



REFLECTIONS ON THE COMPLEXITY AND DEPTH OF SOME CLASSICAL CONCEPTS: CONTEXT AND PERSPECTIVES

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Summary: This article, grounded on the fourth pillar from the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), results from a particular set of reflections about the complexity of a classical concepts within the pedagogical sciences. It is a paramount study, given the social and technological emerging dynamics, being the AI its highest level, from which, a lot of fear and worry are allegedly arising among professors and educators, who feel their professional activities and survive debilitated on its mission. To a particular group, AI is a reliving tool but at a lower level, under the magistocentrism making the regards to the future professionals, the worst professionals of the history of the humanity. Here the main goal was to obtain an extensive perception from the Professors, and a deep complex reflection they have about some of the key concepts being addressed in this study, as well as its exploration in the classroom teaching to train their trainees. This research is applied in nature, with a qualitative approach, due to the natural environment through which the data collection has been carried out, and the researcher as a key tool in a descriptive research of this kind. The target participants are college Educators, at the level of Professors, performing their professional activities at higher pedagogical training institutions. The research data collection tools were biographical reviews/narratives and a semi-structured interview to get the empirical data, and for the data analysis, the study resorted to content analysis under the categorical analysis type. The major findings allowed the confirmation of the Educators' restricted and limited perception of the complexity of the classical concepts being addressed in this study.

Keywords: Education, Teaching, School, Student, Professor.

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Introduction

Professional training has always been entrusted to a group of specialists, equipped with all the methods, techniques, strategies and procedures, combined with an appropriate, exclusive language and specific actions, making the result of the training a source of pride not only in terms of power, for its affirmation in the context of the nations, but also for the trainers and the local community where these professionals will work to.

There are exclusive words: education, teaching, student, school and teacher. The article reflects on the complexity and depth of these classic concepts, their inflection in the current context and the perspectives where they lead.

The research had the following guiding question: What is the perception of teachers regarding the classic concepts under study? It was limited to the following general objective: to understand the expansive perception that teachers have of the concepts in evidence and their exploration in the context of classes for the training of their trainees.

The thesis is that if teachers have a broad understanding of the classical concepts under study, they visualizing their complexity and depth, are challenged to explore the scope of their meaning, and this will foster professional performance in the classroom, contributing to the training of more complete professionals to achieve the objectives of the profession.

The new teachers should be pleasant and docile to the community members where they are going to work, and not repulsive due to the sourness of less successful conduct in training, due to the lack of in-depth exploration of the classical concepts under study.

A number of unfriendly phenomena that take place in today's society are caused by the quality of the training of the professionals who are inspired by their trainers/teachers; the quality of their educational institutions/ infrastructures (schools). Their physical conditions attract and affect students' values; the quality of students who, in the case of higher education institutions (HEI), enrol and continue the training for current and future challenges.

The role of the teacher in the classroom, which according to Abud (2001, p. 13) is conceptualized as a unique environment where people come together to acquire more elaborated knowledge, with the exchange of beliefs, information and even life experiences.

The teaching process takes place in the classroom. According to Libâneo, 1994, it is a sequence of activities between the teacher and the students, with the purpose of acquiring knowledge and developing skills, through which students improve mental processes at all levels.

The teaching process has a bilateral nature, since it occurs between the teacher, who, as defended by Guli, 2018, is the humanizing subject who not only teaches science but also human values; he reviews himself, renews his varying forms of the teaching profession (Heagreves, 1991).

A teacher must be considered a *true educator*, who in the author's point of view is a professional who carries out his activity despite the adversities along his path. He must understand the agglutination of the concept of educator, as being from the Portuguese root *educa* adding the suffix *dor*. He has the

characteristic of educating within time and out of it, at school and outside it, and even in the street. He educates and trains, whatever the circumstances: whether his vocation is valued or not, whether his profession is paid attention to or forgotten, whether paid adequately or not, he pursues his mission; that is why the word educator has the inflection to mean someone who educates in pain.

The humiliation of being called as *thousand men*, the pain of being informed by the media whenever the salary is increased, the pain of being forced to wear white uniforms to hide the poor appearance, the pain of living of credit purchases (taking goods home to be paid later), the pain of not being able to get bank credits without guarantors, the pain of pedagogical training but not having the right of immediate employment to practice what was learned, the pain of being directed by a manager without in-depth knowledge of school organization, management and inspection, the pain of being remembered only on October 5th or November 22nd, but being forgotten every year; the pain of not having the right to a condominium for teachers when there are for Sonangol, Police, Bank employees and others. This interaction in the classroom and beyond, is important for the teacher to understand that the student is someone with a personality built before coming to school, who must be attractive, inviting, and a pleasurable.

The research is pertinent, because if teacher trainers have broader concepts beyond the classics, they will instruct their trainees to use AI (Artificial Intelligence) to activate their cognitive capacity to critically analyse the content and provide opinions, and avoid demonstrating a laziness in reflecting on the knowledge that has been obtained, making contemporary teaching more retrograde than in the era of memorization during the experience of magistrocentrism.

To achieve the teaching quality required and raise the levels of significative learning and the consequent improvement of life style, it is necessary have teachers with such level of reflection.

The results obtained from the research are worrying, as demonstrated the limitations regarding the meaning of the classical concepts studied and, of course, a narrow exploration, compressed in the classroom during the teaching-learning process. Therefore, it does not encourage students to rise to the last level of knowledge assimilation – the creative level.

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative-descriptive approach and is applied in nature, as it produces knowledge which, when explored by teacher trainers, contributes to a renewed understanding of the teaching profession, transcending the daily practice barriers (Prodanov & Freitas, 2013).

It is qualitative because “the natural environment is the source for data collection, and the researcher is the key instrument” (Prodanov & Freitas, 2013, p. 70). It is descriptive as it seeks to uncover the characteristics of a phenomenon or to establish relationships between variables (Vilelas, 2009).

The research setting includes the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in southern Angola, encompassing four provinces, three public universities, and six private higher education institutions. This selection aligns with Amado (2014, as cited in Correia, 2017), who argued that “the unique aim of interpretative research is the

opportunity to particularize rather than generalize” (p. 118). Hence, the focus was placed on HEIs offering teacher education programs.

Initially, those involved were selected for being teacher educators—considered key participants and contributors with more targeted insights, given their daily teaching practices and the fact that the concepts under analysis are inherent to their professional domain.

Therefore, participants were selected through convenience sampling, and inclusion criteria required prior conditions such as holding advanced qualifications from pedagogical institutions.

According to Simões (2023, p. 27), in qualitative studies, theoretical sampling is used, where the sample size is not predetermined. In this regard, 10 teachers participated in the study, with a theoretical sampling of 4 teachers who shared their biographical narratives.

The research employed biographical narrative techniques from the teachers which, according to Amado (2017), are texts developed from one or several interviews. Since such narratives don’t speak for themselves, their value lies in their analysis (Riessman, 2008, as cited in Amado, 2017), applying content analysis.

To process the information gathered through planned instruments, the content analysis technique was applied. Categories were defined based on the theoretical framework that guided and constituted the state of the art throughout the research.

Minayo (1994, as cited in Vilelas, 2009, p. 333) states that “content analysis is the most commonly adopted method in qualitative research data treatment.” Bardin (1977) argues that content analysis has two functions: a heuristic one, aimed at strengthening exploratory research, and an administrative one, applied to verify hypotheses or theoretical assumptions, whether arising from formulated questions or provisional statements.

Results and Discussion

According to Amado (2000), in a qualitative data analysis, the researcher understands something from what participants share. Bardin (2002) notes that, in categorical analysis, we can identify terms and expressions related to a previously defined theoretical category, which helps in answering the initial research questions and objectives. As such, we have:

Categorical Analysis and Interviewee Discourses

Categories	Subcategories	Recording Units	Context Units
Category A – Concept and interpretation of the word “teacher”	Definition attributed to the word “teacher”	A being who teaches and learns; a beacon with a calling	Vocated to teach, learn, and guide
	Characteristics of the ideal teacher	Possessing transversal knowledge, inspiring, skilled in diverse contexts	Broad knowledge and ability to read contexts
	Teacher’s role in the classroom	Indicating paths to problem-solving	Enabling self-resolution of issues
Category B – Concept and interpretation of the word “student”	Definition attributed to the word “student”	Discovers, deepens, and modifies knowledge	Recreates knowledge
	Characteristics of a student	Curious, interactive, overcomes barriers	Insatiable for knowledge
	Student’s expectations of the teacher	A model who helps overcome personal limitations	A model across all areas
Category C – Concept and interpretation of the word “teaching”	Definition attributed to the word “teaching”	Transmission and construction of knowledge	Knowledge construction
	Characteristics of innovative teaching	Educational environments, historical-cultural, project-based learning	Mobilizing diverse learning scenarios
	Transformative teaching	Holistic education, social change, innovation, creation	Harmonious, innovative, and creative training
	Teaching in the 21st century and AI	Analyzable, flexible, and criticizable knowledge	Knowledge flexibility
Category D – Concept and interpretation of the word “education”	Definition of the word “education”	Form and foster positive ethical and moral changes through various environments	Promoting change across different learning scenarios
	In-depth interpretation of the word “education”	Internalizing knowledge and values from family, community, and society	A new cultural experience within family, community, and society
	Education in the 21st century and AI	Hybrid (local and global) education, inclusive and based on digital technologies	Holistic, inclusive education supported by technology
Category E – Concept and interpretation of the word “school”	Definition attributed to the word “school”	Provider of cultural, social, and cognitive learning	Source of integral knowledge
	What the school should be	Attractive, integrative for effective and quality learning	Engaging and impactful in all aspects
	School schedule and calendar in the tech era	Fragmented ideas relying on ICT	Use of ICT resources

Category A-The concept and interpretation of the term ‘Professor’

The participants of the study showed to have a classical understanding of the concept of ‘Professor’ and its dimensions like the mission for teaching, for learning and for leading, based on the fact that, Professors are usually enabled with a widespread overview of different matters, being able to read many different contexts, and as a guide for alternatives to solve problems. Nevertheless, they were not part of initial and ongoing training that would enable them to comprehend and adapt themselves to different social contexts, as defended by Tardif (2014).

A Professor is a professional who is trained to possess pedagogical knowledge, psychological awareness, didactic skills, moral principles, civic values and ethical principles, to be able for the training process of the future professionals of different fields of knowledge. It is only considered a professor, the professional who is committed to address the knowledge. That is, if he is constantly on the spring or source of knowledge, he becomes up-dated, innovative, restorer of standards and concepts and its applicability in everyday life (Guli, 2018).

As stated by Heagreves (1991), a professor is someone who identifies with the profession, renews his multiple teaching dimensions. On the author’s view, a professor is someone who makes the higher education teaching pillars, his professional feeding on a daily basis, becoming inquisitive and inverting the established norms. For instance (from Teaching, Researching and university outreach to Researching, Teaching and University Outreach).

Category B– The concept of Student and its interpretations

The interviewees showed a dynamic knowledge regarding the concept of student, having given all the attributes related to the term, mainly as a person who is insatiable and knowledge originator and expects from the teacher a real model in all the senses. Nevertheless, all the interviewees were silent on the qualities of a professor as an inspirator like, conceptual competences, procedural and attitudinal qualities, as a frame of reference for the student, leading students to be like professor x or z. This would lead students to reshape their knowledge for example: if there is *aroba*, there ought to exist ‘*belroba*, *celroba*, *elroba*, *felroba*’ and other specific semantic neologisms to name for example ‘intimacy’ between people of similar gender or sex, due to the fact that, saying ‘sexual intercourse’ is not possible when the intercourse is made by people of different sexes, and it is only called sexual intercourse if it is carried out by people of different sexes.

A student is a person whose contents need to correspond to its real meaning. In Portuguese, from this term, we have: *Estudante* *es = és* (*verbo*) + *tu* (*pronome pessoal*) + *dantes* = *antes de* (*locução adverbial de tempo*; também podendo indicar lugar, domicílio, vivência). A student is someone with a proper personality and germs of his sociability from his micro-society (family), before he becomes part of a teaching or training institution.

This kind of student that is a true professional or professor and/or educator needs to mould from pre-concepts that the students bring, and work on the narrowed existing personality to a globalized perspective in different dimensions. A student that demands from himself cognition exercising abilities, who is not relaxed on his

pre-existing conceptions, but someone who pursues the creation of other concepts from the previous ones, contributing to the development and the emergence of new conceptions.

Category C – The concept of Teaching and its interpretation

The participants have excelled in reflection of this concept, having attributed to the term student, qualities like, knowledge-builder through different learning scenarios, provider of a holistic training perspective, innovative and creative and allows the knowledge flexibility. Nevertheless, they were silent on how the teaching process needs to be led in this era of modern technology, taking into account the ultra-speed through which AI is evolving.

The teaching process, according to Libâneo (1994), refers to a sequence of students’ and teachers’ activities, taking into account the intake of knowledge and skills’ development, through which the learners improve mental processes of all kinds.

When the participants were enquired about the academic calendar and schools’ schedules, they had no opinion about. It would have been continued with a classical calendar comprising 10 months of tuition. Furthermore, 5 days per week in front of students, 6 academic hours per day/shift? How can we expand the imagination, the abstraction and the emergence of new knowledge? When would the last pillar of assimilation levels be achieved? These are the reflections that would trigger our adaptability in the context of AI era.

The teaching in its etymology means ‘*insignare*’, that is, recording into, inculcate. This process occurs through an organized way, by a calendar and established schedules by the upper-structure.

In this formal activity, the actors (professors and learners/students) explore an appropriate language that facilitates the assimilation of behaviours that lead to an attitudinal change of its trainees within the context where they are exposed.

The appropriate language that serves as an object of sharing substrate, it’s the accumulated knowledge by the humanity that needs to be perpetuated through the teaching process. The flection of the teaching process has its vocal-variants that are non-spoken.

The lexis Teaching, at the author’s viewpoint, can be divided in two particles, at least in Portuguese (i.e. *em+sino*). That means, during the training there needs to have an echo and/or a sound. The teaching can’t be mute, even though, it is also mute, indeed. It is mute if based on the teacher’s or professor’s outfit, his pedagogical expertise, his mastery in articulating the didactics choreographies during the lectures, on his regular attendance and punctuality, at his personal organization regarding the teaching process and others. It echoes; therefore, it possesses sound, it talks on its empathy with the students, on his communication procedures, on the treatment delivered to the students, on persuasion and on the future values he attributes to the students.

Category D – Conceptualization and Interpretation of the Term “Education”

The empirical findings underscore that education should serve as a transformative force, effecting substantive changes in learners’ attitudes and fostering a renewed sociocultural paradigm encompassing the domains of family life, community engagement, and societal development. This transformation is predicated on an educational approach that is holistic in its scope, inclusive in its

orientation, and attuned to the exigencies of the contemporary technological revolution. Notably, participants did not articulate any conceptual dissonance or theoretical divergence between the constructs of teaching and education. This conceptual convergence suggests an implicit understanding of education as an integrative and multidimensional process, rather than as a dichotomous or fragmented set of practices.

In the Platonic tradition (428–348 BCE), education is conceived as the comprehensive cultivation of both body and soul in pursuit of their fullest realization of beauty and perfection. This classical notion frames education not merely as a transmission of knowledge, but as a morally grounded and ontologically formative process. It is an activity undertaken by those endowed with experiential wisdom, who bear the ethical responsibility—whether through deliberate instruction or implicit example—of imparting virtues that awaken and shape the intrinsic nature of the human person. Such formation prepares the individual for integrative and harmonious participation in a diverse and pluralistic society.

From a classical perspective, teaching and education are conceptually discrete domains—a distinction that may warrant reconsideration of institutional nomenclature. The current designation, "Ministry of Education," may be insufficient in capturing the full scope of the sector's responsibilities. A more precise title, such as "Ministry of Teaching and Education," would more accurately reflect the dual mandate of pedagogical practice. Teaching is inherently structured and programmatic, unfolding within defined temporal parameters, scheduled timetables, and a sequenced curricular framework. Consequently, the role of the professional educator extends beyond the facilitation of scientific and disciplinary knowledge; it also encompasses the cultivation of ethical values, attitudes, and dispositions—central tenets of the broader educational mission.

The role of the educator extends beyond instructional delivery to that of a formative agent—one who, as articulated by Goguelin (1971), is a specialist in shaping that which is inherently unstructured or "formless." This metaphor of formless reflects the incongruity between the socially dominant value systems learners encounter in broader society and the foundational norms instilled within their familial micro-communities. Within this dialectic, the educator assumes a transformation function: mediating the negotiation of values and guiding the learner toward coherent identity formation and ethical consciousness. This constructivist view of pedagogical responsibility is further reinforced by Day (2001, p. 47), who asserts that the act of teaching requires a critical recognition of one's epistemological limitations: "I cannot teach clearly unless I recognize my own ignorance, unless I identify what I do not know, what I have not yet mastered."

Category E – Conceptual and Interpretative Dimensions of the Term "School"

Participants in the study identified the school as a locus of integrated knowledge, described as an engaging and transformation environment enriched by the incorporation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). However, their reflections did not extend to the etymological underpinnings of the term itself. From a hermeneutic standpoint, the word *escola* (school) may be deconstructed to reveal a dual linguistic composition: the verb *és* ("you are") and the noun *cola* ("glue"). Symbolically, this synthesis connotes the school as a unifying agent—a metaphorical adhesive

that fosters cohesion and indivisibility among individuals and ideas.

This conceptual framing positions the school as more than a site of academic instruction; it is envisioned as an institution that profoundly shapes the learner's intellectual, social, and moral identity. In this capacity, the school functions as a transformation agent, preparing students not only for cognitive tasks but also for socially responsive engagement within broader societal structures.

Furthermore, participants advanced a vision of the school as a multidimensional space that promotes well-being, aesthetic appeal, and infrastructural functionality. This includes well-designed physical environments—such as landscaped recreational areas, ergonomic and climate-controlled classrooms with exclusive Wi-Fi access, and a purpose-built library for specialized academic consultation. Additional facilities proposed include gender-sensitive washrooms shared between classrooms, sociocultural centers for leisure and community building, and administrative structures committed to sustained student engagement through a transparent and participatory academic calendar.

Conclusions

Grounded in the research problem, its object of study, and overarching objective together with the analytic categories derived from both the research questions and theoretical framework, as well as the empirical data. The study yields the following critical conclusions:

The thematic focus of this investigation proved to be timely and relevant, particularly in light of the evolving demands for graduate quality and the necessary reconfiguration of the teaching profession in response to dynamic sociocultural transformations. The study facilitated a nuanced understanding of educators' conceptualizations of pedagogical principles and their perspectives on the teaching-learning process, in addition to their expectations regarding the institutional characteristics requisite for effective professional formation.

However, the inquiry revealed a conceptual narrowing and limited theoretical engagement among educators across the four teacher training institutions under review. This deficit not only constrains the intellectual formation of prospective educators but also undermines their professional efficacy in contributing meaningfully to the communities in which they are expected to operate as agents of social development.

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) was acknowledged by participants as a potentially transformation tool in mediating instructional processes. Nonetheless, given the conceptual fragility identified, there is a risk that AI could exacerbate pedagogical regression surpassing even teacher-centered paradigms, where learners merely replicated content provided by instructors. Without a reconfiguration of classical educational constructs, AI-assisted teaching risks becoming mechanistic and devoid of critical engagement, reflection, abstraction, imagination, comparative reasoning, or epistemological synthesis. In such a context, learners may not acquire the cognitive autonomy required to investigate, analyze, and construct defensible knowledge claims.

The use of AI must therefore be framed as a facilitator of cognitive development supporting the full spectrum of mental processes rather than as a crutch that perpetuates mental passivity and

reduces learning to copy-and-paste mechanics. The over-reliance on such superficial applications risks producing technically credentialed yet intellectually unprepared individuals, whose actions could critically endanger social vitality across essential domains: education, healthcare, jurisprudence, economics, engineering, governance, family leadership, religion, commerce, and beyond.

Finally, the material and symbolic dimensions of the school institution must be re-conceptualized as well. The school, as a space of knowledge production and identity formation, should be designed not only to inspire learners through its aesthetic and infrastructural quality but also to foster pride in belonging to a vibrant, supportive community. Equally, it must offer dignified conditions for educational professionals ensuring they feel valued through adequate resources, a positive institutional climate, and an organizational culture aligned with pedagogical excellence.

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