

Disciplinary Knowledge, Postmodernism And Globalization: A Call for Donald Schön’s “Reflective Turn” for the Mental Health Professions

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Abstract: Disciplinary knowledge, postmodernism and globalization are identified and analyzed here as three shaping forces of current professional practice and education. The complex interrelationships among those forces is seen as a main contributor to the lack of creativity and as restricting factors pervading the mental health field. Professionals manage somehow to maintain some degree of effectiveness, but they are largely unaware of how they do it, as they are of the factors restricting their practice. A call for a “reflective turn”, as proposed by Donald Schön, is made for current epistemology of professional practices in the mental health field, as a possible way to avoid perpetuating an alienated way to practice and teach. Recommendations are made about ways to embody such a “reflective turn”, so as to allow both teachers and students to center around their actual “theories-in-use”, thus opening them to criticism, change and transmission.

Psychology can never tell the truth about madness because it is madness that holds the truth of psychology. (...) psychology can never master madness (...) because psychology became possible in our world only when madness had already been mastered and excluded from the drama. And when, in lightning flashes and cries, it reappears, as in Nerval and Artaud, Nietzsche or Roussel, it is psychology that remains silent, *speechless*, before this language that borrows a meaning of its own from that tragic split, from that freedom, that, for contemporary man, only the existence of “psychologists” allows him to forget. Michel Foucault (1987, p. 73, 87)

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