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Promoting Significant Training Paths Through the Student Offices: Trajectories, Lived Experiences and Expectations. A Case Study

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Abstract

In the following article, the interpretation of the lived experience and the significance that university students attribute to their educational career is addressed from qualitative methodologies and from a phenomenological perspective. Expectations and future projects are analyzed, along with the work of the student offices, in charge of student well-being at universities, to promote more relevant interventions. Students recognize the trajectory as a process of developing confidence and self-esteem during the university period. Students assign an effort component to their trajectories. Their experience is marked by support and incentives from their families, but they have suffered bullying, discipline from academic schools, and low teacher expectations of them. Their university experiences have been ones of learning and connections. Students have expectations of confidence in the future. The offices should persevere in leadership activities and deepen the work of developing the confidence and self-esteem of young people, since these areas are affected during the school stage and are central to the construction of their future projects. Offices can and should manage students' expectations and incorporate pedagogical work thinking about accelerated social changes and taking into account the origin and projection offices in the university system.

Keywords: Phenomenology, Experience, Trajectories, Expectations.

Introduction

In Chile there is a very important component of social mobility in relation to higher education, according to a study by the Alberto Hurtado University, 7 out of 10 students exceed their parents' education (Bustos, M., & Guzman, F. 2016). At the beginning of the '90s there were just over 200 thousand students in higher education, today the figure is more than one million enrolled in the tertiary system, added to the fact that coverage has quintupled in the last 20 years. The university is a social mobilizer, according to a study published by the OECD shows that the child of a low-income family is more likely to climb to the most affluent 25% of the population in Chile. (Larraín, L., & Rincón, X. 2018).

In this sense, there is an expectation of students regarding their educational trajectories in higher education and the social mobility that it will allow them to achieve. The students of the university where this research is located are mostly beneficiaries of the public policy of free university, more than 80%, which indicates that the children of families with the lowest incomes in the country study.

These students come from schools whose environments are often complex, with family conflicts, scarcity, and other associated issues. What happens in this transition from secondary education to university education where there are different codes and expectations?

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In this step there is a tension when secondary education students (in many cases private) move from a context with certain codes to one with different ones. There is already a conflict, at the mere transition from secondary to university education, even more so in the context of certain students of this University. What happens on the journey between being a high school student and undertaking vocational training?

In this research, we will investigate the educational biography, since the curricular nature of this experience is recognized, which forges an idea of who they were, who they are and who they could become. Within this framework of a broad concept of curriculum, it is possible to inquire about these experiences with approaches and languages appropriate to the nature of the research approach: phenomenology. Specifically. In this research, students from a University in Santiago de Chile were observed and their experience in education, their trajectories and expectations were inquired about. Phenomenological interpretative methodology (Smith et al, 2022) was used, rescuing the contributions of the philosophical field, with the aim of interpreting the stories, making the work of the student offices more pertinent, and understanding what has been significant and relevant in the educational trajectory of the students. In this study we rely on sources of philosophy to do a work on education. Following Pinar (1978), we were interested in the reconceptualist idea, as a critique of the state of the curricular field (Pinar, 1978), obsessed with discipline in educational systems and the oblivion of the true function of schools: teaching (Pinar, 1978). Educational models for Pinar have emphasized control and prediction and the ethical/aesthetic ways of learning and teaching have been left aside. (Pinar, 1978)

Under this perspective, and with the purpose of supporting students to face their academic training, we delve into their biographical experience, since "when the person appears in his or her individuality is when the connections between the event, personal life and existence are better understood" (Passeggi, 2020, p 93), or as Dilthey puts it, who "considers the links between life, life and existence to be inseparable" lived experience and science" (Passeggi, 2020, p. 93).

Student Offices

Some studies have associated the problematization of student issues as a product of progressive education (Caple in Hevel, 2016) which was linked to the point of view of students, in the United States, the first philosophical statement of the new field dealt with the interest of the holistic development of students and the emphasis on the look at student problems as a whole (Caple in Hevel, 2016). Student affairs and research on them have addressed the problems present in society, since universities have not been immune to conflicts. Some of the issues that offices in the United States have had to deal with, for example, have been sexism, racism, and homophobia (Hevel, 2016). Offices have developed according to the accelerated changes in society (Hevel, 2016).

The management of the Student Affairs Offices according to UNESCO (2009) and the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (2020), should be concentrated, among other issues, on support in university residence services for students who come from outside the city, or multiculturalism programs, to strengthen the value of work in diversity, offer a greater variety of recreational sports activities, academic counseling, greater activities with the community to strengthen community development and social action projects and in a very relevant way greater learning opportunities for students according to programs that are related to the second curriculum since students not only learn in the classroom, they also do so in other university spaces (Bawa in Brajkovic, 2020).

Experience

For Dilthey, lived experience is the most proper and original meaning of experience, we also speak of experience. It can only be grasped if we know how to describe it as it is, without attributing to it a meaning that goes beyond its simple being there for me in the way it is. (Cordua, 2017)

It can also be called lived experience, according to Dilthey, "a more encompassing unit of pieces of life linked to each other, by virtue of the common significance they have for existence" (Dilthey in Cordua, 2017. p 6)

The central focus of phenomenology is lived experience (Van Manen in Madjar, 2014). Lived experience is the moment of now, but the now from which we cannot escape, the now is elusive, if we try to capture the now is already gone (Madjar, 2020). What phenomenology tries to do is to "recover" the experience of the now by looking for ways to describe our lived experience (Madjar, 2020).

Educational Trajectories

Education is understood as a broad concept, one that is fundamentally mediated by the biographical situation itself. To speak of education means to speak of psychosocial development and intellectual development of individuals. (Murillo, 2019). For Professor Murillo (2019), this distinction of Pinar put the focus on individual subjectivity at the center of the educational experience and opened the way for a more careful and dedicated consideration of the problem of subjective reconstruction.

"Even if we wanted to, none of us who work in the field of curriculum can isolate ourselves from the problems of educational practice. What happens in schools bears little or no resemblance to the process that is education, revealing our interest in the role of the curriculum in the educational process. This means encompassing most of the definitions in force today, examining the role of text, teachers, and activities in the intellectual and psychosocial development of individuals. Studying this relationship, say, between text and intellectual development, may require one to stay away from schools. In fact, if what we are interested in is the educational process, it would be prudent to stay away from schools." (Pinar in Murillo, 2019. P 162)

"Educational practice is not what individuals do in the classroom, it is how they use experience to advance intellectually and to transform themselves." (Pinar in Murillo, 2019. P 164). For Pinar, to focus only on the school is to ignore the educational experience and is to ignore the educational practice. For him, "an ignored experience is a forgotten experience" (Pinar in Murillo, 2019. P 164). In this sense, it seems relevant to link life experience with the educational trajectory, which implies not only what we can count in an educational institution but also our entire life experience.

Expectation of the Meeting

Bollnow relates existential philosophy to pedagogy through the concept of the "encounter" that means a total rupture, which seeks to situate the human being. This "tearing" determines what is genuine in the self and what is mere deceptive appearance. The encounter becomes a decisive event, man finds himself. The encounter can take a wide variety of forms. It will be a decisive incident in life, an encounter with another human being, or a testimony. The encounter will lead us to a point of no return. (Bollnow, 1987)

The concept of "encounter" from an existential perspective presents an argument against the idea that all formative processes and events should be measured. (Bollnow, 1987)

The normal course of life is interrupted repeatedly and always by events that are introduced irregularly. In these events, the existential aspects of life become important. The educator can and must bring about an awakening, but the educator cannot make this awakening happen, because it does not depend on him. Similarly, one cannot willingly provoke the encounter, but the educator may be able to remain sympathetic and helpful when someone is affected by a crisis. (Bollnow, 1987)

Education must include irregular processes as part of training. It must understand to assist growth, it must include the entire environment in which education takes place. (Bollnow, 1987)

Methodology

In this research, qualitative social methodologies will be used, this type of research "is interpretative inquiry processes based on different methodological traditions that examine a human or social problem" (Vasilachis, 2007, p. 24). They are usually hermeneutical approaches where "experiences or the world of life recover a relevant role in research" (Bolívar, 2002, p. 560). In particular, this research will be carried out from the qualitative approach of phenomenological method, this type of narrative is related to the discursive dimension of being and how men live and signify their subjective world (Bolívar, 2002).

This research will be a case study which implies the understanding of facts in all the singularity (Bolívar, 2002), in addition, "the case study is the choice of an object to be studied, in this perspective the single case studies predominate that give priority to the deep knowledge of the case and its particularities over the generalizations of the results" (Vasilachis, 2007, p. 219). Cases that deal with the life histories of particular people/institutions must meet the basic requirements of good informants that deserve to be studied in depth because of their relevance to the objective, singularity or degree of exemplarity. In this sense, "the informants who occupy predominant positions in it are as important as the rest of the people, regardless of their position, grade or condition, even those who belong to minority or silenced subcultures". (Bolívar, 2019, p. 92).

The type of analysis of this research will be interpretative phenomenological (IPA). IPA is a qualitative method, designed to understand the meaning of people's lived experience, in their context, in their social and individual worlds (Smith, 2022). This method tries to capture the emotions of experience, meaning, and personal interpretation (Smith, 2022). The goal of this method is to get as close as possible to the participants' lived experience so that it can be examined in detail (Smith, 2022). Phenomenological analysis is oriented towards discovery: wanting to discover what a certain phenomenon means and how it is experienced (Van Manen, 2003). When we analyze a phenomenon we try to determine what are the themes, the experiential structures that make up the experience. Lived experience cannot be captured in conceptual abstractions. It can help us to reflect on specific situations, wondering about the pedagogical meaning of the experience of being a teacher or parent (Van Manen, 2003). According to Van Manen, in phenomenological methodology, the term sample should not refer to an empirical sample as the subset of a population. In fact, it is more related to the word example or model (Van Manen, 2016). If it is necessary to use the word sample, it is better to do so in relation to obtaining examples of valuable descriptions (Van Manen, 2016). In this sense, our research seeks to know the particular and specific case of life experience of some of the students of the

university, and in particular that they have had approaches to the student office. We investigated his past, present and expectations of the future through interviews and conversations and did not intend to generalize in his conclusions. They were university students of different careers and years of study, all from public or private subsidized schools, all with participation in leadership activities as members of the Student Centers, participants in workshops or close to the student office. As a case study, the results of this research cannot be generalized and rather this research has theoretical aims and purposes, which open possibilities for further work with more applied approaches. For Smith, studies in this type of research should consider between 10 and 12 participants (Smith, 2022). In our case we have considered 10 participants.

The type of data collection will be through in-depth interviews to bring together the richness of the first-person interpretation and experience. We have protected the people involved in this work including data confidentiality and informed consent.

Results

The educational experiences after the participants' reports are marked by the family support manifested at each moment of their school life, which the young people describe with simple acts: "such as studying at night and receiving a cup of tea from their mother or a hot dish": Support in this sense is described as a concern and care for the other: "with the affection and concern of how I am doing or what I am failing, or in the day to day: "Even though they did not know much, but they were always interested"

The experience of young people is also marked by the encouragement to train from a very early age. Families want students to follow a formal school path. The parents or families of the young people encourage the participants of this study to make an effort and achieve goals so that in the future they can develop in a good way, accessing the labor market: "well, my mother was always concerned that I finished school, that I did not repeat any year, that I did not fall behind and that I entered to study". Underlying the idea is that through training students will have a better life than their parents or relatives had: "the most important thing and what will give you that stability you need is that you at least get your degree"

Secondly, the students report a negative educational experience: *bullying* and harassment: "I was bullied from first grade to first grade. When I was little I was first very fat and second I was very correct with what I did, and what do I mean by this, I was always the person of please, thank you and always wait my turn, then I had classmates who passed over me"

This, added to the high demand of some schools and their type of training, generated anxiety in young people, a very competitive training focused on results: "Oh the anxiety of being such a demanding school I began to have more anxiety crises in this future that I had to know now, what I had to do, that I had to improve my grades excellently and all this demand. Until I entered college I didn't really know what anxiety was until I entered college and where else it's a topic."

The students describe the low expectations that teachers had towards students in the school system. The teachers did not tell them the possibilities that students could have in the university system, on the contrary, they encouraged them to have low expectations in their academic future. Many times they repeated that they should not aspire to a university career: "When I was in this search for what it was that I wanted to study, what it was that interested me, what my vocation was and all that eh when I had already decided that it was psychology and universities, like the ones I wanted to apply to, or things like that, or the plans of what I was interested in... my counselor, who was in charge of vocation, told me to look down more at my grades, as if I was

not going to be able to make it."

Other aspects to highlight are the relevance given in their university experience by the link with other students with similar interests, even if they are from other careers: "I never closed myself only to the career, I always thought of a more comprehensive training, sharing with other centers, with other peers"

The closeness that their teachers had with them, who have motivated them to go for more. To be assistants, continue studies and inquire more deeply into their areas of study: "She has always supported me since I joined, she has always been guiding me the way. I met her when I wanted to be an assistant and she motivated me a lot so do it, she is always supporting me, in fact, she guided my thesis as well"

They also reflect on the possibilities they have from their professions to develop their interest in helping communities socially. Their environment has impacted them and they hope to give back their learning and experience through social action: "I am interested in being in these PIE childhood programs, perhaps working with more vulnerable minors and also perhaps being a contribution to the general mental health of children"

Trajectories can be seen as a process of constructing students' identities. What is relevant in this part is that, although the trajectories have not been constant, the breaks have allowed us to know who they are and project themselves towards who they want to be in the future: "a goal that means, a goal one of those goals that one sets high and big in life. Because I didn't get results, but in the end I did get results. It has meant that I am absolutely self-sufficient, that I can be absolutely self-sufficient in my thoughts and my actions. Yes, to be autonomous"

Regarding expectations, we can say that the answers are related to the interest in continuing postgraduate studies abroad, this is a great aspiration for them, especially to nourish themselves with techniques in their disciplines: "I like construction techniques in other countries, in the United States, because of the hurricanes. Because you've seen the roofs that don't blow off. In China because of the issue of rapid construction"

Traveling to get to know other lands and have new experiences, material goods, a house, space, even a swimming pool for one of our interviewees. They dream of having what they don't have: "perhaps obtaining material things, obviously having a space, a house, a car, but also like traveling the world having perhaps the possibility of getting to know countries, that kind of thing"

These expectations are permeated by a confidence in the future, they trust that it will go well: "I always had faith that I will do well, I always said, I am going to finish my degree, I am going to have my house, I am going to travel, I am going to know many places. I was always optimistic"

The students report their university experience as significant from the work of the student offices, although for them, it has been a space for learning from each discipline, they highlight aspects of development of communication skills, teamwork and leadership, thanks to the link with the Student Centers: "it allowed me to develop in different areas, For example, I have always withdrawn to speak in public or with more people, I always had these crises of anxious anguish, being in the student center, it was a process in which I learned to do it. I was able to learn to say my ideas, to talk to many more people, with all kinds of people and authorities."

On the other hand, the student offices also play a fundamental role as information communicative offices and a mediating role that students recognize and value: "I find that they are very necessary offices for the student body, because they are perhaps in one way or another, the nexus, whenever something has been needed from me or from any other person. they have always been available to what I need"

Discussion

Student Experience

Participants refer to being supported. This has a pedagogical meaning and is perhaps the theme that the participants highlight the most in their experience, the relationship with another and not only in school, but outside of it. We know that pedagogy begins with lived experience and meaningful memory (Madjar, 2020). Phenomenological research is based on the world, as a poetic and aesthetic activity of experience (Van Manen in Pinar 1995). This is what we find in the pedagogical relationship of support. Learning and research, as a consequence, focus on the biographical situation (Pinar, 1995) present in the world of life. Van Manen, on the other hand, uses the word "consideration", according to him, characterizes phenomenology more than any other word. Van Manen also speaks of the word "caring" or "paying attention." (Van Manen in Pinar 1995). Families care and take care of themselves, supporting their children's process. Families pay attention to each other, that means the act of bringing a cup of tea in the evening while your child studies. This is a pedagogical act. Heidegger talks about the word "attunement", which refers to what it feels like and means to be alive. (Van Manen in Pinar 1995). Parents support by experiencing the other's stage, tuning in to the other's experience. Living in the other we see it as a way of loving, the deepest end of pedagogy.

Negative educational experiences are present in the experience of our participants in the school system. For Schutz, the meaning is to interpret the past experience from the now with a reflective attitude (Van Manen, 2016), For Schutz, acts become significant, "if I apprehend them as well-circumscribed experiences of the past and in retrospect" (Schutz in Van Manen, 2016. p 168). The experiences that can be gathered beyond their actuality and about which one can ask about their constitution are subjectively significant for Schutz. We believe that school is a space to build a positive significance in students. Families, educators and the school can support students in this construction of meaning. Meaning for Frankl is a profoundly human feeling (Frankl, 2023). The purpose of school must be the commitment to educate human beings. For Frankl, there is no meaning when life has no purpose. Frankl has been able to demonstrate that, among other things, through experimentation, by making something of the world, of nature, of culture our own, or also by experiencing another, meaning can be found (Frankl, 2023). The school could be a space to educate in the construction of meaning of our students. To stimulate human relations, and family relations with schools. The school can work based on the students' commitment to develop projects, deliver something to the world, create a work. Phenomenology seeks the meaning of the human being. If the researcher in education issues works to understand what it is to be a child or young person in school, he requires, as Pinar tells us, knowledge of historical and cultural traditions (Pinar 1995), each teacher in this sense has an opportunity to intervene in the process in a pedagogical way. For example, understanding social aspects of young people such as poverty or their environment.

On the other hand, there is an idea of resisting the environment that gives it an existential component as overcoming, to remain in order to be able to build itself. The student in this sense is aware that it is a "project" (Heidegger in Vattimo, 2002). There is a resilient construction of

adaptation to this uncomfortable or hostile environment. To remain despite harassment or the hostile environment will be a decision that will mean the construction of the essence (Van Manen 2016) and a consciousness that is formed or built with what happens to the being. This means that the human being is not defined in his present character but in his ability to transcend his present situation (Van Manen, 2016). The same could be said of surviving the low expectations that some teachers have about students, and which they learn to overcome with a conscious spirit of transcendence, which will later mark their trajectory.

About the university experience, the reports speak of the students feeling they have "learned". Frankl refers to the fact that the possibility of finding meaning is always latent in our trajectories as human beings, in any space and time. Frankl warns us that it is not necessary to suffer to satisfy a meaning, meaning is also possible despite suffering (Frankl, 2023). The university experience gives meaning to their existence, thanks to the link with other students, projecting themselves and pouring their interest as social aid to their professional projects. Pinar Quoting Maxine Green, he observes that human consciousness moves towards the world, it does not move away from it. (Pinar, 1995).

The closeness of the teachers to the students is central, all the students' reports speak of the close relationship they manage to have with their professors, the university instance seems to have a reconceptualist component (1978): the teacher concerned with the student's experience and not only with improvement. (García in Pinar, 2014).

Educational Trajectories

This process has not been linear. As Bollnow (1987) tells us, what is typical of human existence is that the life of men suffers breaks or deviations, this will produce a challenge that is ethical, to take control of life again and start again (Bollnow, 1987). What is at the center of trajectories, we refer to crises in human life, are a pedagogical issue because education should be concerned with addressing the totality of human phases, including crises. (Moss in Bollnow, 1987) The school could approach the crisis as something natural and as part of life, perhaps in this way, students would have better tools to manage conflicts. In trajectories, crises are permanent and the university can intervene from student offices. The students' reports indicate awareness of learning in their university career. The stories above all indicate the confidence they have acquired in themselves: the ability to express opinions in front of people and authorities, the development of leadership and teamwork tools that participating in the Student Centers generated. In this sense, students emphasize learning in situations that go beyond content and the classroom. As we reviewed for Pinar, to focus only on the school is to ignore the educational experience and is to ignore the educational practice. For him, "an ignored experience is a forgotten experience" (Pinar in Murillo, 2019. P 164). The university can deepen learning through the variety of resources that the student office can offer, such as leadership work with student centers or sports development.

Student Expectations

The reports of students' expectations are positive, show enthusiasm, and desire to continue studying in the near future. If expectation is what may happen in the future, Heidegger looks at being as a future possibility, from the meanings of things to the possible uses that are related to the ends that man can give them (Vattimo, 2002). All the structures of the existence of the being have the character of possibility and project in the future time, the project is a kind of guide that is subject to modifications. Students project their possibility of the future as an expectation, but

for Heidegger this project must be elaborated. (Vattimo, 2002). The students built their trajectory in the form of openness to new possibilities. With their studies they were already elaborating their future project. By seeking to pursue graduate studies or by configuring their ideas or projects in forms of expectations, they are opening new routes or other possibilities in the construction of the being that they could become. The discomfort of their school career is attenuated and the idea of not feeling as they should disappear, following Heidegger's idea of inauthentic life, that is, not living their life in a true way (Vattimo, 2002). Existential philosophy has to do with expectation, in that it is described as a philosophy of trust in life and hope in the future (Bollnow, 1987). Pedagogy for Bollnow is in the encounter, the decisive event in which these men and women encounter themselves (Bollnow, 1987), the expectation of the encounter with their profession, to see themselves as future lawyers, teachers, psychologists, builders. For his part, Husserl refers to the concept of propensity from an awareness of supratemporal time in the sense of a continuous being present (Crespo, 2011) as a knowledge of what is coming, as an intuition or perception of what will happen. In this sense, we could refer to the idea that this idea reinforces confidence in the future, of what could happen, as long as their present experiences allow them to perceive it that way. This present experience can be reinforced in the pedagogical work of the student offices. It is related to the idea of the office as an expectation manager that can help students, preparing them for decision-making or moderating expectations in a complex, uncertain and changing future.

The Role of Student Offices

The idea of leadership is related to the participation of students in both training and members of Student Centers. This has allowed them to develop communication skills with authorities, which would generate more trust in them. Trust is central to Bollnow's (1987) pedagogy. The support that offices generate in students, mainly based on psychological, mental health and sports workshops, is significant for students to feel good in the university space. It gives them confidence in the world (their worlds) and they take responsibility for their own actions as well. Responsibility has to do with humanitarianism in the sense of human dignity, since we can always appeal to man's freedom and responsibility and thus we can give the person the opportunity to take charge of himself (Frankl, 2023).

Another issue is related to the office as a mediator and communicatively receptive. The mediating role attributed by students is due to the fact that one of their functions is to relate directly with the Student Centers for the problems that they may present in their careers or other units. In this way, the offices "mediate" between different levels. This has a pedagogical function if we relate it to Habermas' theory of communicative action (Pallarés & Traver, 2017). Since what would be sought from the offices is to achieve the "consensus" that has a spirit of search for knowledge and truth. Knowledge would be what is agreed upon in the communities and would be the result of argumentation processes, in the exercise of the search for agreement. (Pallarés & Traver, 2017). In this sense, there would not be an imposition on the part of the office, rather, it would function as an intermediary bringing together the parties that may be in conflict. Students recognize communication that is receptive, close, and open to listening.

Conclusion

This article proposes that offices can carry out support workshops with a curricular intention that looks at education as a whole, incorporating significant learning in students, involving the biographical experience and that this learning complements their formal careers. It is an office capable of giving meaning to the lived experience of students, to their life trajectories, which

supports the management of expectations. An office that allows each student to encounter themselves by recognizing who they have been, who they are and who they can become. We are referring to ensuring that students carry out activities that involve expectation management, care, crises, self-esteem, confidence and hope. If for the students the experience they have had in areas such as care has been significant for their education. The literature suggests that student support in higher education contributes to the quality of the learning experience and academic success (Hill et al in Ciobanu, 2013), so it can improve university retention rates. On the other hand, offices increase diversity in the student experience, since their activities can be transversal to all students of the different careers. In addition, it allows for greater involvement with the community by thinking about the students' stories regarding their desire to impact communities through meaningful social action for people in vulnerable situations. The offices, as those in charge of stimulating student participation, can also contribute to issues related to democracy and educate based on rationality, the value of institutions and diversity. Workshops related to this and open to the entire student community should be promoted. By encouraging student participation, more effective reforms can be implemented, especially if different actors in the academic community are involved, including students, administrators, and professors (Ramos, 2024). These offices are called upon to carry out multiple tasks, but with a pedagogical and curricular functionality. Its objective should be focused on managing expectations, supporting students in their hopes and dreams, providing the tools that allow young people to develop in all their possibilities.

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