

Chapter 5

Service Learning: The Essence of Social Inclusivity Through Transformational Education

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ABSTRACT

The chapter highlights the endogenous strengths that humans have of exposing society to sustainable change. At birth, humans bring with them a triptych code including, the social, emotional and spiritual, that needs to be further developed. Those non-cognitive skills that schooling should instill are possible via service learning education. Through education, individual citizens are enthused with harmonious cognitive and non-cognitive skills which are positive, inclusive, humane, in harmony with life and circumstances. In the current complex and uncertain economy, this education model is directed at social responsibility, social innovation, citizenship, personal and social commitment. Being holistic, multi-focused and dynamic, it brings together learning, service and the economy. This learning- teaching model aligns with an intellectual and humanized society; entails two simultaneous objectives, pedagogical and community collaboration; focuses on real circumstances, deals with community-identified needs, solidarity, cooperation, harmony and commitment.

INTRODUCTION

Humans are currently living through changes which may give rise to a distressing, psychosocial loneliness despite the significant developments in Science, Technology and Information. However, notwithstanding these developments, this cruel and distressful loneliness arises from the individual's self-relinquishment and not from other individuals (Cury, 2017). This assertion gives rise to the need for harnessing intel-

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lectual capital, especially emotional, social and spiritual capitals as well as the learning-teaching models that focus both on the integral development of the individual as well as part on social environment. There is a conscious awareness of the effects these capitals have on individual and professional performance of economic agents. This affirmation is also important towards the developing of society because it is based on the sensitivity, respect, trust and commitment towards the rebuilding of an economy focused on social wellbeing. It builds a holistic environment and motivates citizens to search for and provide alternative answers to everyday problems. This point of view, further leads individuals to develop environments that contribute to organizational and social innovation by engaging in initiatives that may produce beneficial results both at the performance level as well as final output. However, spiritual capital continues to be vague (Martsof & Mickley, 1998) and is often confused with other domains despite its uniqueness as a belief system that adds meaning to human existence (Yang & Mao, 2007).

Spirituality is different from religion and its psychosocial aspects; spirituality is considered as distinctly important for personal and social development (Benko & Silva, 1996). This reality is viewed both as an obstacle for development and for the acceptance of spirituality as a natural process for personal and social development. Spirituality entails a qualitative development of the individual and unifies society. Furthermore, spirituality seeks to provide a more profound human existence as opposed to its longevity, regardless of religious belief (Hansen, 1993). Human beings are a whole, made up of body, mind and spirit (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000), a harmonious trilogy that supports life on earth and guides the mission towards the pursuit of noble social values, as opposed to dominant social structures that focus on the body and mind, individuality, the tangible, and the competitive environment.

The current research intends, against this backdrop, to discuss an alternative way of observing the individual's worldly mission seeing s/he is imbued with endogenous forces that are capable of sustaining the transformation of society. This capability is not restricted to bodily force nor to cognitive capabilities. At birth, individuals bring with them a social, emotional and spiritual code, which during the lifetime is not used to its full capacity.

The current educational system needs to be reflected upon in order to invert the circle and to place the individual at the center of society's concerns and not to condition it towards directions that are individualistic, materialistic and egotistical, which currently characterizes contemporary society. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to reflect both on non-cognitive skills that Schools need to provide and on that educational system, which best adapts to this accomplishment. Hence, the service-learning education system is explored; this is a model that fuses academic learning with community service. The model encompasses values based on democracy, autonomy, participation, social construction, social commitment and solidarity practices, making it a multifocal model with multiple intelligences.

This chapter is divided into four areas; it reflects on unveiling intelligence from a new lens to reveal the importance of spiritual, social and emotional intelligences. The next area embraces the educational model, which is aligned with an economy focused on intangibles. The latter is linked with ethical and moral values, human norms and virtues. The new school of knowledge is reflected on, as well as the service-learning model is a School model focusing on human and social development wherein the individual learns by dealing with real community problems. A discussion ensues about the need to implement a new educational model. Conclusions are presented and future research ideas included.

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