

Artículo de reflexión

Cómo citar: Patiño, Diana; Concha Sebastián; Sánchez, Andrés, D. (2024). Community English School: A Methodology that Builds Networks. . *Polisemia*, 20 (37), 67-76. <http://doi.org/10.26620/uniminuto.polisemia.20.37.2024.67-76>

ISSN: 1900-4648

eISSN: 2590-8189

Editorial: Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios - UNIMINUTO

Recibido: 11 de marzo de 2024

Aceptado: 10 de abril de 2024

Publicado: 30 de mayo de 2024

Diana M. Patiño Bautista, Sebastián Concha Vargas y Andres F. Sanchez Sosa

Community English School: A Methodology that Builds Networks

Escuela comunitaria de inglés: una metodología que construye redes

Escola Comunitaria de Inglês: Uma Metodologia que Constrói Redes

Diana Marcela Patiño Bautista

Professor Social Responsibility
Practicum

Corporación Universitaria
Minuto de Dios – UNIMINUTO

Correo electrónico:
dpatino@uniminuto.edu

Sebastián Concha Vargas

Professor bachelor's degree in
foreign languages, English

Corporación Universitaria
Minuto de Dios – UNIMINUTO

Correo electrónico:
sconcha@uniminuto.edu

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5690-7371>

Andres Felipe Sanchez Sosa

Student bachelor's degree in
foreign languages, English

Correo electrónico:
andres.sanchez-so@uniminuto.edu.co

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-5773-3300>

Abstract

This document summarizes the systematization of the socio-educational experience of the Puerta de Luz Foundation, based on the dialogical encounter, the theoretical reflection and the experience of the Practice of Social Responsibility. The analysis is supported by the interpretation of pedagogical thinkers, in connection with the stories produced by social actors from the framework of the experience in social organization. The reflections raised have allowed us to recognize the importance of the actions of the Puerta de Luz Foundation in Bosa, as well as to rethink meanings and theoretical-methodological orientations on categories such as community education, community and some aspects of didactics.

Keywords: pedagogical mediations, childhood, infancy, community education

Resumen

El artículo presenta los resultados de la sistematización de la experiencia socioeducativa de la Fundación Puerta de Luz, a partir del encuentro dialógico, la reflexión teórica y la experiencia de la Práctica de Responsabilidad Social. El análisis metodológico se basa en la interpretación de pensadores de la pedagogía, en conexión con los relatos producidos por los actores sociales desde



la experiencia en la organización social. Las reflexiones suscitadas permitieron reconocer la trascendencia del accionar de la Fundación Puerta de Luz en Bosa, a la vez que replantear sentidos y orientaciones teórico-metodológicas sobre categorías como educación comunitaria, comunidad y algunos aspectos sobre la didáctica.

Palabras clave: mediaciones pedagógicas, niñez, infancia, educación comunitaria

Resumo

O artigo apresenta os resultados da sistematização da experiência socioeducativa da Fundação Puerta de Luz, a partir do encontro dialógico, da reflexão teórica e da experiência da Prática de Responsabilidade Social. A análise metodológica baseia-se na interpretação de pensadores da pedagogia, em conexão com os relatos produzidos pelos atores sociais a partir da experiência na organização social. As reflexões suscitadas permitiram reconhecer a transcendência da atuação da Fundação Puerta de Luz em Bosa, ao mesmo tempo em que reorientam sentidos e orientações teórico-metodológicas sobre categorias como educação comunitária, comunidade e alguns aspectos sobre a didática.

Palavras-chave: mediações pedagógicas, infância, primeira infância, educação comunitária



Introduction

The English community schools in UPZ 84 of Bosa are an educational initiative aimed at enhancing the educational, social, and political conditions for children and young people within the community. These schools foster communication and training experiences among participants, including families, volunteers, social leaders, and students involved in UNIMINUTO's Social Responsibility Practice. Through these experiences, participants gain insights into various cultural practices and contribute to the holistic training process.

This article outlines three key stages of the experience:

1. Introduction: background, conceptual references, and methodology.
2. Lessons and challenges: insights gained, and obstacles faced during the community experience.
3. Reflections: delving into insights generated through Social Responsibility Practice.

The community education endeavor is portrayed as an independent, cooperative, collective one, attending to social realities and enhancing social practices.

Background

The Foundation Puerta de Luz initiated operations in 2008 with the establishment of the first community dining room. By 2010, it launched the school reinforcement project in Bosa la Independencia neighbourhood, aiming to enhance child nutrition and school quality for children in UPZ 84 of the seventh district in Bogota. In 2016, the foundation expanded its scope by establishing training schools targeting children aged six to fourteen. These schools focus on creating sustainable conditions in education, nutrition, and recreation, aiming to shape children's life projects and strengthen families in the community.

From 2016 to 2017, the Center of Education for Development (CED), in partnership with the bachelor's degree program in English, initiated English class support for children within the social organization. From 2018 to 2019, they delved into classroom projects' methodology, teaching content to facilitate learning by creating fresh perspectives to comprehend a second language within diverse interpretive contexts.

In 2020, the foundation enrolled 150 children aged 5 to 14 in its educational programs. To establish the community English schools, the focus shifted towards understanding sociocultural interactions and intercultural relations dynamically, given that pedagogical actions stem from the interaction of individuals within their context (Fayad Sierra, 2021), revealing a new perspective on how teaching and learning correlate



with the social sphere. Challenges included limited access to technology among families, assessing guardians' proficiency in online platforms, and engaging families to support children in virtual learning environments.

To consolidate the proposal of the formative encounters, a family survey was conducted among the guardians of the children of the foundation, with the goal of recognizing the socioeconomic and formative conditions of 130 families of the sector, where 9% of the inhabitants of Bogota live and 26% of them are children from 0 to 14 years old. From this panorama, the survey identified that 80% of the families participating in the foundation are unemployed and live in rented accommodation, 15% of the population is in a situation of displacement, and 10% are migrants.

Based on the data provided, we observed the social context of families supported by the Puerta de Luz Foundation. Among them, 68% are heads of households with an average of five family members. While 78% of guardians express interest in virtual training, access to technology is limited: only 12% have computers, 60% own cell phones, 20% have tablets for online connection, and 8% lack any technological device. Of these, 30% lack internet access, and 27% lack both of them.

This scenario facilitated the implementation of communication and information strategies for virtual training sessions with families and caregivers. Planning sessions involved leaders, volunteers from the foundation, UNIMINUTO students and teachers, and participants from the University of Michigan (USA). The aim was to create meeting spaces and develop a protocol for child care and protection.

It is possible to claim that pedagogy intertwines with educational and social practices, pointing out interpersonal relationships within community education spaces. It involves recognizing diverse knowledge, pedagogy, and didactics, fostering innovative strategies emerging from sociocultural practices and collective memories. Acknowledging others in learning processes enables the construction of contextual and practical knowledge tailored to territorial expectations and needs (Varón et al., 2020).

Theoretical Framework

Reflections from the Social Responsibility Practice, the bachelor's degree in foreign Languages in English at UNIMINUTO Bogotá campus and the University of Michigan's TESOL Seminar students lead to conceptual references such as pedagogical mediations, childhood, and community education.

In response to societal changes, there's a demand for new pedagogical approaches, necessitating a redefinition of the teacher's role and the introduction of new competencies in education (Hurtado Cumbá et al., 2014). Contexts evolve rapidly, introducing new problem-solving methods, cognitive processes, and technological stimuli within the knowledge society. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



(UNESCO, 2005) underscores this by highlighting knowledge societies' role in fostering social, cultural, and economic transformations to support sustainable development.

Each meeting intends to merge knowledge with reality, allowing participants to engage with learning within their diverse social, familial, professional, and work contexts. This approach brings the university's proposed social fabric to life within the praxeological framework, as outlined by Juliao (2013). Students are intellectually challenged to serve as mediators in various social settings, mobilizing meaningful learning experiences as underlined by Ferreyra (2020). The creation of genuine applied contexts naturalizes learning for life, bypassing simulated situations.

Practices involve more than just critical, reflective professional accompaniment; they're energized by various social, political, and cultural actions. They foster knowledge rooted in recognizing others' historicity through contextual discussions, framing education as a catalyst for social change, as advocated by Freire (2004). Reflection on the teacher-mediator role becomes a daily exercise vital for anyone connected to social responsibility practice.

Pedagogical practices are seen as social acts occurring in educational settings, where interactions between individuals and their environment foster bonds, communication, and emotional connections vital for human development and identity formation. These practices serve as learning environments to analyze, understand, and influence social transformations by integrating theory and praxis, offering knowledge to benefit society.

Children: Recognizing Them from the Perspective of Diversity

Childhood is a socially constructed concept where experiences vary widely at sociocultural levels. Recognizing this pluralization of childhood entails acknowledging the diverse perspectives, voices, and meanings children construct about their worlds. This understanding facilitates the establishment of social and cultural agreements and differences that shape new representations and practices of childhood, empowering children as subjects and political agents.

It is pretty known that acknowledging childhoods means recognizing diverse perspectives and approaches to children. It urges us to embrace their uniqueness and differences, prompting new forms of interaction and engagement.

Community Education: A Pathway to this Process

The concept of community is undergoing a theoretical revival in contemporary social sciences, prompting analysis across various fields to adapt and enrich its potential for theoretical and practical applications. Given the uncertainties



of communal life and societal crises, community education plays a crucial role in exploring the theoretical dimensions and practical implications of community as a socio-cultural entity and an educational scope.

This section delves into the evolving discourse surrounding the concept of community within the sphere of social sciences. From classical Greek philosophy to modern rationality, through subsequent sociological schools in Europe and the USA, contemporary political philosophy, sociology and Latin American perspectives, various viewpoints have emerged, shaped by contextual conditions and socio-economic, political, and cultural processes. These perspectives have influenced the evolution of the debate on community and its significance within the context of social and historical action.

The goal is to clarify a central concept in community education, exploring its diverse intellectual dimensions. This endeavor sheds light on the various ways living together is envisioned and reimagined in today's world. Such understanding is crucial for both theoretical contemplation and practical engagement within community social spaces, which serve as arenas for social, political, and educational action.

The discourse surrounding community, society, and State has evolved within contemporary social theory, fostering a revitalized and dynamic debate. As participants in Latin American social sciences and community education, our role involves examining narratives about communal life in Latin American social theory. Notable perspectives include the concept of communality in indigenous thought as power according to Enrique Dussel (2006), community as a site of resistance in Raúl Zibechi (2007), and community as a platform for democratic political relations suggested by community education.

Revisiting perspectives, debates, and conceptual contributions sheds light on the theoretical and practical significance of viewing the community as both a conceptual framework and a platform for social and political dynamics, as well as for envisioning attainable utopias. This exploration offers myriad possibilities for the social practice of numerous community educators grappling daily with the complexities of the community. Investigating the community's meanings and productions within the Fundación Puerta de Luz process is crucial for understanding its contributions to community research, education, and pedagogy. This systematic inquiry bridges theory and experiential knowledge, enhancing our comprehension of community dynamics.

Recognizing the Steps of the Systematization of the Experience

In 2020, this practice transitioned to virtual platforms due to the COVID-19 contingency. It also aimed to introduce innovative methodologies aligned with modern technological contexts and the needs of vulnerable communities.



The community English schools' work suggestion comprises planning, work time, material usage, strategy implementation, virtual methodologies, and synchronous meetings for class proposals and reflections. Five steps guide community work in developing the English schools' plan:

1. *Contextual Reading:* Identifying aspects such as virtuality and children's circumstances involves assessing their technological resources and readiness for virtual classes.
2. *Logistical Strategy:* The Social Responsibility Internship commences with a survey to ascertain participants' availability, material access, and virtual platform readiness for class development.
3. *Pre-class Planning:* Each session's planning involved synchronous meetings with students from UNIMINUTO and the University of Michigan. During these meetings, team roles were assigned, with each member responsible for specific tasks. The discussions also outlined activities, materials, games, and websites essential for implementing and enhancing the session's activities.
4. *Community Research Space:* We initially surveyed preferences for topics and activities to be covered during the semester. Later, during classes, we created a platform for primary participants (children) to contribute ideas about activities and materials. These suggestions were incorporated into the work plan by team members.
5. *Planning Construction:* Teachers from UNIMINUTO, the University of Michigan, and interlocutors review indicated contents to ensure their relevance for class sessions.

The didactic design aims to create learning scenarios for approaching the English language using playful strategies, as recommended by Medina et al. (2013). They emphasize that enjoyable classes foster productive learning, facilitating the grasp of a second language.

Didactic strategies consider participant age, teaching language (English), materials, active participation, and virtual tools. The first one seeks for creating playful spaces fostering creative skills and imagination through activities like drawing, crafting with clay, image-based guessing games, videos, and using recycled materials for class construction.

The second strategy involves exploring diverse cultural and social topics of interest to participants, facilitating learning about the cultural diversity of our country and the world. Galindo (2005) highlights turning language learners into cultural intermediaries, fostering awareness of both departure and destination cultures. This approach enhances cognitive development and sociocultural competence.

In pursuit of teaching evolution and innovation, this methodology stresses virtual education. It employs resources and didactic tools to integrate teaching-learning strategies effectively and engage project members. The

aim is to introduce participants to technology as a progressive, reformative, and didactic means of learning, especially in English. As Santoveña Casal (2004) notes, the primary objective of online courses is to transmit recreational knowledge.

The methodology encourages group activities during class to foster active participation and teamwork, crucial elements in virtual education. The synchronous approach, where students and teachers meet online simultaneously, promotes collective learning. Santoveña Casal (2012) highlights that this synchronous learning environment enables the publication of animation videos, audiovisual presentations, and real-time communication through various tools.

Materials used are tailored to the virtual environment, employing tools like Kahoot, Quizizz, YouTube, Google Drive, PowerPoint, or Genially. Selection of instruments should consider their adaptability to the situation and the class at hand. As noted by Santoveña Casal (2004), the ideal medium usage depends on factors like content quality, communication tool utilization, and participant engagement in the teaching process.

Throughout each session, student evaluation followed a synchronous methodology, enabling interactive assessment of knowledge and learning. This approach allowed participants to practically recognize their abilities and skills through collective and collaborative activities.

This process consisted of two key moments in each class: firstly, a warm-up or review activity at the session's start to revisit previously presented content. Secondly, at the end of the class, participants applied their learning through a practical activity, such as crafts or physical games, engaging imagination, and creativity. This reflective approach allows for the acquisition of new learning through evaluative methods.

To assess acquired knowledge, a closing activity integrated all topics covered throughout the semester. Students engaged in various games and activities related to each topic, selected randomly, fostering active group participation. This aimed to reflect learning in real-life contexts, enhancing English language skills and competencies.

Reflections on the Process

Community schools gather online to discuss learnings and challenges, maintaining unity through word-based methods facilitated by representatives. This team organizes work suggestions and fosters idea-sharing among participants.

Community education processes foster the development of knowledge and practices, aiming to recognize diverse cultural manifestations, local contexts, social changes, and territorial descriptions that shape identity and citizenship from both local and global perspectives.



The proposal aims to cultivate a continual curiosity, critical perspective, and proactive engagement with reality. It emphasizes recognizing social nuances in teaching and learning, utilizing everyday examples to decipher thought patterns and uncover life's meanings. Additionally, it fosters learning environments that bolster confidence and self-assurance, essential for holistic human development.

References

- Fayad Sierra, J. (2021). Otras educaciones y pedagogías ancestrales: etnoeducación, educación intercultural y educación propia. *Praxis Pedagógica*, 21(30), 268-287. <https://doi.org/10.26620/uniminuto.praxis.21.30.2021.268-287>
- Ferreira, H. A. (2020). El aprender a emprender como uno de los pilares de la educación del futuro en el marco de la construcción de la calidad educativa. *Praxis Pedagógica*, 19(24), 75-100. <http://doi.org/10.26620/uniminuto.praxis.19.24.2019.75-100>
- Freire, P. (2004). *Pedagogía de a autonomía*. Paz e Terra.Sao Paolo.
- Galindo, M. (2005). La importancia de la competencia sociocultural en el aprendizaje de segundas lenguas. *Interlingüística*, (16), 431-441.
- Hurtado Cumbá, G., de los Reyes García, Z. L., Parra Castellanos, M. del R., & Díaz Chieng, L. Y. (2014). Ética: reto para el profesional de la información. *Revista Información Científica*, 88(6), 1125-1133.
- Juliao, C. (2013). *El enfoque praxeológico*. Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios – UNIMINUTO. <https://doi.org/10.26620/uniminuto.praxis.13.14.2013.141-145>
- Medina, M., Melo, G., & Palacios, M. (2013). La importancia del aprendizaje del idioma inglés a temprana edad. *Yachana Revista Científica*, 2(2).
- Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura. (2005) *Hacia las sociedades del conocimiento*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000141908>
- Santoveña Casal, S (2004). Metodología didáctica en entornos virtuales de aprendizaje. *Etic@net*. https://www.ugr.es/~sevimeco/revistaeticanet/Numero3/Articulos/Formateados/metodologia_didactica.pdf
- Santoveña Casal, S. (2012). El proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje a través de herramientas de comunicación síncrona: El caso de Elluminate Live. *Electronic Journal of Research in Education Psychology*, 10(26), 447-474. <https://doi.org/10.25115/ejrep.v10i26.1508>

Varón, V., et al, B. (2020). Pedagogía de la alteridad: entre la educación como práctica social y el ejercicio intelectual. *Revista Insignare Scientia - RIS*, 3(2), 484-508. <https://doi.org/10.36661/2595-4520.2020v3i2.11582>

Zibechi, R. (2007). *América Latina: periferias urbanas, territorios en resistencia*. Abya-Yala.

