


Chapter 14

Curriculum Integration, Teacher Professional Development, and Critical Pedagogies

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents findings from the research project University Teacher Professional Development, Curriculum Integration, and Educational Research in the Configuration of Higher Education, conducted in university and secondary education institutions in Argentina. The study is conducted in terms of reflexive considerations. It explores the notion of experience as something that happens to us, involving active participation and a relational engagement with the world and others. Following this, the connection between curriculum integration and teacher training is addressed. Curriculum integration is understood as the reunification of knowledge through an alternative teaching model. Research suggests that teachers' professional development contributes to improved education, as it combines reflection with the systematization of practice based on a reimagining of teaching based on critical pedagogies.

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INTRODUCTION

The experiences discussed in this article are analysed within the research project University Teacher Professional Development, Curriculum Integration, and Educational Research in the Configuration of Higher Education. From the outset, we have expressed a commitment to focusing “on experiences” and “from experiences” of curriculum integration and teacher professional training, often using the term without a great deal of explanation. Mercado (2021), for instance, explores the concept of experience through the perspective of the work of Dewey, Larrosa, Agamben, and Scott.

Mercado (2021) states that John Dewey (1988) examines the relationship between experience and traditional education, as well as the rise of New Education and Progressive Schools in the United States during the first half of the 20th century. Dewey criticizes traditional education for its top-down approach, where learning is imposed externally upon students. In contrast, progressive education advocates for students’ active participation in the learning process. Learning develops through personal experience, and there is an organic connection between education and lived, real world experience. Dewey identifies two dimensions essential to understanding the concept of experience. The first is experiential continuity, where valuable experiences shape potential future experiences—this is closely related to habit, which Dewey defines as the formation of emotional and intellectual attitudes rooted in past experiences. The second dimension involves interaction, referring to the interplay between external and internal conditions, which Dewey calls the “situation.” He argues that traditional education tends to prioritize external factors, despite the importance of both internal and external elements in shaping educational experiences.

On the other hand, Larrosa (2006) approaches the concept of experience from a perspective of indeterminacy and openness. Experience is something that happens to us, beyond our prior knowledge or control. It involves both journeying and suffering, which leave traces in a person's subjectivity. Larrosa (2006) introduces a debate about the passive nature of the subject in experience, contrasting it with the idea of an active subject who takes charge of their own transformation. Additionally, he distinguishes experience from related concepts such as experiment, practice, or social action:

Experience is defined by principles—‘principles of experience’—such as exteriority, otherness, and alignment; subjectivity, reflexivity, and transformation; singularity, unrepeatability, and plurality; passage and passion; uncertainty and freedom; finitude, body, and life (p. 87, own translation).

Agamben (2004), for his part, saw problems in the notion of experience in relation to modernity and contemporary society. His critique is directed against the tendency to reduce experience to the mere accumulation of technical and specialized

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