

AN INTERCULTURAL APPROACH TO TRAINING HUMAN RESOURCES

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ABSTRAC

While considering the argument that multiculturalism should be the central axis in promoting education in the XXI century as fair and necessary to assist in the development of towns and marginalized communities it is necessary to recognize the diversity of cultures that coexist, interact and influence each other in everyday life in all of Mexico. It is also imperative that the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in our country recognize and assume that an integral human development must respond to the complaint of the poor and marginalized peoples of Chiapas. Therefore, it is vital that a transverse axis in the curricula should be interculturalism which encourages young people from the most vulnerable sector to study, overcome their situation, and assist their communities to overcome their problems. The dialogue of knowledge is undoubtedly the primary tool to different ways of being, of living and to the underlying knowledge that the different cultural expressions of our people and communities can engage and interact in mutual benefit. This is the great challenge of education today, and it is the purpose of this article that basically seeks to motivate the interest of students and academics in this issue of the training of human resources with an intercultural approach.

Keywords: *interculturalism, dialogue about knowledge, education, human resources, institutions of higher education.*

Education is one of the most deeply felt universal rights of humanity and is, without doubt, the main legal and human foundation that recognizes the existence of cultural diversity. For these reasons, the practice of Interculturalism should correspond to public universities which must focus and concentrate the best of themselves to give to mainly marginalized humans in Mexico a real choice of for personal growth, laying the foundations for personal and community wellness, seeking in the words of the declaration of UNEP (2007), “the transformation of values, attitudes, aspirations, decisions and practices, capacity and knowledge building, and fomenting the interconnections of the environment and development, which ultimately leads to the progress of nations”.

In this context, higher education institutions (HEIs) are an essential part in this process in the attention to the neediest in society, which involves academic cooperation at all levels, particularly international knowledge networks. These networks should contribute to build new models of teaching and learning that consider learner-centeredness and interculturalism as fundamental elements of social welfare, sustainable development, equity, relevance and equal opportunities in the context of lifelong learning (UNESCO, 1999).

HEIs in this regard must assume their historic responsibility to build their educational programs, taking into account the diversity of cultural groups that share common elements or traits that identify them and usually differ from other cultural groups, including, of course, the *mestizo culture*. The distinction between cultural elements that identify a group and make it different from another is what makes multiculturalism possible, considering that the word ‘inter’ implies dynamically interaction and so therefore opens to relationships, exchanges and processes.

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND XXI CENTURY

It is important to consider that culture is not static: this means that the elements associated with a culture can change, like all living things. These cultures and identities, to the extent that they remain alive, are in a process of continuous change, whether by internal processes or

increasingly for exchange with other cultures and experiences within its environment.

What are the common cultural elements shared by ever larger groups of people, that come from many backgrounds and cultural belongings?

The educational paradigm of the twenty-first century must have Interculturalism as one of the cornerstones in university educational models that are practiced in different educational programs that can focus on the learning and building of knowledge and skills. In this process, the student is the central character, since it is he who builds his own learning and the teacher is the one who serves as guide.

The introduction of interculturalism to educational models allows for the incorporation of the training of human resources together with a set of strategies that recognizes not only the construction of meaningful, autonomous and situated learning, but also integrates knowledge which is immersed in the towns, in their cultural expressions and in their integration into a new content of schemes of knowledge about reality, including prior knowledge-as Piaget termed it- as well as Carl Jung's knowledge archetypes. Learning is autonomous in that it is exercising, according to ANUIES (1999), the "power to take decisions to regulate one's own learning in order to bring it closer to a specific goal, within specific conditions that form the context of learning" and its entire application is not reduced only to the school context.

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE DIALOGUE

The basic premise for the construction of a system of teaching and learning from the intercultural perspective is participatory research as an essential training tool which is made up of a congruent orientation to the development of critical thinking. It generates repeated opportunities on one hand for to support and maintain its own positions and on the other hand, evaluate the ideas of others in the context of collaborative teamwork, helping to enrich the professional training with a genuine commitment to the problems facing society.

However, when reference is made to research and knowledge and its relationship to multiculturalism, there is an implicit fundamental element that you cannot forget, which is a dialogue about knowledge. This concept essentially proposes the recognition that besides scientific knowledge exists other knowledge and skills that come from men and women who do not study nor practice any form of science.

The conduction of research projects as a learning strategy not only contributes to the understanding of natural or social phenomena but also about learning processes occur in science and how to apply them to teaching. This allows students to take ownership of the methods used by the sciences, arts, and humanities-- in short, all disciplines-- to approximate interpretations of reality underlying the laws of science. In this sense, curriculum planning and research should address the problems that communities and society face, because it is here where professional training intervenes , offering collaborative alternative solutions to the objectives that are posed (Nozenko and Fornari, 1995).

So, then the system of knowledge generation and teaching-learning processes considered in curriculum design should be viewed from a broad perspective and not as the result of the simple arithmetic sum of knowledge, attitudes and skills. It is an inclusive concept, where it is not enough to consider one or more of the elements separately, but the articulation of them taking into account the connection of theory and practice from a scientific perspective and knowledge and practice of people and cultures of the communities.

DIVERSITY OF KNOWLEDGE AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Its necessary to consider that when we look at the communities we do not find isolated knowledge rooted in people, but a system of knowledge, such as is the case of human health or the current production systems in rural communities which have a profound connection between the inhabitants of a community and between people of different communities. Consequently, it would be foolish to ignore or underestimate this knowledge.

However, the story is somewhat different from that premise. For centuries, from the arrival of the Spaniards to our country a system of European knowledge and belief prevailed and it was led to believe that the system of knowledge and knowledge of indigenous peoples are nothing more than quackery, superstition and paganism. That is, the imposition of European culture to the Mesoamerican culture brought contempt and the liquidation of these knowledge systems.

After the collision of two cultures, of two civilizations, even though it dwindled the vast ancient knowledge was unable to be liquidated. It remained in our communities in the form of what we call “traditional knowledge” imbricated to knowledge imposed by Europeans. It is our duty to study, understand, respect and incorporate Western scientific knowledge through the medium of dialogue of knowledge, which is another important foundation of the concept known as multiculturalism.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, when we talk about multiculturalism we mean first that this concept involves a relationship with nature (one of materials and economics, production, food, shelter); Secondly, the social relations between individuals and groups (family, community, politics); and third, to the imaginary or symbolic that gives meaning to the whole (language, religion, art, law and legal system).

Therefore, multiculturalism involves not only shared common traits that identify a group of people and make it different from others, but also the opening to relations and exchanges between different groups or between different knowledge systems such as health or productivity. This relationship based on respect, responsibility and equality is perhaps the greatest challenge of this dialogue of knowledge.

Today we have a great opportunity to build a new system of learning that recognizes and includes INTERCULTURALITY as an essential element in the training of human resources necessary for the full, inclusive, progressive development of society that we intend to build, not to mention the recognition of cultural diversity involves recognizing the existence of other knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that underlie the *pueblos* and communities of our country.

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