

## History and Perspectives of Adult Education and Professional Teacher Education: Between complicity, distance, and recognition

## Histoire et perspectives de la formation des adultes et de la formation à l'enseignement : entre complicité, distance et reconnaissance

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Résumé de l'article

Ce texte s'organise en trois grandes parties. Dans la première partie, nous dessinerons la figure de la professionnalisation. Celle-ci semble aujourd'hui la visée des politiques de formation professionnelle. Elle est de toute évidence aussi considérée comme un moyen et donc comme une garantie de la finalité professionnelle de la formation proposée. Sur quels présupposés, tant idéologiques que pédagogiques, cette professionnalisation repose-t-elle? La seconde figure incarnant les contextes de formation professionnelle est celle des savoirs. Quels sont les savoirs présents dans la formation professionnelle des enseignants? Participent-ils, et de quelles manières, aux processus de professionnalisation? Dans quelles mesures la couleur donnée à la professionnalisation, qu'on la mêle de l'objectif d'instruction, de l'objectif de socialisation ou de l'objectif de qualification, détermine un sens spécifique au Savoir et aux savoirs définis et énoncés dans la formation professionnelle des enseignants? Troisième figure emblématique de la formation professionnelle, celle du rapport entre l'école et la vie. Où commence et où se termine la formation professionnelle? Quels sont ces territoires? Peut-elle aller au-delà des territoires habituels et donc de l'expertise attendue du professionnel? En traitant tour à tour de ces trois figures, nous devrions proposer au lecteur une nouvelle approche de la formation professionnelle des enseignants en lui insufflant un nouveau souffle par un rappel des finalités et des valeurs de la formation des adultes.

# HISTORY AND PERSPECTIVES OF ADULT EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL TEACHER EDUCATION: BETWEEN COMPLICITY, DISTANCE, AND RECOGNITION

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**ABSTRACT.** This text is divided into three broad sections. The first section will elaborate the figure of professionalization, which today appears to be the target of professional training policies. It also seems to be considered a means and thus a guarantee of the professional aim of proposed training. On what ideological and pedagogical presuppositions is this professionalization based? The second figure embodying professional training contexts is that of knowledge. What knowledge is present in the professional training of teachers? Is it involved in professionalization processes? If so, in what ways? To what extent does the tone given to professionalization – whether in connection with the objective of instruction, socialization, or qualification – determine a specific sense for Knowledge and for the knowledge defined and articulated in professional teacher training? The third symbolic figure of professional training is that of the school-life relationship. Where does professional training begin and end? What are its territories? Can it exceed the usual territories and hence the expertise expected of a professional? By examining these three forms, we hope to offer the reader a new approach to professional teacher training inspired by a reminder of the aims and values of adult education.

HISTOIRE ET PERSPECTIVES DE LA FORMATION DES ADULTES ET DE LA FORMATION À L'ENSEIGNEMENT : ENTRE COMPLICITÉ, DISTANCE ET RECONNAISSANCE

**RÉSUMÉ.** Ce texte s'organise en trois grandes parties. Dans la première partie, nous dessinerons la figure de la professionnalisation. Celle-ci semble aujourd'hui la visée des politiques de formation professionnelle. Elle est de toute évidence aussi considérée comme un moyen et donc comme une garantie de la finalité professionnelle de la formation proposée. Sur quels présupposés, tant idéologiques que pédagogiques, cette professionnalisation repose-t-elle? La seconde figure incarnant les contextes de formation professionnelle est celle des savoirs. Quels sont les savoirs présents dans la formation professionnelle des enseignants? Participent-ils, et de quelles manières, aux processus de professionnalisation? Dans quelles mesures la couleur donnée à la professionnalisation, qu'on la mâtime de l'objectif d'instruction, de l'objectif de socialisation ou de l'objectif de qualification, détermine un sens spécifique au Savoir et aux savoirs définis et énoncés dans la formation professionnelle des enseignants? Troisième figure emblématique de la formation professionnelle, celle du rapport entre l'école et la vie. Où commence et où se termine la formation professionnelle? Quels

sont ces territoires? Peut-elle aller au-delà des territoires habituels et donc de l'expertise attendue du professionnel? En traitant tour à tour de ces trois figures, nous devrions proposer au lecteur une nouvelle approche de la formation professionnelle des enseignants en lui insufflant un nouveau souffle par un rappel des finalités et des valeurs de la formation des adultes.

## THE COMPLEX REALITIES OF TEACHING

Since the 1980s education has become considerably more complex, notably owing to increases in responsibilities for teachers and the diversification of student populations (Barrère, 2002). As a result, teachers are confronted with contexts that often overlap and with conditions that are sometimes new, for which their initial university training has not necessarily prepared them (Carbonneau, 1993). As Brodeur, Deaudelin and Bru (2005) have pointed out, a number of dimensions inherent to the professional development process remain to be elucidated, particularly those involved in the period of professional entry (Martineau & Presseau 2007). The issues and difficulties facing new teachers in their classroom situations as well as in their relationships with families and the community constitute a subject of major concern, as is clearly demonstrated by the special report of the Quebec Ministry of Education journal *Vie Pédagogique* (September & October 2003) and a seminar held in Quebec on May 20-21, 2004 (ministère de l'Éducation du Québec [MEQ],<sup>1</sup> Centre de recherche interuniversitaire sur la formation et la profession enseignante [CRIFPE],<sup>2</sup> Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant [COFPE]<sup>3</sup>). These meetings have brought to light the effects of unsuccessful professional integration on the medium- to long-term continuation of teachers in the profession. This issue leads to a questioning, before employment even begins, of the processes of professional learning meant to prepare the way for successful professional integration. More generally speaking, it also raises the question of the relevance of professional *dispositifs*<sup>4</sup> or training plans adopted and overseen by higher education institutions. We should also note the return of the almost ancient quest for the elusive link between training and employment (Tanguy, 1998) that has emerged from debates on teacher education. These debates have to do with ensuring that the financing provided to teacher training institutions guarantees that they will provide students the most adapted preparation possible for the job market.

If professional training is highly lauded and valued in the official discourse on teacher education, this is because it is counted on to improve the competencies of teachers and ultimately the academic perseverance of students. Behind this orientation one finds restated a premise shared today, as much by researchers (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991) as by political leaders (American Council on Education, 1999), namely an affirmation of the teacher's role as a significant vehicle for improving students' academic performance. The success of educational reform thus seems to depend strongly on the involvement and conviction

of concerned players – and especially teachers – in the evolution of educational models, in the improvement of educational contexts, and in a transformation of the practices of the professionals concerned. Various publications (Mendro, 1998; Powell & Anderson, 2002) have underscored the essential role of teachers in successfully introducing a new curriculum (Lenoir, 2005).

Consequently, decision makers in charge of school systems have gradually geared the policies of professional teacher training toward the promotion of training plans, approaches, didactic-pedagogical situations, and methods likely to create the conditions for successful professional learning. They have especially banked on the role of practica (Correa Molina & Gervais, 2008a) as an opportunity to create these learning situations. These leaders also count on scientific research to supply organizational and pedagogical proposals likely to facilitate transitions between knowledge stemming from training and knowledge acquired over periods of employment. The expectation is also that these proposals will concern plans for guiding the first years of employment, which are considered crucial for the successful professional insertion of beginning teachers. In light of these various expectations, research on teacher education has fostered the scientific project of better defining the right teaching practices assumed to establish conditions for student success. Analysis of research conducted on teaching practices in North America (Lenoir et al., 2006) and of research on professional teacher training (Gauthier & Mellouki, 2006) show that the scientific community examines two principal aspects of teaching work seen as possible responses to political and social expectations: first, analysis of teaching practices; and second, analysis of training plans in professional teacher training, principally in terms of training content and the theory-practice relation. These two aspects share the same objective: training a high-level teacher, an expert in the instructional and professional success of education. Although certain works increasingly examine the role of practica in training (Correa Molina & Gervais, 2008b), few seek to analyze formal and/or informal processes of professional learning found in the various phases of insertion and professional integration.

Research on the professional training of teachers today does not seem to be concerned with the question of knowledge, whether the knowledge targeted in training, already acquired by teachers-in-training, or constructed during training and over the course of the various experiences leading to employment. What characterizes this knowledge and how is it linked to the competencies present in the various teacher training frameworks? The nature and functions of the knowledge required to build and develop professional competencies are also neglected in research on professional teacher training. Insofar as they are absent from scientific research, these various aspects of professional training constitute grey or even neglected areas likely to harm the evolution of teacher education policies over time. Due to a lack of precise indicators to support the implementation of training plans and an inability to rely on results or propos-

als stemming from the academic community, public decision makers may be tempted to resort to a few received ideas, in particular the notion that placing subjects in an employment situation is, in itself, the sole end and means of professional training. The recent decision in France to reconsider the place and function of university training institutions for teacher education attests to this skepticism concerning a professional training of teachers that seems unable to respond to social expectations, and political pressure, especially during elections. The lack of data on the conditions required for professional learning may in time compromise not only the professional insertion process, but also the quality of education offered to students, as the most difficult courses – those addressed to students at risk or with learning difficulties – are often left to beginning teachers (COPFE, 2002). We can therefore make a first observation concerning the presence of grey areas or even “black holes” in research on professional teacher training.

The object of this text, however, is to show that these black holes are in no way exclusive to teacher education contexts. In our view, they are components of the contexts of professional training plans at large. To support this thesis we have identified and chosen three figures embodying these contexts and presented as conditions for implementing professional training policies and training plans: the figures of professionalization, knowledge, and the school-life relationship. As we will see, each of these figures is accompanied by its own questions and points of insecurity. But we will also see that they represent grand designs, even if the paths for implementing them are not without obstacles. By outlining the context for reuniting professional teacher training and adult education, we also hope to lay the foundations of a new ambition for policies of professional teacher training marked by the founding values of lifelong education. Ultimately, it is our intent to recall the axiological, scientific, and praxeological heritage of adult education. We would like to demonstrate its visionary power in connection with the evolution of training plans and policies in teacher education.

#### THE MONOTONOUS DIRGE OF DISCOURSES ON PROFESSIONALIZATION

In analyzing the evolution of teacher training policies, we could a priori admit that the professional nature of this training is all but ubiquitous. We should recall that a number of research reports in Canada (Tardif, Lessard, & Gauthier, 1998), studies in Europe (Eurydice, 2004), numerous and sometimes strong recommendations stemming from committees or work groups related to the Ministry of Education (Rapport Bancel in France in 1989; *La formation à l'enseignement*, MEQ, 2001) have, over the past twenty years, supplied decision makers with pertinent arguments for differently conceiving teacher training plans, in particular by encouraging the development of a professionalization (Altet, 1994; Altet & Bourdoncle, 2000) of the teaching occupation. In other words, for the last twenty years an objective that is also a wager have

been forcefully set down – that of conceiving of teacher training with a view to improving the professional competencies of teachers. Although educational projects foremost aim to prepare citizens for the society of tomorrow, they must be able to rely on competent professionals, and this ultimately necessitates an improvement in the quality of teacher training plans and hence the compelling obligation of professionalization.

This recurring discourse on professionalization nevertheless conceals unspoken elements and exhibits a few grey areas or black holes. In the tradition and heritage of the work of British and North American sociologists, various definitions of “profession” and “professionalization” have emerged. Chapoulie (1973), Dubar and Tripier (1998) clearly show the different grey areas in these definitions. Following Dubar, we can consider that profession and professionalization are closely related terms: “professional groups are not separate, unified, established, or objective professions as the functionalist tradition stemming from Durkheim or Parsons might imply. As Strauss (1961) clearly saw, these are historical processes of constant segmentation, competition between segments, professionalization of certain segments and de-professionalization of others, and periodic restructuring influenced by movements of capital, the policies of states, or the collective actions of their members” (Dubar, 2001, p. 58).<sup>5</sup> Although the terms “profession” and “professionalization” echo each other, it should be kept in mind that the first texts examining professionalization primarily sought to define it as a process. These texts aimed to describe the various steps leading to professional status. We should note that professionals are defined by three characteristics: an activity carried out in the frame of a monopoly, an activity of practice evaluation, and an activity of transmitting knowledge and know-how.

The sociology of work (Dubar, 2001) has expanded the notion of profession and shed a different light on professionalization, notably by inviting us to take into account the knowledge that composes activity. Reference is made to the specific competencies of a professional group and the presence of tacit knowledge in professional activity. With the work of Hughes (1996) and Becker (2001), however, a gradual shift can be observed between profession, professionalization, and professionalism. Emphasis is placed on the heterogeneity of paths and of practices within one same professional group. In this context, a profession is therefore the provisional result of a progressive process inscribed in an individual and collective history, using an introspective approach of activity analysis and of contingent practices, and targeting the signification of an identity for the professional group concerned. This clearly shows that to address professionalization is, de facto, to interrogate at the same time the notions of profession, activity, practice, knowledge, and identity. It is also to seek to pose, in line with what could be called a “designer” approach (Barbier, 1997), the question of processes and knowledge drawn on to create the conditions for professionalization.

The works of Wittorski (2007) examine the various facets of professionalization and postulate training and work as means to support the professionalization process. Professionalization is hence defined as a “process of constructing learning, knowledge, and identities recognized as belonging to the chosen profession” (p. 3). Professionalization is also examined on the one hand as a meeting point between intentions expressed by organizations and work systems, and on the other as a demand, expressed by subjects, for recognition by the business. The attribution of the quality of “professional” thus depends on a dual action: the subject’s development and acquisition of recognition for acts in a given environment, and the environment’s social recognition of this subject, according to legitimacy criteria (p. 3). As a result, it is important to remember that professionalization is read, analyzed, and interpreted from two points of view or even two postures: that of the subject and that of the organization. But it should also be noted that the reading, analysis, and interpretation of professionalization processes can be centred on the training plans proposed by institutions, as well as on the situations leading to individual and collective professionalization. Regardless of the nature of these two perspectives of professionalization – which relate to the subject-organization relation and the training-work relation – the Anglo-Saxon heritage of the sociology of professions remains present. From a functionalist standpoint, it is the institution that seems to define the goals and functional modes of a professional group. It is the institution that appears to organize the conditions for professionalization via specific training plans and approaches. From an interactionist standpoint, it is the subjects, in the implementation of their intentions and practices, who define the field of professionalization and take part in its development process. Consequently, professionalization constitutes a complex reality inasmuch as analyzing it necessarily leads the researcher to question various terms (activity, intervention, practice, professionalism, knowledge, situation) both specifically – in their semantic and polysemic singularities – and collectively – in their mutual and reciprocal relations, along a threefold axiological, scientific, and praxeological plane. And yet, when examining training plans in professional teacher training (*La formation à l’enseignement*, MELS, 2001), we can identify two neglected elements. The first concerns the absence of a grammar for understanding the sense and function of terms used. The term “competency” is barely or not at all explained, especially in terms of its epistemological foundations. The terms “training plan,” “approach,” and “method” are not made any clearer. Finally, what can be said of the word “didactic,” which in Quebec covers more than half of the courses offered to teachers in training and remains undefined on a scientific level? These terms tend to become common sense notions. As a result, such words – whose scientific understanding is essential to designing and implementing professionalization processes – belong to the vocabulary of what is taken for granted. We can nevertheless rest assured that this shift toward common sense is not noticed by users. It most often enables the mask-



ing of a scientific anchoring in professional training. The second neglected element constituting teacher training plans has to do with the absence of organizational and didactic scenarios supporting the aim of professionalization. In other words, institutions of professional teacher training are free to choose the training plans that appear to meet the objective of professionalization. And what can be said of the players involved in these training plans who struggle to determine the meaning of the terms developed in and through the training plan and yet who are not invited to take part in the debate on the didactic-pedagogical choices made by the designers of such plans?

In the field of education, Agulhon (2001) notably shows how the term applies to a number of related occupations. Professionalization can also be found in the work of Benguigui (1967) and Monjardet (1968). It is especially the work of Demailly (1987), Isambert-Jamati (1992), and Bourdoncle (1991), however, that adopts the perspective of the sociology of professions to examine human service professions, particularly by studying the work of teachers. The work of Lessard and Tardif (1996), which also draws from the sociology of professions, reveals the limits of the discourse and writings defining education as a profession and those presenting teachers as a professional group. We should recall that the thesis of considering education a profession rests on several arguments. First, teaching activity is part of a societal aim. It is deemed essential to the functioning and development of society. Second, this activity is prepared in the frame of professional training in a high-level university setting – a guarantee of professional expertise. Third, it supposes or presupposes a significant capacity for adaptation to situations, and requires the adjustment of practices to new educational and pedagogical contexts. Basing themselves on these various postulates, recent reforms in teacher training target two objectives: professionalization and the professional development of the subject. In view of reaching these objectives, an approach (analysis of practices), itself part of a championing discourse on an updated and re-contextualized pedagogy (*alternance* or alternation between periods of theory and practice), is gradually becoming the cornerstone of training plans targeting the two objectives of professionalization and professional development (Perrenoud, 2001). However, despite all of these characteristics that might lead us to say that education is indeed a profession, Lessard and Tardif point out the question of knowledge and that of teacher training as potential obstacles to a definitive affirmation. The uncertain nature of the knowledge in education, the difficulty of conferring upon it a status and function in the professionalization process, and the question of the nature and meaning of teacher training that does not always appear to guarantee the establishment of professional learning situations all constitute forms of “no man’s land” that can lead to speaking of education as a semi-profession (Etzioni, 1969) or as a not-quite profession (Goodlad, 1990). From this standpoint, if we are going to interrogate professionalization,



we must insist on looking at a central aspect of the issue – the question of processes. This also leads to analyzing the knowledge present and/or desired in these processes, and to positing the learning act as the central condition for implementing a plan for professionalization. But the limits of the thesis of education as a profession, as referred to by Lessard and Tardif, can also be found in works dealing with other human service professions.

Education is not the only profession concerned by this issue of professionalization; it in fact touches upon nearly all human service professions. Indeed, these grey areas appear to be equally present in research on several other professions. In works on senior educational advisers; on teacher aides (Piot, 2001; Clenet, 2001), in which it is primarily the activity that is examined; on socio-educational contributors and especially childhood specialists (Boutanquoi, 2002), in which the notions of social representations and practices are used to study professional activity; on social stakeholders (Piot, 2006; Jaeger, 2009), who particularly emphasize the question of knowledge and practices, the most recent of which study the activities of guidance, accompanying students, and coaching (Vial, 2007); and on health professionals (Orofiamma, 2006), we can observe that two difficulties appear when examining work in these human service professions. The first difficulty is that of identifying a grammar that might be agreed upon by the academic community. We can even consider that certain terms – such as “practice” or “intervention,” for example – express different meanings and do not all belong to the same scientific paradigm. Consequently, it appears difficult to establish typologies and hence comparisons between these various professional activities. It seems just as hasty to consider a given activity as belonging to one same professional group, owing to an inability to compare various forms of professional action from one profession to another. The second difficulty is that of the methodology chosen to analyze work in the human service professions. The epistemological postures, methodological perspectives, and tools for collecting, treating, and analyzing empirical data are variable and hardly permit the establishment of comparisons likely to permit an identification of the broad characteristics of work in these professions (Lenoir et al., 2006). We can see, therefore, that it is not enough to forcefully invoke the ambition of a professionalization of teacher training for this professionalization to be able to create the conditions for successful professional learning. Hence, besides this question of the meaning and elements constituting professionalization processes, the question of the presence or absence of professional learning situations must be posed when a professional training plan is introduced and piloted. In sum, analysis of the first symbolic figure of professional training – that is, professionalization – reveals three neglected elements as missed opportunities: the teleological element, the didactic-pedagogical element, and the linguistic element.

## ON THE SUBJECT OF “KNOWLEDGE”: BETWEEN THE OBLIGATION OF PROFESSIONALIZATION AND THE DESIRE FOR A “PROFESSIONALIZING” TRAINING

Confronted with these stakes and challenges that come with the objective of professionalization, teacher training institutions (*Hautes écoles, instituts universitaires de formation des maîtres*, education and education science faculties, and the like) have strived for more than twenty years to improve teacher training. In this frame, educational policies, especially in the French-speaking world (MENRT, 1999; MELS 2001) on the basis of researcher recommendations (Meirieu, 1989; Paquay, Altet, Charlier, & Perrenoud, 1996) – as in the English-speaking world (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2000) – have attempted to develop and put into place new teacher training curricula. These curricula have been based on three broad principles: the recognition of the professional nature of teaching or its “professionality”, the implementation of a professionalization process, and the use of various space-times for training embodied by various carriers of knowledge. These three principles rest on the premise that all professional training establishes professional learning situations. Durand (2008, p. 33) elaborates on this idea by identifying several implicit presuppositions in the policies of teacher training. We will address only four. First, training centres disseminate varied knowledge gained from research. Second, this knowledge varies depending on the settings where action takes place. Third, teacher training can, as a result, boil down to an opposition between categories of knowledge. Fourth, teaching leads to the acquisition of experiential knowledge. We would like to add a fifth presupposition, namely that professional training designs and implements professional learning situations. In addition to these presuppositions, we can consider that one of the first grey areas relating to the question of knowledge types in professional training is the one revealing a confrontation between three postures seeking to describe professionalization processes: an epistemological posture, a cognitivist posture, and a posture originating from the action sciences. The epistemological posture seeks to identify the various knowledge types in play in professionalization processes. We can identify various works seeking to draw up typologies of knowledge (Malglave, 1992; Fabre, 1999; Beauvais, 2003; Astolfi, 2004). Other works instead choose to use the word *connaissance* (roughly translated as “what is learned,” a more basic form of knowledge, Bourgois & Nizet, 1997, or even “competence,” Rey, 1996, Perrenoud, 2008). This enterprise of identifying knowledge and its forms is not without perils. Indeed, two impasses can be reached in this delicate work. The first is the risk of isolating knowledge from action. In the endeavour of developing typologies, knowledge is extracted from its contexts so that it can be defined and so that differences can be illustrated in terms of the status, functions, and aims of this knowledge. This substantiates certain common-sense conceptions to the effect that the product can be isolated from the process

(Develay, 1992), that it can be quantified and named, enabling observation of the circumstances and conditions under which it is called upon in action. This attempt at an infinite categorization of knowledge can lead the researcher and/or practitioner to consider an infinite number of knowledge families and to forget that knowledge can be defined only “in relation to” (Charlot, 1997). The second impasse created by this extraction of knowledge from the contexts in which it acquires meaning lies in the fact that such a conception proposes to admit a dual specificity of knowledge, namely variability and heterogeneity. From this perspective, the premise of the nature of knowledge variability and heterogeneity prompts the establishment of spaces for confrontation between knowledge types and thus invites a reading of cognitive processes involved in professionalization situations, such as notably socio-cognitive processes of conflict management (Bourgeois & Nizet, 1997). And yet, in our view it is not so much the knowledge that carries this dual specificity as it is the situations. As a result, it appears necessary to us to define knowledge in and through the situations that support it within professionalization processes. If we consider that an epistemological posture is required to read and understand professionalization processes, it nevertheless remains important to study knowledge in its contexts of activity and situations of use.

Cognitive science for its part seeks to understand cognitive processes involved in professionalization contexts. Durand recalls that two perspectives are directly opposed, namely a constructivist perspective and a social interactionist perspective. In the former, following the Piagetian principle of assimilation-accommodation, human action takes place according to a dual process of adaptation and organization. Consequently, the details of action are unpredictable (Durand, 2008, p. 36) and knowledge is never completed. The issue here is to understand the cognitive mechanisms apt to support the professionalization process. The reference to learning is here explicitly recalled (Bourgeois & Nizet, 1997; Labelle & Eneau, 2008). Nevertheless, when considering this constructivist approach, we can hypothesize that this is liable to cloud understanding and hence impede mastery of professionalization processes; it can hardly help trainers in charge of such processes. The confusion is caused by the provisional nature of knowledge involved and by the fact that this knowledge can never be entirely defined and mastered, since it is inscribed in a “cognitive and practical mastery that always remains incomplete” (Durand, p. 36). The social interactionist approach instead chooses to use the term “activity.” According to Durand, “The unit to analyze is the activity within a social action, and learning is explained by participation in organized social interactions” (p. 36). The social interactionist perspective, closer to a Vygotskian reading of constructivism, uses the word “activity” and situates knowledge in a relation to the context and the situation. It grants a central place to the subject, notably by favouring the function of experience. Consequently, it is the subject “acting in a situation” that is examined. By emphasizing the activity, social

interactionism highlights the importance of taking situations into account. The activity-situation pair thus constitutes a paradigmatic figure of the interactionist approach. In our view, however, learning appears to be somewhat neglected in this underlining of the situation and activity. Indeed, what links can be made between activity, situation, and learning? Are situations designed to support learning processes? Is the conception of situations implicitly determined by a conception of learning? Or, conversely, does this conception of situations relate to a representation of the activity organized chronologically and according to predefined space-times? Although the social interactionist perspective appears relevant to us, particularly insofar as it situates the question of knowledge in relation to the situation and activity, in our view learning should be integrated into this approach for analyzing professionalization processes. As a result, it is important to elucidate the foundations and hence choices of postures (the epistemological posture, the cognitivist posture, and the posture stemming from the action sciences) adopted to describe and analyze knowledge within professionalization processes.

The second grey area touching upon the question of knowledge in professional training is that of the nature of knowledge stemming from training and that of the identity of the carriers of this knowledge. A postulate seems to reign in training institutions, namely the one asserting the scientific nature of knowledge transmitted in these professional training *dispositifs* or training plans. The “university” label adds to this guarantee of the scholarly dimension of knowledge found in professional teacher training. But what is the nature of the knowledge stemming from professional training? Mayen (2008, p. 44) considers that knowledge “proposed from the outside is subject to the same criteria of practical efficiency. Its scientific rationality or prescribed nature do not, as a matter of course, grant it entry into the organization of action.” For Mayen, within professional training, it is the activity – insofar as it carries the organizing principles of action – which organizes and determines criteria for the legitimacy and rationality of scientific knowledge. It is thus central, in teacher training, to examine how concepts and learning are mobilized in the activity. Following Vygotsky, Mayen seeks to show how concepts and learning are constructed by the subject. According to the same author, concepts and learning are transformed according to two mutually enriching approaches, “over the course of a complex operation aiming to solve a problem and by means of encounters with others and with culture” (p. 55). This would indicate a dual intra- and inter-psycho mechanism governing the elaboration of concepts and learning. Here, by “activity” we mean that which carries the organizing principles of action. That action is the reference according to which one can conceive of the knowledge in play in professionalization processes. Durand (2008) reminds us that it is the various situations offered to teachers in training that determine the meaning and, most certainly, the status accorded to knowledge offered during training. He notably identifies four types of situations:

situations in which immediate efficiency is the measure of the activity and its learning; situations in which the relevance comes down to the consistency of reasoning within a given situation; situations in which consistency is seen in accordance with conformity to the norms, codes, and values of a community; and situations in which the relevance has to do with the status of individuals (p. 38). Besides the question of the relation between situation, activity, and learning, this raises the question of the representations of the various carriers of knowledge regarding situations, processes to learn, activities, and learning. Carriers of knowledge each bring their share of “scientificity” and thus legitimacy to the proposed knowledge. Each sets the tone for the knowledge in question by opting for the bias of the activity and/or the situation and/or learning. This is why it appears important, in order to understand professionalization processes, to base ourselves on an exploration of meetings and dialogue with the various trainers involved in professional training. It is undoubtedly here, for example in workshops for analysis of practices, that we can initiate and organize processes of negotiation, transaction, and guidance (p. 57) seeking to establish the conditions for work on knowledge in a triple relation to situations, the activity, and learning. Finally, it should be kept in mind that the various contributors to professional training vary in the proximity of their relation to knowledge stemming from education science. Trainers in the field, university instructors, professor-researchers, practicum supervisors, associate teachers, and education advisers all confer to knowledge a certain legitimacy and “scientificity.” This positioning is seemingly also the product of a relation to the teaching profession. Each contributor’s background plays a part in defining the territories of scientific terms in a relation to distance or proximity with terms in the field, which in turn acquire meaning in reference to concrete situations. Finally, it is these various contributors who also propose ways of categorizing this knowledge by using a grammar that is alternately scientific or common-sense. But here again this knowledge must not be removed from its contexts. It can only be acquired and mastered in a relation to the activity, the situation, and learning. It is these carriers of knowledge in their specific conceptions of situations, of the activity, and of the learning act – as well as in the use of terms chosen to describe professional action – which give their representations of Knowledge and of knowledge.

As a result, to think of the question of knowledge in professional training in a different way, it is important to critically examine two dimensions. The first is that of the legitimacy of discourse used in professional training. Is this discourse the result of a didactic transposition (Chevallard, 1985)? Does it embody the knowledge stemming from education science? In this frame, can we identify academic knowledge from education science whose choice and place in the teacher training curriculum are generally agreed upon? In line with Durand (2008), is this scientific discourse conceived as a response to the characteristics of situations? Is it conceived as answers to problems

contained in situations? Does it consist of suggestions for action or answers for building competencies? What might be the place of practical experience in this attempt at dialogue with knowledge stemming from education science? What are the criteria for selecting this scholarly knowledge (Mayen, 2008, p. 44)? Insofar as professionalization processes include both biographical and relational dimensions, how can these various situations be taken into account in formal and informal contexts? Here again, the answer of undertaking work on the dialectic relations between situation, activity, and learning appears to us a tenable proposition. Finally, what is to be made of “general discourse” loaded with values (Durand, p. 35) and highly present in training, as well as in the discourse of beginning teachers (Maubant & Roger, 2009)? The second dimension to take into account when considering the problem of knowledge in professional training is that of finding a grammar for describing, interpreting, and understanding professionalization processes. Saussez recalls that in professional training, “activities of reflecting on experience do not sufficiently address language and its use” (Saussez, 2008, p. 61). Although the last few years have seen a marked increase in workshops and seminars based on experience – and practice-related narrative (Blanchard-Laville & Fablet, 2004), it must also be recognized that little research has examined language as a tool for clarifying the teaching act. To attempt to question the discourse used in professional training is to justly try to update three aims of professionalization processes – use of reflection on action, study of the conditions for constructing learning, and dialogue between the various involved contributors – around a threefold process of negotiation, transaction, and guidance. Saussez therefore invites us to be cautious when it comes to the use of practice-related workshops and seminars. He suggests analyzing discourse “in the sense that it results from real work over the course of which the speaker attempts to shed light on a grey area of his or her experience of the world using language tools” (Saussez, p. 61). This perspective leads us to set down the question of grammar as one standpoint to take into account when working on knowledge in professionalization processes.

In line with this heuristic aim proposed by Saussez, we will now present a third gray area touching upon the question of knowledge in professional training, namely that of the notion of reflective practitioner. The development and implementation of the new curricula was intended to support the emergence of a new teaching posture – that of the reflective practitioner (Perrenoud, 2001). Besides this objective of reforming teacher education curricula, structured around what is close to a didactic-pedagogical device, the specific question of the relation between research and training, *de facto*, was posed. In this regard, various publications (AECSE, 1993; Paquay, Altet, Charlier, & Perrenoud, 1996; Tardif, Lessard, & Gauthier, 1998) have shown the extent to which training plans in teacher education very early favoured an applicationist model, that is, a model according to which scientific knowledge governs the construction of

professional knowledge. This conception of professional teacher training is hardly different from those governing the construction of other professional training plans preparing for other occupations (Maubant, 2004,a). Indeed, these plans most often give a primordial place to the scientific knowledge that makes up education science by making it the cornerstone for constructing professional knowledge. Although it remains difficult today to recognize the adherence of numerous training plans in teacher education to this model (2004,b), it appears that analysis of the discourse of “newly graduated” teachers (Maubant & Lenoir, 2008) casts doubt on the ability of such training plans to provide future teachers with the knowledge required to practice their occupation. Behind this complex problem of the relation between research and training appears another question, more specifically concerning all professional training, namely the relation between theory and practice. If we notably interrogate professional teacher training plans, the dominant didactic-pedagogical model, which accords a preponderant place to theoretical knowledge to the detriment of practical knowledge, is brought into question (Perrenoud, 2001). Moreover, can we be sure that the knowledge composing teacher education curricula (or knowledge “for” practice) is a faithful translation of knowledge stemming from research (or knowledge “on” practice)? Finally, what can be said of the absence, in teacher training plans, of a real consideration of knowledge stemming from teachers’ analysis of their own *savoir-agir* (knowing how to act, or knowledge “of” practice)? In view of these many grey areas, it seems necessary not only to question the training model favoured in teacher education curricula, but also to identify the conditions for transferring this scientific knowledge stemming from educational research into the actual practices of teachers and not only their declared practices. Our intent here is therefore to critically examine the relevance of the organization of professional training plans targeting the professionalization of training subjects.

In the light of a possible discrepancy between teacher training and the knowledge mobilized in the teaching act, it appears essential in our view to investigate research aiming to study professional learning processes. To examine the professional learning processes of teachers in training, various theoretical, conceptual, and methodological frames are used. In the area of teacher education, one perspective was particularly studied by researchers until recently: the socio-organizational perspective seeking to question the various socio-pedagogical models introduced and implemented by teacher education institutions, such as the pedagogy of alternation (Tardif, Lessard, & Gauthier, 1998; Gauthier & Mellouki, 2006; Maubant, 2004b) or the role of *practica* in training. But it is in the area of research on adult education that one can find, starting in the 2000s, the emergence of educational research seeking to understand the conditions for the realization and success of professional learning (Mayen, 2004; Maubant, 2007). Thus, analysis of the modes of elaboration and mastery of professional knowledge making up teaching practice (Bru, 2002), understanding



of modes for constructing professional knowledge (Clénet, 2003; Mehrand, Ronveaux, & Vanhulle, 2007; Vanhulle, 2008), identification of professional knowledge constructed in initial training and mobilized in the application of professional competencies (Jorro, 2002; Maubant, 2007), and use of training practices intended to work on the learning process of teachers in training (Nault and Lacourse, 2008; Faulx, 2008, Donahue, 2008) are all research orientations favoured and addressed by various research teams in Europe and North America. Reading and understanding professional learning today tends to become the key for research seeking to understand the mechanisms and successful conditions relative to professional teacher training. But here again, we come up against the problem of the choice of words to describe these professional learning situations. There is a pressing need to establish a grammar that might be agreed upon by the various players involved in teacher training. In our view, constructing this grammar requires anchoring in scientific knowledge. We can see beyond doubt that the design of knowledge relates to the design of professionalization. The sense attributed to professionalization will determine the choice of knowledge as well as the identification of a grammar enabling the reading and interpreting of this knowledge. The question of our relation to Knowledge and to knowledge will influence the professionalization process and the way we conceive of professional learning. In our intent to differently interpret professional teacher training, it is therefore necessary to update this mutual envelopment between the figure of professionalization and the figure of knowledge. However, considering professionalization processes and the question of knowledge in play within these processes are certainly two singular approaches that must nevertheless be led together in a quasi-dialectic relation. They also invite us to analyze the professionalizing dimension of these professional trainings. We hypothesize that this professionalizing dimension composing discourses in professional training is situated within the very conception of these training plans, and hence in their organizations. The question of the conception of the professionalizing aim of a given training is directly linked to the conceptions of the relation to knowledge, to those of the activity and situations, to those of learning defended by the various contributors. The more professional training is thought of along a hierarchical line – and this is frequent in educational systems – the greater the over-engineering of training design in the conceptions of the various trainers.

We can therefore consider that to interrogate professionalization in the various professional sectors concerned by this aim of “professionism” (and social occupations are in this group) is primarily to interrogate established processes. It is to study the realities of the professionalizing nature of professional training plans. Analysis of the appearance and rise of these professionalizing training plans reveals two common denominators that often constitute their principal argument. The first is that of the recognition and validation of learning. Professionalizing training plans propose to take into account the learning of

individuals in training, both to answer a demand for individualized paths (Besançon, Maubant, & Ouzilou, 1994) and to adapt to the heterogeneous reality of student populations in training. The second common denominator of these professionalizing training plans is that of alternation. The offered training alternates various space-times (Maubant, 2004) and therefore concerns various temporalities (Roquet, 2007) of a given training path. This training also touches upon connections, linkages, and integrating processes intended to promote its professionalizing aim. Certain courses are sometimes conceived and created in this sense: integration activities. Tools are used: the portfolio (Nault & Lacourse, 2008). And yet, if teacher training plans based on the principle of alternation warrant analysis, it is in order to grasp the relevance of this alternation in terms of the gains it enables for the learning of teachers-in-training (Mehrand, Ronveaux, & Vanhulle, 2007). But it is also to reveal certain absences or neglected elements in the conception of such training plans and/or in the championing inventory of certain pedagogies such as, notably, alternation. Does this refer to knowledge, to situations, or to activities? Is the question of the learning act being taken into account (Aumont & Mesnier, 1992)? Is an examination being carried out of possible contexts of learning in a training situation, in a work situation, or outside training and work situations (Marcel, 2004)? What of informal learning situations, whether intentional (individual, collective) or unconscious, or even tacit (Livingstone & Sawchuck, 2003; Bjornavold, 2001; Gamache, 2004)? What is to be made of forms of “on-the-job” learning (Delbos & Jorion, 1990) or “use-based” learning? Finally, we should note the question of knowledge transmission in organizations or that of the intergenerational transfer of competencies. We could also speak of the rapid development of communities of practice or of mentor guidance practices and of the development of informal groups in organizations, which have proven important factors in the transmission of knowledge and learning within organizations (Lejeune & Brunet, 2006). Finally, we could also find this same idea in the development of social activities in work settings, the consideration of situations in which discussions between peers favour “exchanges of useful methods” and the transmission of knowledge within a work team, for instance, or a social group (Hébert-Suffrin, 1992). Therefore, besides the figure of knowledge and the questions it raises, the identification of conceptions behind the training plans – as well as knowledge of the various situations leading to learning and their geographical and historical place – also come into play in the objective of making professionalization processes intelligible. Having presented the first two figures of professional trainings, that is, that of professionalization and that of knowledge, we would like to guide the reader toward a third figure concerning the teleological aim of professional training: the relation between school and life.

## TRAINING, QUALIFYING, INSTRUCTING, OR SOCIALIZING?

We should recall that in Quebec, the missions of the school (MELS 2001) are organized around three objectives: to instruct, to socialize, and to provide qualifications. The share of each objective in classroom functioning is left up to the practitioner. The teacher is conferred the implementation of the three aims, which are presented as complementary in the official texts. Consequently, the teacher, who administers these aims, can choose to prioritize one or another of these objectives or consider – and this most frequently appears to be the case – that all proposed activities target all three aims. Following a close examination of adult education, we could consider that it covers a larger area than professional training does. In *Les composantes doctrinales de l'idée d'éducation permanente*, Forquin (2002) shows how the rise of institutional discourse of lifelong education contributes to the demise of adult education. From this standpoint, adult education is no longer a supplement or a logical continuation of childhood education. It is instead a component, among others, of ongoing and life-long education. The term “education” as opposed to “training” confirms this thesis of an extension of education and its aims to all periods of life.<sup>6</sup> The boundaries between the various forms of education disappear and give way to education situated in the contexts and territories of human existence.

Françoise Laot (2002) develops and elaborates Forquin's thesis by examining the term “adult.” What is adulthood? What allows us to identify training? Are the permutations of this training found only in the frame of a relation to another person (within or outside of a formal situation)? or only in an individual awareness of the act of training? According to Laot, the term *formation des adultes* or “adult education” appeared in France in 1970. It appears directly related to the development of policies in continuing professional training. We can therefore see a break here between the expression “lifelong education” on the one hand, and the term “adult education” – strongly associated, starting in this period, with objectives assigned to continuing professional training – on the other. It is important to distinguish between the discourse on lifelong education and the discourse on adult education. We can clearly see that both contain political ambitions and ideological aims. According to those championing lifelong education, it is important “to target the idea of infinite perfectibility, stemming from the Age of Enlightenment and Condorcet in particular” (Fabre, 1994, p. 48). For adherents of adult education, it is important to support the development of the professional training mechanism, especially in two specific types of socio-economic contexts – those of technological development and those of industrial restructuring. We have shown (Maubant, 2004) how adult education, notably in France, seeks to resist this new orientation imposed by these two concepts by pursuing one of its founding

functions, that is, democratizing access to knowledge. By contributing to the development of socio-educational actions and the implementation of training for assisting those with social and cognitive difficulties, and by undertaking action so as become involved in training plans seeking to curb social exclusion and economic marginalization, adult education – in France supported and reinforced by the experiences and values of popular education – pursues its ambition of emancipating individuals. As a result, beyond institutional aims, adult education, in its actions and practices, tends to fully maintain its place in the values conveyed by discourse on lifelong education.

Bertrand Schwartz considers that the visionary power of adult education, in France especially, resides in its ability to develop various educational actions simultaneously. The populations targeted by these actions in adult education can by turns be “intentionally weak, intentionally elevated with the training offered by the Conservatoire des arts et métiers, or in between with popular universities” (Schwartz, 1988, p. 9). This adult training can alternately target social and professional promotion (Maubant & Gueneau, 1996), academic remediation, and social and cultural development. The contents offered by this training will seek to address this plurality of populations and objectives. But it is in the values of adult education that one must identify a dimension that might breathe new life into professional teacher education. Referring to Freire, Schwartz reminds us that the Brazilian pedagogue identifies two dimensions addressed in the second and third sections of this text: that of professionalization and that of knowledge. “Which stems from training, and what, notably, is transferred to everyday practice?” Schwartz asks. He also questions the modes of knowledge elaboration. Who introduces, carries, and transmits this knowledge? These questions are all taken on by Labelle. This last author, however, seems to propose to bring together aspirations for an emancipating adult education, thus escaping the melancholy-tinged lyricism evoked by the *École républicaine française*. For Labelle (1996 p. 41), adult education is that opportunity in which “one finds – in connivance and in a combinatorial context to which each adult holds the secret – the various logics of the desire of the person, and of the demands of society.” Does this issue not always lead to the “bringing into reciprocity” (1990) of logics, for the adult at work to progress in his or her awareness as a human being? We can thus consider that adult education in its ability to investigate the professionalizing dimension of the training plan it proposes, notably by questioning the relations between knowledge and work based on a dialogue between activity, situation, and learning, is at the vanguard of reflection on professional teacher training. Through the study of adult courses in France in the 19th century, Labelle recalls the extent to which adult learning must be an individual process linked to work (p. 34). And he adds, “Learning in work and in order to work only has a chance of success if learning takes place together with work, not in a mere relation of simultaneity but rather in a relation of structural contiguity” (p. 35). In adult education,

there is evidently the desire to reconcile instruction and socialization in one same dynamic. This value certainly echoes one of the principles established as a pedagogical posture by the pioneers of New Education, namely work. We consider that adult education offers the perspective of a “second wind” to professional teacher training by situating the analysis of work at the heart of training plans in a dialectic relation with the analysis of learning.

## CONCLUSIONS

### *Teachers: Adults in training?*

By seeking to sketch the landscape of professional training based on these three figures, as unique yet complementary faces and viewpoints (that of professionalization, that of knowledge, and that of the school-life relation), we have sought to defend the thesis that professional teacher training must remember the founding values of adult education. These values lead us to reconsider professional action as an object of study and as an object of training elaboration. They encourage us to remember that training – including professional training – is foremost a question of learning. Finally, by pushing us to overcome the dilemma of instruction and socialization, the values of adult education also invite us to bring school and life together (Houssaye, 1987). To introduce the values of adult education into a reflection on professional teacher training in its three dimensions (teleological, praxeological, and scientific), it appears important to work in two directions: that of the question of scientific knowledge stemming from research in education science, and that of the question of carriers of knowledge. In view of the dangers weighing on teacher training policies and training plans, it appears essential in our view to identify the conditions for a “second wind” in teacher training. This new dynamic will come from adult education.

## NOTES

1. MEQ: Ministère de l'éducation du Québec
2. CRIFPE: Centre de recherche interuniversitaire sur la formation et la profession enseignante
3. COPFE: Comité d'orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant
4. In francophone culture, the term *dispositif* refers to a broad organizational plan or scheme for teacher-training or teaching. It is derived from State and institutional guidelines and requirements, and touches on both the curriculum and the various players who implement the curriculum. It is in this sense that we use the term “training plan” in the text.
5. All translations in the text are ours.
6. To fully appreciate the distinction here implied, it should be noted that adult education is generally referred to as “*formation des adultes*” in French, literally “adult training.”

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