


Details are Important

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Abstract

Transdisciplinarity is important because dialectics and interactions change the conclusions we reach and the way we reach them. We cannot forget that the details are important and are reflected both in the whole and in the parts.

Details are Important

In our mother tongue, Portuguese, we do not distinguish between “história” and “histórias” as we do in English, with “history” and “stories.” Which, beyond the connotations, will certainly have meanings. Details are important. Let’s tell a few stories to try to draw some conclusions:

A. One day we’ve witnessed the statement of a university professor of anatomy that his area of study was practically finished and there was little to investigate. And the ensuing debate in which the least severe thing he heard was being called ignorant by some colleagues. Today it seems that in this area of study, among other things, the number of organs in the human body is discussed.

- a) We’re told we have about eighty organs, so there’s doubts!
- b) And more than six hundred and fifty striated skeletal muscles that move bones and tendons that allow Man to move!
- c) And if it is already difficult to know how many organs and muscles there are and describe them, it is still another, much more complex task to try to understand:
 - i. What functions they perform.
 - ii. How they act and articulate in order to obtain the necessary and possible precision.
 - iii. What costs-energetic, nervous, etc. has to be paid.
 - iv. What strategies can be developed for human movements to be performed.
 - v. So that its performance can be improved and we can gain efficiency.

B. Among many other questions that we would like to see answered so that we can manage human movement in the different situations we go through and the ways in which we can implement it and gain efficiency, within what limits and with what direct and collateral effect?

C. Sport, our base area of study and research, instead of “opening” Man to see what is going on inside, seeks to interpret the phenomena that are happening, even inside Man, through the effects obtained. It’s like Schrodinger’s cat, it can be alive or dead inside the black box we don’t have access to, according to the information we use and the interpretation we make.

Note: Once, at a congress in Rennes (France), we witnessed a surgical intervention on the “knee” of a sheep to reinforce the joint. We had to close our eyes to keep from passing out. It wasn’t only the blood or the work of the scalpel that impressed us, but the use of a drill and drive in screws and saws. It looked like a “rough carpenters’ job.” And what shocked us even more was the immobility of the anesthetized sheep (fortunately it was) and without any defense (reminiscences of similar situations we went through in the operating room?). Connections are made and details are important.

D. An important factor in sport is the relationship between: The performance we have and the results achieved/the resulting effects and the transformations the sportsman undergoes (positive or negative) as a result of this performance.

E. The intentionality and efficiency of training certainly depend on mastering this knowledge, which is possible to obtain if we manage to escape the certainties of complete and finished knowledge (and not because of fantasies in which former practitioners are hooked - practice does not mean a reflection on functionality therefore they have learned about this even less than the mentioned anatomy professor; they developed muscles without knowing what they are and how many there are, and even less – what they are for and how they are for; but, naturally, some of them, learned how to use them. How? That’s another story.

F. Gains (or better the relation gains/costs, which facilitates the identification of the existing dialectics and the resulting dynamics), even if very small in the short term, when maintained (by a management controlled by knowledge, so that it does not resort to mere manifestations of an always random luck), in a sustained way, translates, inexorably, into differences that have great meanings.

G. The methodologies followed (for which we must be aware that there are methodologies and ways of structuring the processes we seek to develop) have consequences on the gains that can be obtained (and on the direct or collateral costs) that result. And the resulting costs, which we will, of course, subtract from earnings.

H. Sport is a definition and assessment of the efficiency obtained (unless the difference between the “structures” of the sportsmen is not true as it is easily concluded from competitions in which the quantification of the results are easier to obtain-for example, in a 100 meter race “doing” 9.9 seconds is excellent, 10.8 seconds is a mediocre mark, therefore about 10% difference, in such a significant way that it can result in the possibility of distinguishing the “champions”-even champions at the local level), since with similar resources the results obtained should be similar, unless the use of available resources promotes diversity.

I. Another analysis that we can make of the sport process (and some do) is that what is important is to have more means, more resources (more strength, more resistance, more effort, ...), in a vision of the world in which the sense of functionality is based on a more/less relationship, that is – having. But maintaining a position

of sustainable competitive dominance can hardly be obtained this way (although occasional random situations can happen due to “luck”). But sport, when developed and properly structured, is not a “game of chance” (even if bad luck/fortune can occasionally happen and influence results).

J. Sport will, therefore, be a search for efficiency, in which functionality is based on a search for “better” - that is “to be,” as becomes clear in an analysis of the sustained investment/result ratio.

K. Now, if we think that sport is a search for efficiency, it might be possible to transfer what can be learned in this field and the lessons that result from it.

Note: A mechanistic view that is the consequent corollary of the use of a methodology that aims to “locate” the origin of the phenomena (in the central nervous system, namely), just as the use of screws and other mechanical means in the articulation of the mentioned sheep, result of a cause/effect relationship (a dialectic where sometimes the starting point is difficult to identify, but where the relationship is clear) between tools such as the “drill and saw” that are similar (or the same) to those used in carpentry. Knowing how to interpret the relationship between the results and the means employed is relevant to understand the potential that an investigation offers and also the obstacles and difficulties that are inherent to it.

The resources (human, financial, laboratorial, technological, etc.) are available, the means exist, the interest and the gains that can be obtained in this way are evident. Everything would make one think that the exploration of this world of knowledge would be natural and should even be encouraged and that the motivations would lead to a way to go that would not have major obstacles. However, the structures, from the elaboration of interesting questions for objective investigation, to the distribution of the product (the means of publication and dissemination, its publicity, paper or computer supports, the relationship with readers/viewers/listeners/viewers, etc.), have blockages that come from past times and conditions that have not yet been overcome and that everyone (really everyone), even those who can benefit (everybody, because the fluidity of knowledge benefits everybody-at least by recognizing the errors committed and so being able to correct them) from them, most of the time ignore.

From those times and conditions, circumstances remained, that are today vices. But which were structural advantages that fostered and supported development and allowed us to be where we are now. It is the result of the problems not being seen in their entirety (as possible with the existing skills and knowledge, obviously) and having been addressed in some specific aspects, without seeking a vision of the whole and of the dialectics and mutual influences that are established. This led to adjustments on a case-by-case basis and not the search for the implementation of viable and functional solutions ... under current (and future) conditions. We give some examples of images that allow to visualize this error (an error;

perhaps even just one error, made in many fields, but, by system, repeated):

a) The positivists (logical empiricism-that is, the exercise of empirical processes in a better organized way), in order to gain in rigor and escape speculative forms, forgot that everything (really everything) is supported and depends on the starting axioms and postulates. They sought precision in the ignorance of the rest of the world and details are important.

b) Research, in order not to take risks, sought to evolve by taking very small steps, creating increasingly narrow areas of expertise, until reaching the situation described in the well-known expression “knowing more and more about less and less, until you know everything about nothing” and details are important.

c) Scientific research, to escape the verbiage of those who know everything and talk about everything, created ways of selecting valid knowledge and separating it from dogmas and “venerable certainties,” looking for ways of evaluating and guaranteeing what was produced. And details are important.

d) The universities to defend themselves forgot to assume the responsibility of defining their politics (of education, of research, of investigating, ...) and depend on the evaluations of someone else and details are important.

But it was not only in the context of knowledge and its structures that the error pointed out was committed. See:

i. How cities, in order to escape anarchic growth, created rules and regulations that today block the appearance of more adapted and more functional solutions (in traffic, housing, transport, commercial typologies, ...) and details are important.

ii. How urban transport, depend on the types of housing that are allowed, forcing people to travel long distances in their daily lives to fulfill their plans and details are important.

iii. How housing typologies still seek to respond to needs that we no longer have in terms of access to shops, work areas, leisure centers “educational establishments” (?), social spaces, and details are important.

iv. How learning spaces still depend on dependent “educational establishments” and a state structure, called a Department or a Ministry (depending on the country – but country and not an organization that launches organizational structures of all the staff involved in the process) ... of education and details are important.

v. How commercial typologies still separate structures dedicated to products with specificities that some (other than consumers) intend (with a paternalistic-or maternalistic?-attitude towards consumers) that are particular and details are important.

There is a whole world, admirable (not to be confused with the “Brave New World” thought in the conditions of more than a century ago - details are important), building to give quality of life to people in the conditions that are possible today and with the capabilities (and potentialities) that exist nowadays.

The study of muscles and organs (if we manage to escape the certainties of those who know everything - which is nothing more than a proof of ignorance) is no more than a step (a very small step, but also an important one-details are important) on this path towards a future that we could well be living today - details are important. Critical thinking can (should) be exercised beyond local problems and we all have to do it beyond the areas of specialty and functions assumed. The change in relation to the restrictions that exist today will take place, because the rupture (see Kuhn) is necessary. But everything could be done at a lower cost. Details are important. And because “Details are important,” we have to think globally so that the functionality “of the whole and the parts” can be respected and coordinated in its dialectical connections and universalities.