

The Collegiate Work in the Higher Education Field: A Look at the Sociocultural Theory.

Dra Norma Angélica Ávila Cano

Universidad Pedagógica Nacional del Estado de Chih. Campus Juárez, Mexico

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to systematically collect different concepts on collegial work that have been poured into higher education, as an input and opportunity to build, reconstruct and, therefore, have the possibility of positioning and contributing a personal construct that is here read and understood as such. In congruence with this, it is also important to approach collegiate work not only from a terminological point of view; because it is considered necessary to scrutinize it also from theoretical axes that allow it, to acquire a deeper meaning in praxis; hence, the Sociocultural Approach from Vigotsky is rescued.

Keywords: Collegial Work, Sociocultural Theory, Higher Education

Introduction

It is undeniable that the vertiginous changes in the productive, financial, technological and scientific systems in a global context, demand of higher education institutions the orientation of their educational purposes to the formation of subjects fully developed, with skills to face the emerging challenges of globalization and participate in the solution of social and productive problems. The above turns the view towards the teachers, who, observing the continuous change that the world suffers from them, it is ironic that they pretend that everything changes except their place of work. It is not possible to maintain the same systems of organization of teaching from one year to the next. The new functions, with a necessary margin of individual decision, require processes of analysis and collective action. It is urgent to update this challenge in theory and action, because of the greater instability of the education system, the more necessary coordination and professional exchange.

This has served as support for the legitimate interest of analyzing at first the teacher collegiality at the higher educational level, so this document begins by analyzing different positions that define this academic work, however it is clear that it is outside of This document, exhaust the number of definitions given by different authors, so it should be limited to those that are more significant, always touching (and not in a superficial way) its transcendence.

Following these ideas, the second moment is related to how the Socio-Cultural Theory provides important elements that allow us to expand the boundaries of collegiality from other edges that give it a significant understanding of its transcendence.

Conceptualization of Collegiate Work

The approach of basic arguments about the collegiate between teachers, refers to start to give account of the meaning that contextualizes this construct; for it, the Dictionary of the Sciences of the Education (1983), registers that school in its etymological sense comes from the Latin *col-leger*, that means to collect, to add; and in the Virtual Dictionary WordReference.com, refers to an association of professionals.

Now, the Dictionary of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language (2001) thus defines the word:

Collegiate: Said of the individuals of the same profession or class: Meet in school.

While the Historical and Modern Dictionary of the Spanish Language (1988) presents the following concept:

"Collegiate: It is said of the individual who is incorporated in the college of the profession to which he belongs"

Comparing these definitions directly related to the object of study, it is explicit that they contain the primitive meaning that gives character to collegial work: the meeting of colleagues (in this case, of teachers). However, meeting among colleagues is the minimum degree of conceptualization that is addressed at this time, because, to this sum or aggregation of subjects of the same profession must be endowed, imperatively in this conceptualization of relational and teleological structures.

Finally, it is assumed that when referring to school, it is a body of people associated with a common function, this refers to the work colleague.

According to Fierro Evans (1998), collegial work deals with a fundamentally participatory process of decision making and definitions of actions between managers and teachers; as a strategy of consultation, reflection, analysis, coordination and peer relationship.

Izquierdo Sánchez (2003, p.33), paraphrases John Bennet (1998) in the book that the latter publishes entitled *College Professionalism, Academia, Individualism and the Common Good writing verbatim: "For Bennet, Collegial Ethics implies the daily cultivation of behaviours and virtues and sincere dialogue between colleagues. Acceptance and support,*

constructive criticism, and virtues that include others, hospitality and consideration must be promoted in the academy. "

The contributions of Bennet, are significant in the tenor of defining two qualities or virtues (as he calls them) to cultivate collegiality: hospitality is the "will to consider, meet and address the strange and the new, as well as revalue the old and the familiar. It is generosity and openness in giving and receiving -both in sharing and in learning" (Izquierdo Sánchez, 2003, p.36), teaching hospitality is then a position convinced that the academic enterprise is the result of a definitely social construction that requires the other and the others to be, subscribe and validate.

For this approach, making a school demands responsible social professionalism, alluding to a moral commitment: "... *professional integrity can only be cultivated within community-structures to promote the public good more than private advantage alone or opportunism. The commitment to this civic good is awakened and developed, it can not be ordered by an economic incentive, by external regulation, or by administrative mandate*" (Izquierdo Sánchez, 2003, p.40), here are two features of collegial ethics.

Now, the consideration called by Bennet as the second virtue requires respect for the autonomy of others and for those conditions that are needed in the exercise of it; it is also a relational way of being prudent but not indifferent to others, impartial and fair, recognizing and accepting the particular circumstances of colleagues.

The foregoing and without possibility of deception, leads to consider how the types of relational link established, largely determine the success or not that can be achieved in this type of actions, then underlines how dialogue, hospitality, consideration and concertation become the heart of collegial activity.

This theoretical dialogue has already offered elements to assume that collegiate work in higher education institutions contains a meaning that directly involves the meeting of teachers, not only in terms of time and space, but in quadrants of common interests that favor the practice educational. Then, in a personal way, it is argued that it is a process of permanent construction and reconstruction in whose organization progress and resistance can be noticed, but always tending towards horizontal participation among teachers who assume themselves as subjects capable of learning from exchange among colleagues in order to guarantee a better definition in the decision making and actions that respond to raise the quality of the educational services that are offered and with it, the professionalization of teachers.

It is necessary to understand that this professionalization is not limited only to the classroom work, nor to the participation in teacher training and updating programs, but to the consideration of collegial work as a cornerstone.

López Hernández (2007, p.9) takes up Little (1990) when he states: "*The reason to propose the study and practice of collegiality is that, presumably, something is gained when the teachers work together and something is lost when it is not made*".

Sociocultural Theory and Collegiality

In terms of sociocultural foundations where conceptions of learning, motivation, group, education, training and teaching emerge among the most important, the contributions of Lev Semiónovich Vigotsky (1896-1934), founder of the Socio-Cultural Theory in psychology or known as Theory of Social Development of Learning, where the concept of the human being is active, constructor of their own learning from the stimulation of the social media mediated by an agent and vehiculated by the language, while this becomes the system of privileged signs for human psychological development. Language mediates the relationship with others and, moreover, mediates the relationship with oneself. This is, according to the genetic law of cultural development, the language in human beings, like the rest of the higher psychological functions, is first a tool shared with others in social activities, to later become a tool for dialogue inside.

The central aspect of Vygotsky is his conviction that biological and cultural development does not occur only, that it is a permanent process and dependent on social interaction and that learning of this type actually leads to cognitive development; that is to say, to develop potentialities if these are favored, for that purpose it integrates the concept of the Zone of Near Development, defined literally by itself as the distance between the real level of development, "*determined by the capacity to resolve independently a problem, and the level of potential development, determined through the resolution of a problem under the guidance of an adult or in collaboration with another, more capable partner.*" (Vygotsky, 1988, p 133).

Then, from this theoretical elaboration, the knowledge construction process is no longer understood as an individual realization, but as a joint construction process that is carried out with the help of the people in its context. Whereas, even though Vygotsky focuses his analysis on the formal educational contexts (schools) about the learning processes of students, their contributions are recovered for the purpose of sustaining a collegiality among teachers in the spirit of pondering the negotiation of meanings and the establishment of a discursive context that makes communication and understanding feasible as a situation that pervades collegiate work. The theoretical contributions of this author, give permission and possibility of restoring to the word its resonance both cognitive and emotional to contribute to giving life to an exchange that makes possible the collective thinking.

The interaction occurs in a context that is socioculturally established, emphasizing the interdependence between individual and social processes in the construction of knowledge. Considering the arguments made, in the collegial interaction applies the concept of Zone of proximal development, in the sense of assuming it as the space in which, thanks to the interaction and the help of others, a teacher can work and solve a problem or perform a task in a way and with a level that I would not be able to have individually.

It is understood then that learning is a process of collaboration or joint coordination in which mechanisms of expression and recognition of opposing points of view are activated, creation and resolution of conflicts, rescuing the

importance of relationships between equals; An angle from which the academic community takes a perspective on collaborative work. Next, the following paragraph quoted by Bárbara Rogoff (1990, p.179) that recovers from Rubtson (1981) in The role of cooperation in the development of intelligence, by significantly paying to the richness of social interaction is transcribed verbatim.

"When I discuss and sincerely try to understand someone, I take care not only to avoid contradicting myself and playing with words, but also to enter into an indefinite series of points of view different from mine ... It's a balance in movement ... The commitments I make for the nature of cooperation lead me to I do not know where.

In conditions of cooperation, an activity that participants initially share, emerges as an original and fundamental foundation for the development of individual activity. "

Conclusions

One of the issues that currently occupy the centre of the educational debate at the international level, is the culture of collaboration and collegiality in educational institutions as strategies that reduce isolation, resistance, mainly conservative attitudes and the emotional cost of education. change in the face of innovations that can arise in collegial work in its different estates. It is assumed that a pattern that is presented in the concept of collegiality is the search for a common academic project under an integrative process; Therefore, we can conclude that the Collegiate Work is a broad, complex and transcendent concept, as well as an action that can be incorporated and lived not just as a sum of organizational reformulations but as a way of thinking and acting that promotes a constant culture. University oriented towards change, innovation and the progress of processes and results that university institutions.

Urge, but in a mature manner and not under hastiness, reposition the collegiality in higher education institutions (IES) in its proper measure, without it to violate or sacrifice the individuality of each teacher or to be imposed by decree, which only It would lead to a false collegiality with poor results that we already know. In equal measure, it is interesting to recover the postulates of Vygotsky in terms of whether the teaching task involves constant training and professionalization within a framework of socialization; then, premises of this sociocultural approach have also been recovered in what concerns to consider that the construction of knowledge is a social and shared process.

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