

CREATIVE TEACHING - REFLECTIONS AND APPROACHES*

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Abstract

In modern pedagogy, the concept of teaching has acquired a lot of new meanings and has had numerous interpretations, but also reinterpretations.

The redefinition of teaching is imposed by the transition process from "transmission pedagogy" to "active and constructive pedagogy", oriented in the direction of effective learning, immediately, but also in the medium and long term. Thus, the relationship between teaching and learning becomes very important, as actions subordinate to the training activity.

In postmodern (contemporary) pedagogy, the concept of teaching is defined as the action of formative communication of the pedagogical/didactic message, designed according to the objectives of the training activity, carried out at the level of the common repertoire between the teacher and the class of students, aimed at immediate learning and in the medium and long term, regulated and self-regulated by continuous evaluation of results.

Teaching is the dominant activity of the teacher and a causal variable on which the state of preparation of the students largely depends. Approaching the creative dimension in teaching is considered an optimal way for the development of the student's personality, in the context of contemporary educational models, which emphasize educational innovation.

Key words: *Teaching; Creative teaching; Formative teaching.*

1. Introduction

The information explosion produced simultaneously with the reconceptualization of educational paradigms generated the need to explore new ways of educational intervention and teaching-learning-evaluation. Students' creativity can be harnessed by exposing them to a variety of opportunities driven by technological and informational developments.

On the other hand, creativity is a condition of efficiency both in work and in education. For an adult to become creative, it is necessary to stimulate creativity and

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develop creative potential from an early age. School plays an essential role in training students to be able to use their full creative potential in future productive activities, being the main tool, that society uses to cultivate the creativity of future adults.

The contemporary educational models support the perspectives of innovation of the educational process, some essential dimensions highlighted being: the active involvement of students, emphasis on learning through interaction, centering the assessment on progress and skills training, the need to build transdisciplinary approaches, as well as the valorization of students' skills training in the extracurricular environment.

The recognition that the development of students' creativity is a prerequisite for the development of their skills and personality focused the analyzes on the identification of optimal strategies and approaches that can be integrated into the educational process.

The creative dimension of the didactic act extends these analyzes to the level of all educational variables, which can be designed for the global innovation of the process. Teaching, as a fundamental didactic process, integrated in the teaching-learning-evaluation relationship, is one of the main ways in which the teacher can foresee the behavioral changes of the students, exhaustively covering the dimensions of development: intellectual, motor, motivational, relational acquisitions, of communication etc.

2. Theoretical foundation of the theme

2.1. The evolution of the teaching concept

The evolution of the concept of teaching highlights multiple conceptual interferences, with an emphasis on defining the meaning of teaching in the circular teaching-learning-evaluation model.

The conceptual analyzes highlight the transition from the primary, extrapolated meaning, in which teaching is synonymous with instruction, through which the student is taught, and the teacher represents the central factor of the activity (Cristea, 2019).

Later, various definitions were assigned to the concept of teaching, highlighting the teaching behaviors, these representing the teaching actions of the teacher, through which this didactic process is assumed to be active, of educational intervention in order to obtain didactic results. We identify, in this sense, the specific teaching behaviors: producing the expected changes, specifying the learning objectives, organizing the learning content and the ways of presenting them, establishing the way of active engagement of students in learning and organizing the optimal conditions, achieving feed-back training and evaluation of the effectiveness of the educational intervention (Potolea, Neacșu, Iucu, Pânișoara, 2008). In parallel, didactic roles are assigned to the teacher: provider of information, model of behavior, creator of learning situations, counselor and guide, evaluator and therapist, organizer and leader (Jinga, Istrate, 2006).

The focus of teaching on the aspect of educational intervention is identified, in the sense of producing changes in the students' behavior. Teaching is a change

caused in the behavior of students, by engaging them in learning experiences (Iucu, 2008), a process of knowledge accumulation, which requires repetitions, practice, imitation (Cerghit, 2008), overall, of ways to present the subject, communicate knowledge, ensemble of strategies to present a lesson, etc. (Potolea, Neacșu, Iucu, Pânișoară, 2008).

Contemporary approaches are built around the teaching-learning interaction, because teaching involves producing results in students' learning behavior. It is related to the force of inducing learning and, on the other hand, to the effective production of learning (Brițchi, Sadovei, 2014), through activities of explanation, systematic, effective and deliberate introduction of a content, the quality effectiveness of teaching being that of leading to learning (Neacșu, 1990).

2.2. Creative teaching – conceptual meanings

Creativity represents the highest level of manifestation of human behavior, and the quantification of creative behavior is expressed by the degree of originality, novelty, value and social utility. Creativity is a social need caused especially by the challenges of contemporaneity, which constantly brings new benchmarks for training, development and education.

Creative manifestation requires adaptation, and in order to adapt to the permanent requirements exposed in the educational environment, the teaching staff must cultivate their creative skills, to ensure the development of a new, challenging, exciting training framework for all those involved.

Being defined as a general disposition of the personality towards the new, the creative process is expressed through actions of combining, imagining and continuous restructuring of known data, to ensure access to discovery, search, innovation. The development of students' creativity is explored through intellectual (imagination, memory, thinking) and personality factors (perseverance, patience, enthusiasm, spirit and discipline of group work, willingness to learn, discover, discovery, satisfaction, professional dedication, etc.).

The constructive roles of education in stimulating and developing creativity are (Rotari, 2010):

- the promotion in the educational environment of relationships based on collaboration, on the stimulation of students' efforts and their desire to make their own contributions to the introduction and study of the new, on the development of their attitude to be original, inventive and creative;
- the promotion of heuristic approaches, which lay the foundations for the formation of independent and creative thinking of students, to put into action their spontaneity and initiative, their entire intellectual, affective and motivational potential;
- the use of learning through discovery, problematization;
- capitalizing on research elements;
- posing new problems and questions, envisioning new possibilities for approaching old problems, all of these presuppose creative imagination and mark real processes in science;

- capitalizing on the creative and stimulating valences of the communicative-explanatory, interrogative-conversational methodologies, as well as those intended for independent activities.

Creativity in teaching brings to the forefront the ideas of educational paradigms, which support the construction of knowledge through a creative and active process. In constructivist approaches, students build their own knowledge through experimentation, reflection, discovery, etc., students' acquisitions being the result of their active, creative and responsible involvement in their own training, in which students interact with new learning experiences through which they modify their own reflections (Oprea, 2007).

Referring to indicators of creativity, the definition of creative teaching is complex and fraught with various approaches.

On the one hand, creative teaching is determined and influenced by creativity factors: fluidity and flexibility of thought, originality, elaboration, sensitivity and redefinition.

Creative thinking represents the relatively autonomous approach of the person who acts in and on his environment and which leads to an original, personalized product (Bocoș, 2013). Creative thinking, considered the main component of creativity, is characterized by the presence of the characteristics of divergent thinking: fluidity, flexibility, originality and productivity:

- fluidity in teaching is expressed through the wealth of associations and ideas to be taught;
- flexibility in teaching derives from the ability to quickly change the reasoning of teaching when the teaching-learning situation requires it;
- originality of teaching is defined by novelty, freshness, inventiveness;
- productivity in teaching is associated with the qualities of the product, i.e. of the results or acquisitions acquired by the students as a result of the act of teaching.

Creativity manifests itself in different forms, all of which outline a specific product or action (Popescu-Neveanu, 1971):

- expressive - manifested through more efficient production solutions;
- productive – expressed through combinations and recombinations, data associations;
- innovative – refers to a new solution that increases productivity;
- inventiveness – an idea is produced, an original solution that boosts theoretical or practical progress in a certain field.

Creative teaching involves the creation of creative learning contexts, which allow students to develop their innovative, evaluative and collaborative capacities (Cremin, Barnes, 2018).

Creative teaching is carried out in an environment that allows students to understand how things work, promotes learning through situations based on self-correction, self-evaluation, self-knowledge. Elements of creativity in teaching: imagination, originality, flexibility, decision-making, communication, motivation, collaboration.

The design of creative educational approaches and training situations that contribute to the stimulation of students' creativity, within curricular and extra-curricular activities, will certainly aim at the development of their transversal skills (Rotari, 2010):

- capitalizing and developing the spirit of observation, as a premise for the appearance and manifestation of creative behaviors;
- cultivating flexibility of thinking, divergent, imaginative and creative thinking, which will allow students to carry out authentic creative actions;
- developing the fluidity of ideas and associations in solving learning tasks (for example, by listing as many objects, phenomena, processes, elements of ideational content as possible, according to certain predetermined criteria);

To support students' interest in learning, teachers must design creative approaches, promote students' initiative and autonomy, give them access to searches, discoveries, proposed solutions, etc. Creative teaching aims at participative learning, in which the student is engaged in the rediscovery of knowledge through his own thinking effort, through problematization, discovery and heuristic dialogue.

To support creative teaching, Lucas and Spencer (2020) propose a series of principles:

- staff motivation - teachers and students;
- the integration of authentic, extracurricular, collaborative and reflection-based activities;
- the active involvement of students, including as designers of the didactic act;
- promoting learning based on the development mindset;
- creating a flexible learning space, because the classroom becomes a learning community;
- carrying out evaluation practices within the teaching process;
- the use of web networks as sources of documentation and intercommunication and collaboration between participants;
- accepting the challenge, the unexpected and unplanned elements.

Analyzing characteristics that define the creative attitude in learning, we identify a list of behaviors that the teacher will pursue in the creative challenge of learning. A student exhibits creative behavior when he engages in activities designed to develop individual and group creativity. Creative teaching challenges the student, thus (Bocoş, 2013):

- is actively involved in the learning process and adopts an open and creative attitude;
- thinks critically, has a spirit of observation, spirit of initiative and autonomy in action;
- explores the learning environment and discovers solutions to different problems;
- prefer active, divergent, imaginative and creative thinking;
- capitalize on their constructive imagination and inventiveness, problematize the contents they face, carry out investigations, case studies, discoveries;

- he has confidence in his own worth, a strong self-esteem, which motivates him and helps him feed his self-improvement tendency;
- assumes risks in the learning process, becomes responsible and autonomous and assumes responsibility for finding new solutions;
- does not get discouraged in the face of ambiguity and frustration, having a strong tolerance for them, perseveres in learning;
- creates unique, original curriculum products.

Creative teaching reconfigures the roles of the teacher, he is a mediator, facilitator, having a role in building the learning environment, in providing information sources, making contents accessible, guiding students to form their own search skills (skills, challenging knowledge, mediating relationships in the group (Joița, 2006). The teacher capitalizes on the students' points of view, stimulating their confidence in their own strength to issue new ideas, organizes favorable conditions for the construction and reconstruction of personal knowledge (Cerghit, 2008).

Contemporary models consider learning environments and learning cultures fundamental in teaching, because intellectual and material operations are challenged, they ensure the engagement of the student, the ability to collect, synthesize, organize, associate and communication of information (Cerghit, 2008).

Creative teaching starts with a series of interesting questions to the students to stimulate their curiosity, interest, motivation and desire to know. Also, through creative teaching, students gain self-confidence, develop self-control, the ability to communicate, cooperate, show their curiosity and become much more motivated and involved in teaching activities.

Understanding learning styles and their role is an important element of effective teaching for both students and teachers. The literature suggests that student motivation, achievement, and satisfaction increase as teaching methods complement students' learning styles. We find various classifications of learning styles, in which the active role of the student in learning is emphasized, which is considered an important premise in the creative manifestation in the didactic act. For example, Honey and Mumford classify individual learning styles according to their preference for learning from experience (an activist), reflective observation, process description and understanding of meaning (a reflector), observation and understanding facts and information and their relationships, and understanding logic (a theorist) or doing and trying practical things (a pragmatist) (Pološki Vokić, Aleksić, 2020).

Through creative teaching, students are encouraged (Lucas, Spencer, 2020):

- to take responsibility and guide their own learning;
- to ask and question;
- to make connections and see the relationships thus established;
- to understand the possibilities;
- analyze ideas and reflect critically on ideas, actions and results;
- to think independently;
- to embrace new challenges and experiences;
- to see mistakes as the basis of good learning;
- to focus on progress in the learning process.

The design of the creative approach in teaching has the immediate and long-term consequence of ensuring effective learning and evaluation and depends a lot on the creativity of the teaching staff, but also on his capacity for improvement and continuous self-improvement. Some essential qualities of the creative teacher are: patience to create an individualized educational scenario in favor of a mechanized and repetitive instructional-educational process, enthusiasm and spontaneity in favor of strategies and methods designed from the perspective of predetermined objectives (Stan, 2014).

The creative attitudes of teaching staff direct their psycho-pedagogical skills in the direction of designing innovative pedagogical activities. Among the creative attitudes of teaching staff, the confidence in one's own strengths, a thorough professional training, cognitive interests and devotion to the profession, the attitude opposed to rigidity and conformity, perseverance in the search for optimal solutions, a value-adding attitude, receptivity to the new, respect for originality and its consistent cultivation and social engagement.

Regarding the internal relational framework, the interaction relationships between teachers play a fundamental role in their professional development, in the development of professional satisfaction and well-being, contributing to the achievement of a positive professional environment.

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Studies examining the role of teachers' creativity in their preferred teaching style. The creativity of teachers plays an important role depending on the teaching styles they display. Some analyzes show that teacher creativity positively predicts teaching styles in which the focus is on facilitating learning and delegating learning responsibilities (Ghanizadeh, Jahedizadeh, Boylan, 2016).

School is an excellent place to foster students' creative thinking skills. In this sense, we find analyzes that show the positive influence of alternative school education on the creative performance of students at the university admission level (Gu, Ritter, Koksma, Dijksterhuis, 2021).

2.3. Design of creative didactic approaches

People think creatively when they work in groups. Therefore, most ideas for supporting creative teaching are in integrating creativity development strategies in teaching.

Brainstorming, the method of the storm in the brain, involves postponing the evaluation of the ideas issued for a later stage, in this way developing a constructive atmosphere, in which each idea is subjected to critical analysis, thus proposing original solutions. Brainstorming stimulates students' creativity by capitalizing on assimilated knowledge, which is combined and recombined inventively and innovatively, in an open context (Cristea, 2018). The method also aims to launch new ideas, conditioned by the quality of previous knowledge, combined and recombined at a higher creative level. Brainstorming is based on four fundamental

rules of creative thinking: overcoming obstacles, searching for ideas, suspending judgment of ideas, accepting all ideas and critically analyzing them.

The Frisco method, based on the interpretation of roles, approaches a problem from several perspectives, contributing to the development of students' linguistic, logical-mathematical and interpersonal intelligence, their empathic capacity and their imagination.

- the conservative values old methods, speaks for their maintenance, but does not exclude the possibility of improvements;
- the exuberant creates an imaginative, creative discussion framework that stimulates the other students to be creative;
- the pessimist is concerned with the bad aspects of any improvements, with dangers;
- the optimist identifies possibilities to achieve the solutions proposed by the exuberant, encourages colleagues to adopt a positive attitude.

Synectics aims to stimulate students' creativity by formulating ideas and hypotheses, using reasoning by analogy. Its purpose is to free participants from any constraints and help them freely express their views on a particular issue. The method instigates the development of new and original ideas, involves uninterested students, makes learning enjoyable, creative and playful, encourages participants to listen to ideas, seemingly irrelevant, but which can be used as clues for new ideas.

Creative controversy (also called structured or academic controversy) represents a way to use both the advantages of the traditional debate technique by using compromise techniques at the end of the method (Pânișoară, 2006). The specific function of this method is to highlight possible solutions, in complex situations, in which what is true is not found in a single part.

3. Conclusions

Student preferences in the teaching and learning process have changed considerably in the last decade. Students relate differently to the teaching act, they have developed new attitudes and different preferences for teaching, because they prefer interactive and participatory teaching approaches (class discussions, case studies, interactive presentations, etc.). They develop higher order thinking skills and prepare students for the challenges of social and professional life.

The reconsideration of the educational act is always based on interventions adapted to the training needs of the students, who will be future adults on the social and labor market. In this sense, efforts are useful to develop students' ability to face the challenges brought by innovative technology, to become innovators in the fields in which they will be active (Jackson, 2020).

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