2010-12-01

Responsabilidad social universitaria desde la pedagogía social: algunos aspectos relevantes relativos al proceso de interacción enseñanzaaprendizaje

Nelson Andrés Molina Roa

Universidad de La Salle, Bogotá, nelsonmolina@unisalle.edu.co

Follow this and additional works at: https://ciencia.lasalle.edu.co/gs

University Social Responsibility from Social Pedagogy - Some Relevant Aspects concerning Teaching-Learning Interaction Process

Nelson Andrés Molina Roa*

Abstract

This article offers some of the latest basic definitions of *Social Responsibility, University Social Responsibility* and *Social Pedagogy* concepts and expose, as an example, how La Salle University's Management and Accounting Science School tries to apply them. In addition, because most of the USR actions from the social pedagogy are based on teaching-learning processes, offers some qualitative suggestions that should be taken into account during this interaction process into communities.

Keywords

* Licenciado en Filología e Idiomas de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Magíster en Lingüística de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Cursa Especialización en Entornos Virtuales de Educación de la OEI y la Escuela de Altos Estudios. Actualmente, docente-investigador tiempo completo, Universidad de La Salle, Facultad de Ciencias Administrativas y Contables. Miembro Grupo de investigación en aspectos sociales y económicos del agro colombiano adscrito al Centro de Investigación CIMRA. Correo electrónico: nelsonmolina@unisalle.edu.co

63
GESTIÓN & SOCIEDAD

Responsabilidad social universitaria desde la pedagogía social: algunos aspectos relevantes relativos al proceso de interacción enseñanza-aprendizaje

Resumen

El propósito del presente artículo consiste en ofrecer algunas de las más recientes definiciones relativas a los conceptos *Responsabilidad social, Responsabilidad social Universitaria* y *Pedagogía Social*, y exponer –a modo de ejemplo– cómo la Facultad de Ciencias Administrativas y Contables de la Universidad de La Salle intenta aplicarlos. En adición a esto, debido a que muchas de las acciones de Responsabilidad Social Universitaria que desde la pedagogía social se emprenden se basan en procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje, también se exponen algunas sugerencias de índole cualitativa que se deberían tener en cuenta durante dicho proceso de interacción dentro de las comunidades.

Palabras clave

Responsabilidad Social, Responsabilidad Social Universitaria, Pedagogía Social, Universidad de La Salle, Investigación-Acción-Participación (IAP).

Introduction: Social Responsibility, University Social Responsibility, Social Pedagogy

Social responsibility has been established as one of the most important global concepts of discussion today because world demands from enterprises and other kinds of organizations to change the ideology, politics, relationships and practices. These entities, overall, need to change their negative thought around the role that environment, relationship with stakeholders and care for society have into their organizations. They have to see these aspects not as an expense or a heavy burden but as economical opportunities of development.

Because the definition of the concept "Social Responsibility" is still under building, companies and other organizations have developed their own applications of the concept. However, it is necessary to expose a standard concept to which companies and institutions may resort. ISO International Standards for Business, Government and Society (2010) are working now on the construction of standards of definitions and rules that enterprises can take as a role model. For now, this document offers the following goals:

> The future International Standard ISO 26000, Guidance on social responsibility, will provide harmonized, globally relevant guidance for private and public sector organizations of all types based on international consensus among expert representatives of the main stakeholder groups and so encourage the implementation of best

practice in social responsibility worldwide (ISO, 2010).

Of course, these goals can only be achieved if companies commit to be:

- responsible for the impacts of their decisions and activities on society and the environment;
- transparent and ethical in their behaviors;
- consistent with sustainable development and welfare of society;
- ready to take into account the expectations of stake holders;
- in accordance with current legislation and consistent with international rules of conduct; and
- integrated throughout the organization, its practices and relationships

In this event, Universities, as part of society and as enterprises, cannot stay away of this problematic but they have too much to do for their cities, countries and for the global world. Universities are being forced to reconsider their role in society and to evaluate their relationships with their various constituencies, stakeholders, and communities. People expect from universities to engage in interactions with industrial and regional partners, government programs and external communities. The Global Environmental Management Education Center, EMSU defines the University Social Responsibility (USR) in the following text:

> Universities as ivory towers isolated from Society are anachronistic, irrelevant and wasteful of time and resources needed for creating solutions for sustainability. The Dogmatic days of academic freedom and tenure are dead. Universities must build bridges to Local Communities serve directly with knowledge-based products and services, and to lead by example in Campus Operations and culture to create Sustainable Solutions (Phillips, 2008).

In this sense, universities have to design actions into the communities as a result of the implementation of their Institutional Project, which states explicitly –through the Vision and Mission– the consistency of their values and activities to pursuit welfare and happiness to these communities. Universities have the responsibility to set up programs to build a more just and balanced society with long targets term that would achieve the necessary conditions to make our earth a comfortable home for future generations.

A university that meets these postulates may transcend from place where it is inserted physically and will turn their immediate efforts, towards the regional and global communities. It is only a matter of time before efforts become a real social chance to the whole society to achieve their objectives of welfare and happiness (Montgomery, 2005).Continuing with this idea, teacher François Vallaeys from Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (2010) identifies four characteristics by which universities themselves have initiated processes for fulfilling its objective of social mission:

- ethical and environmental management of the institution;
- training citizens aware and supportive;
- production and dissemination of socially relevant knowledge; and
- social participation in promoting a more equitable and sustainable development.

USR strategies to achieve this improvement are: the integrated participation of internal and outside stakeholders into the mission of the

University; the articulation of curricula, research, extension and teaching methods to the solution of the problems of society and the development of regular self-diagnosis with appropriate tools of measurement for accountability.

Thanks to these new approaches, the traditional concepts social outreach and social projection universities have been over the years change to a wide and compromising definition what should be the role of higher education relationship with society and the environment. Universities are social enterprises and hence their Social responsibility is particularly important. The traditional *social projection* or *university extension* concepts, usually seen as the obligation *to educate and train students to exercise their profession giving a service to society*, are today an insufficient concept.

In this way, University Social Responsibility has two clear stages of action:

- Into the institutions, forming human values, solidarity, tolerance and early coexistence, to create awareness of their individual and collective obligation of help needy and improve their environment.
- Outside of the institutions, toward society in general, fulfilling the objective of achieving a society fairer access to knowledge, information and work within a framework of respect for different cultures and customs, the appropriate use of resources and reservation of the environment.

Thus, universities have developed various strategies for intervention in the community that are not limited to the student's social service, but also explore other types of relationships: research processes, academic events, produc-

tion agreements, business opportunities, technical and technological development, service contracts and others.

However, as a consequence of educational tradition of universities, and because it is one of the most direct ways to connecting academics to communities in interactive processes in a field in which universities have experience, it has become a common initial interaction practice, teaching specific knowledge aspects of the university programs to interest groups within fragile communities who, among other problems, do not have easy access to higher education and to the knowledge that could help them to solve their problematic.

It is undeniable then that this first kind of interaction –whether they could be called tutoring, coaching, advising, training or informal classes- is based in pedagogical principles through teaching-learning practices, intended for social purposes: to help community. This connection between social action and teaching practices has been called *social pedagogy* by countries such as Germany and Holland and *[...] embrace the activities of youth workers, residential or day care workers (with children or adults), work with offenders, and play and occupational therapists [...] It has also been used to describe aspects of church work and some community development activity* (Galuske, 2009).

Social pedagogy basic premises rooted in the belief that *people were able to develop, to respect and care for others, and to work for the good of the community [...] its stimulation to full development, expression, activity and initiative; natural, hence joyful, experience of life; stimulation to be lucid and to discover things* (Günther, 1994).

The case of La Salle University Management and Accounting Sciences School

In this vein, La Salle USR programs are part, both the vision and the mission, of the Lasallian University Education Project (in Spanish PEUL) (2007). As a catholic institution, La Salle University: *"[...] does research and projects with social relevance and impact, with the aim of promoting dignity and integral development of individual, the transformation of society, promoting of culture and the search for meaning truth"* (PEUL, 2007),(Author version). La Salle University has developed programs, projects, relationships and research centers that look for the integration of the students, teachers and researches with the needed Colombian society. Social Responsibility has been established from directors as an Horizon of Meaning (Horizonte de sentido in Spanish) in the part 4, number 4.7 (mission values) ordinal C: *"[...] privileging communal rather than individual, the public interest before private interest, solidarity rather than competition [...] concern for others and the belief that a society cannot be built without a social network where the development of all society is the condition for justice and peace"* (PEUL, 2007) (Author version).

For this instance, the Business Management and Accounting Science school of the University is under the name "Social projection" (Programa de Proyección Social, PPS, in Spanish) developing a number of projects and agreements with governmental and private organizations to help the Colombian marginal society. One of the most effective PPS strategy of action consist in promoting, among students who are about to begin their degree option and among teachers-researches that have interest in social

research, the possibility of performing this social work into the needed communities -that have established contact with the University of La Salle - either by directly applying of their research developments within the community, either by transmitting their knowledge and experiences to the community.

PPS seeks to carry the Business Management & Public Accountant academic community's spirit of brotherhood, solidarity and integrity under the service of the whole community for construction and transformation of individual, family and society with their knowledge. Specially, they attend the training needs of the needed community and the productive community through research, training, advice, support and business training (Universidad de La Salle, 2010). Through this interaction, PPS seeks to develop ongoing processes of interaction and integration with the communities of the region's cities, Distrito Capital, municipalities and other regions that require the involvement and support of the University in productive projects.

Methodological and educational processes

The qualitative research method that the PPS program has studied and officially applied to approach the communities is known in Latin-American (in Spanish) as IAP, *Interacción, Acción, Participación* (Borda,1989) and in English as PAR (Participatory Action Research).This qualitative method attend to help the needed people to encourage the social problems by affecting their lives trough the research process. For the business Management and Public Accountant social researcher, the participatory action research paradigm, which is based upon the goal of helping people and employs methodologies

that are different from traditional consumer research, seek not only to create enterprises and business opportunities but also assist people in their basic problems (Ozzane & Saatcioglu, 2008): health, welfare, job opportunities, quality of life, education, self-reliance, process of creating a small or medium business, enterprises organization and more.

In fact, teaching-learning practices have become a traditional way to approach communities and to transfer them specific knowledge and experience in La Salle University and its Business Management and Public Accounting School. So, when the school undertakes a social project into a particular community and invites teachers- researchers and students to participate on it, the first strategy to approach the community is to provide basic accounting courses for SMEs or talks about entrepreneurship, legal requirements to form companies, the function of cooperatives and other issues concerning business administration and public accounting.

Then, taken as example the gained USR experiences by La Salle university´s Management and Accounting school, teaching-learning practices turn out to be a method within the PAR method to help communities and, because transmitting knowledge and experience –whether trough tutoring, coaching, advising, training or in informal classes– become a deep social interaction from academic people into fragile, diverse, often poor, not educate communities; it is necessary to mention some relevant tips concerning to teaching-learning interaction context into communities so social pedagogy practices into the URS could be fruitful.

Being part of the context

Good teaching has been associated with the provision of a supportive, personal, learning environment encouraging active participation and providing quality feedback (Ramsden, 2003). Ramsden's student learning approach in relation to learning context can be seen in the following diagram.

Figure 1. Ramsden Model – Student Learning in Context
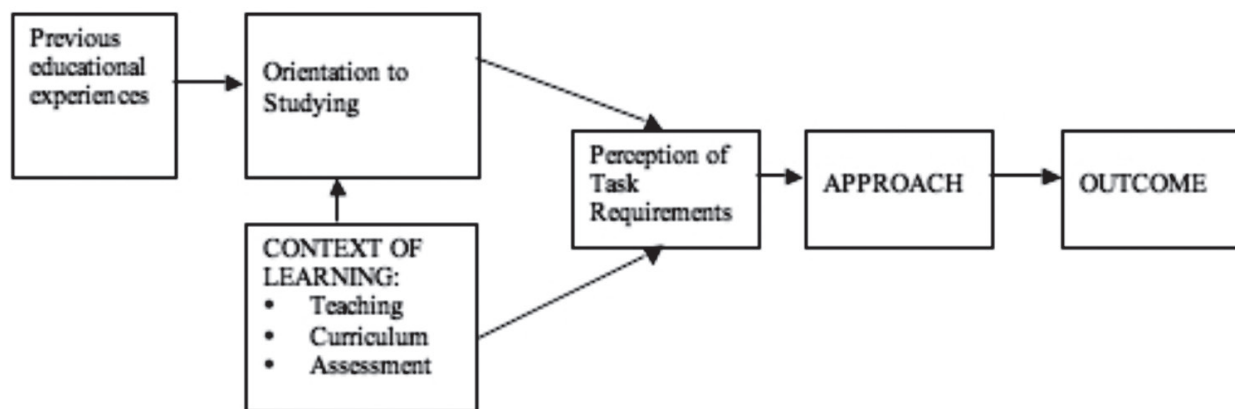
Source: Ramsden (2003, p. 83).

In this vein, the observation of the context (see for example: how the community carried out relationships, what and how they eat, what their favorites sites are, what their tastes are) and prudence (not talking too much until you are sure you have seen good community behaviors) are keys to achieving acceptance and good results during the process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001).

However, although in most cases, researchers will not be accept totally for the people as part of the community, at least, they can earn their confidence and kindness. This is accomplished through the Christian, loving, simple, sincere and collaborative spirit that characterizes the University of La Salle institution; trough the strength and relevance of the knowledge transferred and trough the use of appropriate methodologies and respectful manner towards people.

In this order, as it is well known, for most qualitative research practices involving close relations between the researcher and the community in the territory of the community (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001), it is necessary for the researchers not being the focus of attention because their too refined, arrogant or peevish gestures; sophisticated clothes or expensive phones, I-pods and other accessories. The mere fact of being outsider calls enough attention, therefore, customs and accessories that expand the gap of separation between social strata make more difficult to win confidence of community.

In addition, problems of insecurity and crime observed in some marginal sectors of the regions where universities undertake social responsibility practices make necessary to avoid temptation from thieves and rubbers.

Theory depends on Practice

Many young researchers that begin their social responsibility practices in social projection programs have the trend to teach the community as their teachers did with them in the university. This is because young researches think that they have to give a proper class as their teacher did with them but they do not take into account that circumstances are very different in both pedagogical cases. Community is not a property students group but a group of people, often with low levels of education and culture, crossing social and economic difficulties that need a quick solution to their problems and not a body of academic theory expressed in complicated language that they do not easy understand.

This is the reason why Syllabus, programs or plan (academic program of the course or tutorial) cannot be a straitjacket that the tutor has to follow without exceptions. Indeed, tutorials need to see the motivations, resources, knowledge, and advantages that in some topics the community group had previously realized before they came to them. This is because in many cases community, although empirically, has advanced in the process of creating of SMEs, using accounting processes or positioning a product or service. The labor of tutorials in this case consist in not to ignore these processes, but potentiate through their experience and academic knowledge, detailing the processes still missing and propose them to the community; both participants in the educational process contributing to the achievement of goals, therefore, it is necessary listening to the community. Humble people have so much to teach to the professionals too.

The theoretical concepts must match the real referents. Examples and explanations of procedures

must come from businesses that the community is developing. In this sense, to give an example, if a tutor teaches a group of businessmen from the community what the best way to present an attractive product to the public is, this should be taught through traditional products produced by the community and not through ideal products taken from books.

Finally, since the common people do not usually receive long talks sitting in their chairs as college students do. It is necessary to develop additional tutor teaching strategies which do not use only auditory learning processes; people, as children, learn best trough a mix of teaching strategies: by doing (Strategies kinesiology) or watching (visual strategies), for example, than only by listening (Gardner,1995).

In this event, each class session, as well as marker and board, must be exerted full of practical: magazine clippings, examples found on the web, materials and products, forms, pictures, videos, objects examples found on the web and more. The meeting space should look like a workshop rather than a cold classroom environment.

Reflexive Attitude

Not only PAR qualitative research method but also the major qualitative methods as ethnography or case study need a reflexive attitude to be a real way to find usable information for USR actions.

Practices, as contexts of uncertainty and complexity, generate a range of feelings and emotions related to unexpected situations that require either an immediate action or prudent silence. Finally requires making decisions about what happened. However, for most

social researchers, this new situation referred to their expectations (what they want or expect to find into the community) is a cause of fears, helplessness and frustration (Chacón, 2007) as well unexpected feelings of joy or love for the community.

Social researches need to try to control their feelings although it, in fact, is impossible in the sense that unexpected events are part of the day bay day reality. This does not mean that researches have to avoid or disregard uncertainly situations; on the contrary, such situations produce more and better data relative to the life of the community so that they can be helped by their real problems.

But researchers need in this kind of situations, and during the whole process, to keep a reflexive attitude in front and into the community, the practices, the communicative interchanges, the outside tutorials talks, the tutorials environment, the change attitude in participants, and the own feelings and behavior. Overall –and this is because this practices are deep inductive and qualitative– the social researchers need to pay attention to their self from the following factors (Chacón, 2007) before other kinds or felling:

About the Practices:

- Why are we doing this? What motivates me to do this from institutional and personal perspective?
- Did I change the way over time? Why?

About Practices-Theories relationship:

- Feel I fear to do empirical actions?
- Do I not feel me property smart to answer a theory question?

About teaching- learning strategies:

- Is my group learning?
- How am I teaching?
- Try I to do all for the group? Or let I them alone?
- How constant am I?

So pay attention to these factors is not to deny other feelings but subordinate to those generated by teaching and research relationship.

Finally, the best way to discover the most important qualitative data that process may offer and, incidentally, to detect unexpected events, movement of feelings or emotions and, why not, to generate new ideas; is to be constantly writing a *Field Diary* (Shagoury & Millar 2000). That is, either on a notebook, either on a word processor, either on a tape recorder, the daily record of events is an indispensable data source for researchers seeking to perform work of social

responsibility, specifically, university social responsibility.

Conclusions

Social Responsibility and University Social Responsibility means to take care of society, global world problems, environment and organizations participants before to make an action or to take decisions. Overall, for the universities, USR means devoting academic and research efforts to the solutions of needed community problems, to help the productive sector, to make usable the knowledge. In other words, academics have to leave from classrooms and offices and have to go into the communities; they need to know the real problems where they are and fight, with the assistance of the community, against them.

References

Chacón, M.A. (2007). *La enseñanza reflexiva en los estudiantes de pasantías de la carrera de educación básica integral.* Tarragona: Universitat Rivira I Virgili

Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (2001). *Introduction: entering the Field of Qualitative Research. Handbook of Qualitative Research. Londres,* California: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N & Lincoln, Y. (2001). *Handbook of qualitative research, Thousand Oaks,* California: Sage.

Fals Borda, O. (1989). *El problema de cómo investigar la realidad para transformarla por la praxis.* Bogotá: Tercer Mundo.

Galuske (2009). *Methoden der Sozialen Arbeit: Eine Einführung.* Auflage: Juventa.

Gardner (1995). *Inteligencias múltiples: La teoría en la práctica.* Barcelona: Paidós.

Günther (1994). *Friedrich Adolph Wilhelm Diesterweg' in Z. Morsy (ed.) Thinkers on Education.* Paris: Unesco.

International Standards for Business, Government and Society ISO, 2010. Available online en http://www.iso.org/iso/ims_2009-09-10.htm

Montgomery (2005). *Historical Shifts in Norms of Research Conduct: How Public and Private Organizations Create and Change Logics of Research Integrity.* Unpublished paper.

Ozzane & Saatcioglu (2008). Participatory Action Research In: *Journal of Consumer Research*; Oct 2008, Vol. 35 Issue 3, pp. 423-439, 17 p, 2 Charts

Phillips (2008). *Global Environmental Management Education Center, U. Wisconsin-Stevens Point, USA EMSU 2008,* October 15-17, Barcelona, Spain. Available on http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/gem/NewsArchive/

Ramsden, P. (2003). *Learning to Teach in Higher Education.* Routledge, London.

Shagoury, R., & Millar, B., (2000). *El arte de la indagación en el aula: Manual para Docentes investigadores.* Barcelona: Gedisa.

Universidad de La Salle (2007). *Proyecto Educativo Universitario Lasallista.* Bogotá: Universidad de La Salle

Universidad de La Salle (2010). *Extensión a la comunidad, Proyección a la comunidad* (online resource) Retrieved on http://cayc.lasalle.edu.co/index.php/proyeccion-social.html?start=1)

Vallaeys & Carrizo (2008). *Hacia la construcción de indicadores de responsabilidad social* (unpublished document from pue.udlap.mx). Available on http://www.pue.udlap.mx/rsu/pdf/2/IndicadoresRSU.pdf. Retrieved on 12 April, 2010.