Abstract

Adults want to learn with pleasure, participating creatively in building their own knowledge. From this point of view, it is important to create opportunities to involve them in stimulating learning in a creative and interactive way. In this regard we propose a new concept, the interactive-creative learning, that we will define as an evolutionary process based on receptivity to the new experiences identified and resolved through exploration, deduction, analysis, synthesis, generalization, abstraction, concretization, focusing on achievement of the connections between meanings and requiring a deep intellectual, psychomotor, affective and volitional involvement. Within the interactive-creative learning, the adult discovers, imagines, builds and redefines the meanings, filtering them through the prism of his own personality and using higher mental processes of thought and creation. The individual who learns is active and able to permanently reorganize and restructure his own achievements, in a systemic vision.

Keywords: interactive-creative learning; the teacher's role.

1. Rationale Paper: The interactive-creative learning concept

Many studies demonstrate that learning is most effective when students are involved in this process. Training strategies that engage students in learning stimulate the critical thinking, increase the level of awareness and responsibility on their part.

„As adult education becomes increasingly important worldwide, to promote adult learners' enrollment, persistence and successful completion of educational courses is crucial to understand their motives, beliefs and goals, and how
these relate to their background variables and to the various types of educational courses they attend (Rothes, Lemos, Gonçalves, 2014).

The interactivity is based on mutual relationships and refers to the process of active learning in which the student acts on information to transform it into a new, personal and interiorized one. In a constructivist sense, the one who learns, re-builds new senses by exploring the educational environment, solving problems and/or applying the information acquired in new circumstances

The principles underlying the construction of interactive teaching strategies are (Oprea, 2009: 159):

The students build their own meanings and interpretations of training;

The goals of training are discussed, negotiated, not imposed;

There are promoted alternatives for the teaching - learning - assessment;

The learning tasks will require trans-disciplinary information and multidimensional analysis of the reality;

The assessment will be reflexive, incorporating alternative methods of assessment;

Learning through discovery, creation and solving problems is promoted.

The interactive-creative learning is a process of creating meanings regarding the new information and the previous knowledge, of transformation of cognitive structures of the student, a consequence of the incorporation of new acquisitions (knowledge, skills and abilities), through the engagement of the intellectual and psychomotor efforts for building knowledge.

The interactivity involves the direct or mediated inter-relationships with others, with the teacher and colleagues and also processes of study material transformation. The creativity requires blending, conversion, imagining and continuous restructuring processes of the data, by putting the learners into problem solving situations. We have creative learning where the student acquires a fresh experience through their own powers, discovering and practicing it under a different problem. The interactivity involves creativity, while the creativity may be an individual or group process. The interactive training, associated to the superior type of interactive and creative learning, involves the conjugation of efforts of both educational agents (teacher - students) in a knowledge construction. The relationship teacher-pupil/student is reevaluating. The educated one assumes the role of subject, as the agent of his training, and the teacher is his guide in the undertaken efforts. It is desirable that the interactive learning to determine, beside the active implication of students, also the pleasure of discovering and learning through developing personal initiatives. This can create positive sentiments – of self-confidence in its own potential, the desire for knowledge, for fulfillment, motivating the future knowledge activities.

The interactive-creative learning is a special form of learning within the school, released from the need to keeping step with the new transformations existing and planned changes in life and the social human activity within the complexity of the contemporary era. This requires to the individual to be endowed with affective-volitional and intellectual talents to help overcoming the simple ways of balancing the body by responding to stimuli at sensorial-perceptive dominant. He should use the combined and complicated trajectories of a reflexive type in solving the life problems and to explore the alternative resolution. The future man must be a builder of ideas systems and problems necessary to solve and transpose them into an ideative and practical plan, finding the best and effective solutions. He is a man of facts because its facts are convincing, so the creative man; it is the man for whom the fact and not the word is the maxim leading in life. Consequently, the interactive-creative learning is necessary to create the creative man, a builder of ideas that do not remain suspended in his system of ideas, but uses it to elaborate decisions and solve life problems through action. This type of learning does not preclude classical school learning, but is a new quality of these through the objectives by which it follows on in shaping the human personality. It focuses on learning through research and discovery, learning through own effort, independently or directly; it focuses primarily on the operational intellectual capability on thinking and creative imagination. Learning through discovery ensures an active and durable achieving of knowledge. The processes of assimilation and understanding being more attractive, it has a higher formative value, favoring the development of the attitudes and of the investigative and inventive spirit, productivity and flexibility of thinking, of organized curiosity, complex motivation and creativity. But, there are not excluded the concerns to educate and develop the memory, to develop the memory block, because without these tools the thinking and creative imagination would not have material design.

The specific of the creative learning is understood in the specific literature, as a maximal approaching of the active knowledge model, through exploration, hypothesis, deduction, presenting and solving problems, but also practical realization of transformative projects. Its own feature, the combinatory one, is reinforced by motivation and
by a specific and nonspecific attitudinal complex. Fundamentally in this type of learning the exploration behavior is sustained by the epistemic knowledge. Any theory, mechanism or artistic creation starts from the existing data, on which the creative individual associates in ways which nobody else had thought before. The creative learning is based just on these combination, reorganization, inversion and replacement proceedings using the testing and error method, of successive explorations.

For Gagné the creation represents the superior type of education is learning, the last in the hierarchy proposed by him, and “lies in combining two or more previously adopted rules, to produce a new capacity that can be demonstrated as depending on rule. The creativity, although relatively similar to resolving problems, but exceeds it. It entails a “qualitative leap, a combination of ideas of very different systems of knowledge, a bold use of the analogy that go beyond what is understood usually through the generalization within a class of problematic situations” (Gagné, 1975: 323).

2. Postmodern perspective on learning

Speaking of post-modernist education goals, Gough (2001) states that it is necessary to recognize and encourage the development of children's cognitive constructs, whose origins are in social, using a socio-genetic process. She lays imperative that we need a post-modern science education, one that is democratic and social constructs recognize the multicultural nature of science in its global context. We also need a pedagogy that draws attention to the process in which knowledge is produced by student.

Oprea C.L (2009:113) said that in a postmodern school the self-esteem is a prerequisite for learning and the education can be understood as a therapy. The postmodern educators help their students to build their identities. Thus, the teachers are facilitators of knowledge and participate in this process construction. Knowledge is achieved because it is useful. The relation between educator-educated is relatively open, based on mutual support constructive, dialogue and cooperation. Teacher's authority is an implicit one and must not be required.

Resize the teacher-student relationship, focusing on dialogue, negotiation processes encourages autonomous learning. The students can take permanent decisions about that want to learn, how to use what they have gained and about evaluation methods.

The specific active-creator process is not a problem-solving but a problem-finding process. The new postmodernist guidelines on science education necessarily require the application of interactive-creative strategy in teaching and learning in school. The educational practices of activating teaching and stimulating the creative potential of the student enter within the goals of modernist and post-modernist pedagogy, cooperation and reflection on learning. The interrelation established both between teachers and students and between student-student is specific to the interactive training. The active and creative work of the student is based on knowledge construction proceedings, to restructuring of ideas, to rethinking of thinking, the meta-cognition. The assimilating of meta-cognitive strategies have in view the reflection of the student to his own identity, as a subject of learning, making analysis of educational needs and expectations of its own interests, consistent with the cognitive particularities and possibilities of, practical and intellectual and physical effort of him. The meta-cognition involves moreover the analysis of the level of the difficulty of the learning tasks and the opportune strategies for solving them effectively.

A postmodern person is "relaxed and flexible and preoccupied about his emotions, feelings and inner feelings, showing an attitude of" be yourself" (Rosenau, 1992:53). For the teaching approaches, he should be seen from double aspect: as the subject of his own training and as an agent of the social influence and thereby of the self-development.

The purpose of post-modernist educational sciences is - as stated by Weinstein (2001) - not only to gain knowledge but also to feel the excitement of studying it; education should be the one to determine the individuals to be in a constant state problematical, a condition in which permanent to ask questions and seek answers. Postmodern school should form social agents capable of diagnosis, intervention and to change existential framework. The learning of learning - one of the postmodernist education goals - involves interactivity and creativity in adopting strategies that require the involvement in activity and a meta-cognitive attitude of learning and of the knowledge process and an interest for the continuously improve.
From a postmodern vision, the classrooms are viewed by Appelbaum (2001) as a true community research, demonstrating the importance of learning in a social method. The goal is to help students to find ways to question and to criticize the problems and not only to train them to formulate answers to the questions and problems listed. Creating learning communities in a postmodern school requires abandoning practices that reinforce hierarchy.

The postmodern teacher is in a relationship for partnership with his students, for negotiating learning objectives and assessment forms. He treats the school as a real world class, analyzing its explicit and implicit rules and transforms it in a real world scene as an inexhaustible learning situation. For the postmodern school, the rankings are not valued as a evaluation results, but focusing on the responsibility of learning as a motivational source. Individual characteristics and motivation are respected and valued and on this basis the teacher builds methodological alternatives, using personal expression, reflective and critical attitude, autonomy of the individual and the group, encouraging cooperative learning to induce personal development through self-awareness actions in small groups.

3. How to stimulate interactive -creative learning

The active and creative attitude of the students is a consequence of both: the teaching style of the teacher and the student's habits for making the activity. The manner he requires answers to a problem, organizes information and training activities with students and puts the accent on the cognitive-applicative processes, the teacher influences the active and creative behavior of the student. Stimulating creativity in the school involves fostering an environment of interactive learning, dynamic and incite. Learning through cooperation ensures the development of a field of relationships stimulating the best manifestation of creative and active student in the class. He develops and maintains internal epistemic motivation, encouraging the active involvement in task and creative, original contributions of the participants.

A creative learning project was conceived as teacher-led action research in which it observed the impact of new creative learning approaches on the motivation of a group of students. This project is reported by Corner (2012) which shows a series of critical incidents and associated evidence gave insights into the issues and challenges encountered and the effects on students’ learning as the project progressed. Her belief in the power of creative learning was deepened, leading her to reflect on the implications for school improvement beyond her own practice and suggesting further lines of enquiry. A creative learning project was conceived as teacher-led action research in which it observed the impact of new creative learning approaches on the motivation of a group of students. This project is reported by Claire Corner which shows a series of critical incidents and associated evidence gave insights into the issues and challenges encountered and the effects on students’ learning as the project progressed. Her belief in the power of creative learning was deepened, leading her to reflect on the implications for school improvement beyond her own practice and suggesting further lines of enquiry.

The conditions and the specific situations that may lead to the development of investigative spirit of the diverging thinking, the creative and active attitudes in school, could be the following:

- Encouraging the students to ask as many questions;
- Limiting the constraints and factors that cause frustration;
- Stimulating the communication by organizing discussions and debates between students, and between teacher and students;
- Activating of the students by their requiring to dealing with ideas, concepts, objects for its reconsideration and the issuance of new variants;
- Nurturing the cognitive independence, the spontaneity and the autonomy in learning;
- Stimulating the constructive critical spirit, the capacity of reasoning and the searching of alternatives;
- Promoting the access to knowledge through own forces, stimulating the reflexive attitude on their own approaches to learn;
- The ability to challenge the “illustrative” and “no illustrative” in things and facts;

Simons and Hicks (2006) have explored how using the creative arts in teaching in higher education can engage and empower individuals who learn in different ways beside the traditional forms of learning which value cognitive and verbal means of learning and assessment. They concluded that using a creative arts module in higher education,
which used drama, movement, music, and visual art as teaching methods is possible to engender through the creative arts a better influence the students’ learning.

From our empirical data on the promotion of creative-interactive learning these outcome are following: involvement in solving tasks increased from 62%, in case of individual work to 78% for group work. Performance grew from 75% in individual cases to the level of 89% in group situations. Performance increased the enthusiasm of the student which generated a greater desire to continue to learn. The teacher has to find the most effective ways to stimulate the creative potential of each participant individually. The activities proposed to students in order to enhance the creative and active involvement offered:

- Stimulating the productive thinking, the critical thinking, the divergent and lateral thinking;
- Freedom of expression, of knowledge, of thoughts and of facts. In this regard appear appropriate activities that require spontaneity and contribute to the development of the independence in thought and action;
- Using the talents and capabilities specific to each individual;
- Inciting the interest for new and giving satisfaction to finding a solution after the search effort by the student;
- Exercising the capacities of research, searching for ideas, information and possibilities of transfer of meanings, criteria for grading;
- Developing the capability of organizing materials and ideas through the creation of portfolios of their work, collections of words, objects, by contrasts; organizing discussions on specific issues, initiating games and trips;
- Educating the capability to see things from a different perspective, and to ask unusual questions about common things.

"The teacher is expected to find some sort of compromise between these conflicting elements by designing a course that should be useful and interesting for the students" (Lungu, 2013).

4. Conclusion

The teaching-learning activity must become an "adventure of knowledge” in which the student is challenged to participate according to his own powers, meeting challenges and learning situations designed to make him to analyze and examine them, for finding plausible solutions. The teacher's role consists more in stimulating and guidance for students. The motivation arises from the teacher’s enthusiastic participation. The student is involved both in teaching, learning and assessment, and the discipline becomes self-discipline, ensured by the satisfaction of cooperation. "Learning should be fun" - said J. Olsen and Th. W. Nielsen, using an adapted, diverse and exciting methodology. "If learning is not fun - said these authors - we make huge efforts, both the students and the teachers" (Olsen & Nielsen, 2009).

In the pedagogical literature (Hoy & Weinstein, 2006), are highlighted three important aspects that characterize a good teacher, according to the student:

- Ability to establish positive interrelations with students (to show that they care about);
- Ability to exercise authority and to provide structure and clarity of rules without doing so in a rigid way;
- Ability to make teaching and learning in a fun way, by using creative teaching strategies.

A successful teacher must "continuously monitor the performance of their students and to have positive expectations on what the students can do" (Purkey & Strahan, 2002). "The role of the teacher/trainer is to elaborate/carry the educational actions that have to facilitate the participation of a high number of subjects to whom he develops their thinking capacity, to put into practice the learned content in a more efficient manner” (Cornel, 2013).

References


