

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF REFLEXIVITY AND CRITICAL THINKING AS PILLARS FOR THE EMERGENCE OF CREATIVITY**

Training competent, autonomous and critical professionals remain an important challenge in dealing with increasingly complex issues and contexts. In response to complex problems, employers tend to impose predictable and rigid procedures on employees that are regulated by work demands, thus removing the need for professional judgment [1]. The execution of tasks and protocols becomes then an important source of stress and pressure for specialists who have to deal with feelings of helplessness in the face of unpredictability and complexity [4].

In the current economic context, tensions often emerge between a professional practice based on values, its code of ethics, and the economic and technocratic ideologies of agencies, organizations and structures [5]. In order to reconcile these tensions, personal and professional creativity becomes an important tool that, combined with professional judgment, allows us to go beyond a superficial reading of situations to develop innovative interventions that will increase the scope of valid changes [7].

Thus, we approach the principles of critical thinking to support awareness of the fundamentals of values, intuitions and theories in order to be able to take a critical look at a planned approach, inspired mainly by Etherington, Fook and Gardner.

Reflective practice remains a major concern in education and other related disciplines to understand people's issues and the complexity of the economic and social transformations in which they occur.

Critical thinking relies first and foremost on the ability to "think-in-action" in order to develop a "knowledge-in-action" [8]. Considering the fact that the process of "reflection in action" has been described as essentially a design process in which "knowledge in action" is applied, tested, and developed with the aim of finding satisfying answers to more or less problematic situations, using Schön's image of the reflective practitioner when studying the interplay between teacher knowledge and teachers' daily lesson design seems to have clear promise.

As Schön would have predicted, the design problems (expected results of the lesson, etc.) and the possible solutions are unclear at the beginning, but are constantly defined and redefined during the lesson design process.

The analysis showed that teachers' knowledge influences the design process mainly through the application of rules and then through the assessment of expected outcomes of design decisions.

This posture allows the speaker to develop his capacity for reflexivity in order to analyze and question

the ideologies that build his reality. Etherington proposes a posture of reflexivity that makes an interesting bridge between the various roles of the speaker and the researcher.

Reflexivity is therefore a tool whereby we can include our "selves" at any stage, making transparent the values and beliefs we hold that almost certainly influence the research process and its outcomes. Reflexive research encourages us to display in our writing/conversations the interactions between ourselves and our participants from our first point of contact until we end those relationships, so that our work can be understood, not only in terms of what we have discovered, but how we have discovered it [2]. This author defines reflexivity as a skill that we develop, that of becoming aware of the world, of people and events around us, in order to inform our actions, our communications, our understanding and our interpretation of a given situation. and of oneself in the situation. Thus, reflexivity requires being aware of one's intuitive reactions and developing the ability to make choices about the use of one's personal and professional reactions.

Anchored in a critical and postmodern ideology, Fook and Gardner propose in 2007 a structured model for the development of critical thinking and analysis of practice.

Essentially, this model is a process of critical reflection and reflexivity that involves the analysis of a situation and an action, and which aims at an awareness and a change of practice. The purpose of this model is to challenge pre-constructs and automatisms - to distort one's usual reactions - in order to identify "the implicit" in one's decision-making and to examine the personal and professional values in which one's presumptions are anchored.

The proposed approach, at first, provides a thorough analysis of a "critical incident" to name its presumptions. In a second step, it allows to explore the practice and how it could change as a result of the awareness of the understood meaning of its presumptions.

The concept of critical incident is used in several areas with different conceptualizations. He is particularly privileged in the field, where a structured reflexive approach will promote the explication, critical analysis and transformation of professional practices. The purpose of this method of analysis is to "better understand and consider different psychosocial constructs contained in the subjective and intersubjective experience of the actors; take into

account the complexity of the practice and shared representations of a reality” [3].

For Filteau, Bourassa and Leclerc, who work in the field of education, these are sufficiently destabilizing situations to encourage people to engage in reflective practice and these critical incidents become moments of particular transformation.

The other researchers focus on the critical incident in the awareness process and relate the importance of the reflection exercise by alternating individual and group work according to four axes of analysis: the reflective approach, the reflexivity, the postmodernism (associated with deconstruction) and critical theory [4].

The first axis, the reflexive approach, aims to help the professional become aware of the “theories” or presumptions that fill his conceptual and methodological fields, as well as his practice to reduce the gap between what is ideal and real action in action. The reflexive approach proposes to harmonize the reading of the context of the action by drawing, on the one hand, on the theories and knowledge related to the field and, on the other hand, by using both the intuition to name what spontaneously appears to us and the creativity to take a new look at the situation. This process highlights the knowledge that emerges inductively.

The second axis of the critical reflection model focuses on reflexivity. It targets the development of the ability to look at oneself (from within) while having a global (external) vision to recognize and identify the links between the social, the cultural and the construction of knowledge. Reflexivity concedes that knowledge is influenced by our own subjective experience related to socially constructed identities (gender, social class, sexuality, ethnicity / race / culture) and is actualized in an interactive process by explaining the relationship between the interpretation of the situation and the self-image in the situation.

Based on postmodern ideologies, the third axis raises questions about the representation of a single truth by naming implicit dominant discourses and the powers conferred on them. By engaging in a process of deconstruction of ideas and values, we can understand how the dominant discourses related to power and knowledge contributed to the construction of the presented perspective. This process involves the systematic examination of the various facets of the narrative of a situation, the values that fill the interpretations, to arrive at naming the beliefs and ideologies on which these values are based [6].

The fourth and final axis of the critical thinking model is anchored in critical social theory and illustrates how the power or ability to dominate is lived personally and created collectively and structurally.

This pedagogy facilitates problem solving, understanding of one's role and professional values in practice. It also allows the analysis of collaborative work, professional action and other aspects, including emotions and intuition, while inviting students to challenge themselves to see and explain things differently, beyond the routine of the structural protocols.

Thus, the process consists of thinking about how one thinks, to analyze the way one analyzes, to change one's practice, while favoring the alternation between individual and group reflection.

Both in the individual reflection process and in the group discussion, the students draw on the foundations of the analytical models presented in the exploration and application process. Through this exercise, students participate and witness the various possible results according to the various analytical tools used, while integrating into the approach essential elements of critical thinking.

Having now located the concept of critical thinking in connection with the reflection in action, we present you the pedagogical tools to facilitate and explain the training process: the practice narrative, the concept map, the notebook observation and analysis. The practice narrative adopts a narrative style to describe the learning trajectory. The concept map presents a global vision of the links between the chosen concepts. As for the observation and analysis notebook, it is a combined tool of the first two.

The conceptual and theoretical landmarks presented in this study are useful in a variety of professional and educational contexts, but particularly in the integration of theories of intervention and the development of professional competence. They provide avenues for reflection and ways to reconcile the dislocation caused by reflexivity and the pervasive challenges in the contexts of practice, training and research in the corporate world.

## References

1. T. Eadie and M. Lymbery, "Promoting Creative Practice through Social Work Education", *Social Work Education*, vol. 26, no. 7, pp. 670–683, 2007. Available: 10.1080/02615470601129842 [Accessed 20 March 2019].
2. K. Etherington, *Becoming a reflexive researcher*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2006.
3. J. Fook and F. Gardner, *Practising critical reflection: a resource handbook*. Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2007.
4. M. Fourdrignier, "Universités et formations au social : une nouvelle donne en France ?", *Pensée plurielle*, vol. n° 17, no. 1, pp. 101-111, 2008. Available: 10.3917/pp.017.0101 [Accessed 19 March 2019].
5. C. Leclerc, B. Bourassa and O. Filteau, "Utilisation de la méthode des incidents critiques dans une perspective d'explicitation, d'analyse critique et de transformation des pratiques professionnelles", *Éducation et francophonie*, vol. 38, no. 1, pp. 11-32, 2010. Available: 10.7202/039977ar [Accessed 18 March 2019].
6. D. Mercure and S. Rivard, "Le développement de la réflexivité et de la pensée critique comme piliers à l'émergence de la créativité dans la formation des futurs travailleurs sociaux", *Approches Inductives*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 71-91, 2016. Available: 10.7202/1037914ar [Accessed 18 March 2019].
7. L. Rodopoulos and B. Mullaly, "Challenging Oppression: A Critical Social Work Approach," *Australian Social Work*, vol. 56, no. 2, pp. 177–179, 2003.
8. D. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. London: Arena, 1999.