

## CREATIVITY: THE NECESSARY SKILL FOR PROFESSIONALS IN THIS CENTURY

### *CRIATIVIDADE: A HABILIDADE NECESSÁRIA AOS PROFISSIONAIS NESTE SÉCULO*

### *CREATIVIDAD: LA HABILIDAD NECESARIA PARA LOS PROFESIONALES DE ESTE SIGLO*

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**ABSTRACT:** The present moment of humanity has been characterized by countless social, economic and political changes that are reflected in education. As a result of this process, it must be aligned with the new world order without, however, losing sight of the functions; reflective, cooperative, communicative and creative. In this sense, this work has as main objective to discuss the concept of creativity and its relevance in the development of the fundamental skills in the formation of teachers, seeking to transform them into critical subjects capable of quickly solving the problems faced in the current world. This way, the formation of education professionals must develop their creative capacity so that they become active subjects in the process of social transformation. This is a theoretical study that proposes to offer some suggestions for teaching in order to stimulate the creative process, especially at university.

**KEYWORDS:** Education. Creativity. Teaching ability.

**RESUMO:** *O momento atual da humanidade tem se caracterizado por inúmeras mudanças sociais, econômicas e políticas que se refletem na educação. Fruto desse processo, ela deve estar alinhada à nova ordem mundial sem, contudo, perder de vista as funções; reflexiva, cooperativa, comunicativa e criativa. Nesse sentido, este trabalho tem como objetivo principal discutir o conceito de criatividade e a sua relevância no desenvolvimento das habilidades fundamentais na formação de docentes, buscando transformá-los em sujeitos críticos e capazes de solucionar rapidamente os problemas enfrentados no mundo atual. Dessa feita, a formação de profissionais da educação deve desenvolver a capacidade criativa de modo que eles se tornem sujeitos ativos, no processo de transformação social. Trata-se de um estudo teórico que se propõe a oferecer algumas sugestões para a docência de modo a estimular, sobretudo na universidade, o processo criativo.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Educação. Criatividade. Habilidade docente.*

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**RESUMEN:** *El momento actual de la humanidad se ha caracterizado por numerosos cambios sociales, económicos y políticos que se reflejan en la educación. El resultado de este proceso debe ser alineado con el nuevo orden mundial, sin embargo, perder de vista las funciones; reflexivo, cooperativo, creativo y comunicativo. En este sentido, este trabajo tiene como objetivo principal discutir el concepto de creatividad y su importancia en el desarrollo de habilidades fundamentales en la formación de maestros, que buscan para convertirlos en sujetos críticos y capaces de resolver rápidamente los problemas que enfrenta el mundo hoy. Esto hizo la formación de profesionales de la educación debe desarrollar la capacidad creativa para que sean sujetos activos en el proceso de transformación social. Es un estudio teórico que pretende ofrecer algunas sugerencias para la enseñanza con el fin de estimular, sobre todo en la Universidad, el proceso creativo.*

**PALABRAS-CLAVE:** *Educación. Creatividad. Habilidad docente.*

## Introduction

This work is the result of the observation of performance, as a teacher, training professionals in the area of early childhood education.

Practice has shown that the 21st century has undergone numerous social, economic, cultural and political transformations, determined by what Arendt (1996)<sup>3</sup> called the crisis of modernity. Such changes have changed the world order and required, on the part of education, other skills different from those practiced in previous centuries.

From a social point of view, global poverty has increased and conflicts between different groups in different countries have increased with it. The growth of the needy population, among other factors, is not a unique fact, but stems from other elements such as the demographic increase and the expansion of the capitalist mode of production that has transformed local economies into a global economy.

In the case of the former, on all continents, the large population flow that migrated to urban centers in search of better living and working conditions, but without any training, causing the exodus in the countryside and structural unemployment in the cities. In the middle of this process, social problems arising from the lack of infrastructure and public policies increased.

In the case of the latter, with the opening of international markets and the increase in the capitalist mode of production, global poverty has grown, due to low wages, the replacement of the human labor force by new production technologies, the development of communication and

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<sup>3</sup> According to Arendt, the crisis of modernity is characterized by changes in authority in culture and authority.

information systems and, especially, the decrease in the state's participation in the area of social rights, making them the responsibility of the private sector.

If, until the middle of the last century the liberal political model was dominant, placing education as one of the rights of the citizen, the increasing neoliberalism from the 1970s began to approach the school in the market, because once the State was absent from such responsibility, it allowed the private company to assume this role, leaving a large contingent of the population out of school. This disengagement, however, refers not only to the privatization of education, but to the association between it and the demands of the labor market and multinationals, preventing an increasing number of people from having access to this good.

In this century, there is a growing interconnection of world economies and industrialized nations, devoid of democratic political content, from free trade. This process results from the combination of strategic alliances and cooperation, the organization of economic agents in networks and the development of new communication and information technologies. These factors eventually changed local and unique cultures, transforming them into global cultures. Therefore, the peculiarities of each people have become universalities and schooling has focused on meeting international business interests, contributing to the growth of world poverty and to the exclusion of children and young people from education.

According to Marrach (1996), the neoliberal process did not alter the pyramidal structure of society, on the contrary, it worsened the population's income distribution model, further increasing the social, economic, cultural and political problems already existing in the various countries and, consequently, educational.

In this context "globalization can be defined by the circulation of flows and the correlative development of multinational companies. These existed before globalization, but became even more powerful with globalization and the retreat of the state" (CHARLOT, 2013.p. 47).

This demonstrates that the process of globalization has grown more with the reduction of the state's power and its responsibility in the social area, leaving this task to the private sector, in such a way that the laws of the market end up prevailing. Of course, such transformations affected the different contexts and, within them, the school.

## **The information society and the new requirements in the training of professionals**

The information society, however, requires a paradigm shift, prioritizing the mastery of certain skills, previously unnecessary, causing schooling to prepare man for work, so that there is a qualified workforce able to compete in the internal and foreign market. Thus, the institution has stimulated competition and has configured itself as a market for products of the cultural and computer industry, functioning in a similar way to it.

Although globalization is an economic process, with regard to culture, its consequences spread to other areas, causing the meeting between the groups, the dissemination of new forms of expression and communication, the growth of the world media, the dissemination of cultural products and the generalization of the English language as an international language.

Education reflects international influences so that the school was forced to change due to the new demands of the market, having to develop other skills such as knowledge, reflection, competence, cooperation and creativity.

A new man is therefore required for a new world in which learning must be continuous.

Apparently, the school has opened up to "**the whole**" population in the last 40 (forty) years and now it should be met with quality, but education is still a great challenge, because it remains a breeder of doctrinal principles, where disadvantaged classes remain excluded, even more, without the right to receive quality education.

However, in the labor market, although a fundamental role is attributed to schooling, it does not always question its quality in general, because, in most cases, it is not a means of reflection and transformation of the doctrinal principles in force, thus further reinforcing political and ideological control. To these factors it is observed that in several developed countries there has been, in recent years, a growth of political groups with fascist and anti-democratic ideologies, dominated, behind all this, by the power of capital.

In addition to these transformations, it is also emphasized that in the society of the 21st century there are no more absolute truths, but realities in perspectives, making it necessary to continuously update scientific knowledge due, above all, to the evolution of the media, which began to require basic learning that allows a permanent relationship between local and global culture.

Within this context, education seeks to meet the demands of the international market, even because its interests are adopted by the State itself, as a public power. In addition, the new logics require more trained workers and consumers, because according to Charlot (2013) it is

not just about developing technical skills, but improving the level of basic training of the population.

### **Education and its new demands**

This demand goes through education, but not alienated, but conscious and reflected. To be offered with quality it needs knowledge, commitment, cooperation and creativity, so that the human being can be subject and, not object, of the society in which he lives.

Within this new reality one must think of school and education, within the current context so that it provides the necessary elements for the human being to live within his time, contributing to the appropriate transformations for the society in which he is part. Therefore, the institution must be prepared for the great challenge, which consists in offering quality education to the entire population, so that education fulfills its humanizing and transforming function, where reflection and action are inseparable constituents of praxis.

According to Freire (1982), the human being is unfinished and is continuously constructed, both from the phylogenetic and ontogenetic point of view, not being able to ignore that he has a history as a singular subject that he is. This statement leads the thinker to explain about the transforming function of the educational process, as long as it is conscious, critical and committed.

Unfortunately, however, affected by the so-called global crisis, the Brazilian school, in the last 40 years, apparently opened up to the entire population, allowing a larger contingent of people to have access to it. However, one of the major obstacles observed is that it continued elitist, not altering either its structure or its functioning, acting in a very similar way to the moment of its origin, so that it continued causing school failure, exclusion and social inequality, besides not meeting the demands of the market.

At first glance it seems that social transformations do not affect education and, particularly, the school, however, they are part of a broader context in which they integrate and are intrinsically interrelated, through continuous influences.

From this perspective we agree with Charlot (op.cit.), for whom there are four major challenges to be faced by the school in contemporary society, increase the level of formation of the population as a whole, improve the quality of the work performed, face the new educational and cultural challenges and redefine school contents.

These challenges include the adoption of public policies, the funding needed for research, the creation of adequate infrastructure, the training, valorization and remuneration of the magisterium, factors that in Brazil seem to have been forgotten for a long time.

Among the main obstacles listed deserves special attention to teacher training, since the reality experienced by most teachers is quite contradictory, because it involves on the one hand a perspective of educating for the present, but, on the other, one cannot lose sight of the past and the future. The first, for helping to understand and underlie some important knowledge and, the future, by designing new goals that result in a fairer, less competitive and more egalitarian society.

Therefore, as Delors (1996) very well explained in one of his works, which is responsible for education, to offer children and adults basic knowledge, which allows identifying the rapid changes of contemporary society, thus assuming new contents and skills and, mainly, the ability to reflect on a range of information in order to better understand them within their respective social and political contexts.

It is in this context that, after years of teaching, we carry out this work, reflecting on some elements, from the experience that can contribute to improving the school and, especially, the training of teachers, especially those who will work with young children.

This preference is due to the fact that recent research on psychology, medicine, sociology and education, among other sciences, has pointed to the relevance of the first five years of life, therefore, acting with the little ones supposes the work of a well-trained professional.

In teacher training, the development of creativity will deserve special attention. The choice focused on such an area, for two reasons. The first is the fact that it constitutes one of the basic elements for reflexive practice. The second because given its devaluation needs to be urgently rethought before the skills required for the man of the 21st century.

It is, therefore, a theoretical discussion that will allow to establish some fundamental points to illuminate the practices in the degrees that train professionals to act, mainly, in the field of early childhood education.

Teacher education in this century becomes a very complex process, considering the existence of various contradictions of the local and international context, interferes in education, requiring the professional to be prepared and, therefore, have knowledge of reality, commitment to it, act cooperatively and be creative to solve the multiple problems faced daily.

From the perspective of knowledge, for example, it is essential that the teacher detains the content to be worked and, also, knows how to reflect on it, because according to Imbernón

(2017), knowledge is always "heterodox, autonomous and heteronomous"<sup>4</sup>, in educational practice. Therefore, it is an integral part of thought, because it is reflective and this is mirrored in that of praxis.<sup>5</sup>

In the context of teaching, thought is associated with knowledge and the way of teaching it. However, these two conditions are not enough, because they are associated with the commitment of the professional with the society in which he is part, requiring, according to Freire (op. Cit.), a lucid and profound decision of those who assume the educational process, in which the necessary condition for the committed act is the dialogical relationship established between reflection and action that makes it possible to be aware of reality. Thus, the commitment of the professional must involve an engagement with the context in which it operates, which requires the exercise of citizenship and solidarity.

According to the thinker, "there is no man without a world, no world without man" therefore, "there can be no reflection and action outside of reality"<sup>6</sup>. It is in this sense that one should think about education, because there should be no educator outside the context, because only by reflecting on it will it be possible to transform it.

Commitment and knowledge are fundamental and complementary characteristics, in the case of teaching, which must be accompanied by a feeling that educational doing transforms reality, a focal point for improving education and the future of humanity. Therefore, teacher education should consider it in all its nuances and perspectives. Only in this way will it be possible to exercise the educational action responsibly.

The characteristics presented must be associated with the value of cooperation. It becomes difficult to work in isolation, especially at a time when network information is multiplying.

The demand for solidarity on a global scale supposes, on the other hand, that everyone should overcome the tendency to close themselves to themselves, so as to open themselves to the understanding of others, based on respect for diversity. The responsibility of education in this area is, at the same time, essential and delicate in that the notion of identity lends itself to a double reading: affirming the difference, discovering the foundations of its culture, strengthening the solidarity of the group, can constitute positive and liberating steps for anyone, but when poorly understood this type of claim contributes, also to make it difficult and even impossible to meet and dialogue with others (DELORS, 2003, p. 42).

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<sup>4</sup> Words of Imbernon.

<sup>5</sup> Praxis is being used in this work according to the vision Freirean education, showing the relationship existing in the action-reflection-action process.

<sup>6</sup> Words of Freire.

For these reasons in this process of globalization they are combined with cooperation, other skills that teachers must possess such as communication and creativity.

Initially it is essential to think about communication, because the fate of each of us in the global village is limited to a global scale, because with the opening of economic frontiers stimulated by free trade increased planetary interdependence, which have rapidly caused the growth of problems for which we are not prepared to solve.

Along with free trade there have also emerged the migratory movements of people to developed countries or to those who have a little more economic and political security in search of better living and working conditions. On all continents such movements have been growing and, in the face of such mobility, there is a need for a reception for migrants and requires, on the part of education, tolerance, inclusion and respect for diversity.

For Delors (2003), helping to transform real interdependence into solidarity is an important task of education hence the value of understanding the world and the other and, therefore, the need for a professional who act cooperatively. This implies better knowledge of one another and the ways of relating to others, requiring a more solidary and collaborative education, so that different knowledge and cultures can be contemplated, feasible through the establishment of social bonds, aiming at human development in its social and ethical dimension.

If migration movements have provoked serious conflicts internationally, they can be minimized by cooperation through education in order to avoid the problems of exclusion, poverty and struggles.

Another element to be considered from an educational point of view is communication, especially at a time when the media have spread and developed rapidly. The penetration of new technologies grows daily, facilitated by the low cost of materials and equipment, making them increasingly accessible.

It is true that the technological revolution has become an indispensable factor for understanding modernity, creating new forms of relationship. However, if on the one hand it enables the expansion of knowledge in a world sphere and the rapid exchange with people from other parts of the planet, on the other hand there is a tendency for each human being to close on himself and isolate himself, compromising the bonds of solidarity.

There are also other issues that can be addressed, such as the fact that the use of new technologies has increased the distances between developed and poor countries, because the former are able to continuously update their research in the area. However, otherwise such development could contribute to improving the most remote and needy regions of the planet. This reality still seems to be a utopia, because developed countries have continued scientifically



with the rapid advancement of their knowledge, while the poorest and most peripheral have been limited to receiving information, without a real exchange.

Today, information occurs in real time, but it is not only communication through equipment, but interpersonal information that requires deeper relationships between human beings.

Education reflects this reality, sometimes within the same country, because there are schools and teachers with technological infrastructure and new communication resources, while there are others that work, only with the saliva of the teacher, chalk and eraser. The forms of communication used in school are also restricted to orality and writing, as if humanity had only depended on them to ensure the culture of the numerous social groups.

Of course, there is also a vacuum between the knowledge worked, the learning and skills required, further increasing the distances between populations and, consequently, between rich and poor students.

Among the skills necessary for human life and that should be treated by schools is creativity, because it is one of the factors responsible for reflection.

It will therefore be the main object of study in this work. However, it is not a simple subject to be discussed, because both society and the school seem to devalue it.

### **Creativity a skill needed in this century**

The act of creating is closely linked to freedom of expression and the use of the various languages by the human being. However, society and education have long valued only oral language and writing, leaving the other in the background. That is why Charlot (2013) is right to state that the institution tends to teach what can be said through words and neglect, despise and sometimes even fight, what involves the body and sensitivity.

The path to the formation of man centered on his inner and outer world takes place through knowledge, feeling, playful, poetic. A path directed to the creative, to the imagination that favors man the construction of his inner and outer world, differentiating him as the unique individual he is.

It is necessary that the educator by his perception of the inner and outer worlds, is in constant movement of search, research and study to always reinvent what is necessary for his educational practice, and that the relationships between the school and the community, the teacher and the student, the administration and teachers are real relationships with the same purpose (STORI, 2003, p. 17).

An uncompromising, non-reflective and insensitive teacher will be another element of reproduction of elitist values and stagnation of educational and social transformations.

If creativity is so important to contribute to the formation of a critical and reflective human being, what would be the impediments for it to be stimulated? Why, when children are young, and when they grow up they lose such skill? Would such an impediment be linked to school practices? This discussion, therefore, takes as a starting point the concept of creativity, an idea that is quite complex.

Creating is basically forming. It's being able to shape something new. In whatever field of activity, this 'new' is new coherences that are established for the human mind, phenomena related in a new way and understood in new terms. The creative act therefore encompasses the ability to understand; and this, in turn, to relate, sort, configure, mean (OSTROWER, 1979, p. 9).

According to the author, we move between forms, things that are configured for us. Each act of ours relates to our interior, constituting a singular way of focusing and interpreting phenomena, giving them meanings so that we can understand life. Such processes are intuitive, but they become conscious as we shape it. For this reason, it can be said that man is a formator because he is able to relate events.

Therefore, the creative act takes as principle the conscious perception of oneself that arises from concrete needs, which is a factor of personal fulfillment and transformation. This means that in addition to solving immediate situations we are able to foresee problems and solve them. Creation, therefore, is related to sensitivity, by connecting the outside world to the interior through symbolic expression.

Creativity, therefore, can be considered as a universal function, which exists potentially throughout the human being and its activation is the responsibility of education through the use of sensitization and different languages, because they consist of manifestations of creative expression.

To create is to express what exists within each of us and results from a long process of elaboration. Such skill depends on the experience of each one and that develops according to the context.

Vigotski (1998) showed in one of his works that, what we call creation, is a complex process of pregnancy initiated through external and internal perception, serving as the basis for the experience of each one.

For him the imagination is extremely complex to be studied, constituting one of the main obstacles to research on creativity. It points out that this ability depends on a long gestation, which the human being accumulates to build his fantasies, involving associations, dissociations, analyses, synthesis, comparisons...

Such processes depend on the extraction of isolated characteristics, which undergo rapid and dynamic transformations, often reaching exaggeration. One of the most important factors for it to develop is the need to adapt to the world around us. One who is perfectly adapted to its context could not desire, experiment, discover and create.

The creative act depends both on stimuli and on images that are influenced by emotions, the experience lived and the needs of each one. Therefore, according to the researcher, the inventor is always the product of his environment and no discovery appears without the created material and psychological conditions for this. Every creative work thus results from a historical process, where each new form is based on the previous one. The richer each person's experiences, the greater the chances the person will have to create.

It is not possible to have creation from nothing, it is based on the knowledge that one has of reality. Each and every fantasy originates from the elements extracted from the real world. It has, therefore, a direct relationship with the richness of experiences lived by each one. To create it is necessary to relate reality with fantasy. Once accumulated the experiences are matured and combined. There is no simple reproduction, but rearrangements. Thus, the latter becomes an expansion of the experience, which allows to go far beyond what is known. Often fantasy helps to know reality.

It is worth mentioning, in this process, the influence of the emotional factor, because the representations accompanied by emotions are associated, resulting in the combination of images based on common feelings, even with divergent representations, thus explaining the reciprocal bond between imagination and emotion. Soon all forms of creative imagination also depend on this last factor.

To all the elements described above is added the representation of something new, which does not exist in human experience and that end up materializing in it, turning to reality. It can be said, therefore, that the creative act involves the junction of feeling and thought and is structured on the triple relationship between making, perceiving and feeling.

According to Guilford and Löwefld (*apud* GLOTON; CLERGY, 1976), there are eight characteristics that evidence creativity: sensitivity, receptivity, mobility, originality, analysis, synthesis and coherent organization: sensitivity because it allows to notice certain subtleties, predict losses, perceive emotions, discover needs and needs; receptivity that manifests the openness and fluidity of thought; mobility that presupposes rapid adaptation to new situations, favoring change; transform and resize the function of one object into another according to the need of the moment resulting in originality; abstract certain fundamental capacities of the object, offering the possibility to better understand the differences; synthesize, allowing the

gathering of various elements forming new sets; and, finally, the coherent organization of the ability to harmonize thoughts.

Such characteristics must be cultivated in humans from an early age so that they can become creative.

It can be said that four stages of the creative process, preparation, when the person identifies the ideas; incubation and when they remain in the unconscious to be selected; the lighting when the creator becomes aware of the adjustment of all elements and verification when the final details are proven.

Thus, creativity involves the education of doing, perceiving and feeling so that the human being can manipulate, understand the environment that surrounds him and relate to the symbolic means. The more it favors the practice of this relationship, the more it will contribute to the development of creativity.

However, education and creativity at school seem to travel in opposite directions. There is no valorization of the creative act in the schooling process and pedagogical practices in Brazil are still very traditional, preventing the use of other symbolic languages.

According to Charlot (2013), between the traditional and conservative organizational structure and a constructivist discourse, teachers try to survive, without there being a real space/time for students to create.

This becomes clearer in the context of the teaching education process itself, because the academy is still predominantly theoretical, and there is not in fact a place for reflection between it and practice capable of favoring the existence of a liberal and open climate that allows greater independence for students to express themselves.

In the undergraduate studies, this reality still seems to be worse, because it has increased the perspective of theoretical research, detached from the practice of certain skills capable of favoring creativity.

Artistic and expressive skills are seen as mere hobbies and often despised as there is a disregard for childhood.

Creative imagination and expression are fundamental skills to train young people, because according to Gloton and Clergy (1997), they help students arm themselves against alienation and be aware of the deviations of technologies and the dangers of automation. Hence the importance of its use in the training of free, original people, with initiative and responsibility. And for that, they need to be stimulated.

It remains to be remembered that, despite the changes, the Brazilian school is still elitist and as the creative act depends on the experiences lived by the subjects, students who have a

better economic condition, usually have richer experiences which, in theory, allows them to have more elements for the development of such skill.

Being highly exclusive, a large contingent of students stay out of the educational process, so they don't have the opportunity to create. Worse than that, the few who have access to it are prevented from doing so, because they are subjected to a traditional education, in which feelings, doing and thinking are not related but segmented, hindering the development of creativity.

When it comes to undergraduate courses, the issue becomes even more serious, because professionals who have not had the opportunity to experience certain skills will feel unsafe to develop such skills or to allow such experiences to their students.

Working for change means transforming ourselves, from practices through richer experiences, the use of countless languages, and greater opportunities for activities to favor the knowledge of new spaces, contact with other forms of communication and expression, uniting thinking, doing and feeling so that they can, consequently, create.

### **Final reflections**

From the reflections carried out throughout this work we suggest some steps for teacher training to contribute to the development of creativity. For this reason, it is important to think:

- that all people are able to create and that the more experiences they have, the richer their symbolic representations can be;
- that the creative act is closely related to the reflexive act;
- whereas the use of different languages will enrich creative skills;
- whereas the classroom is an environment of experimentation;
- those other spaces, besides school, may contribute to the enrichment of knowledge, observation, analysis and reflection of work, valuing creative skills;
- that the teacher should dare and allow his students to do so as well;
- that the opportunity to create depends on a democratic and liberating education, in which quality is not a privilege of the few, but, above all, a right of all.

Only then will it be possible to develop the creative potential that exists in each of us.

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