing, especially in adults. Emotional awareness is a unique approach, since a profound understanding of the subconscious dimensions of emotional flows allows for the understanding of the dynamics of human life and cognitive transformation. The transformation intended by the CIS methodology, therefore, reaches psychological, biological, social, and spiritual contexts, establishing connections and interactions between them. The use of the CIS techniques reaches multiple areas to promote emotional and cognitive transformation. Through the Systemic Self-Assessment tool (SSAM) participants can analyze their lives considering the many aspects of their personal (emotions, profession, health, intellect, dedication to assist others), familial (marriage, relatives, children), social, professional, and financial contexts. The results of such evaluation make it possible to set the guidelines of the goals to be achieved with the support of another tool named SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time). Once goals are set, other coaching techniques can be used to establish focus on them, by categorizing them as visionary, behavioral, and consistent. As focus is directly related to the overlapping experiences of the participants in time and space, Focal-Temporal Intelligence techniques make it possible to observe specific facts, bringing forth an analytical perspective for decision making, with multi-dimensional consequences to the participant’s life. The use of techniques based on neuro-sciences promotes balance in potential everyday decision-making, that is, individual actions that influence social interactions and living spaces. Considering the many techniques it presents, the use of the CIS methodology as an active learning methodology allows for the achievement of the first stage on course planning: students can be better understood; professor/student relationship becomes narrower; trust bonds between professors and students are improved; student autonomy is increased or improved. Through CIS techniques, it is also possible to have more clarity about the objectives of the course, breaking with merely cognitive approaches. At the same time, these goals can be aligned with the systemic objectives of the students, taking into consideration the personal, familial, social, professional, and financial aspects of their lives, facilitating the learning process.
The activities to be developed are also built in synergy with the purposes of the students. As the CIS has a set of pedagogical and technological resources, including books, case reports and videos with coaching sessions, activities can be planned and applied with such materials along a discipline, period or undergraduate degree. The work of professors in the classroom, due to this plan, tends to develop a differentiated teaching rhythm, associating cooperation and focus on the achievement of established goals. This occurs as a consequence of the professors’ ability to take on multiple roles, through which they can conduct, advise, and promote emotional and cognitive learning. On the other hand, the students, because of the techniques used can, from their self-analysis, be prepared for change, by being engaged and actively participating in the learning process. This configuration also favors the adoption of inverted learning, since the CIS methodology can help overcome the obstacles that hinder the application of this active learning technique. As for the evaluation process, the CIS methodology also proposes new alternatives, such as the 360° evaluation method, which introduces a new approach to the results of the learning process. Self-assessment, currently not a part of the traditional method, becomes part of the evaluation once students become able to perform it. The CIS, as a facilitating strategy for higher education, is part of the range of active learning methodologies. However, its approach transcends constructivist cognitive approaches usually presented on active learning methodologies. The systemic perspective of the CIS methodology embraces a humanistic approach, representing an alternative for the solution of complex themes in the implementation of active learning methodologies. The systemic perspective of the CIS methodology embraces a humanistic approach, representing an alternative for the solution of complex themes in the implementation of active learning methodologies. The systemic perspective of the CIS methodology embraces a humanistic approach, representing an alternative for the solution of complex themes in the implementation of active learning methodologies.

IV. CONCLUSION

The present time is one of profound transformation in society and education, including on-line higher education.

1 - The CIS methodology as an active learning methodology is an alternative with the potential to promote the integral development of professors. Being prepared to work with the CIS methodology, professors become able to take on different roles in the classroom, assisting students with their learning process through a cognitive and emotional transformation.

2 - As an active learning methodology, the CIS methodology tends to respond to the daily challenges of students, professors, and higher education distance learning (e-learning) institutions that yearn for a model of active learning.

3 - The use of the CIS represents a facilitating and transformative learning approach, promoting personal and professional fulfillment. The evaluation of its results, however, poses a further step, still under construction.

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