Tracks to Analyze Emotions around Mediator Artifacts to Improve Training and Business Creation for Unemployed People in French Universities

Christian BOURRET

Research Team DICEN IDF (Information and Communication Devices in the Digital Era)
University of Paris East Marne-la-Vallée (UPEM)
Marne-la-Vallée, France
e-mail: christian.bourret@u-pem.fr

Abstract - **In France, with the economic crisis and the huge rate of unemployment, the role of Universities has changed in the recent years. They try to promote the creation of new economic activities to attract new people, especially coming from disadvantaged areas in great town suburbs, particularly unemployed young people. We present the experiment of Creators of Activities University Degrees (DUCA) around cooperative devices or Creators' Groups (GC). These DUCA / GC correspond to an individual project, part of a global dynamics in a collective approach. In a perspective of helping disadvantaged people to rebuild their life in a project dynamics of creation of economic activity, information and communication issues are central. We propose some tracks to analyze these cooperative devices through two Mediator Artifacts developed in the DUCA / GC areas of cooperation: the business plan of the activities' creators and the training serious game "Solutia". They help to better master the emotions and feelings of activities' creators to develop their self-confidence and their entrepreneurship skills.**

Keywords - unemployed people; economic activities creation; entrepreneurship ; disadvantadged areas; mediator artifacts.

I. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

In a period of social crisis and of huge unemployment (3.58 million people in full unemployment in France in September 2016), particularly for non-graduated young people in disadvantaged areas, Paugam pointed the importance of "social links" [1] and of solidarity. In this context, in the recent years, the role of University has changed. It is no longer just only to build and transfer knowledge, but also to welcome new people and promote their vocational integration, including the creation of new economic activities. We speak of Social Responsibility of Universities (RSU). There is also the new position of "entrepreneur student" [2]. These evolutions correspond to the need of repositioning the Universities but also other organizations with public service missions, such as *Missions Locales* (ML) or Centre for Information and Orientation (CIO).

According to Azoulay [3], "there are talents in the suburbs but they need to be discovered and developed in different manners". We must give confidence to potential activities' creators and enable their talents to flourish, and also to promote "innovation in everyday life" [4] and especially social innovation.

The University of Paris East Marne-la-Vallée or UPEM, through its component University Institute of Technology (IUT) has managed since 2006 several groups of Creators of Activities University Degrees (DUCA), supported by training partnerships devices, the Creators' Groups (GC). These GC are federated in a national association: National Association of Creators' Groups (ANGC).

In this paper, we first present the researcher's position and the methodology used. Then we explain the specificity of the DUCA – GC devices, pointing particularly on their Information and Communication issues and the question of emotions. We present two emotions' Mediator Artifacts: first a training "serious game" (Solutia) and a second, the Business Plan used as the framework of the economic activity project. Finally, we give some examples of success stories of activities creation before a conclusion insisting on future works.

II. RESEARCHER'S POSITION AND METHODOLOGY

The author of this paper manages DUCAs in the IUT / UPEM and is also member of GC Coordination Committees. His analysis corresponds to a research position described by Bernard et al. [5] as "engaging communication". These researchers outline the dimensions of "engaging position" and that of projects, which is the case for DUCA-GC.

According to D'Almeida [6], organizations move "between projects and stories." The projects correspond to two types of devices: first is the organizational one, and the second she calls "symbolic narrative" part where "stories" (symbolic devices) are essential. Organizations or organizational devices build their own imaginary stories. To take an example in a presentation's leaflet of Val de Marne Creators' Group: "Creators' Groups help to switch from dream to reality." They are based on two core values: "everyone is an asset for the territory", "everyone expressing the desire to create an activity is heard".

From a methodological perspective, the author of this article belongs to the French University's interdisciplinary field of Information and Communication Sciences, in agreement with the approach proposed by Bernard [7] with the convergence of four aspects: meaning, link (relationships, interactions), knowledge and action. He positions in a research action perspective mixing theory and practice to build knowledge for action.

In this work, we meet several concepts. The first concept met is that of "device" (in French, "*dispositif*"), that we consider, according to Foucault [8], with all its socio-technical dimensions. For him, "What I'm trying to identify with that name, is first a decidedly mixed space, with speeches, institutions, architectural arrangements, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical propositions, moral, philanthropic, in short: the words, as well as the unspoken, are mere elements of the device. The device in itself is the network that can be established between all these elements. Secondly, that I would identify in the device, is precisely the nature of the relationship that may exist between these heterogeneous elements."

In a socio-constructivist perspective, we also rely on the concept of "mediator artifact": "the tools provided by the environment do not only play a role of mediator but also of artifact in that they organize (or reorganize) cognitive functioning" [9] with all the importance of project dynamics [10] [11]. We also rely on the concepts of situations and interactions [12], defined by Zacklad as a logic of "cooperative transactions" [13].

III. THE DUCA – GC AS SOCIO-TECHNICAL DEVICES

In this section, we will show how DUCA-GC corresponds to socio-technical devices as interactions' areas with important Information and Communication Issues.

A. DUCA and GC as interactions' areas

According to ANGC, "The Creators Groups seek autonomy and professional integration of unemployed people, including school leavers, based on their desires to undertake as a catalyst". The main goal of the GC / DUCA devices is to restore confidence, especially for young school leavers by leveraging their creativity in a project approach from an individual project based on training (DUCA), developed in training and group work, but also with an individual coaching. So this is an individual project, part of global dynamics, in a collective approach (Creators' Groups).

Since 2006, UPEM / IUT proposed several DUCAs in partnership with different Creators Groups: Val de Marne Department (94), Val Maubuée (Torcy, 77) and, during three years, with the GC Paris 20th.

We will analyze how a new kind of training (DUCA) is based on cooperative processes and may be regarded as a

"device" or an "organizational form" created by all the interactions between all the actors, to develop new opportunities for job seekers coming from disadvantaged areas, especially young school leavers. This process creates a new dynamics among all the actors, combining the individual dimension of each project with a collective dynamics.

A DUCA / GC device brings together partners including: 1) A federative structure (*Mission Locale*, Local Plan for Economic Insertion (PLIE), House of Employment (*Pôle Emploi*), other associations, etc.), 2) a University, often through an IUT, 3) a consultancy team in business creation (management shop or *boutique de gestion*, cooperative, industry and trade chamber, etc.).

B. Importance of Information and Communication Issues

In a perspective of helping people to rebuild their life [14] in a project dynamics, information collect and communication issues are central. Their analysis will constitute a main part of our grid to consider awareness and management of emotions and feelings as levers of creating economic activities. And so their management included in these activities' creation may help people in difficult situations to rebuild their life.

Firstly, candidates to DUCA / GC are searching in leaflets on business and crafts, books and numerous documents offered by the Local Missions and Centre for Information and Orientation (CIO), specialized websites, etc., information to better formalize their projects. They are helped in their information and documentation work by members of ML or of CIO.

The personal reconstruction of the learner / creator is based on an innovative process of creating an activity that is formalized in an oral mid-term and an end-of-year presentation. This process involves many exchanges and a strong research activity for information and documentation with the help of people resources. It is driven by Mediator Artifact such as Business Plan of each student or meetings around a training "serious game".

This paper corresponds to a complementary of views: DUCA teachers, GC leaders, trainers, facilitators from Local Missions, members of *boutiques de gestion*, psychologists, and, of course, students-learners, and potential creators of their economic activity.

We propose some tracks to begin to try to analyze emotions and feelings of these actors, especially of young people creating activities around two Mediator Artifacts: a training serious game (Solutia) and the business plan of each activity's creator.

IV. TWO EMOTIONS' MEDIATOR ARTIFACTS

DUCA / GC devices correspond to societal innovative areas to promote interactions. Two Mediator Artifacts may

act to reveal emotions and feelings and so help to improve activities creators' skills and their creativity.

A. A training "Serious Game" (Solutia) as first Mediator Artifact to develop ludic interactions

The main goal of DUCA / GC is to help increase creativity spirit and skills of creators of potential economic activity and especially young people. The DUCA-GC training teams try to invent new ways to interest the potential activities' creators in being involved and so changing their life. One specific way consists in a training game: SOLUTIA. It is actually a form of "serious game", but not developed on Internet interactions but on real exchanges in face-to-face situations between some creators (five to eight) with the help (a form of coaching) of a ML member.

This game constitutes a Mediator Artifact to develop ludic interactions to improve interest for cooperation and project dynamics. This training "serious game" may also help converge the representations and develop confidence by creating collective dynamics and some form of pride around a personal project which may be also that of a whole family and, sometimes, of a larger community.

First, this game has been thought and created by Marie Beauvais – Chevalier, member of ML of Marne-la-Vallée / Torcy, coordinator of the GC in Val Maubuée. Solutia's game corresponds to a sort of Monopoly and Game of the Goose (*Jeu de l'Oie*) for learning how to manage company's creation and its traps and opportunities.

In a second step, Solutia has been developed and marketed by a student of UPEM University with the creation of a new enterprise through a new device "Students poles for Innovation, Transfer and Entrepreneurship" (PEPITE) [15].

This business creation by a student around Solutia's serious game illustrates the important evolution of the French Universities, and especially UPEM University. UPEM University tries to develop a new spirit of entrepreneurship through various devices and especially with times of exchanges and interactions between teachers and students such as the "All Creative Day, *Tous Créatifs*" (this year on June 22 th).

B. A second Mediator Artifact: the Business Plan of the creators' projects

We have also observed the emotions and feelings of the actors of DUCA / GC Devices around another Mediator Artifact, the Business Plan of each creator of potential economic activity. The business plan is the main framework of the entire process of monitoring the development of the economic activity of the potential creator. It is a crystallizer of interactions from the beginning of the process (emergence phase) to the final presentation of the project.

The emergence phase allows the potential activity creators to better define their ideas and formalize them. It includes four steps: 1) better knowing their potentiality as project's leaders, 2) better defining the main idea of activity to develop, 3) discover the environment of the project, 4) define the suitability of their personality to the project and its environment. After this phase, the future creator formalized a file, which is the basis for presentation and defending before a jury for admission to the DUCA degree. The interview is always conducted sympathetically to give confidence to the future creator and validate his idea.

The training phase (DUCA) allows future creators to receive specific knowledge to develop skills necessary to manage any activity (company, association, etc.): management, information and communication, legal and tax information, sales management, market survey, project management, etc., and to check the feasibility of the proposed project, specifying the business plan (market survey, financing, cost calculations, etc.). The "case" is finalized and presented before a jury. Pedagogy emphasizes the collective dimension and the practical application of the teachings around creative projects.

V. INTERACTIONS ANALYSIS AROUND MEDIATOR ARTIFACTS INTEGRATING EMOTIONAL DIMENSIONS

The two presented Mediator Artifacts enable us to observe the emotions and feelings expressed in particular by young potential entrepreneurs: a phase of interactions between them in a playful position (Solutia Game) and also with interactions with the teaching team: the Business Plan. Both Mediator Artifacts converge to help to build an individual project in a collective dynamics.

Finally, our findings highlight an analysis process with the transition from the initial and spontaneous emotions of the actors, especially young creators of economic activity, to more lasting feelings, attitudes and behaviors over a long period, in relation with their personality.

We promote a dynamic dimension of integration (integrative approach) of changing emotions and feelings in the situation analysis and interactional approach proposed by Mucchielli (Situational and Interactionist Semiotics) [16] for economic activity creativity, apprehended in a grid of informational and communicational integration of actors' views. For us, it is also the challenge of development of a dynamics (process) around control of emotions and feelings on a rather long term process.

The DUCA / GC devices are also a space for converging management of project approaches [10] and quality approaches. We propose to consider this convergence through three types of processes that exists in any organization or project: the objective to compliance (control), the desire to implement changes and so the commitment to promote creativity and innovation [17]. For us, DUCA / GC devices constitute interesting areas of cooperation to observe this convergence.

The emotional skills of young creators are the central element of an emotional intelligence, in our opinion, not sufficiently taken into account. The human body is both the mediator from which the individual can sensitize his affects

and constitutes a communication support of them, according to Martin-Juchat [18].

By helping to set the individual project of business creation in a collective dynamics, the two studied Mediator Artifacts may help to favor a first awareness among activity creators; they are never completely alone and there are levers, networks that they must know how to use to get the right information at the right time and in the right place (informational and communicational skills). This awareness may help activities' creators to restore their confidence and to overcome their shyness. The serious game Solutia also promotes situational skills: it allows students to discover a number of problem situations they can find in their creative activity and so help to overpass them.

The goal of the Mediator Artifacts, particularly Solutia serious game is to (re) give confidence, to raise awareness that everyone has met difficulties in his entrepreneurship's pathway and that they can be overcome. It is good to know how to go beyond emotions such as: fear of failure, withdrawal, frustration, anger, etc. Understanding and better managing emotions by relativizing them may help to recreate a positive dynamics of trust. It is also important to train the activities' creators to be aware of their emotions and feelings, so they are not paralyzed by them, and, therefore, to better manage them and to succeed in their creation of activity process.

We think that learning to better manage the emotions can become a collective goal to develop cooperation and improve skills. It is on this aspect that we propose to the other partners of the GC - DUCA to insist with a view of continuous improvement of existing devices.

Social sharing of emotions is also important for encouraging awareness of group membership [12]. This group is essential to promote the personal development of each potential creator. This integration of emotions and feelings can help to better integrate an individual project of creation of activities in a collective dynamics of exchange of experiences and feelings (Group of Creators) to better understand and support in times of doubt and (re) motivate them. We wish to analyze their mechanisms to best promote these periods of interactions and information sharing for improvement of their projects.

Our observations lead us to propose a broadening of perspectives of Situational and Interactionist Semiotics defined by Mucchielli with the integration of the experiences of the actors and their emotions and feelings [19], particularly for creators of activity.

Another approach to consider is the Sociology of Actor-Network (SAR) [20], even if the business plan and the serious game Solutia are not technical devices, but rather social and managerial devices. The idea that the collective activity ("acting elements") can be considered as a "black box" ("*boîte noire*") seems to match our approach of the business plan as the idea of "hybrid reality composed of successive translations" and the fact that the SAR "has been designed to follow the collective in their making process", which is the case of GC – DUCA devices.

We can then consider a dynamic relational semiotics approach to a certain length: global (approach by the complexity theory in a constructivist way), based on the search for meaning in the interactions' situations between all the actors (including socio-technical artifacts), and of course also including emotions, feelings, experiences of all the actors in a dynamic approach (convergence of the management of project approaches and the process approaches of quality management) to create a dynamic of change, creativity and innovation, mixing individual and collective dimensions.

VI. A Success to better Socially Integrate people By Creating New Economic Activities

Since 2006, 305 activity creators and, especially, young people, have been trained in the IUT of UPEM and 157 graduated, that is to say more than 50%, which is considered as a very positive result by the Ile-de-France Regional Council (CRIF), the main public collectivity giving funds to the GC / DUCA devices.

More globally, nearly 500 people, especially young people, have been sensitized to business creation and reality of the economic constraints of companies. Nearly 35% of the graduated students have created their business or taken over an existing activity; others have been inserted as employees in existing companies (often trade or food activities). Activities creations successes particularly concern the services sector in very different aspects. First, we have food activities such as gluten free bakeries, food to all tastes and cuisines possible, particularly Afro-Asian. Secondly, we have clothes manufacturing companies corresponding to different countries (Japan and Asia fashion, North Africa, etc.) and shops of different types of clothes. We have also organic cleaning companies, communication companies to organize special events (marriage, etc), production of video games, jewelry creations, home automation company, etc. We have also more usual activities such as: nurseries, gardening, public writers, different ways of home help, beauticians, hairdressers, sometimes with itinerant projects. But also, with the reform of school times, we have animation's projects to provide stimulating activities or sports for children after school time, etc.

A great satisfaction during the graduation ceremony for the DUCAs in December 2015 was to see some graduated of previous years come to offer jobs to those who had just come into training.

VII. Conclusion And Future Work

In this work in progress, we propose tracks to analyze emotions and feelings around two Mediator Artifacts to improve training and business creation for specific people in the French Universities.

Since 2006, with DUCA / GC devices, UPEM / IUT, in cooperation with federated partners in the GC, has trained over than 500 students in the creation of activity, including a majority of school leavers. The challenge is now finding

additional funding to the specific aid the Regional Council of Ile-de-France. We hope in European subsidies.

In the cooperation areas developed around DUCA / GC devices, the position of "committed researcher" has really, for us, taken all its meaning and corresponds to a personal approach to the RSU, revisited as "social responsibility of the researcher." We have gradually become convinced that the future can be built from micro actions on the territories and on daily innovative practices.

For us, beyond the figures and examples of activities successes creations in various sectors (gardening, personal computers, clothing, cleaning, food, restaurants, personal services, etc.), the more important part is to have renewed hope through a project dynamics to allow potential creators of economic activities, especially school young leavers, to take charge of their destiny, in taking the risk of action for hope to promote a new business vision, resolutely different from "destructive innovation" discussed by Ferry [21], with the disasters of the financial and speculative capitalism. We insist on a first goal, that people dare to do the first step and also meeting the words of Mallory starting to climb to Everest Mountain (1924): "Where there is a will, there is always a way."

This approach focuses on the integration and management of emotions and feelings of all the actors of DUCA / GC devices, particularly those of the potential creators of economic activities. It also incorporates the concepts of "resilience" (ability to move again in a crisis situation), both with individual and collective aspects, of "sustainable development" of territories. Territories are then considered as built by a synergy of local projects, both individual and collective [22] in order to create a collective dynamics and give capacity for innovation and creativity [23].

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