The notion of the " reflective professional " in education: relevance, uses and limits

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ARTICLES

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La noción de "profesional reflexivo" en educación:

Actualidad, usos y límites la notion de professionnel réflexif en éducation:

Actualité, utilisations et limites

A noção de "profissional reflexivo" na educação:

Atualidade, usos e limites

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ABSTRACT

This article proposes to rethink the interpretation and use of Schön's concept of the "reflective professional", taking into consideration its high impact and influence in education at the international level, especially in the study of teaching and teacher training. The central thesis supported here is that, in the light of the tradition and philosophy of the humanities and social sciences that structure the intellectual context of the emergence of this idea, the field of education uses an impoverished version and limited reflection. In addition to that, the study aims to revitalize the debate on what is meant by reflection, recovering three alternative ways

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of thinking about it: as a social experience, as recognition and interaction and as criticism of ideologies and relations of domination.

Keywords: Professional; Reflection; Policies; Teacher Education

RESUMEN

Constatando el alto impacto y la influencia de la noción de "profesional reflexivo" de Schön en el campo de la educación a nivel internacional, el presente artículo propone repensar la interpretación y el uso que se le ha dado, en particular en el estudio del trabajo docente y en la formación del profesorado. La tesis central que se defiende es que, a la luz de la tradición de la filosofía y de las ciencias humanas y sociales que estructuran el contexto intelectual de emergencia de esta idea, en educación se maneja una versión empobrecida y limitada de la reflexión. Asimismo, el trabajo pretende revitalizar el debate sobre lo que se entiende por reflexión, rescatando tres modos alternativos de pensarla: como experiencia social, como reconocimiento e interacción y como crítica de las ideologías y las relaciones de dominación.

Palabras clave: Profesional; Reflexión; Políticas; Formación de Docentes.

RÉSUMÉ

Guidé par la constatation du large impact et de l'influence qu'exerce la notion de "professionnel réflexif" développée par Schön dans le domaine de l'éducation à l'échelle internationale, cet article se propose de repenser l'interprétation et l'utilisation de cette notion, particulièrement en ce qui concerne le travail enseignant et la formation des professeurs. La thèse centrale est que, si la lumière de la tradition philosophique et des sciences humaines et sociales structure le contexte intellectuel de l'émergence de cette idée, l'éducation, quant à elle, n'utilise qu'une version appauvrie et limitée de cette réflexion. De plus, le présent travail prétend revitaliser le débat sur ce que l'on entend par réflexion, en reprenant trois modes alternatifs de l'appréhender: comme expérience sociale, comme reconnaissance et interaction et comme critique des idéologies et des rapports de domination.

Mots-clés: Professionnel; Réflexion; Politiques; Formation des enseignants

RESUMO

Constatando o alto impacto e a influência da noção de "profissional reflexivo" de Schön no âmbito da educação em nível internacional, este artigo propõe que sejam repensados sua

interpretação e uso, sobretudo no estudo do trabalho docente e na formação dos professores. A tese central defendida é que, à luz da tradição da filosofia e das ciências humanas e sociais que estruturam o contexto intelectual de emergência dessa ideia, na educação é utilizada uma versão empobrecida e limitada da reflexão. Além do mais, o trabalho pretende revitalizar o debate sobre o que se entende por reflexão, resgatando três modos alternativos de pensá-la: como experiência social, como reconhecimento e interação e como crítica das ideologias e das relações de dominação.

Palavras-chave: Profissional; Reflexão; Políticas; Formação de Professores

Donald Schön (1930-1997) is one of the scholars that has strongly influenced the educational field at the international level, mainly through the concept of "the reflective professional" (1983), which has been widely integrated in the educational research and teacher training (CORREA MOLINA; THOMAS, 2013) in several Western countries, even inspiring –to this day– numerous reforms and educational movements.

Despite its profound influence in the field of education and educational policies, there is still an indisputable fact that needs to be remembered: the notion of "reflection" – both at the semantic level and in its numerous links with the ancient and more recent history of ideas – exceeds by far the field of educational sciences and that of Schön's thought.

In our opinion, the notion of reflection is rooted in long-standing traditions from the history of philosophy and the human and social sciences in general. The main objective of this article is, precisely, to critically discuss the notion of reflection –and its many derivations: reflexivity, reflexive thought, reflective professional, practical reflection, reflection-in-action, among others– as it has been interpreted, introduced and used in the educational sciences, using Schön's work as basis; above all, we seek to recover the traditions of reflective thought that have been omitted favoring a vision based almost exclusively on this author.

To accomplish this objective, this work has two parts. In the first, we briefly specify the reasons and arguments that lead us to think that the vision of reflection and of the reflective professional in education seems limited and unilateral. In the second part, without aspiring to exhaustiveness, we present other traditions of reflective thought that merit, in our opinion, to be integrated into a broader and exhaustive vision of the reflective professional, thus enriching its use, especially in the training of education professionals.

THE REFLECTIVE PROFESSIONAL IN EDUCATION: EMERGENCE, USE AND INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT

THE REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER: FROM THE MAIN IDEAS TO ITS LIMITS

As soon as Schön's ideas on the reflective professional arose (ARGYRIS; SCHÖN, 1978a, 1978b) they quickly gathered enormous interest, not only in the field of teacher training, but also in adult training, social work, university pedagogy, medicine (especially in the nursing sector) and many other professional trainings. Schön's successive works (1983, 1991, 1993) acquired an international audience, generating many debates. Since the 1990s and to this day (CORREA MOLINA; THOMAS, 2013), almost every reform to the training of teachers in the Anglo-Saxon, Latin American and European countries have used a good part of the Schönian conceptual apparatus on reflection, the reflective professional, the reflection-in-action, the learning-by-doing, etc.

How can the idea of a reflective professional be understood? The main thesis of Schön (1993) is that professionals do not act in the real world as technicians or scientists in a laboratory; since professional activity is largely improvised and built during its development, it does not constitute a model of applied sciences or an instrumental technique. In this regard, a professional cannot be satisfied with following "recipes" or with "applying" the theoretical knowledge prior to the action he/she performs, because each professional situation he/she experiences is unique and requires a reflection on and about that action, which is partly built by the professional, who must give it meaning, precisely what Schön (1993) calls the problem setting. Thus, experience and professional competences contribute to manage the practice and making it more autonomous.

These are, broadly speaking, the ideas that teacher training, in numerous and varied countries, tries to forge as skills and/or competences in future teachers (SÁNCHEZ-TARAZAGA, 2016); the basic postulate is that the teacher cannot be considered a technician who applies what he/she learned in the university or an official who follows pedagogical methods imposed by a program or by a ministry. The teacher who acts as a professional necessarily maintains a reflective link with his/her work, i.e., he/she has the capacity to reflect on the action, which allows him/her to enter a process of continuous learning that represents a decisive characteristic of the professional practice (SCHÖN, 1993). In this sense, the reflection linked directly to the action that sustains it is one of the most important sources of professional learning. Likewise, the Schönian professional must be able to take a critical distance from it,

for example, verbalizing, objectifying and evaluating, with the aim of improving and even introducing corrections and innovations in the pedagogical field. There is an evident coherence of this professional ideal with what is currently being proposed in the vast majority of teacher training programs.

However, as often happens in the world of ideas, Schön's conceptions provoked numerous critical reactions that have been amplified and diversified. In addition, there have been numerous syntheses and, today, we have an important critical tradition around his work (BEAUCHAMP, 2006; DESJARDINS, 1999).

Grosso modo, we can identify two types of problems generated by Schönean ideas. In the first place, they can be considered obscure, limited to delivering intuitions or general indications about extremely complex processes, without detailing them rigorously. For example, the idea of "reflection-in-action" corresponds to this genre of brilliant intuition, but is insufficient to understand exactly how people think when they work or act. It is not enough to affirm that the "reflection-in-action" relies on tacit knowledge, bricolage or a creative artistic process to understand what it is about. In the same vein, to say that reflection is "a dialogue with practice" does not allow us to move forward and only postpones the problem of defining the terminology at stake and the realities to which it corresponds.

Second, there is a criticism to the extremely formal aspect of professional reflection. It is known that the reflective professional "reflects" logically on his/her practice and in the practice, but what are the contents of these reflections and what exactly are they about? It does not seem clear, especially because the contents and limits of what is called "professional practice" are not sufficiently defined. For example, on what or about what reflects a teacher who reflects about his/her practice or in his/her practice? Does he/she wonder about the ethical and political crossroads of his/her work, the contents of teaching, the relations with the students, the difficulties of managing a class, school inequalities? Even if all these elements constitute the subject of teacher reflection, they are extremely varied elements to be unified through simple ideas such as reflection before, during and after the action.

Considering both criticisms, the most sensible thing would seem to take Schön's ideas for what they really are: original intuitions and stimulating clues about complex problems that merit being explored in depth and by no means theoretical solutions to scientifically specific problems about action and professional thinking. Furthermore, the scientific documentation of the last 25 years does not show that the notions of "reflective professional" and/or reflection

have led to the formulation of a definitive theory; on the contrary, they have only given rise to endless controversies or to the multiplication of opposite definitions or different variants.

As Erazo (2011) states, some authors link the ideas of Schön with those of Dewey and, to a lesser degree, those of Max Van Manen. However, in our opinion, this affiliation is not the only one that can be made. Indeed, the scientific and intellectual context in which Schön situates is much richer than the inheritance we have collected in education; his ideas echo in currents of philosophy, epistemology and in the human and social sciences developed during the 70s and 80s, and even before; these currents constitute the true force of the origin of the reflexive turnaround, structuring around issues transversal to various disciplines such as those cited above.

In this context, we propose to address some of these issues that reveal the presence and power of the notion of reflexivity in the context prior to Schön and during the development of his ideas.

THE INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT LINKED TO THE NOTION OF REFLECTION

The critique of positivism and rationality

- In Europe and North America, the decades of the 60s and the 70s were marked by a global critique of positivism. In fact, there is an important setback of logical empiricism and analytic philosophy (apart from England), which suffer a series of strong criticisms from the thesis of the second Wittgenstein (1975), Kuhn (1972) and Popper (2007). Empiricism and behaviorism suffer equally hard setbacks, especially with the demolition that Chomsky (1967) makes of the Skinnerian theory of language learning. These criticisms lead to postulate that there are no raw facts, nor pure data alien to a theory or, more globally, to thought and its constituent operations. Contrary to what the positivists defend, the facts are always impregnated with theories, that is, with previous beliefs. In addition, far from constituting raw and directly verifiable data, our sensations and body perceptions are filtered, organized and interpreted by cognition at all times. The relationship between thought and the world (or of theory and facts) is not transparent; on the contrary, this constitutes the main problem of the epistemology of scientific or ordinary knowledge.

The critique of positivism is amplified during the following decades with the sociology of the sciences, socio-constructivism and postmodernism, which see scientific theories as social

constructions, language games, contingent productions of life in laboratories. Thus, Schön's criticism to positivism and his idea of considering the professional's thinking in his work to understand his/her activity are typical of this era.

In Europe the situation was similar, although the critique of positivism extended more broadly to both philosophical and scientific rationality, as well as to state and institutional rationality. From the 60s and 70s, we witness the birth of what can be called the "deconstruction thought", by the hand of Derrida (1967), Foucault (1969), Deleuze (1969), Kristeva (1969), among other authors. These thinkers quickly acquired an international audience, particularly in the United States and Europe. The beginning of the 80s was marked by the development of postmodernism, initiated by Lyotard (1970) and followed by the works of Maffesoli, Vattimo, Lipovestky, Rorty, etc. These philosophers devoted themselves to the task of rethinking rational knowledge (including those of the human sciences as Foucault's work shows) and deconstructing them, evidencing their relationship with power, "metaphysics and Western science" and "rational violence".

These years are also characterized by the death of the Subject, the birth of poststructuralism, the return to Nietzsche and postmodernism. Many of these authors strive to restore an artistic vision of action and thought, showing the inability of rational knowledge to account for the uniqueness of beings, situations, desires, etc. Many of them were inspired by Heidegger's (1958) ideas on technique and strove to criticize the technical and technocratic vision of the social world.

Finally, these postmodernist theses clarify the fall of the traditional ways of legitimizing society; the space they give to the artistic dimensions of action and the criticism they make of technical rationality makes it easy to identify their deep convergence with Schön's intuitions.

The return of the actor

The criticism of positivism and rationality concerns above all philosophers and epistemologists. What is the situation on the side of the social sciences between the 60s and 70s? First, there is a decline in Marxist thought. In this period, neo-Marxism and the Frankfurt school lack a concrete link with Marx and the historical materialism of the preceding decades. These decades are marked by the beginning of the "standard social sciences", by the hand of Durkheim and Weber who lift the project (followed by many: Bourdieu, Giddens, Habermas,

Luhmann, among others) to elaborate a "great theory of society", without succeeding in engendering a unitary scientific paradigm.

Both the eclipse of Marxism and the difficulties of the great sociological theories were accompanied by an important renovation that can be called the return of the "actor", a phenomenon that was developed mainly in the decades of the 50s and 60s, extending until the 90s with the works by Goffman (1973), Garfinkel (2007), Schütz (1987), Touraine (1992), Boudon (1996) and Sartre (1960).

The concept of actor must not be understood as a psychological subject, but rather as a principle of intelligibility of what is social, i.e., that a social activity (such as teaching and learning in school) cannot be understood without considering the dispositions, motivations, meanings or intentions of the one who interacts with other actors in a certain social situation. Likewise, social activity is never the result of a social law (for example, the class struggle for Marx) or of social coercion (external, as Durkheim's "norms" or internal, as Bourdieu's habitus); on the contrary, the actor's principle indicates that social activity involves margins of maneuver, choices, decisions of the actor involved in the interaction and contingent social situations. Social activity becomes a production or a co-construction that partly derives from the activities and the significant interactions of the actors or, as Giddens (1987) will later say, of their competences and their reflexivity.

This vision makes reflexivity a central theme in social sciences, since social activities constantly presuppose a regulation of the actors. Therefore, social action is not the consequence of an automatic conduction or external or internal coercion; it implies a "creativity of action" (JOAS, 1999), which the actor guides thanks to the reflective awareness of his/her own activity and to the interpretation of the points of view of the other actors. Thus, the "knowledge-acting" of the social actors does not dominate or precede the action, but rather reflects and becomes part of the action as it develops.

The coincidence between this vision of the social actor and that of the Schönian professional turns out to be quite strong, insofar as the latter does not apply a technical knowledge, but produces a practice derived from reflection.

The strong emergence of cognitivism

To complete this brief overview of the intellectual context in which Schön's thought is situated, it is necessary to point out that similar phenomena are observed in psychology during

the 60s and 70s: psychoanalysis begins its seemingly irreversible withdrawal; at the same time, in North America, behaviorism retreats and positivism and empiricism decline. During these decades, it is undeniable that there is a certain apogee of cognitivism in a broad sense, including both Piagetian constructivism, representational and computational theories and socio-constructivist and culturalist theories.

Nevertheless, the central idea of cognitivism, in all its variants, argues that human activity (and even animal to some extent) cannot be reduced to a reflex behavior or unconscious driving; rather –on the contrary of representational bases– it needs to be guided and regulated by thought. It also requires an active treatment of knowledge and to apply high-level intellectual operations reflexively to the action as it develops. In cognitivism, human activity supposes an intelligence, a cognition, namely what is known today as competences or knowledge of action. Piaget (1992) goes even further, showing that the activity of the subject in the world is necessary for the construction of his/her own intelligence: the action is no longer the result of an intelligent behavior, but what allows the construction of intelligence. Thus, contrary to most of the Western philosophical tradition, cognition and action cease to be apprehended as two separate realities.

Since the 80s, cognitivism penetrates massively in the field of Anglo-Saxon educational sciences and in the domain of teacher training. In this same period, the American research stops studying the behavior of the teacher from a behavioral perspective, striving to consider the "teachers' thinking", their knowledge, their representations and their beliefs. The American Educational Research Association (AERA) publishes, under the direction of M. C. Wittrock (1986), the third edition of the great *Handbook of research on teaching*. This work contains numerous chapters that propose a synthesis of thousands of researches on the thinking and knowledge of teachers. It contains founding texts that will mark the research in this domain until our days: Clark and Peterson, "Teachers' thought processes"; Doyle, "Classroom organization and management"; Fenstermacher, "Philosophy of Research on Teaching", and Shulman, "Paradigms and research programs in the study of teaching". All these authors seek to promote a cognitivist interpretation of teaching, striving to link the behaviors (or actions) of the teacher to their thinking, their knowledge, their representations, their judgments. At the same time, the cognitivist orientation is considerably reinforced by the teaching professionalization movement in the United States, which calls for the construction of a "knowledge base" specific to the teaching profession.

During this same decade, however, cognitivism in education is not homogeneous and has many currents that persist even today. In North America, several works inspired by computational cognitivism consider the teacher as an expert. This expert teacher is characterized by the richness of his/her mental plans and the rapid and focused adaptation of these plans to specific teaching situations. He/she has a repertoire of effective teaching routines and knows how to adapt them to the ongoing action. Regarding the novices, as shown by Tochon (1993) in a synthesis of this investigative current, expert teachers "have a faculty of decoding and elaborating information in their superior work memory; they retain relevant information better, are more sensitive to the structures and models underlying the information. In verbal tasks, their high level of inference allows them to discriminate the information according to its degree of relevance. They gather information more effectively and have faster and better access to useful memories"[3] (TOCHON, 1993, p. 131).

Likewise, other currents that defend rather qualitative and constructivist conceptions are found in the same period; these currents emphasize the articulation between the teachers' thinking and their activity, in the situated and anchored character of cognition and in the essentially narrative dimension of teachers' knowledge (BUTT; RAYMOND; YAMAGISHI; 1988; CLANDININ; CONNELLY; 1986; ELBAZ, 1983). Finally, other researchers closer to ethnomethodology, symbolic-interactionism and phenomenology are interested in everyday knowledge, social competences, and the rules of action rooted in the daily world of teachers: class, school, trade, etc. (CALDERHEAD, 1987; MEHAN, 1978; WOODS, 1986).

In short, beyond the theoretical currents, the thinking of teachers in action has been imposed since the 1980s as an obligatory step in research on teaching and teacher training. That is why we argue that the ideas of Schön, formulated at the same time, are a variant of cognitivism, insofar as they systematically highlight the cognitive dimension of learning and the exercise of teaching. These ideas affirm that professional acting implies the management of high-level reflective skills: practice description, taking distance to critique, pause the action to better think of it, reflection-in-action, problem-setting, problem-solving, etc.

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[3] In original: "ont une faculté d'encodage et d'élaboration de l'information dans leur mémoire de travail supérieure; ils retiennent mieux l'information pertinente, sont plus sensibles aux structures et modèles sous-jacents à l'information. Dans les tâches verbales, leur haut niveau d'inférence leur permet de discriminer l'information selon son degré de pertinence. Ils rassemblent l'information de manière plus efficace et ont un accès plus rapide et meilleur aux souvenirs utiles".

An exception in education: the popular education movement

Based on practical experiences of literacy in Brazil during the 60s as well as on theoretical elements coming from the ideas of the theology of liberation and (post)Marxism, the popular education movement comes from the hand of Paulo Freire's thought (1921–1997). While it is true that the variety of Freire's ideas, synthesized from his first publications (1967), reach their most impressive point – for his time – in *Pedagogía del oprimido* [Pedagogy of the oppressed] (1970), an idea runs through the work of this Brazilian author: to achieve the sense of worth and emancipation of the people through the development of critical thinking. In this regard, for Freire it is necessary to end with the prevailing "educação bancária" [banking model of education] (where students receive knowledge and archive them) to make way for a "dialoguing" education (where students are an active part in the learning processes).

Through an impressive synthesis of the thought of Marx, Horkheimer, Lukács, Jaspers and Marcel, among other authors, Freire gathers above all the work of Marcuse (1969), particularly regarding the denunciation of the mechanisms by which Capitalism manages to create a "voluntary servitude" of individuals, using the most varied modes of violence. Education becomes the only means to achieve the necessary change towards a more just society, showing people who have been convinced that they do not possess knowledge that, on the contrary, they have it and that taking it back is the ultimate meaning of education: it is meant to humanize men, a humanization that has been lost after being trained for exclusively economic purposes.

This brief and very general description of Freire's thought must be completed by two comments. The first is that, in our opinion, one of the most important aspects of Freire is that his ideas are conceived from the educational field and, furthermore, from the work of the teacher. What is a teacher in this context? A teacher is not a "transmitter" of knowledge, but above all a "creator of the possibilities" of construction and production of knowledge, a critical thinker and an analyst of his/her own practice. What is then the teacher's role? The teacher has, undoubtedly, a role of social transformation through his/her contribution to the development of critical thinking of the new generations. In addition, the teacher does not act with recipes: to a large extent, his/her work is co-constructed with the students, it is not completely planned outside the classroom situation and, therefore, it is a task that is completed, in a strict sense, in its social dimension, for it and with it. The second comment is related to the evolution of Freire's influence.

The impact of the Freirian thought quickly spread throughout Latin America, crossed the Atlantic Ocean and spread in Europe, particularly in France where, to a large extent, it was the basis of the movements and associations of alternative education and sociocultural animation. Likewise, it should not be forgotten that it inspired national educational reforms and initiatives in various countries, especially in terms of literacy. Despite this, the scale and influence of Freire's ideas began to decline in the 80s and 90s, to gradually abandon educational systems almost completely, and his ideas were relegated to more isolated initiatives. In this way, it seems that the idea of Schön's reflective professional is not only contained in Freire's thought, but also radicalized and thought from its most pragmatic dimension: the praxis of the teacher.

FROM THE INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT TO THE SOCIOPOLITICAL CONTEXT: THE "UTILITY" OF SCHÖN'S IDEAS

This brief horizon of currents that goes from the 60s to the 80s shows that the conception of Schön's ideas is nourished by the great themes and theoretical and scientific models that structure the human and social sciences of his time: the criticism of the techno-scientific rationality, the reflexivity of social practices, the return of the actor, the cognitive dimensions of the action, the artistic, creative and constructive aspects of the activity, among others. Schön's thinking does not go back only to Dewey, but is at the crossroads of his time, which is largely ours as well.

As we see it, Schön has the originality of being one of the first to problematize the questions of rationality, cognition and reflection in the traditional domain of university professional training. However, his ideas must be placed in the North American and European intellectual context. Despite this, it is surprising to see how the educational sciences, from the 80s, reduced this rich inheritance of reflexive thought present in the human and social sciences and in philosophy to almost exclusively Schön's vision. This is particularly the case of the Francophone education sciences, which mainly discovered Schön since the 90s and above all the decade of 2000s, recovering the theme of the "reflective professional" to transform it into a true leitmotiv applied to the training of teachers and to teachers' practices.

This hegemony of the Schönian model will later be used in the reforms of teacher training and in the new educational policies on the professionalization of education: the "reflective professional" becomes a true panacea in the most varied countries and in the different teachers' training systems. Thus, the fruitful and original contribution of Schön, that should have

sensitized us to the study of other currents and traditions of reflective thought, was quickly reduced during the 1990s and 2000 to reformist slogans within the framework of new teacher training programs. In the end, by focusing on the Schönian ideal, the educational sciences greatly impoverished the diversity of their own reflective tradition and the links that bound them to the human and social sciences.

It is impossible to reconstruct in this paper the totality of historical events and the factors that contributed to this impoverishment, but we can formulate three hypotheses linked to contextual elements that could help:

1) In the 1980s in North America, a decade later in Europe and towards the end of the 90s and the beginning of the 2000s in Latin America, Schön's conception spreads at the same time as the teachers' professionalization movement (SÁNCHEZ-TARAZAGA, 2016). This movement puts the sciences of education, trainers and researchers in the spotlight, imposing them to establish effective training and research for the teaching practice. This perspective confers an important political responsibility to the educational sciences: to form a quality teaching staff able to ensure the success of all students. At the same time, professionalization generates a certain rupture with the strictly wisdom-based vision of university education, advocating a training that has the professional action in its core (TARDIF; LESSARD; GAUTHIER, 1998). Such vision progressively manages to displace, within the faculties, departments and programs of education, the theoretical and critical knowledge of the human and social sciences in favor of the knowledge and skills that can be used in the professional practice and practical training. In this context, our hypothesis is that the reflective professional concept has a crucial role for university trainers, since its conceptual vision of teaching practice is coherent with the university culture, putting at the same time the emphasis on professional acting and the training of the professional through action. Thus, for a large number of university trainers and researchers, the Schönian professional can respond to both the traditional academic requirements linked to the theorization of teaching practices and the new requirements of effective or pragmatic professional training required by the professionalization movement.

2) From the 80s, the professionalization movement is also accompanied by another important requirement: granting a voice to the professors, knowing the value of their expertise and the pertinence of their experience knowledge. This requirement comes from the will of the professionalization promoters of building the Knowledge base (SHULMAN, 1986) in the junction of scientific research and the teachers' professional knowledge. The reflective

professional is transformed into the ideal figure of what the professional teacher should be; university researchers want at the same time to train and to work with this professional in the classrooms and the schools to collaborate in the construction of the Knowledge base or simply to transform it into a transversal skill (ORGANIZAÇÃO PARA A COOPERAÇÃO E DESENVOLVIMENTO ECONOMICO – OCDE, 2005; SÁNCHEZ-TARAZAGA, 2016). In this context, new research practices appear in education and, particularly, in teacher training; among them, the collaborative investigation, the analysis of practices, the stories of practice, the investigation-action and the co-construction of knowledge between university students and professionals stand out. In this way, Schönian ideas play a fundamental role that allows trainers and researchers to face the harsh demands of professionalization in collaboration with school contexts and teachers. Subtly transforming themselves into "reflective professionals", teachers become valid interlocutors for university students and their professional practices cease to be routine, becoming the evidence of a professional intelligence in action: they merit to be studied.

3) Finally, on a broader level, the context between the years 1980 and 2000 is marked both in Europe and in North and South America by numerous reforms of teacher training, integrated to larger policies and reforms; decentralization, right of access, parents' freedom of choice, autonomy of units and local actors, standardization and national assessments, accountability policies, etc. It is well known that these educational policies and reforms are in turn linked to important sociopolitical changes, such as the massification of neoliberalism, the globalization of economy and information and communication technologies, the transformation of the State, etc. Both in the private sectors and in public services (health, education, justice...), in this era new regulations are imposed through ideas such as market economy, competition, efficiency, standardization, international comparison, etc. University institutions and teacher training institutions must assume these changes, rationalize their practices, improve their results, control and reduce their resources and meet the economic and social needs. For the teaching profession, it does not suffice to teach all the students in a democratic school: the latter must also lead them to success and achievements.

In this political and ideological landscape, the education sciences welcome the work of Schön. Paradoxically, while this author pretended to be a critic of instrumental rationality and the technical vision of the teachers, it seems to us that his idea of the reflective professional has been widely manipulated and altered by the education sciences to demonstrate the effective nature and social utility of his contribution to teacher training since the 1990s.

In short, the reflective professional is transformed into a symbol of the competent teacher trained in universities, able to make his/her students learn. The question that concerns most of university trainers in education nowadays is how to lead future teachers to reflect on their practices to improve them. The reflection that is demanded of the new teachers is generally seen as a subjective and individual mental process that, to a great extent, takes up the reflection inspired by Descartes. In other words, reflection is seen essentially as a methodical and analytical process: pause and control of the spontaneous course of thought, analysis of the representations involved, prudence regarding early opinions, critical stance, ability to formulate well-based arguments, etc.; it is transformed into a sort of subjective intellectual faculty, an empty and universal disposition of the practices and the mobilization of skills. This is why it is integrated into the vast majority of skills referents required for teachers in the education systems of Europe, North America and Latin America: reflection is presented as a generic ability, a "meta-skill" or as some sort of metacognition.

RICHNESS OF THE REFLECTIVE TRADITIONS FOR (RE)THINKING TEACHING WORK

REFLECTION AS A SOCIAL EXPERIENCE

Contemporary social sciences put reflection at the heart of social activities. This thesis is supported above all by authors such as Beck, Giddens and Dubet, who do not conceive the reflective attitude as a strict intellectual disposition (reflected thought) but as the result of the transformations that characterize our current societies. Indeed, regarding the preceding societies, contemporary societies seem fundamentally societies of choice and of projects. This means that social behavior cannot be defined primarily by status, roles and norms. In *La société du risque: sur la voie d'une autre modernité* [Risk society: towards a new modernity] (2001, p. 283), Beck speaks of an "individualization of life" that makes new forms of life emerge to the detriment of those of industrial society, through which "the individuals build, articulate and stage their own personal trajectory"[4]. In his work on *Les conséquences de la modernité* [The consequences of modernity] (1994), Giddens highlights how the generalized reflective attitude in our societies comes partly from the social knowledge produced by social sciences, but also in a massive and daily way by the information society. These knowledges (that deal mainly with sexuality, couple, education, children, financial management, real estate, investments,

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[4] In original: "les individus construisent, articulent et mettent en scène leur propre trajectoire personnelle".

retirement, etc.) contribute to the reflexivity of individuals and favor "the examination and constant revision of social practices, in light of the new information concerning the practices themselves, which constitutively alters their character"[5] (GIDDENS, 1994, p. 45).

All this means that what we do in our lives is not previously fixed by routine roles and stable status: everything that constitutes out individuality, such as, adulthood, motherhood or parenthood, husbands, wives, teachers, masculinity or femininity, the relationships with our bodies that can be modified to some extent thanks to aesthetic technologies, are possible choices. We are all condemned to reflect on our own life, which does not have a definitive role that we have to assume, but represents a project of self-construction.

Likewise, being a teacher today is no longer a clear role based on shared norms and fixed in routine practices. Teaching has become a problem today, precisely because teachers are confronted with multiple choices that are not strictly dictated by the institution, society or traditions. When, for example, one is teaching at the secondary school level, it is not possible to be covered by the institutional role anymore, by the adult status; one can no longer claim a "natural" authority over children, nor evoke the mission of teaching as a superior value that gives meaning to a role.

Finally, to teach is to be condemned to a regime of reflexivity about the own professional activity and identity. One of the consequences of this reflexivity is the impossibility, for social actors, to totalize all social behaviors and to subsume them to a unique identity, a unitary role, a definitive status. The social actors are in effect, although in different degrees, in tension between their different choices, their different possible behaviors, which forces them to permanently build a representation of themselves. In other words, reflexivity is accompanied by a process of decomposition and recomposing of the identities of social actors. This occurs if we consider, for example, the current diversity of the family institution and paternal roles. We no longer know what a "normal family" is, since there are multiple family models: single-parent, same sex parents, reconstituted, adopting families, traditional, etc. In addition, these models are transformed throughout life according to individual experiences.

Thus, identities are produced by choices, they are at the very core of reflexivity. That is why the social actor

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[5] In original: "l'examen et la révision constants des pratiques sociales, à la lumière des informations nouvelles concernant ces pratiques mêmes, ce qui altère constitutivement leur caractère".

[…] is constituted to the extent that he must build an autonomous action and an identity of his own due to the plurality of the mechanisms that surround him and of the tests he faces [...] the unit of the meanings of social life can only exist in the work of actors themselves, a work through which they build their own experience[6] (DUBET, 1994, p.254)

and, we might add, deliver meaning to their lives.

This conception of reflection that we have just superficially presented seems important to us to understand the experience of the teaching work today. Indeed, what seems to characterize contemporary schools is precisely the elimination of traditional school logics (the authority of adults over children, effort as a tool for achievement, unquestionable school knowledge, etc.), as well as the decomposition of the roles and status of teachers. The figure of the "teacher who instructs" is in the process of recomposing, along with other roles that teachers must assume: social worker, psychologist, educator, substitute parent, police, etc. In this sense, the teaching work is splitting from within: to be able to teach, the teacher must do something else and, above all, do multiple works, which entails, in the case of some teachers, resistance, and even suffering (LANTHEAUME; HÉLOU, 2008; TARDIF; LEVASSEUR, 2010).

Social reflexivity seems to be at the very center of teaching practices, to the extent that the status and roles that serve as institutional and normative bases to conduct the profession fall apart. Like all social actors, teachers must make their professional practices a matter of reflection, in order to give them meaning. The extreme valorization that teachers give to the knowledge of experience seems to test the power and strength of this reflexivity. In a school world that increasingly loses its legitimacy, in a profession where roles and traditional status are shed, teachers, at least those who resist and love their work, must at all costs give it their own meaning. In fact, all teachers point out that the meaning of their work lies in their own experience, which does not emerge from a theoretical reflection, but is part of reflexivity as a way to understanding the social. The experience of the teaching work proves the preponderance of the actor as a source of meaning in a school world where roles, as well as traditions and status, are being decomposed. Thus, it is pertinent to extend the Schönian conception of

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[6] In original: "se constitue dans la mesure où il est tenu de construire une action autonome et une identité propre en raison même de la pluralité des mécanismes qui l'enserrent et des épreuves qu'il affronte [...] l'unité des significations de la vie sociale ne peut exister que dans le travail des acteurs eux-mêmes, travail par lequel ils construisent leur expérience".

reflective professional, to consider the social reflexivity of teachers. In this perspective, it is no longer enough to be interested in what teachers think of their practice, it is necessary to consider how they define themselves and how they invent new practices outside their official roles and status. Likewise, it is necessary to take into account the suffering and difficulties that accompany the current process of decomposition and recomposing of the teaching profession, in order to evaluate in a more complex way the reality of teaching work.

REFLECTION AS RECOGNITION AND INTERACTION

This second conception is interested in intersubjectivity, the interactions between actors and the crossroads linked to their recognition. Historically, its genesis dates to Hegel and Marx, and has been updated in recent decades by the interactionist and ethnomethodology currents, as well as by Honneth (2000, 2006).

Hegel (1997) thought that human societies do not rest solely on the economy and the satisfaction of natural needs through the use of technology; they are also based on what this author called the struggle for recognition. In this struggle, human beings want to see their desires and themselves (and not only their needs) recognized by others. They also want to be treated in a human way with dignity and equity; they want their desires to be transformed into the desires of others as well. For example, a man who desires a woman not only wants to mate with her as animals do, he wants his desire for her to inhabit her as his desire for him: in short, he wants to be wanted, loved and appreciated. Recognition means that reflection is the activity of showing oneself to others, of relating with them, of projecting outside of oneself and towards them, so this projection can be recognized by others. Reflection is not understood here as an internal mental process: it is the externalization of what I am in human interaction to affirm what I am and to be recognized as such by others. In this conception, reflection is at the center of everyday human interactions: to live in society is to act and speak to others in such a way that the way in which the others see me is in accordance with what I have shown them. This self-reflection based on the others is so powerful that it can, in extreme cases, lead people to transform and even destroy their bodies through medical techniques to show themselves to the others.

These Hegelian ideas are found partly in the interactionist sociological traditions about the works, for example, by Goffman (1973) and Garfinkel (2007), influenced by the social phenomenology of Alfred Schütz (1987) and by the ideas of George Herbet Mead (1934) on

the social construction of oneself. Perfunctorily, we can say that these theoretical traditions defend the idea that our human and social identity is constructed in the interaction with others. We are only someone if we are recognized by others as who we are. From this point of view, the identities (of teacher, of adult) refer to processes of negotiation and exchanges within the framework of scenes of everyday life, as the title of a work by Goffman suggests, *La mise en scène de la vie quotidienne* [The presentation of self in everyday life] (1973). Garfinkel (1967/2007) insisted on the idea that the participants of these daily interactions are in principle capable of explaining their activities in a routine way; this means that the actor can describe his/her activity using everyday language. Thus, a description of this type seems to correspond to reflexivity, that is, "that, speaking, we construct at the same time, with the formulation of statements, the sense, the order, the rationality of what we are doing at that very moment"[7] (GARFINKEL, 1967/2007, p. 50).

If this conception is applied to teaching, two perspectives of great interest are opened within the framework of the study of the reflective professional. The first one allows to understand that the teaching professional is confronted with a particular work situation, the work with the other within groups of students. This means that his/her reflection is not about his/her "practice", but a professional practice lived and shared with others, a practice that needs to be recognized by others if he/she wants to aspire to feel fulfilled thanks to them. In other words, the teacher should not only reflect on his/her practice but also on the reflection of others, on the practices of others, on the way in which others receive his/her practice and reflect from it simultaneously. In short, reflection is not an exercise of a private conscience, nor a dialogue with its practice; it constitutes a social reflection in the strict sense: when a teacher teaches, everything he/she says and does is seen by others and, in return, the others must accept to coordinate and adjust themselves to what is said and done to make things possible. In other words, the professional reflection of teaching is characterized by the reflective and interactive dimensions of teaching work (TARDIF; LESSARD, 1999).

The second perspective shows the importance of the struggle for recognition in the construction of teaching identity. As pointed out above, current societies have led us to the exhaustion of roles, of status and of traditional norms that served as an institutional basis for teacher identity. This is what Dubet (2002) calls "the decline of the institution". This decline is

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[7] In original: "qu'en parlant nous construisons en même temps, au fur et à mesure de nos énoncés, le sens, l'ordre, la rationalité de ce que nous sommes en train de faire à ce moment-là".

not an abstraction: the teacher has a deficit of recognition and self-images, starting with certain categories of students that are increasingly numerous. This decline also shows that the traditional forms of teacher identity enforcement – authority, possession of knowledge, the power of the institution, regulatory controls – are not sufficient for the tasks that must be performed. This proves that teachers must build and maintain their identity in the daily flow of interactions with their students and other school actors.

This type of identity is reflexive: the professor does not depend on his/her official role, on his/her official or union status, on his/her training, on the professional skills and knowledge he/she has, he/she depends on what he/she becomes to others. In this context, relations with students represent the backbone of teaching work since, in the absence of stable roles and status defended by the institution, what teachers do and live with their students is central. It is at this crossroads that the "professional-self" either lives or dies.

REFLECTION AS A CRITICISM OF IDEOLOGIES AND DOMINATION RELATIONS

The third and last tradition of thought linked to the reflective professional idea has its roots in what is called the modern reflection, emerged in the eighteenth century, during the Age of Enlightenment; it was conceived as a critique of ideologies and relationships of social domination. This critical tradition is taken up by Hegel and – above all – by Marx, who tried to stamp a revolutionary dimension on it, through which critical reflection is used as driving force for radical social changes. Subsequently, this tradition will continue throughout the twentieth century, mainly thanks to the Frankfurt School and the "critical theory", and to the works of Habermas, Giddens and other thinkers like Bourdieu or Foucault.

This tradition teaches us that reflection can be useless if it is not applied critically against everything that blocks, obscures or disfigures it. It states that human thought is not a cognitive machine that works with formal logic, but rather is defined by its history, its culture and its situation in the social world. Thus, critical reflection is turned towards its own contents and its own situation. Being critical is being able to systematically examine our own beliefs. Being critical is daring to question our own evidences, prejudices, beliefs and interests. When this critical work starts, it unveils the links between the contents and interests of thought with social ideologies and social relations of domination (ROBICHAUD; TARDIF; MORALES PERLAZA, 2015).

Regarding the field of education and, more particularly, teaching, the critical tradition affirms that teachers' professional thoughts and activities are predetermined by ideologies and

social practices. This means a teaching practice cannot be understood just by reducing it to itself and separating it from the rest. But also, teachers' reflection cannot be understood by enclosing it in itself: it is not enough to make teachers talk about their practices so that they can tell the truth about them; it is necessary for them to be able to see how and in what way their own practices are locked in ideologies and social practices. Without this critical capacity, the famous "explicitation interview" (VERMERSCH, 1994), which aspires to access the subjectivity of the actor and the significance of the activity, is only a siren song.

In this regard, the requirement made to people studying to be teachers and to actual teachers to reflect on their practice is abstract, since the main problem is being ignored: teaching practices. Perhaps, by focusing attention on the reflective dimensions of practice, we are forgetting that these are social practices traversed and structured by deep problems of inequality, poverty, competition, exclusion of some to proclaim the success of others and of everyday violence. These practices merge with social forces and political decisions, incarnated in the different offer and quality of schools; they are also transformed and adapted according to the school public and, finally, they translate into hiring people who have different status and functions in schools.

Teaching practices and the profession of teacher are inseparable; they confront him/her to school failure, to the abandonment of schooling, to the impossibility of teaching and making people learn, to suffering at work and to the abandonment of the profession. However, when analyzing teacher training programs in various countries, there are few or no links between the reflective professional and this type of sociopolitical crossroads that percolate in teaching practices. In short, it seems imperative to enrich the vision of the reflective professional through his/her connection with the tradition of critical reflection.

CONCLUSION

Based on the reflective turn inaugurated by the works of Schön in the 80s, this article has tried to introduce the intellectual context existing at the time in which Schönian ideas were installed in the field of education, particularly in the domain of research on training and teacher's work.

On the one hand, we sought to show that the reflexive turn cannot be separated from the main streams of ideas that structured philosophy and human and social sciences in this era. As for the implementation of this turn in educational sciences, we have defended the thesis that the dominant interpretation of the reflective professional was accompanied by an impoverishment:

by eclipsing the contribution of reflective traditions in favor of an instrumental vision of the Schönian idea, there is a loss in depth and strength, which succumb to the pressure and demands of the movement to professionalize teaching and the new socio-economic imperatives linked to the effectiveness of teaching and teacher training programs. On the other hand, as a reaction to this impoverishment, we tried to value the existence and interest of other diverse intellectual traditions that allow enriching the vision of reflection to better understand the teacher's work. The reflection conceived as a social experience, as recognition and as a critique of the relations of domination, provides conceptual frameworks that, when articulated with the notion of reflective professional, reveal the tensions and problems that teachers confront in their work.

There is an important risk of trivialization of the idea of the reflective professional, since the idea of reflection that underlies it cannot be considered transparently due to its excessive use. However, given the relevance, impact and use of this idea, it urgently needs to be critically complemented by other currents that can add more value to the contribution of Schön's work. In our opinion, today more than ever it is essential to rethink the concepts used in the analysis of teaching work and teacher training since, despite the recommendations to eliminate common sense of social research (BACHELARD, 1993), it apparently continues to deliver an important part of the concepts used in it (FABREGAS PUIG, 2005).

Only by taking the critical function of research to its limits can the notion of reflection and its use in research and teacher training advance; the exploration of the compatibility and complementarity between different views of reflection such as those exposed in this article can open promising research lines.

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