

Ariadne's Thread. Metacognition for Emancipatory Rationality in Education

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Abstract

Emancipatory rationality in education empowers individuals and promotes social justice. Metacognition and critical thinking play vital roles in supporting this approach by encouraging learners and professionals to reflect on their thinking processes, question assumptions, and develop the ability to engage critically with information (Zanazzi & Gramigna, 2023).

The research presented in this paper falls within the action research framework (Lewin, 1946), which provides for the investigation to be conducted in the field based on close collaboration between researchers and practitioners (Mortari, 2007; Sorzio, 2019). Action research aims to generate improvement and change in the context in which it is implemented. The roots of this approach can be found in Dewey's (1938) criticism of the traditional separation of knowledge and action and in Freire's (1970) idea of conscientization, the process of developing critical awareness through reflection and action. In their view, learning depends upon uncovering real problems and actual needs.

Starting from four critical incidents (Flanagan, 1954), the paper demonstrates how reflective practices based on metacognition can be used to train education professionals. Metacognitive work is essential for analyzing problems and responsibilities and identifying any distortions preventing educational action from responding effectively to people's needs.

When faced with an educational problem, the professional needs to be able to use two forms of rationality: heuristic-reflective and emancipatory. The first type of rationality guides through the investigation of the experience to build the necessary knowledge to interpret and manage it. The second makes the educator an agent of transformation and change (Striano, 2002).

Keywords: education, reflection, metacognition, critical incident, emancipatory rationality.