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EMANCIPATORY EDUCATION DURING THE PRACTICUM: REFLECTION, DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract

We present an investigation that is an ethnography during the Practicum of students in the Master of Social Development at the Catholic University of Murcia. The objective was to recognize in projects of development cooperation, in the otherness of multiple perspectives and in a dialogue of knowledge and interculturality, the existence of an emancipatory and non-assistance development, in the analysis from different approaches, daily, private and public, where the students have contrasted and transformed the intervention in an Education for Development, whose guidelines are consolidated in: awareness, training, research and political advocacy in the transformation. The ethnography was carried out through various sources: motivation letter, field diary (semi-guided), interviews during the Practicum process (students and tutors) and their self-evaluations. This approach will be presented from the contributions that the research and experience in the Practicum favors the changes that are being pursued in the current 2030 Agenda.

1.   Introduction: Practicum as a self-reflective space in professional training

Much of the research from the Practicum is related to studies of the labor market, as well as the skills acquired for professionalism, such as the study of Mareque and De Prada (2018), or the evaluation of the training of trainers as objective to consolidate professional ethics and optimal professionalism (Barrios, Iranzo, & Tierno, 2014). The Practicum in the European Higher Education Area reminds us of the importance of the content that will be acquired in the professional part, which is related to processes of improvement, transformation and development of cooperation.

It is of interest to know the International Symposium on a Quality Practicum and to analyze the topics on the reflexive analysis of the development of the Practicum in relation to citizenship and transformation in this case we observed a symposium entitled: "Quality Practicum in the online university: connecting theory and practice. From reflection to action", whose reflection is about acquired competences, in this case cultural competence is required to relate interculturality and gender from cultural diversity and relational pedagogy (Muñoz & Iniesta, 2017)

In this research, the Master of Social Development of the Catholic University of Murcia is the subject, whose objective is to put the student in contact with the professional performance of social development. For the student this subject means putting into practice the training received and complementing their academic training with the professional reality, expanding the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes and encouraging teamwork that we can see in the Master's curriculum.

The contents are:

- Sense and purpose of social promotion work in the context of the master's degree.
- Interpersonal, community, social, legal and socio-health elements in the work of social promotion.
- Realization of Social Development Practices.
- Analysis of Social Development Projects.
- Preparation of a report of the work carried out.

There are various assignments students may receive in their Practicum: NGDOs, educational institutions, health institutions, social enterprises and community initiatives. The themes can be interdisciplinary, such as health, psychology, education, development cooperation, conflict resolution, education for peace, etc. These can be in Spain or abroad. If the student is from the country where he practices the Practicum, this can change the connection he has with his assignment.

The Justification can be framed by the needs of higher education, especially in the social sciences, and by checking what impact the Practicum has on training, what changes occur and what students think about their Practicum, as well as the tutors or users of the service where they do the Practicum. With the purpose of reflecting on teaching, deficiencies and potentialities, as well as reverting to new or different theories that favor a better accompaniment in the Practicum together with the relevance between narrating the practice and making theory from the teacher's reflection (Schön, 1998), as well as a reflexive regulation of know-how (Perrenoud, 2004).

Of the general competencies we highlight two: 1. Know how to communicate and develop teamwork strategies that allow students to implement social projects, cooperation and development and; 2. Ability to

apply the knowledge and skills acquired from the values of solidarity, justice and social equality in the different academic and professional contexts. We highlight two specific competences 1. Know how to work in interdisciplinary teams to encourage cooperative learning and access to shared knowledge; 2. Solve problems and make decisions with sustainability criteria.

We add the urgent need to encourage students to reflect on the Practicum process, in terms of the potential of these experiences and the existing relationship in the exercise of socio-educational transformation involving the participating communities and commitment in a dialogue of knowledge (Dietz, 2012). As well as making a survey among the institutions that receive the students of the Practicum, the students themselves as well as the contents of the master's degree and if educational emancipation is favored.

This debate moves in the intervention or not in the Practicum, as well as the meaning that is offered to the intervention and the possibility that intervention can be equal to colonize from the aspect of sociocultural immersion.

Below are some reflections on the concept of social intervention, methodological aspects and the complexity that implies as those involved are based on cultural references and different identifications (gender, profession, ethnicity, among others). The discussion of these concepts is posed from the decolonial perspective, in the intention to question how useful the knowledge generated by research is when put into practice in the intended transformation process. Muñoz (2015) alludes to the fact that social intervention is something programmed for a change, supposedly to improve the current state of some life situation, in addition, it raises the difficulties of decolonizing the interventions or the supposedly transforming praxis, the author mentions that : "Se requiere mantener atención política y ética a nuestras prácticas, impulsar intervenciones orientadas a la creación de conciencias críticas y metodologías descolonizadoras, y promover/acoger epistemologías que provengan de las voces de los excluidos y marginados" (p. 272).

The above coincides with the vision of Radha (2014) who from his experience in India reminds us that social intervention goes hand in hand with activist research, while research should be evaluated for its transformative potential; that is, the ability to transform unjust and unequal relationships. In this regard D'Souza mentions a relationship of progressive activism, defender of social justice and equality. However, in the academy there are two realities: the rules of citizenship and those of professional institutions, related to the market. In research these two logics cause dissonance, although the empirical requires theory, and must always be questioned, for what? For whom? What type of activism is identified? What cooperation? Can we do it? Do we colonize if we intervene ...? The interventions vary on the expectations, demands and ways of proposing the transformations: "el activismo y la investigación apunta a transformaciones estructurales y revolucionarias o a transformaciones constitucionales y reformistas" (Radha, 2014, p. 133). To this we add a committed anthropology (Hale, 2008; Muñoz, 2012) from a dialogue of knowledge that co-operates to create a living, real and changing knowledge in an educational community that is active and reflective (Vitón, 2013; Dietz, 2012).

The study of knowledge, from an ethnographic perspective, is based on a notion that highlights the link between teachers' knowledge and daily experience, and reflective processes accompany teaching and the institutional contexts that frame, constrain or enable teaching work. Integrated to the daily practice in the classroom, the knowledge forms part of the school institution and, as knowledge generated in front of

work problems specific to the profession, they constitute a historical and social heritage that must be assessed (Rockwell & Mercado, 2003).

2. Objectives of the research

The main objective was to facilitate a process from the formation of the master, the personal contribution to training and the self-reflection of the step during the Practicum.

The specific objectives were to:

▪ Analyze how the Practicum in degree and postgraduate programs from different institutions create a formation in the social commitment that modifies, expands and theorizes on theoretical and practical concepts prior to the knowledge in the chosen scenarios of the Practicum.

▪ Identify if attitudes, prejudices and stereotypes of development cooperation change or not, encompassing the emancipatory processes.

▪ Compendium of experiences that served to improve reality in the assignments carried out during the Practicum.

▪ What could be improved in the training and research prior to the Practicum to direct it to a democratization of knowledge in the construction of citizenship.

3. Research Methods

The research is based on an ethnography that contains different instruments: personal interviews (students), letters of motivation, reflective questionnaire and memories of the practicum during the 2016-2018 academic year. There were 24 students. This was completed through interviews with the practicum tutors and student tutors.

We rely on a multi-referential ethnography (Velasco & Díaz de Rada, 1997) that complements the triangulation of data and confers more unanimous results. Some categories of analysis were developed from the Practicum process, the transformations and the legitimacy of its characteristics and even identity. Some were answered, and others were ignored, for the emic category of the participant as opposed to the etic seen from outside the system (Pike, 1967)

In general, it was difficult for students to reflect. Although some welcomed reflection, the majority avoided it. This shows the difficulty in prioritizing a dialogical language in relation to knowledge between teachers and future teachers according to Knowles and Holt-Reynolds (1991) the possibility of clarifying their pedagogical and educational ideas, their weltanschauung (vision of the world) of the school and academic, will impact their work in practice and their future as a teacher.

In the meeting of knowledge we analyze several categories and subcategories, which favor the systematic organization of the previous reflective processes during and after the Practicum. The first categories are in Table 01:

Table 01. Categories and subcategories emerging from the reflective period of the Practicum

Practicum process and categories	Subcategories
PHASE I: Motivation	Stereotypes
PHASE II: Entry into the assignment	Capabilities
PHASE III: Professional reflection / learning	Difficulties / Limitations
PHASE IV: Personal Reflection	Teamwork
PHASE V: Transformations	Expectations / Deceptions
PHASE VI: Recommendations	Relations Authorship Social reality and Symbologies

4.   Results of reflective ethnography

From the anthropology of education to development, emancipatory processes are analyzed and recognized from the identification of policies and colonized praxis in which decolonization is proposed.

After the accompanying processes in the different projects located in their countries where cooperation is proposed, how can we recognize what is being done by the population and the worker (student in the Practicum)? Could he limit himself to being a visitor, without managing interventions, unless required by the project itself? What if the student does not intervene and maintains his place as a participant observer and not a participant in the process?

We identify that the Practicum does not always contribute in the same way, there are generational differences as well as motivations and personal and professional searches. Before the analysis of the main categories, we highlight those that are within the reflective process of praxis: difficulties, potentialities, transformations, and recommendations.

4.1. Difficulties during the Practicum

The main difficulty was not being ready for the circumstances or not having competences in certain relationships, especially with regards to the expectations placed on the students as well as the distrust transmitted by users of the institutions. It was also observed the lack of resources on the part of the students to approach and relate to people of diverse cultures and religious beliefs, for which they need a certain training on cultural competence. Other difficulties were found in the context of the people using the services offered by the organization running a practicum, such as the armed conflict in Colombia. Some examples:

"Fear of not being able to face, in the best way, all the needs found in this child population. Lack of experience in the elaboration of social intervention projects"(Practicum Colombia)

There is also the difficulty of unexpected responsibility in the other: making judgments, for example:

"*One of the main difficulties that had to be faced during the social development project is the apathy of people to participate in these activities, although it is true that they accept that their children are part of these social projects, parents do not recognize the importance of them also getting involved*

in this program. Their lack of interest is manifested in the lack of time and motivation that they show when they are informed of the accomplishment of some activity " (Practicum Colombia).

"*The reception by the work team was impeccable, but the most difficult part was the reception by the people who come there*" (Caritas, Spain).

"*The biggest difficulty has been adapting to the philosophy of the center. You arrive at your house and you alter its dynamics by the simple fact of being there. You have to earn their trust. They understand that you will only be there for a certain period of time, but during that time you will do everything possible and more to help and that they can count on you*" (Villa Paz, Madrid).

4.2. Potentialities

We will highlight a few examples of potentialities from the collected testimonies. These categories are complicated since there are many potentialities that the students of the Practicum do not always show, besides the hesitation to talk of their own achievements and appear too arrogant. There is a differentiation in the profiles of the worker as well as in the differences observed according to institutions and countries in different assignments. These potentialities can become efficient, profitable projects that open up other possibilities that can be more consolidated and even create new social agents that value collaborative cooperation, or create agents from the affected population itself:

"*Logical Framework Approach EML, which was very interesting because it is a tool that is built with all those involved, which allows constant participatory action, where the community is a participant in its own development to identify the problems and establish the possible solutions, making people appropriate the planning of the project and a self-commitment is created by realizing that the subject is part of the solution to the problems or difficulties detected* " (Practicum Colombia).

"*My potential / capacity highlighted the positive attitude that comes from within me, (...); but my smile, my kindness and my capacity to make others laugh... I have not lost it at any time, and I hope that it continues like this* " (Practicum Murcia).

"*A process that culminated with the gestation of a project called "HUELLAS DEL ARTE", which was born from a need to optimize children's free time and enhance their talents. An agreement was reached with the Ministry of Culture, which is contributing resources for hiring drawing and painting teachers. [It] is being managed by the association which has been of great impact for the community since the beneficiary children are actively participating in the project*" (Practicum Colombia).

"*Being aware of the potential that each human being has when he realizes what he really likes. In my case, I highlight my abilities to design projects, with creativity, perseverance, flexibility and decision-making that this entails. From my point of view, I consider it an area in which I develop all my potential and in which I develop the best* "(Practicum, Spain).

4.3. Transformations

This category has been one of the most important and where we apply more sense to research. There is a lack of interest in personal and professional transformation, but from the perceptive ethic of the researchers, we give a special interest to show that the Praticum favors formative emancipation and intervention / social mediation. "A collaborative team was formed" this favored believing in collaborative work and interdisciplinarity.

We highlighted some testimonies that confer a potential in the projection of social development from the potential of each participant of the process:

"*It was possible for us to walk and retrace with the farmers and learn and unlearn about the sowing and harvesting cycles and all the rituality that this entails*".

"*I have learned that reality is more complex than any theory that pretends to explain it and that in sociological studies, the variables are so numerous that any prediction becomes difficult, so that studies should be based mainly on observation* (Teacher Practicum Spain).

"*Another look at the immigrant*".

"*The value and perseverance that professionals in this field maintain despite the lack of financial support they may have, as well as their drive to maintain a service to the population, sometimes undervalued, with the minimum possible resources*." (Social worker, Spain)

"*I think I have developed a better flow when talking and extracting information from people, observing their difficulties and extracting the emotional part implicit in each of these people* (teacher Practicum Spain).

"*Greater assertiveness and empathy with people, putting me in their shoes and seeing the real difficulties they are going through, (...) I feel more flexible when it comes to resolving conflicts, developing mediation skills; to teach them different ways of doing things* "(teacher practicum, Spain).

"*Approach to the social reality that is lived in my closest environment, which I previously ignored. Playing an active role as an agent of change in the community is hard work but at the same time enriching and satisfying, especially when learning is mutual and the exchange of experiences lays the basis for a change in the way of acting in the future* (Practicum Cáritas Spain).

"*I have been getting autonomy in the resolution of problems and the reconduction of certain unforeseen situations, (...) I have managed to direct the dynamics, counting on a high resolutive capacity before any situation or conflict that arose*" (Law, Spain).

"*I have been an agent of change and mediation (...) with the project will generate spaces for the exchange of knowledge, knowledge and wisdom, around the process of preparation of the land, planting and harvesting of products, which is immersed in the experiences, traditions and culture of each town or community, since peasant or mobile markets enable the interaction between the farmer and the consumer* (Practicum Colombia).

"*My first job contact directing people with disabilities has helped me to see things from another perspective, to prepare projects thinking more about the individual characteristics of people, to value the importance of an adequate training process to improve performance and above all to enjoy watching the evolution of the person who was 'accompanied'*".

On a personal level we can highlight testimonies that reflect a personal process necessary to make visible such as: "*I have been developing autonomy in the resolution of problems and the redirection of certain unforeseen situations*", "*I have managed to direct dynamics, counting on a successful resolution capacity before any situation or conflict that arose*", "*Interpersonal mediation with students has been an aspect that has enriched me a lot* ","*there are two key elements in this sense; the perseverance and the patience ... I leave more developed, more prepared but above all better person*".

4.4. Recommendations

If finding personal reflections among the students has been complicated, it has been easier to make recommendations and proposals to improve the Practicum. One of the discussions observed is whether the students of the Practicum should go to a specific assignment, develop a concrete project or work for an institution without a clear function. This confuses students but also creates other interesting expectations to analyze.

We consider the difficulty of differentiating between mediation, intervention and / or accompaniment. We observed that the Practicum can become a personal and professional process of agents of change or social agents. It has been awakening interesting concerns and questions that relate their thinking to praxis in overcoming difficulties to improve the possible intervention: "I have been an agent of change and mediation" (student Colombia). We also observed that there is a predisposition of institutions to favor the contact of the Practicum to get projects and cooperation supports, "utilitarianism".

"*It was possible for us to walk and retrace with the farmers and learn and unlearn about the sowing and harvesting cycles and all the rituality that this entails*" (two Practicum students).

A difficulty observed in the first weeks is how well the students adapt, feel accepted or sometimes feel that it is not an adequate space, moment or activities: "*The first week has been a week in which I felt a little strange* "(student Practicum).

5. Discussion and results

Reflective ethnography and the research process have given us a more complete knowledge to understand these Practicum processes of universities, as well as proposals from associations and NGOs that are not linked to bureaucratic and administrative processes. We trust in the need to present the different meanings that arise in different contexts, in addition to multiple perspectives, so that it allows us to acquire a glolocal-situated knowledge that favors interventions of an emancipatory cooperation in relation to the 2030 Agenda whose motto is to transform our world (Muñoz & Vitón, 2017). For this, we trust in the need to find processes that favor the decolonization of both the worker and the institution, represented in the following table:

Table 02. Traits of coloniality and decoloniality in cooperation processes

	Qualities - cooperating students	**Cooperating institution**
Colonial	Take center stage Empower Mimetize with power structures Skip the objectives of cooperation Power of incidence Remove data without return and without permission Cooperator's success - intervention Judgments of its users	Technocracy Market Abandonment of processes and bureaucratization Delegitimize the importance of the objectives of the projects Concern too much for the format (we ignore a student without competences in Spanish, academic standards) De-solidarization
Decolonial	Knowledge located Mimicry Language located No protagonist Does not intervene - accompanies Favors the existing processes Influence community objectives Organizational strengthening Complaint controlled by protagonists-accompaniment process Recognize its historicism	Supports the complaint of the people it aims to help Teach what you have learned from your processes Stewardship Establish priorities with the community Organizational strengthening Process accompaniment Accompaniment to the worker Teamwork-collaborative

In short, the Practicum favors the emancipatory intervention after helping students whose problem is: "*The greatest difficulty has been adapting to the philosophy of the center*" *and answering "How to carry out a social intervention project that has an impact on each of the children, who came to the foundation*?".

There is a direct relationship between Practicum and social intervention, which is associated by the students in the potential that exists in the "letting do" a greater commitment of the students of the Practicum.

"*It is about formulating the projects from and for the communities, thus achieving that they themselves recognize the problems, weaknesses, possibilities and strengths of their context and, in the same way, they themselves seek a way to overcome such shortcomings, which makes them feel recognized and valued, and therefore, more committed to the formulation and execution of the project*" (Agricultural Project, Colombia).

Finally, we emphasize that there are transformations in attitudes:

"*There are two key elements in this regard: perseverance and patience ... I leave more developed, more prepared but above all better person* "(Education Practicum Mexico).

Acknowledgments

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