

# Challenges of teacher training and updating for Higher Education in the key of Social Responsibility

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**Abstract.** Social responsibility has been raised as a key issue of university identity, however, although its different faces permeate institutional statements, how work is done in the classroom, presents us with questions for teachers. Thus, the study explores the voices of university professors, facing the question, What narratives of teachers account for how they interpret their role in the training of socially responsible professionals?

From an interpretative perspective, the experiences that make up the training in social responsibility, oriented to university teachers, are resignified from the transformational dimension of collective leadership from Scharmer's U Theory. The results show that teacher training has allowed them to change the internal place from which they operate as teachers and the ways they relate, which affects the transformative potential of collective leadership. Consequently, maintaining an active training of teachers in this regard, not only creates spaces for personal reflection, but also collective spaces, generating an articulated network that affects institutional training practices, especially at the classroom level which are fundamentally related to teaching in close relationship with the problems of society.

**Keywords:** Ethics Education, Social Responsibility, Professional Training, Pedagogical Practices.

## 1 Introduction

The Universidad Construye País project [UCP-2001] (Universidad Construye-País, 2006), resignified in 2022, conceives University Social Responsibility [USR] as a way of being, doing university and cohabiting the territory [UCP-2022] (Aguilera et al., 2022). This invites to integrate the territories and the ethical imperative to move towards an assessment that social responsibility [SR] is learned when it takes place through experiences of the real (De la Cruz, 2016). Thus, a teaching practice assumed as community action (Lázaro & Hernández, 2020; Vallejo et al., 2010), it invites to: (1) rethink the actions that happen in the classroom as ways of learning to live from a pro-

fessional exercise and (2) teacher leadership as a collective action that guides the learning process towards that purpose (Irrarazabal-Gavancho, 2022). This makes the teaching narratives significant, regarding their role in forming students to act, with freedom and responsibility, towards a professional exercise in favor of the dignity of the person and the common good.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

A training in SR guides the understanding of the world contributing to transform it (Irrarazabal-Gavancho, 2022; Müller & Coronado, 2016). The USR (Aguilera et al., 2022), in the XXI century implies reviewing curricula, assuming teaching as a form of collective leadership (Vallejo & Goveo de Guerrero, 2011; Van Ginkel, 2002), and above all to understand and reflect on the deepest dimension of leadership (Irrarazabal-Gavancho, 2022), the internal space of intention and attention from which we act, from which leadership and social action become reality (Scharmer, 2017). Demanding to learn to listen empathically and generatively, in a world that changes as a result of processes of globalization, fragmentation, integration and decentralization (Flores et al., 2021; Scharmer, 2018).

For Sharmer (2018) in U Theory, the way we pay attention to a situation, individually and collectively, determines the direction in which the system moves and the way it is transformed by defining four "spheres of attention": personal (1), group (2), institutional (3) and global (4). The most important challenge of today's leadership is to transform from reactive responses and quick fixes (scopes 1 and 2) to generative responses that address the systemic root of problems (scopes 3 and 4).

## 3 Method

The research question: What narratives of teachers account for how they interpret their role in the training of socially responsible professionals?, allows us to understand the internal space of action of teachers when exercising leadership in SR training. The perspective of the study is interpretive, with narrative methodology, where reality is constituted in text (Arias Cardona, 2015; Castaño Gaviria & Guisao Gil, 2021).

The analysis considers the areas of action and attention, expressed in Sharmer's U Theory and the transformative change that constitutes it.

## 4 Results and discussion

Today's leadership requires becoming aware of challenges and possibilities by opening the mind, heart and will (Lázaro & Hernández, 2020), what in the narratives of teachers is presented in the understanding that SR is part of a vocation of institutional service (Rubio-Rodríguez et al., 2021). They point out that: *"Especially, the vocation of service allows me to organize my teaching since I understand that I must promote not only the mastery of constructs and central procedures of my discipline, but I must also promote*

*in my students this vocation: that of using the knowledge of the discipline to contribute to society".*

Expressions such as "*dialogue*", "*embodiment at work*" or "*contributing to society*" are presented to give meaning to a teaching with effect towards society from the actions of the students. In this way, teachers and students have an opening, which transforms them into the bond that is sustained.

As for their teaching role, in their different styles, they are represented as someone who accompanies and facilitates the student to find themselves in this vocation of service. They refer to it as: "*Motivate them to define a professional identity that generates a positive impact on the environment, on the territory and in the places where they will potentially work from their own identity as a person*".

The participants agree on a formative role and the understanding that the context connects students with reality, inviting a teaching praxis from prosocial leadership (Roche, 2012), able to engage in a bond with another and a professional practice at the service of a common good (Flores et al., 2021), what Adela Cortina points out as a social good of the profession (Cortina, 2000). For them it is "*to recover or rather make visible the pillars of being and to live and work consciously with them. The humanist and the vision of contributing to a better society are recovered*".

The narratives of teachers permeate a language that makes them present in the process and creates spaces to contain the formative transformation. They reflect patterns of thought, conversation, and organization, capable of creating the complexity of the social world that is put into action at a given moment, to integrate the gaze of the other through empathy, build together and embrace new possibilities. (Scharmer, 2018).

## **5 Conclusions**

Social Responsibility is a key issue of university identity but, how do teachers do it in the classroom?. Teachers understand their role, aware of the effect of their actions on the life projects of students and on society as a whole, building their understanding of SR, at the confluence of institutional statements, professional disciplines, the cultures of each school or career and their own life stories. Teacher training has allowed them to change the internal place from which they operate as teachers and the ways in which they relate. Their narrative shows a teaching with a less directive and centralized role, allowing them to move towards a more co-creative one, not only with the student but with a community outside the classroom, becoming aware of it.

## **6 Limitations and Future Research**

It is interesting to expand the long-term effect of intentional training in teaching practices aimed at implementing SR curricula and its effect on academic cultures, on students and how this will impact on their future actions as professionals.

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