

The challenges of higher education in the 21st century**Los retos de la educación superior en el siglo XXI**

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Abstract

Today in our country we are against the presence of a new educational model based on internationalization, curricular flexibility in the credit system in curriculum design competence and university autonomy. Overall, this study analyzed the way the college seeks how to solve the dilemma between being a nationalist approach professionals or professionals who think globally but are capable of addressing problems locally. Furthermore, we question some of the myths between education and globalization, as well as the negative effects of the shortcomings of our education system in the economic, social and contemporary political life.

Education, Globalization, Crisis of values, Education reform**Resumen**

Hoy en nuestro país estamos frente a la presencia de un nuevo modelo educativo centrado en la internacionalización, en la flexibilización curricular, en el sistema de créditos, en diseños curriculares por competencias y en la autonomía universitaria. En general, en este trabajo analizamos la manera en que la educación universitaria busca el cómo resolver la disyuntiva entre formar profesionistas con un enfoque nacionalista o profesionistas que piensen globalmente pero que sean capaces de atender los problemas localmente. Asimismo, cuestionamos algunos de los mitos entre educación y globalización, así como los efectos negativos de las deficiencias de nuestro sistema educativo en la vida económica, social y política contemporánea.

Educación, Globalización, Crisis de valores, Reforma educativa

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Introduction**Background**

While recognizing that currently the State institutionally induces the educational model required by the country or the new international scenarios, the truth is that each university has been adopting the one that best corresponds to its context and historical circumstances.

I identify in our country basically three educational models that Mexican universities have gone through in our modern history.

The first stage refers to the Socialist Model, an educational model imposed by the State in the period 1934-1946, under the constitutional reform of December 13, 1934, which stated: "the education provided by the State will be socialist and Furthermore, by excluding all religious doctrine, it will combat fanaticism and prejudices, for which the school will organize its teachings and activities in a way that allows youth to create a rational and exact concept of the Universe and of social life. In this way, the State not only affirmed its absolute right to education, but also believed that it possessed the truth.

The subsequent development of the country created the conditions for the adoption of a Nationalist Model, a model structured in schools and colleges, also known as the Napoleonic model. This educational model, a product of the strong economic, industrial and urban growth in the 1950s-1970s, showed its limitations in the late 1970s, which were reflected in expressions and social mobilizations in which university students were the main protagonists of the change in the educational model.

Towards the eighties, in the context of what has been called globalization, educational institutions found it necessary to adopt a new model that would allow the country to acquire a greater capacity to participate in world scientific advancement and, above all, everything, which would allow us to actively participate in the processes of economic, cultural and technological integration.

The value of education

The social responsibility of the universities has been to promote educational models that are centered on Ethics as the guiding axis of professional training and the generation of good citizens. That is why the new educational models seek to resolve the dilemma between training professionals with a nationalist approach or professionals who think globally but can address problems locally.

In fact, as Fernando Savater (2003) pointed out more than ten years ago in his book entitled "The value of educating", "society prepares its members in the way that seems most convenient". In other words, according to the same author, "society prepares them for their conservation, not for their destruction; it seeks to form good partners, not enemies or antisocial singularities".

In this regard, since the end of the 19th century, sociologists like Durkheim have observed how education has been transforming; Well, from being an education with all the characteristics of a social institution, it became a public service that tended to be placed more and more directly under the inspection and direction of the State, so that it did not become a means of domination, exclusion or social discrimination.

Durkheim appreciated that education was separated, every day more, not only from its ends, but from the local or ethnic conditions that characterized it before; and that its principles became more and more general and more abstract.

Today universities are facing the presence of new educational models; educational models that respond to new contexts, which present not only a new different administrative and academic organization, but even politics.

Education and the myths of globalization

More than three decades ago the theme of "globalization" became fashionable, which was seen by many as an economic, social, political, cultural and technological phenomenon, which would end up imbuing us and inevitably drag us backward or towards greater stages of development. It was said that it was the opportunity for poor countries to get out of backwardness or underdevelopment; that it was the opportunity to improve our competitive capabilities.

Many experts considered that it was more of a media discourse or an ideology that sought to convince governments and citizens of the world about its benefits. It was also interpreted as the emergence of a new paradigm, a theory or even a new development model. The reality is that the expectations that were had of this process are far from what we are experiencing almost all over the planet.

Both in the universities, as in the media or even in political discourse, the concept was used abusively and irresponsibly, making citizens believe that by participating in this process we would one day enter the first world; that we would have the same capabilities to compete with the best in the world.

Students were told in the classrooms that in the "global world" they would have to compete against North Americans, Europeans or Japanese as if all the citizens of the world and of all nationalities were going to attend the same job market.

The reality is that individuals do not compete in the supposed "global market" for a job; neither are the Americans, nor the Europeans, nor the Japanese going to come or come to dispute our precarious and miserable jobs.

In world markets there is competition with products made with labor, but with qualified labor, with advanced systems to improve productivity such as education, scientific knowledge, new technologies, equipment, infrastructure, the system political, etc. etc.

It is a myth, then, that with globalization and its benefits, we will be able to compete in the labor markets where all the economies of the world concur.

To begin with, very few will travel to work from one country to another; Unless they do it as braceros, because in the conditions of our workforce and our youth, the furthest they can go is to the jails of the United States or to die on the border.

In short, one thing is what the ideologues of globalization say and another what the most recent data from the OECD says, regarding the improvement of our human capacities; because according to the 2013 Education Panorama, in Mexico 64% of the population have an educational level lower than upper secondary education (prepa).

According to the same organization, our country has one of the lowest enrollment rates for young people between 15 and 19 years of age, barely 56%; well below 84%, which is the average for OECD member countries, or for other countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and Chile.

Overall, only 12% of our young people between the ages of 20 and 29 participate in education. In 2011, about 30% of these young people in general were neither employed nor studying; the percentage of women represented 47% within this group.

This is our harsh reality in the face of globalization, it is the place we occupy in the concert of nations; We are in 27th place out of 33 countries that make up the OECD and other G20 countries (the most economically powerful) in terms of investment in higher education. Only 26% of young people who aspire to pursue a university degree have the opportunity to fulfill their dreams; thus we will never be able to compete with the professionals or in the great markets of the world.

For this reason, globalization, although for many it is an opportunity, is still a myth of those who believed that globalization and the invisible hand of the market would lead us to the first world, would improve the levels of employment, income, the possibilities of development educational and cultural, levels of well-being and everything; everything that we have not seen anywhere. Well, the reality is that the misnamed globalization that has brought with it is social unrest throughout the world, misery, social exclusion, wars, crime, unemployment, income concentration and impoverishment of the great majority of the population.

The right to education

Today in our country we are going through a severe crisis that is manifested in economic instability, political instability, security, lack of credibility in institutions and deficiencies in our educational system. And it is that for at least two decades our country lost the way of how to properly educate our children, our adolescents, and our young people.

The reality is that from the assessments that were made to students in basic education (primary) through the ENLACE test in 2013, almost half of our children were failed in ethics and civics; which, in parallel with the terrible education that most parents give our children, we will be condemning them to suffering and failure throughout their lives. There is an almost general opinion among psychologists, psychoanalysts and neurologists; that we are not adequately preparing our children to be able to face and overcome adversity in their adulthood. Especially since, until now, we have been more concerned with teaching them skills than attitudes; that is, we have only taught them skills and abilities without enabling them with the tools required for managing emotions and social interaction. It is unfortunate that in a society in crisis like the one we live in today in Mexico, we are worrying more about teaching them to compete than to cooperate; we have formed "competitive" people, but not very cooperative. We have allowed the market and individualism to take over their consciences and for selfishness to overcome humanism, goodness and the solidarity that must exist between the human species.

We have abandoned them to their fate, without instilling in them values, ethical and moral principles that allow healthy social coexistence, creativity, mental health and constructive interpersonal relationships. The lack of closeness, attention, understanding, support, encouragement and family coexistence has made our children autistic, hyperactive or aggressive infants; we have made our young people isolated, insecure, incapable or frustrated, at best. But we have also raised arrogant, selfish, narcissistic, quarrelsome, irresponsible, alcoholic and drug addicts.

Mental health experts agree that a child who has not received an adequate education during their childhood and adolescence, upon reaching higher education, we will be able to do very little for them; especially if there is no higher education system that prioritizes the development, not only of intellectual intelligence but also of emotional intelligence.

In short, there are so many deficiencies in our educational systems that, as long as we do not pay due attention to the way we educate our children, to the training we are providing to our young people, as well as the relationship that parents establish with our children. ; we will be generating emotional illiterates.

Importance of private education in Mexico

We all know that the recent Educational Reform in Mexico has unleashed in some regions of the country large mobilizations of some sectors of the teaching profession, especially those related to basic education.

The reality is that this reform obeys the commitments assumed, for more than two decades before UNESCO, by all those countries that, like ours, face enormous lags in universal coverage and educational quality at all levels. Although it is true that the causes of our low educational quality standards are controversial and complex, it is enough to observe the importance that private education has acquired in our basic educational systems, due to corruption, inefficiency, lack of planning, low quality and insufficient spending on public education; In fact, according to SEP statistics, between 2009-2010, private spending on education represented 13.6% at the preschool level, 43% at primary level and 18.1% at secondary level of the national total.

We may not agree with these reforms, for maintaining an opposition political stance, but the national educational system needs to be transformed from above in order to introduce innovations at the institutional and local level (from below). The reality is that our educational system has become obsolete in the face of the great changes that are taking place worldwide in the face of the complex transition between the 20th and 21st centuries. For this reason, in our country, the lack of educational opportunities for girls, boys and young people, as well as the low quality of education, has resulted after a few years in lack of job opportunities, crime and deterioration of the quality of life of Mexicans. Since 1990, at the World Summit in Jomtien, Thailand, it was emphasized that in the world there were more than one hundred million children and countless adults who did not manage to complete primary school and that of the more than one hundred million children who did not had access to primary education, 60% were girls.

It is not understood why we Mexicans are more outraged by an educational reform to improve the quality and coverage of education, than the low spending on education or the results of the evaluations of our students. We are certainly satisfied with being a country of failures, according to the latest report from the OECD's Student Assessment System (PISA); or with the results of the ENLACE test (National Evaluation of Academic Achievement in School Centers, 2013), which shows that 78.1% of our Secondary students have an "Insufficient and Elementary" training in Mathematics or that 54.6% of those in Primary have an Ethical and Civic training "Insufficient and Elementary".

Without a doubt, we all have to make an effort, not only social or political, to improve our educational standards in coverage and quality; The most recent data show that in terms of spending on preschool education, Mexico ranks 31st out of 32 among OECD countries; 33rd out of 34th in primary education and 32nd out of 34th in secondary education.

We should be outraged, not by what is happening to teachers, who have the right to demand better salary and working conditions; but because of what we ourselves do not do for the education of our children or because we do not demand greater spending on education from our federal or state governments.

Parents are also co-responsible for the education of our children; it is up to us to instill in them family values, good customs, but above all, to be good citizens.

Structural reasons for the educational reform in Mexico

The controversy that the Education Reform has unleashed in Mexico is understandable if we consider that with its implementation some particular interests will be affected, especially those related to the power that the education workers' unions had to influence political processes and electoral, in the control of privileges, perks and canogies that favored some of the privileged leaders of the teaching profession.

Although the reasons that give rise to this reform are overly broad and complex, the reality is that, at least, we can locate three aspects. In the first place, it is a response of the State to counteract the power of the unions and their influence in the planning, design, methods and contents of public education, in order to retake the leadership of the educational system; secondly, the Mexican State seeks to respond to the international pressures and commitments that our country has with some organizations such as the OECD, UNESCO, etc. Y; third, find mechanisms to reduce our marked economic and social inequalities.

First, it must be recognized that our country was classified by the OECD as a failed country in the last evaluation of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA); Well, according to that organization, despite the fact that the country has relatively improved the budget, the reality is that of that budget, 93.3% is allocated to the remuneration of staff as a whole and, practically, nothing to the creation of infrastructure or equipment.

The lack of educational opportunities for girls, boys, young people and the deterioration in the quality of education has resulted after a few years in a lack of job opportunities, crime and a deterioration in the quality of life of the people in our country.

Since the 1990 UNESCO World Declaration, also known as the Jontiem Declaration; Every country in the world has been recommending the need to guarantee EpT (Education for All). For this reason, this reform is not due to political whims or party wishes; It is an objective and structural requirement that the country has required for years to improve its educational systems.

Although this reform may seem painful, it is necessary to consider that a social and political effort is required to improve our educational standards in coverage and quality; The most recent data show that in terms of spending on preschool education, Mexico ranks 31st out of 32 among OECD countries; 33rd out of 34th in primary education and 32nd out of 34th in secondary education.

Since the beginning of the eighties in the last century, many theorists of the world economy have been emphasizing that spending on education is a strategic instrument to promote an adequate distribution of wealth, to improve per capita income and improve the economic and living conditions of the population. Since then, it has also been said that the training received in the classroom is essential for the improvement of human capacities and to improve the competitiveness of the economy, companies and countries that participate in international trade.

If we have obsolete educational systems, unions that promote cochupo among their leaders to the detriment of workers' union rights or that we continue to have educational institutions that serve more for political purposes than to fulfill their social responsibility to form better citizens; We will continue to pay the cost of our social breakdown, our economic backwardness, and our own future as a sovereign nation. As in the economy, it must be very clear that neither all control to the State, nor all power to the market; likewise, neither all the power to the State, nor all the control to the unions. It is the State that must assume the leadership of education and the economy to maintain the economic and social balances that make Mexico a fairer country.

Importance of good education

In his book on "The value of educating", Fernando Savater (2003), argues that education has a double value; because to educate you have to have courage and because spending on education is a value. But it also takes courage to provide one kind or another of education to our children. That is why Savater suggests that to avoid discrimination between one type of education or another, it is necessary to universalize education. An education that contemplates not only local or national problems, but the problems that today afflict all of humanity. Therefore, in a document entitled "21st century educational model" (Universidad de Guadalajara, 2007), we can see that new educational models are being promoted focused on the universalization of knowledge, on internationalization, on curricular flexibility, on the credits, in curricular designs by competencies and in university autonomy.

These new models seek to respond to the demands posed by the phenomenon of globalization and economic, political and cultural interdependence. The adoption of these new models does not mean turning our backs on the localities, on the national, but on being in and with the world; for fully belonging to the knowledge and information society, for taking advantage of the academic and cultural experiences that are generated in other latitudes and communities, and for making our contributions reach all corners of the country and the rest of the world (University of Guadalajara, 2007).

The reality is that universities are currently facing internal and external forces that promote their internationalization as a strategy to expand their coverage capacity, improve the quality of their programs, be more competitive, interact in the field of advanced knowledge and be part of the educational geopolitics in matters of cooperation, exchange and global dissemination of knowledge.

Faced with these circumstances, it can be said that universities have had to move from rigid educational systems, controlled by the State, to others more or less flexible, in which academic communities begin, relatively, to participate in educational designs that will allow us to break with classist education schemes and focused exclusively on unilateral views with criteria, or of a global nature, or with local criteria.

Therefore, the participation of local communities will continue to be essential to improve the quality and direction of education in the future.

Among some of the factors that have influenced the need to promote these models based on the internationalization of universities, we can highlight, according to ANUIES, the following:

- Growing demand for higher education in the world
- Emergence of increasingly advanced knowledge
- Geopolitical, cultural and cooperative influence
- Need to create new sources of income
- Increase in trade in telecommunications and internet-based services.
- Transform a closed public education system into an open one with cooperation and exchange networks.
- Achieve better use of material and human resources (administrative improvement). Guarantee appropriate working conditions and infrastructure for academic bodies.
- Carry out a systematic monitoring of institutional activities (including external evaluation).
- Accelerate educational innovation in public universities.

- Promote national and international mobility of students. (Promoting the flexibility of study programs). Accelerate the growth of the public offer of higher education. (Strengthen the modalities of open and distance education).
- Address the problem of over-saturation of careers with the highest demand.
- Clarity of commitments between institutions, federal, state and local governments.
- Application of new formulas for equity and performance in the allocation of the budget to public universities.
- Establish a national system that allows the academic career of teachers at the national level, in such a way that they can have inter-institutional mobility without losing the seniority achieved in a particular institution.

In conclusion

In almost all the countries of the world, particularly in less developed ones like ours, there is some concern about the future of university education for the century.

XXI. Especially if we take into account that recurring economic crises, political instability, insecurity, environmental damage, loss of values and the deterioration of social cohesion have to do with the failure of the educational model that has been implemented for more than three decades in most countries of the world.

Universities became functional to the system, because to receive higher budgets they had to streamline their resources to improve their "productivity"; Thus, began the quality controls, which later were translated into cumbersome systems for the simulation and bureaucratization of education. Now, teachers and researchers instead of teaching; They spend a large part of their time on paperwork, filling out forms, financial reports and of all kinds to participate in the humiliating programs of stimuli to the productivity to complement the deplorable university salaries.

University life has become a tortuous path for professors and researchers to obtain additional income. Faced with the privileged university bureaucracy that strives more and more to make the way of the cross that teachers have to go through every day to preserve their income and stay in the classroom more and more cumbersome.

And as time passes, the University continues to functionally advance towards E-learning, to expand the offer, improve educational efficiency and favor public savings in education: more graduates with university degrees, but without classrooms, with less costs and with fewer teachers compared to the group. That is, the virtuosity of online self-learning, without teachers, without classrooms and without effort.

We do not suggest discarding technological advances, but neither do we agree to disparage the human intellect. It is not about locking ourselves in classrooms, but neither is it about throwing young people out en masse on the streets.

True education must consist not only in the development of aptitudes or skills, but also in the development of interpersonal skills, attitudes and values to achieve a better world, with human, social and environmental conscience.

Well, the crisis that the world is experiencing, our country, is nothing more than the product of our regression in education, in culture and in human coexistence. We have taught people to compete, not to share, to divide, not to cooperate, to destroy and not to build and live together.