PROMOTING CONSCIOUS AND ACTIVE LEARNING AND AGING

HOW TO FACE CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES?

ALBERTINA LIMA OLIVEIRA
(COORD.)

LIFE HISTORIES AND INTERGENERATIONAL KNOWLEDGE TRANSFERENCE: A CASE STUDY AT THE BANK OF THE NORTHEAST CORPORATE UNIVERSITY

Marcos Marinelli[28]**, Luís Alcoforado**[29]**,
Marcos Antônio Martins Lima**[30]

Abstract

This communication aims to present, technically and methodologically, the main results of learning experiences as well as life stories within a program in succession at the Bank of the Northeast Corporate University (UC-BNB).It is structured into four parts:in the first, we make a brief approach to the theoretical framework and its relationship with the corporate education system of the organization analyzed; in the second, we outline the methodology used to write this paper, based on a case study, whose data collection techniques were predominantly based on direct observations, document reviews and interviews with the professionals involved in the development and implementation of the learning experiences; in the third, we describe the learning experiences gathered throughout this case study; and finally, in the fourth part, we analyze the results.The results indicate the contribution of skills, recognized by peers and the institution, and attested to by the accomplishment of 93.3% of program graduates in management positions. Another result refers to a greater contribution of the instructors in the process of training of employees of the Bank of the Northeast of Brazil (BNB), and greater recognition from peers and the institution.

Keywords: Learning Experiences; Life Stories; Corporate Education System; Adult Education; Succession Program.

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[28] Email: marinelli_marcos@hotmail.com; Faculty of Education; Scholarship from CAPES/PDSE.

[29] Email: lalcoforado@fpce.uc.pt; University of Coimbra - Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences.

[30] Email: marcos.a.lima@terra.com.br; Federal University of Ceará.

Introduction

The world of labor is constantly changing, with radical and fast transformations in the political, economic, technological and social fields as well as in personal values. This dynamism of the contemporary world poses new challenges for organizations with regard to the forms of work organization, and new learning needs to deal with the complexity of this world, thus reflecting the set up of new organizational formats and the implementation of new models of management.

In this environment, organizations began to be more attentive to the people who work for them. Their systems of training and development (professional formation) have evolved from a mechanistic approach and a technical-operational work into a holistic and systemic approach, with a strategic and transformative work in the conception, structuring, development, survival and success of the venture.

In the same vein, there is a growing concern among researchers and professionals in education about the adaptation of lifelong education, and here we refer to adults' professional training, to these new demands of society.

From this perspective, there is a need to go beyond the building of knowledge in a Cartesian and positivist view, of technical rationale, and consider the complexity and the inter-relationship between knowledge and skills, which, so far, and in many cases, have been discussed in a linear and fragmented manner.

To meet this new educational paradigm, new learning methods have been incorporated into the practice of adult training, which enable learners to build their own knowledge, face challenges and find solutions, incorporating the attitude of learning to learn in their everyday work (Meister, 1999; Eboli, 2004; Borges-Andrade, Abbad & Mourão, 2006).

It is within this new context that the new learning experiences and life stories are included.

This study addresses learning experiences and life stories as learning practices in the professional training of adults in the program of succession of the corporate university of a Brazilian government institution.

1. Terminological and conceptual considerations

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework, involving terminology and the development of concepts, verifying the systematic formulation of scientific objects and the proposition of rules for interpreting the facts, for specifying and defining the solutions provisionally given that support the corporate education system, the learning experiences and life stories.

1.1. Corporate Education Systems

There are various definitions for training, with different meanings varying according to the identification of authors and its historical evolution.

One can notice a tendency to associate training with a process of acquisition or improvement of knowledge and skills and changes in attitudes, particularly related to the performance of a task or a function. Development, in turn, would be mainly a process aimed at the growth of man, observable in the behavioral change and the expansion of their skills and knowledge in solving new and different situations or problems (Pereira, 2000).

For the purposes of this work, the terms training and development, empowerment, improvement, education, qualification and formation, when applied to the organizational environment, would be included in the terminology systems of corporate education.

The activities of training and development in the organizations have evolved from a mechanistic approach and a technical-operational work into a holistic and systemic approach, with a strategic and transformative work in the conception, structuring, development, survival and success of the venture.

The difference between the corporate university and a traditional training center may be expressed by the following characteristics:(1) proactive attitude; (2) establishment of a centralized philosophy of learning; (3) tailored actions of learning; (4) acting as a business unit; (5) rational use of investment in education; (6) continuing efforts of corporate education;

and (7) relevance given by the organization management to the work carried out (Nisembaum, 1998).

The corporate university is more than a training department; it represents the organization's effort to develop in its employees, customers and partners a set of skills necessary for its success (Gordon, 1995; Meister, 1999; Jarvis, 2001). Its activities are linked directly with the organization's mission and strategies and are structured to cultivate organizational learning and knowledge (Allen, 2002).

With the paradigm shift from training to learning, new learning environments are perceived, structured to be proactive, centralized, specific and strategic, with managers holding an important role in professional training, not only by teaching the concepts applied in their everyday working life, but also trying to adapt their concepts to the reality of the participants.

In this perspective, life stories emerge as an approach applied in the systems of corporate education based on life experiences, assisting in the professional orientation and training of adults, through tacit knowledge or experiences as well as the revelation of the learning built throughout life.

1.2. Learning Experiences and Life Stories

In the mid-1980s, Pierre Dominicé, Mathias Finger and Christine Josso envisioned "a new theoretical horizon in the field of adult education for an approach to training focused on the subject-learner, using the mediation of a research-training methodology linked with life stories" (Josso, 1999, p. 14).

The life story approach is a fertile and suitable strategy to broaden the understanding of the educational world and the everyday cultural practices of the subjects in the training process (Souza, 2006). "Life stories are part of the current movement that seeks to rethink the issues of training, emphasizing the idea that no one teaches anyone and that training is inevitably a process of reflection on the walks of life" (Nóvoa, 1988, p. 116).

Souza (2006, p. 27) states that the use of the terminology life story:

> corresponds to a generic designation under formation and investigation, since it turns out to be relevant to the self-understanding of who we are, of the learning we build throughout life, of our experiences and of a process of self-knowledge and the meanings we attach to the different phenomena that mobilize and weave our individual and collective life.

Reflective thought, the knowledge of experience, self-awareness and self-reflection are components in the personal accounts of life stories (Souza, 2006).

The alternative of life stories enables a revaluation of the notion of experience, since it is not used as a way to facilitate the transmission of knowledge, but as a means of emphasizing the way in which knowledge is forged in concrete situations, how it is built through action or how it develops in the existential events (Dominicé, 1990, p. 8).

When we talk about the understanding built on the story of life, either as an oral or a written report, collected by means of interviews or case studies, we consider it within the perspective of uncovering or reconstructing professional experiences lived by individuals in different contexts in the organization.

Corporate education and training practices have been, in the Brazilian case, key instruments in which life stories are present as well as the work with training narratives and case studies and the incorporation of individuals' experiences.

The relationship between life stories of experienced professionals and personal reflexivity has become more connected because it produces a new perspective on the continuing education of the professionals, especially those beginning their careers.

Thus, the concepts proposed by Schön (1983) – of reflection-in-action, about action and about the reflection in action – cease to be slogans and are now considered to be strategies that enable the linkage between theory and practice.

Schön (1983) suggests a professional training based on the enhancement of educational practice as a moment to build knowledge through reflection, analysis and questioning, and to recognize tacit knowledge, which is present in the solution found by the professionals during the action.

Based on the literature, some practices can be exemplified, composing a set of strategies that enhance reflection and can be integrated into professional training practices. Table 4, below, illustrates some of these practices at the individual and group level (Reis, Silva & Eboli, 2010).

Table 4: Practices and Strategies that Enhance Reflection.

AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL	*AUTHORS*
Personal reflective practices, with greater or lesser degree of structuring - reflection in action and post action.	Schön (1983, 2000); Boud (1994).
Reflective practice in programs in the classroom.	Hedberg (2009)
Self-assessment exercises.	Bouldand Knights (1996).
Learning partners:colleagues from whom feedback may be obtained or with whom specific aspects of the practice may be discussed.	Bould and Knights (1996).
Feedback processes.	Brockbank and McGill (2006); Reis (2007)
Reflective dialogue with individual coaching.	Jackson (2004); Reis (2007).
AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL / GROUP LEVEL	*AUTHORS*
Reflective practice in programs in the classroom.	Hedberg (2009)
Use of structured experiences and the learning cycle.	Kolb (1994).
Reflection from the sharing of personal accounts and stories.	Tyler (2009).
Reflection from the analysis of critical incidents.	Moon (1999); Jolly andRaccliffe (2000a, 2000b); Verdonshot (2006).
Reflective coaching in group emphasizing questioning and critical reflection.	Reis (2007); Mulec and Roth (2005).
Practice communities.	Lave (2009); Woerkon; Nijhof andNieuwenhuis (2002); Hoyrup (2004); Verdonshot (2006).
Learning from mistakes.	Lave (2009); Woerkon; Nijhof andNieuwenhuis (2002); Hoyrup (2004); Verdonshot (2006).
Sharing of experiences.	Lave (2009); Woerkon; Nijhof andNieuwenhuis (2002); Hoyrup (2004); Verdonshot (2006).

Source: Adapted from Reis, Silva and Eboli (2010, pp. 413-414).

The importance of a practice-based reflection constitutes a way of gaining knowledge in action, building it from a context of interaction (Antonello & Godoy, 2009).

According to Galvão (2005, p. 331):

> [...] life stories reveal tacit knowledge, which is important to be understood; they take place in a meaningful context; they appeal to the tradition of storytelling, which gives structure to the expression; there is usually a moral lesson to be learned; they give voice to criticism in a socially acceptable way; they reflect the lack of separation between thought and action in the act of telling, in the dialogue between the narrator and the audience.

The educational environment should, as a place of continuing education, provide moments of exchanges of experiences, including the stories of "mature" professionals, distinguished by the knowledge gained in the course of their career.

In this perspective, our goal is to present, from the life story approach, the experience of the Program of Training and Succession at the Bank of the Northeast Corporate University.

2. Research methodology

The current scientific methodology in the organizational field indicates the case study as a technique that may allow for further analysis and visualization of theoretical concepts. Triviños (1987, p. 45) defines case study as "a research category whose object is a deeply analyzed unit".

The case study technique is indicated when the interest is in the process, context and findings (Merriam, 1988; Gil, 1991; Yin, 2001).

Case studies can be divided into categories based on the intent of the study. This study is described as descriptive, since the data were collected from diagnosis and reports from the organizational project and describes the results of learning experiences and life stories within the program of succession at the Bank of the Northeast Corporate University (Merriam, 1998).

The techniques of data collection applied to the case study were "in situ" observations, direct observation, document analysis, and interview

with the professionals involved in the development and implementation of the object of study.

2.1 History and Profile of the Company of the Case Study

The Bank of the Northeast of Brazil is a semi-public corporation whose mission is to promote the development of the Northeast region of Brazil, mainly through the contribution of financial resources for public and private investments needed to overcome several challenges, including the inadequate income distribution profile, the low level of education of the population, the limitations of global infrastructure, climate instability, the limited entrepreneurial skills and the disentanglement of regional policies (Banco do Nordeste do Brasil S.A., 2011).

Founded in July, 1952, the BNB currently has a network of 185 branches covering the Northeast Brazil, north of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo, as well as the capitals of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and Brasília. Its area of operations involves 1,989 municipalities and it had 6,049 employees, on June 30, 2011 (Banco do Nordeste do Brasil S.A., 2011).

The BNB ranked 13th among the largest banks in Brazil in volume of investments, having invested R$ 23.8 billion in 2010 (Banco do Nordeste do Brasil S.A., 2011).

2.1.1 The Bank of the Northeast Corporate University

The project to create the Bank of the Northeast Corporate University started in 2008 and aimed to focus its education efforts on diversifying the portfolio of programs, the expansion of opportunities and a conception of learning aligned to business and core competences, guided by a well-defined mission, vision and guidelines.

The BNB Corporate University has adopted an educational model whose objective is to guide employees, facilitators, internal customers and partners about the principles governing the activities of the Bank of the Northeast concerning the view of learning, the development of

people and the teaching approach required to achieve the programs objectives.

This model is aimed at developing skills, from an andragogical perspective, in which the learners exercise autonomy and critical thinking.

The concept of andragogy is based on the etymology, anner, man, agogus, educate. Andragogy is a teaching for adults which seeks to promote learning through experience, stimulating and transforming the content, promoting assimilation. According to Jiménez Ortiz, the concept of Andragogy is a neologism proposed by UNESCO to replace the word pedagogy, to designate the science of the education of men, so there is no confusion with the education of children, and it is a continuing education (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2009; LABSSJ, 2009).

The configuration of the Bank of the Northeast Corporate University is represented in figure 21, below.
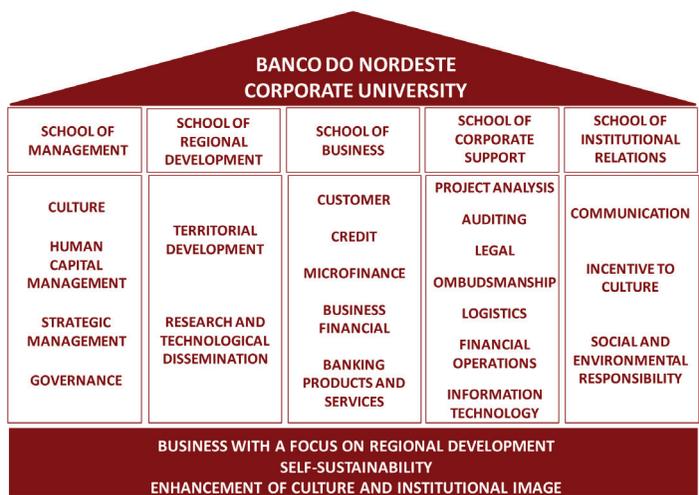
BANCO DO NORDESTE CORPORATE UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT	SCHOOL OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT	SCHOOL OF BUSINESS	SCHOOL OF CORPORATE SUPPORT	SCHOOL OF INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS
CULTURE HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GOVERNANCE	TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGICAL DISSEMINATION	CUSTOMER CREDIT MICROFINANCE BUSINESS FINANCIAL BANKING PRODUCTS AND SERVICES	PROJECT ANALYSIS AUDITING LEGAL OMBUDSMANSHIP LOGISTICS FINANCIAL OPERATIONS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	COMMUNICATION INCENTIVE TO CULTURE SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

BUSINESS WITH A FOCUS ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
SELF-SUSTAINABILITY
ENHANCEMENT OF CULTURE AND INSTITUTIONAL IMAGE

Figure 21: Configuration of the Bank of the Corporate University.
Source: Banco do Nordeste do Brasil S.A. (2010).

As one can see in figure 21 above, the configuration of the Bank of the Northeast Corporate University includes five schools, responsible for the homogeneity of the learning issues, distributed into training pillars. These schools are intended to provide learning solutions in the various areas of the organization.

The andragogical approach, defined bythe BNB Corporate University, has a theoretical basis similar to Pedagogy with regard to the object of study (man) and purpose (education). The differences are in the methodological differences established according to the stages of life of the individual in learning situations.

The main differences between the pedagogical and the andragogical models are summarized in Table 5, as follows:

Table 5: *Differences between the Pedagogical and Andragogical Models.*

Principles	Pedagogical Model	Andragogical Model
The need to know	Students need to know just what the teacher teaches.There is no need to know how to apply the learning to their life.	Students need to know the learning objective and what they will gain in the process.
The learner's self-concept.	Teacher dependent personality.	Learners are adults, and as such, responsible for their decisions and life, presenting the need to be seen and treated by others as capable of self-managing.
The role of experience	Learner's experience is of little use. The teacher's experience prevails.	It differs from children and young people for the bulk of their experiences, which are the basis of their learning.The techniques that take advantage of this range of individual differences will be more effective.
Readiness to learn	The willingness to learn what the teacher teaches is related to progression at school.	The willingness to learn is greater when they understand its usefulness and the learning is related to real situations of their daily lives.
Learning Orientation	Learning centered on context, rather than on the issues and problems of the learners' daily life.	Learning contextualized for some application or use.
Motivation	Learning is motivated by external factors, such as the assessment of parents and teachers as well as school ratings.	Motivation for adult learning is more internal than external: self-esteem, satisfaction, life quality, among others.

Source: Adapted from Knowles (1986, pp. 52-61).

For Kolb (1984), the creator of the Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), learning is a process in which knowledge arises from the transformation of experience and is based on six assumptions: (1) learning is a process, not a result; (2) learning derives from experience; (3) learning requires individual to resolve opposing demands dialectically; (4) learning is holistic and integrative; (5) learning requires interaction between people and environment; and (6) learning results in knowledge creation.

In such a process, adults learn by recognizing and articulating the response to a set of personal and environmental demands, through the interaction between actions of acquisition and processing of knowledge.

The ELT integrates different theories of knowledge in a formal model of learning. In general, four approaches are generally dealt with when learning is discussed: (1) action, which emphasizes the behavioral changes that occur in adults when they are dedicated to solving problems. It is an essentially rational, linear, deterministic and quantitative approach: (2) cognition, which emphasizes the intra- and interpersonal transformations that occur in adults and between adults. It is an approach that aims to help them interpret their environment and work with group processes, such as memory, perception, mental models, schemas and representations; (3) reflection, which focuses on the process of self-discovery and questioning which leads adults to develop a broad view of practice. Reflection enables them to uncover phenomena of politics and power and often has goals of emancipation, to seek in development a means to develop better organizations, a better society, a better world, through the release of deeply ingrained social assumptions. It is the approach that most closely matches with the critical pedagogy; and (4) experience, which focuses on how adults acquire and transform new experiences and how these experiences lead to more satisfaction, motivation and development. It is an essentially personal approach which values the learner as an individual.

For the Bank of the Northeast Corporate University, this andragogical approach is based on the permanent association between theory (perspectives, models, methods and tools) and the organizational reality (Kolb, 1984; Knowles, 1986).

To do so, it involves five main focuses: (1) To know the reality of the BNB – to open programs with lectures on the Bank's practices by its executives; encourage socialization and exchange of experiences; and foster thought and debate; (2) sensitize and stimulate – to present new perspectives and models; create tensions between the different approaches in the programs in lectures and discussion forums; and encourage critical reflection; (3) provide training – explore the logic of the schools and of the training pillars of the UC-BNB; build knowledge based on the

experience of the participants; and present methods and tools appropriate to the reality of the Bank; (4) apply to reality – use the participants' experiences; encourage dynamic thinking and practical application, with emphasis on projects associated with the programs; and associate the reflections and work of the UC-BNB to existing events at the Bank; and (5) consolidate knowledge – reflect on the action; stimulate cycles of improvement and change, from the assessment of the application of the acquired knowledge to the reality of the BNB.

The andragogical approach proposed by the BNB Corporate University makes use of what Knowles (1980, 1986, 1990, 1996) called the andragogical cycle.

The andragogical cycle is a process in which the learning facilitator and the subject who engage in it begin to build an environment of empathy, acceptance, understanding and help, managing and developing together throughout the course of the acquisitions, extending this partnership to the judgment on the adequacy of the learning to individual needs and to a possible amendment or new diagnosis of needs (Alcoforado, 2008, p. 96).

The andragogical model of the BNB Corporate University is based on the following principles:(a) the need to know: adults need to know why they need to learn something and what they will gain in the process; (b) the learner's self-concept: adults are responsible for their decisions and life, therefore they want to be seen and treated by others as capable of self-managing: (c) the role of experiences: for the adult, their experiences are the basis of their learning. The techniques that take advantage of this range of individual differences will be more effective; (d) readiness to learn: the adult is willing to learn when the occasion demands some kind of learning related to real situations of their daily life; (e) learning orientation: the adult learns better when the concepts presented are contextualized to some kind of application and usefulness; and (f) motivation: adults are more motivated to learn for intrinsic values: self--esteem, quality of life and development (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2009, p. 159).

3. The challenge of management training at the BNB - the program of training and succession

From a diagnosis made by the human resources area of the BNB in 2006, it was found that 31% of the staff were expected to retire by the year 2010, and that most of them occupied key positions at the BNB.

This fact was explained by the absence of entry of new employees between 1991 and 2003, creating a gap in the natural succession of the organization (53% of the employees had been working for the Bank for less than 5 years (Banco do Nordeste do Brasil S.A., 2007).

In this sense, in 2007, the Program of Training and Succession was initiated in order to prepare new leaders, by developing their skills regarding management, concepts and theories, and enabling them to perform their duties aligned with the challenges of the Institution.

In addition to the above general objective, the Program of Training and Succession had the following specific objectives: (1) assess the situation of the BNB in relation to the expectations of retirement and to the natural succession of existing skills; (2) encourage and guide employees to develop their career; (3) introduce training programs to develop the necessary skills for the BNB; (4) equip the BNB, in a qualified way, with a database of potential successors able to meet the future demands, prioritizing functions considered to be strategic and more complex; and (5) suggest and implement short, medium and long-term actions, in order to minimize the impacts that a process of succession may cause in the BNB.

To serve the specific target audience (technicians with an identified potential; substitutes for management positions; and new managers) and, considering the large number of employees to be trained, approximately 1,317 participants, as well as the operational capacity of the Bank of the Northeast Corporate University to implement the actions, the distribution of this amount over three years was defined: 30% in 2008; 30% in 2009; and 40% in 2010. Thus, new employees were nominated for training every year, reaching the entire contingent of potential successors.

The Program of Training and Succession of the Bank of the Northeast consisted of three stages: (1) Conception and Modeling; (2) Preparation

for Implementation; and (3) Implementation and Support (Banco do Nordeste do Brasil S.A., 2007). Stages 1 and 2 were undertaken in 2007, and stage 3 over the years 2008 to 2010. The work was facilitated internally by employees who were components of a strategic project and was completed in late 2010, being incorporated into the work processes of the Bank of the Northeast Corporate University.

3.1 The program curricular structure

The Program of Training and Succession of the Bank of the Northeast had several methodological approaches employed in various forms of training: classroom-based, at the BNB and at partners' premises (conventional, in-service, experiential and outdoors), distance (intranet, internet and videoconference), and blended (classroom-based and distance) (Figure 22).

It also included the conduction of psychological tests in order to assist the program participants to know their strengths and needs for improvement in relation to what was expected from them, regarding the new roles they would play, as well as to enable the organization to know the specific needs of each of the participants and groups of managers involved in the program; there is also the use of coaching (individual and group) by more experienced professionals, as well as providing communities of practice for the exchange of experiences and interaction between the participants of the program.

Figure 22: Methodological approaches.
Source: Banco do Nordeste do Brasil S.A. (2010).

Despite the range of approaches, one of the concerns of the Bank of the Northeast Corporate University staff and managers referred to the limited experience of learners, and as a way to address this shortcoming, they focused on tacit knowledge, taking advantage of the exchange of experiences between learners, of the interaction between them, but mainly of the contact with more experienced professionals.

Thus, they sought to identify the most experienced professionals who had recognized expertise on issues and areas to be taught, with the ability to mediate learning facilitation processes, establishing a partnership with them and a process of training/updating in andragogical practices so that they would become the instructors and facilitators of the new manager training process. These professionals, with the help of the technical staff of the Corporate University as well as professionals hired in the market, reshaped the content, adapting and suggesting new methodologies that would provide interaction, experiencing and exchanges of experiences, bringing their competences, recognized by peers and the institution, notably through case studies, as well as the narration of facts of everyday life (life stories) that could help learners to build knowledge in action, from a context of interaction.

4. Analysis and submission of the results

The participants of the Program of Training and Succession of the Bank of the Northeast were eligible to occupy various management positions at the BNB if they participated successfully in all the events planned in the program grid, as well as meeting the requirements of succession contained in Table 6 below:

Table 6: *Succession Requirements Program of Training and Succession*

FUNCTION/LEVEL	REQUIREMENTS
Unit Manager	• Minimum of three years of effective work for the Bank; • An undergraduate degree, authorized/recognized by the Ministry of Education, with a certificate; • Participation, with a passing result, in training events for managers of at least 160 hours. • Certification in management skills to the level.
Intermediate Manager	• Minimum of two years of effective work for the Bank; • Complete Secondary School, with a certificate; • Participation, with a passing result, in training events for managers of at least 120 hours. • Certification in management skills to the level.
First level of management (management support)	• Minimum of two years of effective work for the Bank; • Complete Secondary School, with a certificate; • Participation, with a passing result, in technical and management events in the area of activity ofat least 40 hours. • Certification in management skills to the level.

Source: Banco do Nordeste do Brasil S.A. (2007).

One indicator that attests to the good performance of the Program of Training and Succession is the percentage of participants who officially achieved management positions: among the 1,317 members of the staff who were trained, 1,229, that is, 93.3% of the total officially became managers.

Another way to illustrate the results may be the testimonies of participants and instructors, such as the following examples (Banco do Nordeste do Brasil S.A., 2009):

Participants' testimonies:

For a participant from the Santa Inês branch in Maranhão, the Program of Training and Succession works with a dynamic that allows a great exchange of ideas, enabling the development of the methodologies and techniques to be applied in their own branches, and the development of professional skills: teamwork, problem solving, systemic view and human capital management.

A phrase often repeated in the organizational environment is the one that says that the main asset of a company is its staff. With the Program of Training and Succession, the Bank of the Northeast shows that this phrase is not just a buzzword, but a commandment. In our view, this Program fielded the best and most experienced instructors, who master-

fully facilitated the processes of learning and exchanging of experiences, forming a cadre of leaders lined up to perform management functions at the BNB (Participant from Petrolina-PE).

For a participant from a branch from Tianguá-Ce, the program gives the opportunity for new employees to interact with new as well as with more experienced ones, and get to know the regional problems and local solutions that are presented in the various branches of the training participants, enabling the exchange of experiences and good working practices.

We know how important the operational area of our branches is and this program is to meet our daily needs. I am living a moment of great expectations, given the responsibility that is already felt with the participation in the various courses and the opportunity to learn with more experienced colleagues in the positions that we will occupy. I am fully convinced that the return is guaranteed (Participant from Barra do Corda-MA).

Instructors' testimony:

For an instructor from Montes Claros-MG, in the current approach of the Program of Training and Succession, the participants have the opportunity to experience the best practices of the work units' everyday life, through the transfer of successful experiences, either through case studies, or by life stories. It is noticed that the new employees are really willing to learn how to do it, and how to do it well. Thus, the program has contributed a lot because, after its completion, the employee shall have a complete picture of the processes in the work units.

These testimonies attest the importance of the Program as a tool for motivation, encouragement and guidance to new employees in developing their careers, creating also a culture of self-teaching in the participants.

Another result perceived concerns the instructors, who now have a greater contribution in the process of training of the BNB employees, and, as a consequence, are more recognized by peers and the institution, either through feedback from the assessments on the occasion of the events, or through formal recognitions running internally in the institution, as well as additional remuneration and promotions (since teaching was incorporated as a differentiating factor in the promotion process).

For the experience of the Program of Training and Succession of the Bank of the Northeast to be successful, some factors were of paramount importance:(1) the sponsorship of the board of directors of the Bank of the Northeast; (2) the availability of funds for the realization of the project; (3) the implementation of a communication plan throughout the project; (4) project management with monitoring and evaluation throughout the implementation schedule; (5) and the involvement of the several areas of the Bank of the Northeast.

5. Conclusion

This study presented, as a guideline, the desire to clarify the theories surrounding the use of life stories as an educational approach, used in adult professional training, and its implementation at a Brazilian government organization.

Corporate education, when constituted of a strategic basis, can give intentionality to the knowledge generated in the organization, indicating the institution to rescue this knowledge and learn how to explore it in order to generate more economic value for the organization itself and social value for the employees and partners, ensuring a trajectory of development for both the organization and participants (Dutra, 2002).

In the field of adult education, which is consolidating and expanding in Brazil, it is clear that learning experiences and life stories have established themselves, notably because of the diversity of uses as well as the unique ways they are used in the academic and professional circles.

However, as a practice of adult education, we stress the need for further studies in this field, aiming to consolidate it as an educational practice.

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