

Chapter 4.14

Contributions of Psychopedagogy to the Inclusion of ICT in the Pedagogical Environment

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aims at critically analyzing distance education and the interactions between ICT, teaching, and knowledge structures based on the contributions of psychopedagogy. The first section examines the innovations currently taking place in the field of psychopedagogy, in which the concept of the physical classroom is being replaced by that of the virtual classroom. The second and third sections analyze, respectively, the learning through ICT and the incorporation of the Web in the pedagogical practices, their possibilities, and limitations. A fourth segment regards the use of the Web by the youngsters and analyses the possible reasons for its great significance and use among youngsters. The conclusion of this chapter stresses the need to acknowledge the value of the

interrelationship between the culture of physical presence and cyberculture in the teaching environment, as well as the need for teachers to change their mentality and to become effectively enabled to add ICT to their pedagogical practice.

INTRODUCTION

Why speak of psychopedagogy, instead of pedagogy, when the heart of the current debate is teaching in the knowledge society? Maybe because in the field of pedagogy, we have witnessed, with a certain degree of apprehension, several attempts to find the decisive factor in guaranteeing effective learning. Searching for answers to this question, pedagogy has dichotomized the individual and the group, the natural and the social, ignoring the fact

that the answers do not solely depend on those who teach or those who learn, or on society only. This has been so for several decades, resulting, for example, in the decline of biological factors as determining in the success or failure of learning after years of excessive biologist; in the prevalence of psychology; in the prevalence of educational technology; in the prevalence of the social factor, considered for a long time, the only architect of knowledge, and so forth. There were several theories and several innovative proposals which became disused because they did not achieve the goal they longed for.

Looking into this trail, it is clearly not enough that factors considered essential to learning are individually announced and enunciated. Certainly, the human being cannot be studied in parts, made of hermetic departments, as if he were a collage of different clippings, a fragmented being. Current studies are increasingly showing that people are both singular and collective, always inserted in a certain social context, expressing their way of thinking in their daily lives and informal communication. Therefore, human beings are part of a natural and of a social order (Elias, 1994). From this perspective, the heart of the matter is trying to find out how this takes place. In other words, one should work with a complex approach to the act of learning, not only because cognition and emotion are structural elements in learning, simultaneously dependent on the body, the context, and the relationship, but also because there is always a connection between the individual and the environment which necessarily places them in a position of interdependence.

Psychopedagogy, such as it is known today, goes beyond the isolated fields of pedagogy and psychology. Formerly used as an adjective as a way of rendering the pedagogical function more psychological, it now exists as a noun, as organized knowledge which, adopting complex thinking, on the terms proposed by theorists that, based on ideas proposed by Prigogine and Morin among others, dare to go beyond their strict fields of

study to reflect upon the global culture that today, more than ever, is at this level mostly stimulated by the technological advances that, chiefly, allow us to shorten distances (Carvalho & Mendonça, 2003). Along that line of thinking, the theoretical advances in the field of psychopedagogy seek to know the dimensions that, in an insoluble way, constitute the individual that learns, this active relation being, seeker of the knowledge of himself and the universe. On the psychological point of view, knowledge always floats in a zone of uncertainties of large proportions and, exactly because of that, the gathering of knowledge takes an important ethical-political function.

The building of knowledge takes place where reason and affection intersect: in the tension between cultural diversity and the universality of knowledge; between personal fate and social/historical fate—such tensions being regarded as dimensions, at the same time distinct and inseparable. On the other hand, the construction of knowledge, from this perspective, presupposes that the individual takes a step beyond the acquisition of information to incorporate and manipulate the instruments of questioning, logically assuming that learning is being able to question. For that reason, the individual's presuppositions are fundamental when we study the new skills and tools necessary for teachers to act in the current pedagogical environments, in which the use of ICTs (information and communication technologies) and distance education are increasingly more widespread (Santos, 2003).

On that sense, one of the most significant experiences in e-learning, among the ones I have participated in, was carried out between the end of the 90s until 2002 and will be reinstated in 2005, after a period which was destined to the critical analysis of the project. I am referring to the "Curriculum and Educational Practice Specialization Course", most of which is carried out long distance and has been developed by the Education Department at the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), with the duration of

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