

El docente como artista: creatividad y pasión en la práctica pedagógica

Teachers as artists: creativity and passion in teaching practice

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RESUMEN: El presente artículo propone una reflexión crítica y humanista sobre la figura del docente como artista, destacando la creatividad y la pasión como dimensiones esenciales e insustituibles de la práctica pedagógica. Desde una perspectiva epistemológica, se concibe la enseñanza no como un proceso meramente técnico o de transmisión de saberes, sino como un acto profundamente estético, ético y transformador. A través de un enfoque teórico-interpretativo, basado en el análisis conceptual y la revisión crítica de fuentes, se argumenta que la labor docente requiere imaginación, sensibilidad, intuición y un compromiso ético con la formación integral del estudiante.

Palabras clave: Creatividad docente; Educación transformadora; Pasión pedagógica; Praxis educativa

ABSTRACT: This article offers a critical and humanistic reflection on the figure of the teacher as an artist, highlighting creativity and passion as essential and irreplaceable dimensions of pedagogical practice. From an epistemological perspective, teaching is understood not merely as a technical process or transmission of knowledge, but as a profoundly aesthetic, ethical, and transformative act. Through a theoretical-interpretative approach, based on conceptual analysis and critical literature review, it is argued that the teaching profession requires imagination, sensitivity, intuition, and an ethical commitment to the student's holistic development.

Keywords: Teaching creativity; Transformative education; Pedagogical passion; Educational praxis

Introduction

The contemporary educational landscape presents higher education institutions, such as Miguel de Cervantes University in Chile, with profound and complex tensions that challenge traditional ways of understanding and practicing teaching. Increasing curriculum standardization and an

obsession with quantitative measurement of learning clash head-on with the inherent cultural, social, and cognitive diversity of university students.

At the same time, technical rigidity and administrative protocols stand in opposition to the sensitivity, intuition, and creativity that a genuinely human education demands. These contradictions have been exacerbated by recent global phenomena, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlighted the urgency of new ways of teaching and learning in unpredictable and changing contexts. At Miguel de Cervantes University, these challenges were met with agility and adaptability.

In this context, the university teacher, in their deepest essence, is much more than a simple transmitter of knowledge. Far from being an automaton who executes curricula, they stand as authentic creative agents. Conceiving of university teachers as artists is not a poetic metaphor or a naive vision, but a proposal with a solid epistemological and pedagogical foundation that seeks to completely redefine educational practice. Thus, teaching becomes an inherently creative act, deeply dialogical and committed to life. From this perspective, teachers not only teach, but also inspire, shape, and co-construct a future with their students, preparing them for a constantly evolving world.

In the words of Biesta (2017), “education is a way of being in the world with others, which requires openness, receptivity, and an aesthetic disposition toward the unexpected” (p. 27). Thus, teaching becomes an art that demands sensitivity to connect knowledge with the student. Complementarily, Carvajal and Torres (2019) affirm that “to educate is to offer horizons to imagine, question, and remake the world with others, from sensitivity and critical thinking” (p. 103). Education, then, is configured as an act of creative freedom, an aesthetic practice that involves imagination, sensitivity, ethical judgment, and commitment to humanity.

The perspectives of Biesta and Carvajal and Torres resonate deeply with the pedagogical vision promoted at Miguel de Cervantes University. In practice, it can be observed that the most meaningful learning moments transcend the mere acquisition of information to become authentic aesthetic experiences. This reaffirms the conviction that the role of the teacher goes beyond the transmission of content; it consists of facilitating emotional and creative connections that transform learning into something unforgettable and meaningful.

At Miguel de Cervantes University, these ideas are embodied in the design of activities that not only inform, but also inspire curiosity and encourage personal expression. This encourages students to explore new worlds beyond the explicit curriculum, enhancing their imagination and critical thinking within the framework of a quality higher education.

Development

University Teaching as Art

The conception of teaching as art contrasts with the growing standardization and bureaucratization of education, even at the university level. As Torres (2020) points out, “educational systems tend to function as mechanisms of social reproduction, limiting the possibilities for pedagogical innovation by imposing standardized and controlled models of teaching” (p. 41).

However, this view of the teacher as an artist in the educational process is supported by contemporary perspectives such as that of Biesta (2017), who states that “teaching cannot be reduced to a programmable technique, but rather constitutes an ethical and aesthetic act open to uncertainty and to the uniqueness of the encounter with the other” (p. 56). As in artistic creation, teaching requires being in touch with the unexpected, reading specific circumstances, using available resources, and constructing meaning in each pedagogical act.

The tension between the artistic vision of teaching and the standardization proposed by Biesta is a constant reality in the university context, including at Miguel de Cervantes University. Although regulations and curricula often impose limits, pedagogical invention remains possible. Teaching is manifested in the interpretation and adaptation of these rigid frameworks, always seeking to introduce flexibility, new methodologies, and creative approaches that genuinely connect with students.

The unpredictability that Eisner (2017) attributes to the art of teaching is reflected in the daily experience at Miguel de Cervantes University: each classroom, whether virtual or face-to-face, each group of students, and each day are unique. This requires teaching staff to be constantly creating, adjusting innovative and technological strategies on the fly, reading the dynamics of the group, and celebrating results that, as in art, rarely coincide exactly with what was planned.

On the other hand, Hooks (2019) argues that “liberating education is a deeply emotional and creative act, a practice of freedom that requires love, imagination, and ethical commitment” (p.

42). Thus, the teacher-artist embodies a pedagogy of wonder and passion, which promotes the joint creation of knowledge in a horizontal dialogue with learners.

From a hermeneutic perspective, Skliar (2017) points out that “teaching is an act of reading the world and the other; a practice of listening and dialogue that seeks to understand rather than instruct” (p. 29). In his words, “understanding is not the mechanical application of rules, but the creative interpretation of what is given” (p. 301). This implies that teaching does not consist of following a manual to the letter or applying pre-established formulas, but rather actively interpreting the unique reality of each classroom and student, who contribute their wealth of experiences and particular ways of seeing the world. From this perspective, teaching becomes an interpretive art where there is no single correct way to act.

Hooks' (2019) ideas about education as an ethical, political, and creative act are fundamental to Miguel de Cervantes University. “Teaching is not a neutral act, but a practice of love, imagination, and ethical commitment” (p. 42). This conception encourages teachers to recognize the potential of each student and to believe in their ability to transform their reality, fostering horizontal dialogue and the joint creation of knowledge beyond mere transmission.

Skliar's hermeneutic proposal complements this vision, as each interaction in the classroom is a creative and situated interpretation. Understanding is not mechanical; it is about grasping what is transmitted, the students' prior ideas, their contexts, and questions, in order to construct meaning collaboratively. This dynamic and artistic process makes each day in the classroom an enriching challenge and an opportunity to grow alongside the participants.

In this way, the university classroom can be imagined as a workshop or gallery under permanent construction, a space open to wonder and expression. From this perspective, the teacher shapes subjectivities, enables other ways of looking, and leaves an aesthetic and ethical mark on their students. This metaphor does not undermine the importance of disciplinary knowledge or teaching methodologies, but rather transcends them. The teacher is placed in a creative dimension that integrates knowledge, emotion, intuition, ethics, and aesthetics. It is in this integration that the most profound challenges of contemporary higher education are found today, challenges that Miguel de Cervantes University actively takes on.

Creativity in University Teaching Practice

Creativity, understood as the ability to generate new and relevant ideas, is an essential component of university teaching practice, as it promotes both meaningful learning and adaptation to

constantly changing educational contexts. In the university teaching environment, creativity is not conceived as a series of isolated acts of invention, but rather as a sustained attitude, a permanent commitment to innovation, flexibility, and exploration.

At Miguel de Cervantes University, creativity is a fundamental pillar of academic and professional training, understood as the ability to produce ideas and solutions that are not only original but also socially relevant. In this vein, Kaufman and Beghetto (2013) define creativity as “the production of work that is both novel and appropriate within a social context” (p. 2), emphasizing that creativity involves not only novelty, but also relevance and social impact. Thus, in the educational practice of this university, a dynamic creative process is encouraged, characterized by constant exploration, testing of new strategies, and continuous interaction with the academic community and the social environment.

Teaching is conceived as an educational process that faces unique challenges that require contextualized responses. Whether faced with an explanation that fails to be understood, an unmotivated group, or the need to address complex content, the teacher must take a decisive attitude. This attitude involves taking risks, experimenting with different methodologies, and communicating creatively, always with the intention of encouraging active participation and critical thinking among students. In this sense, for Miguel de Cervantes University, creativity is not an optional extra, but the backbone of teaching practice: the means by which educational experiences are designed that go beyond the formal curriculum and genuinely connect with students.

Kaufman and Beghetto (2013) delve into the distinction between “big C” and “little c” creativity. The former refers to extraordinary and culturally recognized creativity, while the latter refers to everyday creativity, expressed in the habitual decisions and practices of teachers who adapt their teaching to specific situations. For these authors, it is precisely this everyday creativity that has the greatest impact on educational improvement, as it manifests itself in daily choices that allow for meaningful and authentic learning.

This distinction is particularly relevant to the teaching work at Miguel de Cervantes University, where it is recognized that, although revolutionary innovations (capital C creativity) do not always occur, professional creativity (lowercase c creativity) is constantly exercised. This translates into specific pedagogical gestures such as rephrasing a question to facilitate understanding, adapting teaching materials to promote inclusion, or improvising strategies when

the initial plan is not effective. It is in this practical, everyday creativity—marked by resourcefulness and adaptability—that the greatest potential for building truly transformative educational experiences lies.

In a context where many university systems prioritize standardization, quantitative assessment, and repetition of content, the role of the creative teacher takes on a character of pedagogical resistance. At Miguel de Cervantes University, this role is assumed as a conscious commitment to innovation, to integrating art, technology, and active student participation, while recognizing and valuing the diversity of knowledge and talents present in the classroom.

However, the exercise of creativity is not without its tensions. Institutional, cultural, and personal factors such as work overload, evaluative pressure, lack of resources, or low valuation of teaching work can hinder the development of creative teaching. Therefore, it is essential to consolidate an institutional culture that promotes creativity as an essential element of university work. Viewing creativity as an ethical act means responsibly committing to adapting teaching to address diversity, respect differences, and promote inclusion. Conceived in this way, creativity becomes an engine of social transformation, aimed at training individuals who are committed to the reality in which they live.

Passion as the Driving Force Behind University Education

Passion, understood as a deep emotional commitment and intrinsic motivation toward educational work, is an essential driving force that gives meaning and vitality to university teaching. Beyond technical competence, it is this force that gives teachers the energy they need to face daily challenges and establish meaningful connections with their students. As Brown (2018) states, “authenticity is the daily practice of letting go of who we think we should be and embracing who we really are. In teaching, this translates into connecting from our genuine selves, not from a prefabricated role” (p. 56).

From this perspective, passion implies a deep integration between the personal dimension of being and the professional practice of teaching. Teaching is not limited to following manuals or reproducing content: it is allowing one's identity, values, and personal convictions to permeate every educational act. This authentic connection between the teacher and their vocation brings life and meaning to the teaching-learning process.

At Miguel de Cervantes University, this vision is embodied in the daily practice of its teachers, who not only transmit curricular knowledge, but also their experiences, values, and enthusiasm

for knowledge. By teaching from a place of authenticity, a pedagogical relationship is fostered that transcends the formal curriculum, generating transformative bonds and lasting learning. This integration of the personal “I” with the professional role is precisely what gives meaning to each day in the university classroom.

Day and Gu (2019), in their studies on teacher well-being, argue that “passion for teaching is an essential component in maintaining a sense of professional purpose and coping with the emotional challenges of educational work” (p. 142). In this sense, passion operates as a vital psychological resource that protects against burnout and strengthens resilience. In line with this position, Noddings (2017) states that “education is an act of care that reflects our ethical and emotional commitment to others and to the world” (p. 89). Thus, passion is configured not only as a personal emotion, but also as an ethical and political stance: an act of love, responsibility, and deep commitment to humanity.

The ideas of Day and Noddings clearly encapsulate why passion is indispensable in the life of a university teacher. In an environment often marked by growing demands, uncertainty, and institutional pressure, this passion becomes the anchor that allows educators to sustain their purpose, seek creative solutions, and resist emotional burnout. It is this “inner fire” that drives teachers to innovate, inspire, and build meaningful learning spaces.

Noddings' (2017) statement transforms passion into something that goes beyond personal motivation: it elevates it to the category of ethical commitment to the future. This vision challenges university teachers to understand that their work goes beyond the mere transmission of content, constituting an active contribution to the formation of critical, empathetic, and committed citizens. This principle has become a guiding pillar at Miguel de Cervantes University, where it is recognized that a passion for teaching is a vital force for social transformation.

However, sustaining that passion over time is not easy. Adverse working conditions, lack of recognition, work overload, and constant pressure can undermine enthusiasm and lead to professional burnout. Therefore, it is essential to create institutional spaces for care, reflection, support, and continuous training that allow teachers to renew their sense of vocation and preserve their passion for teaching. In this sense, Miguel de Cervantes University is committed to a pedagogy of care that supports not only student learning but also the overall well-being of faculty.

Conclusion

A truly transformative education requires university educators who teach not only from their knowledge, but from their whole being; who turn the classroom into a space where beauty, hope, and freedom flourish. As Eisner (2017) states, “education is an artistic act that invites us to discover new ways of seeing and understanding the world, beyond the obvious” (p. 45). This is precisely the challenge of the teacher-artist at Miguel de Cervantes University: to educate in order to imagine, to imagine in order to transform, and to transform in order to humanize.

Rethinking the teacher as an artist implies understanding that teaching is a creative, sensitive, and ethical act that transcends the simple transmission of content. Creativity in university teaching allows for the continuous redesign and reinvention of educational strategies, adapting them to diversity and contemporary challenges. Passion, for its part, nourishes the emotional commitment that sustains the teaching profession in the face of adversity, while also facilitating authentic bonds with students. However, this view faces significant structural tensions: standardization, bureaucratization, and the social devaluation of the teaching role threaten autonomy, undermine innovative capacity, and affect the emotional well-being of faculty.

Given this situation, it is urgent to implement institutional actions that strengthen creativity and passion for teaching at Miguel de Cervantes University. These include:

- Reformulating teacher training models, integrating the development of creative, ethical, and emotional skills that foster critical reflection and pedagogical innovation adapted to the university context.
- Fostering work environments that value professional autonomy, peer collaboration, and the construction of learning communities supported by leadership committed to human development.
- Implementing institutional policies that recognize and promote the creative and passionate commitment of teachers, guaranteeing decent working conditions, adequate incentives, and sufficient resources for professional practice.
- Promoting spaces for teacher care and well-being, aimed at preserving motivation, resilience, and vocational meaning over time.

In short, educating with creativity and passion is an act of profound humanization that allows for the formation of critical, sensitive individuals committed to social transformation. The teacher-

artist at Miguel de Cervantes University, aware of their mission, becomes an agent of change who opens up possible worlds for their students and, by extension, for all of Chilean society.

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