

## Integration of Four Basic Functions of Education in the Arts Unit of the Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas

### Integración de Cuatro Funciones Básicas de la Educación en la Unidad de Artes de la Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas

CAIGNET-LIMA, Solanye†\*, CHÁVEZ-ACUÑA, Samuel Caleb and BAUTISTA-ACOSTA, Edgar Enoch

*Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas, Mexico, Arts Unit, Mexico.*

ID 1<sup>st</sup> Author: *Solanye, Caignet-Lima* / ORC ID: 0000-0002-5559-2088, Researcher ID Thomson: ABI-6860-2020

ID 1<sup>st</sup> Co-author: *Samuel Caleb, Chávez-Acuña* / ORC ID: 0000-0001-8489-6155

ID 2<sup>nd</sup> Co-author: *Edgar Enoch, Bautista-Acosta* / ORC ID: 0000-0001-9138-7893

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#### Abstract

Four of the educational functions are: Teaching, Research, Management and Extension. These functions have led to an inequitable impact that has been determined by the identity characteristics of the Arts Unit (UAA) of the Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas (UAZ). At the same time, they have developed in an evolutionary way within the Institution because it requires an organization and promotion process sheltered by certain parameters and indicators that can affect internal execution. In this work it was verified through a qualitative analysis how the integration of the four mentioned functions takes place from the artistic perspective projected by this Institution. The objectives pursued were to establish and analyze the disconnect that exists between these functions and the educational relationship of the Zacatecas Arts Unit, as well as to point out the integration needs with the community. It was found that these are determined and developed differently in the artistic area, so the pertinent evaluations through rigid models do not allow a complete integration of them. It is therefore concluded that it is necessary to detonate constant dialogic measures to carry out the desired integration, as well as actions determined by a correct analysis and organization within the Unit itself that lead to a more successful fusion of these educational functions.

#### Resumen

Cuatro de las funciones educativas son: Docencia, Investigación, Gestión y Extensión. Estas funciones han conllevado a un impacto inequitativo que ha sido determinado por las propias características identitarias de la Unidad de Artes (UAA) de la Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas (UAZ). A la vez, se han desarrollado de manera evolutiva dentro de la Institución debido a que se requiere de un proceso de organización y de fomentación cobijados por parámetros e indicadores determinados que pueden afectar a la ejecución interna. En este trabajo se comprobó a través de un análisis cualitativo como se produce la integración de las cuatro funciones mencionadas desde la perspectiva artística proyectada por esta Institución. Los objetivos perseguidos fueron establecer y analizar la desconexión que existe entre estas funciones y la relación educativa de la UAA-UAZ, así como puntualizar en las necesidades de integración con la comunidad. Se encontró que estas se determinan y se desarrollan de manera distinta en el área artística por lo que las evaluaciones pertinentes a través de modelos rígidos no permiten una completa integración de estas. Se concluye por lo tanto que es necesario detonar medidas de corte dialógico constantes para poder llevar a cabo la integración deseada, así como acciones determinadas por un correcto análisis y organización dentro de la propia Unidad que conlleven a una fusión más acertada de estas funciones educativas.

**Educational function, Art, Integration, Community**

**Función educativa, Arte, Integración, Comunidad**

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\* Correspondence of the Author (Email: solanyec1@uaz.edu.mx)

† Researcher contributing as first author.

## Introduction

The functions of education in a higher education institution are complex and multifaceted. The word function comes from the Latin *functio*: execution, exercise of some faculty, function, fulfillment of a duty. Thus, we understand that the function of education fulfils the task of executing and forming, shaping the individual through an integral development towards a professional level and can be divided into multiple branches. In this paper we will talk specifically about four branches of education from the artistic perspective: Teaching, research, extension and management. We consider this issue to be important because as teachers in the area of Arts we find an area of opportunity for research in this area. Being academics within an Institution we wish to contribute to the continuous development of these educational branches that permeate our academic-artistic work. The theme was conceived by the authors after participating in meetings with virtual discussion groups such as: The meeting of graduates of the Arts Unit, The meeting of musical employers, meetings with university councils and academic restructuring boards.

Therefore, this is a qualitative observational research based on a focal group.

In the first section of the Article we find definitions of each of the educational branches and give a contribution for each, focused on the academic-artistic category.

In the second section we merge two branches into a single heading: teaching-research and extension-management. This with the eagerness to have a broader overview, because we understand that, although the four branches are indivisible, there is a wider correlation within these pairs.

In the next section we explain the Methodology and the objectives and in the last section we conclude the present investigation.

This paper aims to investigate the correlation between these four branches of educational functions within the UAA-UAZ, through a general and qualitative analysis. In the development section the corresponding analyses will be developed in pairs: Teaching-research, then Extension-Management.

The research question was: How does the balance between the four educational functions within the Arts Education that is taught in the area of Arts of the Autonomous University of Zacatecas.

## Background and definitions

Education is a knowledge acquisition system that provides theoretical-practical understanding of a specific topic or topics depending on the area of study. We can be taught in institutions, centers or even autodidactically. The General Education Act establishes the various bodies responsible for the efficient and accurate implementation of the Act: "The implementation and monitoring of compliance with this Law shall be the responsibility of the educational authorities of the Federation, the States, Mexico City and the municipalities, in accordance with the terms established in the Seventh Title of the Educational Federalism." (General Education Act, Article 4)

Thus, this system, whose educational authority is the Ministry of Public Education (SEP), regulates education at the national level.

The four functions are indivisible and are feedback. (Recéndez and Muñoz,2014) explain that one of the considerations of teaching within the UAZ is the realization of the action of teaching and forming, coupled with the investigative action, an activity that is half supported. In addition, it states that the full-time teacher is obligated to carry out research, management, tutoring, etc. since they are part of the academic work and cannot be separated since these functions are assigned to formalize the professionalization process. (p. 75).

Teaching is a function that involves a set of indissoluble and evolutionary characteristics that can be constructed from a very particular definition:

"Teaching is a work with and on others, it is an activity that develops in a set of intense and systematic interpersonal relations and, therefore, requires something more than the mastery and use of specialized technical knowledge. The teacher has to invest in the work his personality, emotions, feelings and passions, with all that it has of stimulating and risky at the same time." (Velaz, 2021)

With the current pandemic circumstances, the teaching function has become more complex. Distance education is now a constant: "Distance education is a technological system of mass and bidirectional communication that replaces personal interaction in the classroom of teacher and student as a preferred medium of teaching, by the systematic and joint action of various teaching resources and the support of a tutorial organization, which promote the autonomous learning of students" (García 1990)

The characteristics of this current learning range from democratization and content facilitation (attention to students from different regions of the country and world, without the need for specific spaces and times), autonomous learning facilitating the tools for the student to practically self-form through specific didactics.

Thus, artistic education handles these concepts that strongly influence teaching, under a cultural-musical approach, that is, it is sustained by the teaching-learning of artistic concepts, musical, philosophical and psychological that are required within the corresponding curriculum. Because the Institution alone cannot contribute all the knowledge, for this there is the investigative function or research that provides intervention from the academic and student community, which prevents the Institution from simply becoming a mere repetition of archaic or outdated knowledge. Research is usually an approach that is given through a transformative process that emanates from the knowledge of the Society.

There are many types of research: basic, formative, applied, etc. At the Higher Education Institution, formative research trains the student and teaching community that seeks to become a researcher. Their aim is to make people learn to investigate, regardless of whether their results yield new or old knowledge. This phase usually occurs in the study of a Bachelor's degree. In the artistic area, research is taking new directions as more and more are interested in doing research work within the area. Opportunities and topics are unlimited and of high academic value.

University extension, another important function, is defined as the link between an institution and the community, with its needs and shortcomings, through identification programmes and actions, "is the set of activities leading to identify the problems and demands of society and its environment, coordinate the corresponding transfer actions and reorient and recreate teaching and research activities from the interaction with that context." (Doble Via, 2021)

The extent within the parameters of Artistic Education is determined all the time through the scope of it and its times, the understanding of the social context and its opportunities and weaknesses. Academic management, the fourth branch of the educational function, is aimed at facilitating and improving training processes in higher education institutions. This includes the follow-up of certain actions to improve the educational needs of teachers and students, the functions mentioned can be: Coordination of activities and events, preparation of plans, updating of programs, etc.

### **Development**

We talk about the crisis of education, but it can be seen from multiple perspectives that encompass a complicated overview. From the perspective of an axiological analysis, this crisis is supported by the lack of articulation between the legitimacy and congruence of educational policies. "Education is responsible for the cultural architecture of man: values, cognition, affections, emotions, ideas, social practices, the meaning of life, language, meaning, symbols, knowledge." (León 2007)

These policies are then shaped from different angles that have to do not only with education but mainly with the social, family and the adaptation of the human being to the changing world of the current XXI century. Thus, the Autonomous Universities have had to adapt to the new challenges and challenges. The UAZ is the highest house of studies in the state of Zacatecas. It is made up of areas of knowledge, which in turn are made up of units. The UAZ has restructured its academic, political and social position in the face of the onslaught of world reality, in a systematic way.

Within the humanistic-social area, the UAA is located. It offers different Bachelor's degrees: Singing, Instrument, Arts and Languages, all supported by the Ministry of Public Education: SEP.

### Teaching and research at the UAA-UAZ

Teaching is one of the most interesting and complex functions of the Unit. UAA teachers are usually trained with the necessary skills to carry out their profession: ability to analyze, synthesize, work in a team, ability to adapt to different socio-cultural environments. The latter has developed due to the multiculturalism presented by both the teaching and student plants of the Unit.

Most teachers are under the figure of teacher-researcher and are subject teachers. In addition to this condition, the teachers, mostly with postgraduate studies, practice a strong research function that can even contribute to the applications of certain recognized calls such as those issued by the National System of Researchers (SNI). In the case of Bachelor's degrees in Singing and Instrument, teaching has developed under the old conservatory model of musical teaching: transmission of knowledge and artistic-musical experiences. Generally, the programs are built mainly with the archetypes of the teaching of classical or learned music, and through the music of the so-called great composers such as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven or Haydn.

There is little contact with Latin American music, contemporary music and identity music both state and national. The reasoning established for the development of the curriculum for the training of professionals is determined unilaterally by incomplete restructuring that often responds to a retraining of the individual training of teachers as a whole with musical aesthetic preferences of a personal nature.

The curriculum map is also subject to these parameters, made up of practical and theoretical subjects that hardly converge with each other with contents suitable for serious and concise reviews.

The challenge in terms of the teaching area of the Arts Unit of the UAZ is to adapt an appropriate curriculum of competencies and relevant to the social-cultural contexts of the Zacatecan and national Society, as well as the continuous development of the current mentoring program. In addition, an analysis of the scope of the entry and exit profiles is required.

These actions are activated according to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Academic Model of the University: "The university curriculum as an academic, political, social and cultural project in a historical period of momentous changes and rapid communication, must anticipate the formation processes of each generation, endowing it with the fundamentals of contemporary knowledge, relevant competences and learning skills, as well as individual and social values that allow it to develop itself in the era of globalization and to respond critically and constructively to the demands of society." (Academic Model, UAZ-XXI century)

In the case of the investigative function that is an intrinsic part of the work of the so-called teacher-researcher is exercised from the identifications of the different areas of development and opportunity. In the area of music, the different researchers rescue, interpret and analyze through multiple themes and elements relevant to modern research. "Research and teaching are the axes of the academic life of the University and both are articulated with extension to achieve institutional objectives of an academic or social nature." (Segura, 2008) Within the UAA these axes converge in a complex way due to the particularities of the unit and also due to other interesting factors such as: working conditions, group versus time and the social and professional functions of teachers, combining the practical part of the profession with the different types of research.

### Extension and management

University extension seeks a dialogic action with the Society. Both extension and management are inseparable from the aforementioned functions: teaching and research, since they add an invaluable value to educational training by strengthening the University's own indicators.

Discussions on these functions have become more complex due to the continuing evolution of globalization. The UAA continues to develop plans and strategies to be an intrinsic part of the Zacatecan Society democratizing knowledge beyond its walls. But since art is still an elitist and somewhat snobbish task for the financial and polarized thinking of the current Zacatecan and Mexican Society, it becomes extremely difficult to manage university extension as a highly recommendable function, realistic and regularizing real integration with the Zacatecan Society.

In the Organic Law, in Article 4, section III mandata is established: "Extend and disseminate science, technology, art and culture"; while the General Statute of the UAZ, in its article 3 states that: "The fundamental tasks of the University are to provide education at the various levels and modalities; to organize, conduct and promote scientific, humanistic and technological research; and the extension and dissemination of science, technology, art and culture".

In the UAZ there are University Extension programs where musical and/or artistic groups have been developed, but there is still a way to go to make this pair a completely finished product, strengthened through the components of the rest of the functions. The extension does not cease to be a joint work in which a construction of existing deficiencies is recreated. It can be defined as social work and is very useful, but it must satisfy the current needs of the Zacatecan Society in the field of culture and knowledge.

The path seems to be the constructive dialogue between the University and the Society that surrounds it, to achieve a strengthening objective through the articulation of university functions.

University management focuses on the affirmation of quality and identity:

That is, a distinction must be made between the growing "polyfunctionality" of the university institution, and the unity of meaning that must govern it to avoid the risks of institutional opportunism, to overcome the centrifugal forces that can be unleashed and to make productive use of the interaction between disciplines and activities within the framework of diversity. (Martínez, 2000)

But the real impact of university management is difficult to identify in this artistic area. In the UAA, university management is exercised through coordination of artistic events, organizations of boards of academies and participation as examination juries or even of related competencies organized by companies or other institutions. Due to the characteristics of their curricula and the length of their duration, these activities become sporadic so that there is no constant impact of the university artistic management of the Unit. Thus, the UAA is constantly debated between the real tension that is generated between the imposed institutional preservation and the diversity within it, due to the particularities of its times and activities.

Because of this the management evaluation should: "...pay attention to the processes and meanings that are attributed to them and to how those meanings are shared, negotiated and mediated and infuse the actions that are undertaken."

Musical Education is not linked to the demands of the social and working environment that surrounds us, lacking certain values and relevance:

Musical education loses its importance in the educational system because national policies have focused on improving academic results in standardized tests, with the intention of forming a citizenship that is successfully integrated into the labor market. (Alvarado, 2018)

This measurement continues to be a challenge for the UAA: to be able to elucidate measures of action that correspond to the goals of the changing educational and political management, as well as to articulate a dialogue to raise awareness of the indicators within the imposed standardization.

The Tutoring programs offered by the UAZ and that have an outstanding impact within the UAA, should be strengthened to form a human capital with skills of socialization and integration of work groups, academic or labor. There is a need to integrate outreach activities aimed at improving interpersonal relations in order to bridge the gap that exists since the University's linkage into a complex globalization process.

...Mexico's precarious educational and working conditions limit the possibilities of taking advantage of the globalization of the economy and digital modernity. If we anticipate a progressive unemployment of unskilled labor and a demand for highly sophisticated jobs, we must seriously consider, first, that compulsory education fully fulfil its mission of providing all Mexican students with the key knowledge, skills and competencies that will allow them to successfully move to higher education or the world of work" (2017 Backhoff)

The current evaluation system within the main UAZ calls, It fails to understand the complexity of the teaching of Art so it is necessary a sensible reformulation that stimulates and analyzes the real impact of the UAA on the current problem of the Zacatecan Society. The parameters by which music education could be measured do not compare with those of other units or professions, with enormous differences, although there are also a few points of convergence.

## **Conclusion**

The career opportunities offered by the UAA-UAZ represent the sense of identity, value and academic and social control within their university world, but externally they are disconnected by a lack of integration of the four branches of education that fail to embrace the needs of Art in the face of the political and social panorama of Zacatecas and Mexico. From the teacher's point of view, very specific competencies are required: to be critical, reflective, analytical, conflict solver, systemic, combine divergent and convergent thinking in the search for positions, approaches, argumentations to finally be an important part of this integration between the four basic functions.

Extension and management must still be analysed and seen as areas of opportunity, but they are still limited by educational policies, as well as by the social deficiencies that require other concepts as primary objectives. Within the Tutorials of the University, it is suggested to establish competencies of personal interrelation that will help the members of the academic world to exercise the dialogic activities required from these complex processes. The future of education in Mexico is really uncertain. The future does not respond to something completely indeterminate and will depend on the outcome of decisions made in the present conditioned by social processes difficult to change and also conditioned from the angle of educational policies. A fairly long process is required as it is not yet determined in the near future how substantial a change would be in this area. In the study of the future, then, the researcher must employ methods and techniques that allow combining both the forces of the past and the options of the present.

The functions of education are related to the social and political phenomena of a given system and therefore must be rethought and analysed to carry them out either inductively or deductively from inside and outside the classroom for the best social insertion of each individual.

The problem of art and its projection articulates the four educational functions in a complex but innovative way. Music and art continue to be used as tools of distraction and not as an important part of Social Education, being a resource of primary importance for human development. The UAA has a titanic task that is re-established in each school cycle through the four functions mentioned. It is necessary to maintain the discussion forums and the dialectical interaction between the educational functions to foster an understanding and a more efficient articulation that enhances the guidelines to be followed in the advanced 21st century.

## **Results**

It was considered important to perform a SWOT analysis to have a better visualization of the balance of the educational functions mentioned above: SWOT analysis

### Strengths

- The teaching plant of the Arts Unit is becoming more and more professional which causes a more accurate graft within the indivisible network of the four educational functions.
- Increase the number of teachers with the figure of teacher-researcher within the Unit who practice artistic research.
- Successful results have been achieved in teaching with outstanding and determined students.

### Weaknesses

- With the current condition of distance learning, due to the pandemic situation, teaching has become complex
- Teachers and students needed time to find the methodologies and didactics necessary for their work at a distance. • Management and outreach activities are sporadic due to the complexity of curricula and work plans within the Unit.
- It is essential to develop a more appropriate teaching methodology that at the same time inserts the teacher and the student into the functions of extension and management, under the development of the necessary competences.
- Art continues to be an elitist task for national financial thought.

### Opportunities

- Individual classes can be focused within a project that helps to remodel the extension function.
- Due to the intrinsic characteristics of the study programs, it is possible to work co-participated between teachers and students reinforcing the function of the Extension.
- Due to the size of the teaching and student plant, it should be possible to take dialogic actions in favor of the best needed.

- Due to the characteristics of the Unit, students and teachers can form research networks and extension activations by developing projects that propose modifications within cultural policies.

### Threats

- The activity of the Arts Unit must follow the indicators and institutional parameters that are sometimes closed and disconnected from teaching and the field of the Arts.
- Since the European colonization in America, the imposition of musical artistic models within the curricula, has determined a scarce investigation of Latin American concert music, causing an identity crisis affecting the professional orientation of students and teachers' referents.
- Institutional indicators continue to be given through standardized tests giving more importance to academic results than to the evaluation and systematic development of skills.

The result of our research and answering the research question is that the integration of the four basic functions of education in the area of Arts of the Arts Unit of the Autonomous University of Zacatecas is weak and developing. It is highlighted in this result that the area of weaknesses comprises the greatest number of points, followed by the area of opportunities that shows us that only through group strength, co-participation and political wills coupled with an integrative and pertinent analysis, it is possible to begin to articulate a better disposition of the mentioned functions around the teaching of the Art within the University.

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