

Place-based learning: A framework for building a multilevel approach from companies

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Abstract:

Company visits are common in Master of Business Administration (MBA) programmes, but much less frequent in undergraduate business education. The purpose of this article is to advocate a framework for place-based learning multilevel approach, illustrating how each level can be incorporated into a sociology of organizations course in the bachelor of business administration featuring company visits. Considering empirical works and research lines developed over recent years, this framework highlights the understanding of organizational, group and individual levels through reflexive, active and collaborative practices. These practices are carried out by students and teachers, in close articulation with the members of the business communities, inside and outside of the classroom, bringing with it a sense of learning teaching unity that promotes interdependent and challenging learning ecologies. To conclude, it is argued that place-based learning needs to explore a deeper reflection on the interconnections and complexities between the organizational, group and individual levels. More effective teaching and learning strategies must be promote with a greater connection to a business organizational environment becoming more uncertain and volatile.

Keywords:

Place-based learning; multilevel approach; business education; companies.

Aprendizagem baseada no local: A construção de uma abordagem multinível a partir de empresas

Resumo: As visitas a empresas são comuns em programas de Mestrado em Administração de Empresas (MBA), mas muito menos frequentes em cursos de graduação em gestão. O objetivo deste artigo é propor uma abordagem multinível de aprendizagem baseada no local, ilustrando como cada nível pode ser incorporado na unidade curricular de sociologia das organizações de uma licenciatura em gestão que propõe visitas a empresas. Considerando trabalhos empíricos e linhas de pesquisa desenvolvidas nos últimos anos, esta abordagem destaca a compreensão dos níveis organizacional, grupal e individual por meio de práticas reflexivas, ativas e colaborativas. Tais práticas são protagonizadas por alunos e professores, em estreita articulação com as comunidades empresariais, dentro e fora da sala de aula, trazendo consigo um sentido de unidade para o ensino aprendizagem, que promove ecologias de aprendizagem interdependentes e desafiadoras. Para concluir, argumenta-se que a aprendizagem baseada no local necessita de explorar mais profundamente as interconexões e complexidades entre os níveis organizacional, grupal e individual. Estratégias de ensino e aprendizagem robustas devem ser promovidas em articulação com um ambiente organizacional de negócios cada vez mais incerto e volátil.

Palavras-chave: Aprendizagem baseada no local; abordagem multinível, educação em gestão, empresas.

Aprendizaje basado en el lugar: Construir un enfoque multinivel basado en empresas

Resumen: Las visitas a empresas son comunes en los programas de Maestría en Administración de Empresas (MBA), pero mucho menos frecuentes en la educación empresarial de pregrado. El propósito de este artículo es promover el enfoque multinivel del aprendizaje basado en el lugar, que ilustra cómo cada nivel puede incorporarse en el plan de estudios de un curso de sociología de las organizaciones en la licenciatura en administración con visitas a empresas. Este enfoque destaca la comprensión de los niveles organizacional, grupal e individual a través de prácticas reflexivas, activas y colaborativas. Estas prácticas son realizadas por estudiantes y docentes, en estrecha articulación con los miembros de las comunidades empresariales, dentro y fuera del aula, trayendo consigo un sentido de unidad didáctica de aprendizaje que promueve ecologías de aprendizaje interdependientes y desafiantes. Para concluir, se argumenta que el aprendizaje basado en el lugar necesita explorar más profundamente las interconexiones y complejidades entre los niveles organizacional, grupal e individual. Se deben promover estrategias de enseñanza y aprendizaje más efectivas en relación con un mundo organizacional empresarial cada vez más incierto y volátil.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje basado en el lugar; enfoque multinivel, educación en administración, empresas.

Apprentissage basé sur le lieu: La construction d'une approche multiniveaux ancrée dans les visites d'entreprises

Résumé: Les visites d'entreprises sont courantes dans les programmes de Maîtrise en Administration (MBA), mais beaucoup moins fréquentes dans la formation en gestion de premier cycle. Le but de cet article est de proposer une approche multiniveaux d'apprentissage basé sur le lieux, illustrant comment chaque niveau peut être intégré dans un cours de sociologie des organisations du premier cycle en gestion, comportant des visites d'entreprises. Ce cadre met en évidence la compréhension des niveaux organisationnel, collectif et individuel à travers des pratiques réflexives, actives et collaboratives. Ces pratiques sont menées par les étudiants et les enseignants, en étroite articulation avec les membres des communautés d'affaires, à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur de la classe, apportant avec elle un sentiment d'unité pédagogique d'apprentissage qui favorise des écologies d'apprentissage interdépendantes et stimulantes. Pour conclure, il est soutenu que l'apprentissage basé sur le lieux devrait explorer davantage les interconnexions et les complexités entre les niveaux organisationnel, de groupe et individuel. Des stratégies d'enseignement et d'apprentissage plus efficaces doivent être promues en lien avec un monde organisationnel des affaires de plus en plus incertain et volatil.

Mots clés: Apprentissage basé sur le lieu; approche mutiniveaux, éducation en gestion, entreprises.

Introduction

Field visits to companies in the context of management teaching-learning have been taking place for some time in the Master of Business Administration programmes, particularly in the United States where its first programme appeared in 1908 at the Harvard Business School. Ever since it was introduced, and then improved with necessary changes, it constitutes a way of bridging the knowing-doing gap (Pfeffer & Sutton, 1999). However, this type of strategy is less used in undergraduate business administration, and even less in the first year of the three-year study cycle in this scientific area. The aim of this paper is precisely to discuss the strategy of including company visits from the outset of initial business education. This strategy is used in the sociology of organizations course, which students attend in the first year in the bachelor of business administration, and is assumed as fundamental to map out its programmed contents and, above all, to foster learner-centered classrooms (McKeachie, 1999; Bilimoria & Wheeler, 1995).

Despite the lack of consensus about the definition of learner-centered classrooms, it is argued that this approach promotes a paradigmatic shift in the traditional roles of teacher and student in the classroom. Both teachers and students have a central role in the co-construction of a learning environment that reveals physical, psychological, social and technological aspects. Along the same line of reasoning, the truly learning-centered classroom perspective (Ramsey & Fitzgibbons, 2005) allows the discussion of assumptions, values and beliefs about the role of teachers, students, the nature of classroom interactions and the learning objectives. By questioning the learning concept, this perspective exemplifies the following three ways of teaching and learning in the classroom: doing something to students, doing something with students, being with students. These three ways corresponding to a focus, respectively, on teaching, on teaching and learning, and on learning. The conciliation of these three methods in the classroom enables interdependent ecologies (Barnett, 2011) in order to avoid the fragmentation of roles and the promotion of a sense of unity that is nonetheless not confined to the classroom space.

Actually, the strategy of combining places is the trigger for learning. Sobel (2004) proposes the idea of place-based learning and teaching as a mode of approaching learning opportunities through a local community. In this paradigm the role of the teacher is to be a broker between students and the local community and their diverse actors. Although this paradigm emphasizes the importance of these different actors, it does not provide a multilevel approach (Rousseau, 1995; Hitt, Beamish, Jackson & Mathieu, 2007) that considers individual, group and organizational levels. Studying these levels and their inter-level dynamics is essential to identify the role played by each level in the development of more complex understandings of these local communities. Students learn how these multilevels improve the thinking of organizational entities as

arrangements that are shaped by the context in which certain individual, group and organizational experiences are formed. This is particularly important to nurture a deeper understanding of the interconnections between these multilevels and thus can lead to more effective teaching strategies, and ultimately, greater connection to a business organizational world becoming more complex.

The purpose of this article is to develop a framework for place-based learning that designs a multilevel approach considering the individual, group, organizational levels and illustrate how each level can be embodied into an undergraduate business administration course featuring company visits. It shows via Hitt, Beamish, Jackson & Mathieu (2007) work about multilevel approach to management research, that this approach is not only crucial to business research, but it fundamental to enrich the place-based learning in business education.

The article is structured as follows. First, it starts by exploring the theoretically contribution made to place-based learning through adapting the multilevel approach. Then, presents the logic of the curriculum choices in the sociology of organizations course of the bachelor of business administration where the company visits take place. Afterwards develops a framework for place-based learning adopting a multilevel management approach from companies and illustrate how each level can be incorporated in curriculum choices. Finally, it argues that more effective teaching and learning strategies that promote place-based perspectives must be encourage with a greater connection to an unstable business environment.

1. Place-based learning: a multilevel approach

Learning process is heterogeneous and stems from a constant interaction between teachers and students (Biggs, 1999). Furthermore, each student has it own very different way and style of learning, which tends to derive from direct and concrete experiences lived by the student, and from abstract experiences lived and shared by other people. These experiences are transformed into knowledge when learners engage in them either through theorisation or reflection, or experiencing them in an active manner (Kolb, 1984). In other words, in order to provide students with truly effective learning, in addition to theorising and experiencing, reflecting, acting and experimenting are also required. This means that collectiveness and relationality are the main drivers for reflective learning (Parker, Racz & Palmer, 2020). Active learning focused on the students (Mundhenk, 2004) is also essential, as they not only need to listen to the teachers, but also to talk and write about what they learn, and relate what they have learnt with past and present experiences.

Place-based learning (Sobel, 2004) as a mode of approaching learning opportunities through a local community is a key approach that can lead to more effective learning

and teaching strategies. Following this approach, any place can be rich in learning opportunities and the role of the teacher is to be a broker between students and the local communities and their main actors. It helps students connect the theoretical concepts in their courses with practical issues and challenges in their own communities. However, place-based learning do not provide a multilevel lens that reveals the different levels existing in the organizational community and the role played by each level in the development of more complex understandings of these local communities. Hitt, Beamish, Jackson & Mathieu (2007) propose a multilevel approach to management research that considers expanding richer analysis of phenomena by using individual, group and organizational levels. In this scope, it is important first to identify and clarify each level of the analysis and then explain the articulation between the different levels. Consider specifically the overall logic of this approach, there are three levels divided into different levels that are interwoven with each other in nested arrangements: individual level is nested in teams or work groups; group level is nested in larger organizational units (e.g. departments, strategic business units); organizational level is nested in national or multinational organizations, in its turn, these organizations are nested in interorganizational networks (such as strategic alliances), and these interorganizational networks are nested in larger environments. This paper seeks to elaborate upon the idea that this approach is not only crucial to management research, but it is fundamental to enrich the place-based learning in management education. In fact, adapting this approach to place-based learning in management education may deepen students' knowledge of organizational structures and dynamics issues facing specific contexts and has the potential to connect students to relevant management challenges inside organizations.

2. Course overview

The sociology of organizations course establishes learning objectives and competences, taking into consideration that the learning process always implies change and experience (Locke, 2005; Kolb, 1984), seen as relationship-centred (Tomkins & Ulus, 2016) as lived by the various players involved therein.

Theory-practical lessons allow the discussion of main curriculum contents in their conceptual, theoretical, methodological and empirical dimensions. The lecture-type intervention by the teacher is combined with student questioning practices, at different learning levels (Bloom, 1986), therefore showing a variable structure in terms of learning requirements, and may involve remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, assessing and creating. During classroom interactions, students and teacher may bring up particular cases for discussion, or the teacher may provide students with these cases in advance. Underlying both situations is a concern with performing the aforementioned actions, either in a combined or in isolated way. These practices are guided

by the principle of cooperation between students and of promoting contact between students and teacher (Chickering & Gamson, 1987).

Tutorial sessions are of a specific type. They are organized in advance with the students, who are divided into groups at the beginning of the academic year, focusing on working documents provided to the students. This joint organization promotes responsibility and commitment (McKeachie, 1999; Sharples, 2019). Through this responsibility, students must assume a commitment to themselves and to others, to their actions and behaviours, in order to understand that they are responsible for their own acts. Responsibility implies commitment, commitment implies action, and action implies results. A dialogue is instigated with students about the expectations the teacher has regarding their performance (Sharma & Sharma, 2015; Burnett, 2002), directly related with the committed work that the teacher hopes to accomplish throughout the semester. Both encourage learning and develop students' motivation (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). The purpose is to ensure that students are competent in exercising a culture of critical and reflective citizenship, and of professional attitudes based on ethical principles.

The assessment method proposed is the distributed evaluation, consisting of three elements: thematic report (50%), report on a company visit (30%), and attendance and participation in theory-practical and tutorial lessons (20%). The thematic report is an opportunity for students to mobilise their knowledge of the main organizational theories, in order to discuss a specific case study of their interest. For the company visit reports, students have to apply in a reflective way theory-practical and tutorial lessons contents about the structuring of organizations and managerialism. Actually, company visit is a unique opportunity for students to have a first-hand approach to a company with a specific structuring and organizational dynamics. The element of attendance and participation in the theory-practical and tutorial lessons is related with the pedagogical-didactic and assessment context.

The design of these elements of sociology of organizations course is constructively aligned (Biggs, 1999), in order to promote efficient and effective strategies throughout the teaching and learning process.

3. Building a place-based learning multilevel approach from companies

This section develops a framework for place-based learning adopting a multilevel approach from companies. In a context in which organizational environments change and are adapted (Berdrow & Evers, 2011; Mintzberg, 2009), very relevant questions can be raised: how does the environment in which the company is placed influences it? What are the different parts of a company and how do they relate to one another? If they are systems, what characterises them and how do they evolve? If the company

is the coordination of players and interdependent activities, how to ensure coordination in the most efficient way to achieve its aims? These issues become all more relevant as the students visit industrial companies with specific structures and dynamics (Mintzberg, 1979).

Actually, students visit different types of industries (e.g. agri-food, chemistry, metal-omechanics, furniture) with distinct business dimensions (e.g. family business, multinational). They visit factories, particularly their working and productive processes and the administrative and managerial areas of these companies. As mentioned above, students work in groups to prepare an observation grid that will help them along the visit, and then will serve as the basis for preparing the report where they have to apply course concepts and readings about the structuring of organizations, managerialism to their observations. The observation grid, that consider the three levels stated earlier (organizational, group, individual levels) and fully analysed in table 1, combines the contributions of Mintzberg's (1979) and Freire's (2002) approaches on the construction of company observation, analysis and diagnostic guides. While the observation grid is common for all students who visit the different companies, it is nevertheless important to note that due to the specific features of companies the grid initially designed may need to be adjusted. This means that students need to connect the learning (Sharples et al. 2019) from the classroom, enabling the corroboration of a place-based learning practice. In this context, opportunities arise for learning and teaching experiences in the classroom, in particular the doing something to students, doing something with students, and being with students, focused on, respectively, teaching, teaching and learning, and learning (Ramsey & Fitzgibbons, 2005). Therefore, these three realms are combined in the classroom and in the companies, bringing with it a sense of unity that contributes to the affirmation an interdependent learning ecology (Barnett, 2011), both in and outside the classroom.

3.1. Place-based learning: organizational, group and individual levels

The paper proposes three levels originating nested arrangements: individual level (IL) is nested in teams or work groups; this group level (GL) is nested in larger organizational units (e.g. departments, strategic business units); this organizational level (OL) is nested in national or multinational organizations, in its turn, these organizations are nested in interorganizational networks (such as strategic alliances); and these interorganizational networks are nested in larger environments.

The analytical levels of place-based learning are discussed taking in consideration the following dimensions: company history (OL), company organization (OL), company's economy activity (OL), organization of work /production (GL) and workers (IL).

The organizational level (Table 1) analysed the history of the company, the worldly mindset (Mintzberg, 2009) that allow students to learn about the company's lifecycle

and regard it as a living organism adaptable to the various contexts in which it is placed (Tennent, Gillett & Foster, 2019).

Table 1- Framework for building a place-based learning multilevel approach from companies: organizational level (OL)

Levels	Dimensions	Categories	Indicators	RAC's practices Teaching objectives (TO) Learning objectives (LO)
OL	-Company history	- origin - development phases	- date of incorporation - people involved - context	<p>Reflexive practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TO: develop the student's thinking about the importance of managing the organizations' internal and external contexts - LO: identify and reflect on the worldly mindset of companies, through questions-eliciting-questions <p>Active practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TO: stimulate active practices in the classroom and in the company, by promoting the contact with the different information sources - LO: recognise and analyse relevant quantitative and qualitative information from independent bibliographical sources, testimonials from company decision-makers and from teachers <p>Collaborative practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TO: encourage collaborative practices in and outside the classroom to answer questions-eliciting-questions that promote complex and critical thinking - LO: compare and interpret the strategies to answer questions-eliciting-questions designed in a collaborative manner
OL	-Company organization	- infrastructure - organizational chart	- building - physical spaces - surroundings - departments - divisions	<p>Reflexive practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TO: develop the students' reflective abilities about the articulation between the physical and social organizational structures of companies. - LO: identify and analyse the logics in the physical and social organizational structures of companies. <p>Active practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TO: promote active practices in the classroom and in the companies involving strategies and reasons conducive to the different organizations of the physical and social space of companies. - LO: identify and analyse the data from the companies' organizational charts and documents that describe their mission and values. <p>Collaborative practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TO: promote collaborative practices in and outside the classroom, to understand the articulation between the physical and social organizational structure of companies - LO: share and compare information about the different strategies used in the construction of physical and social spaces of companies

Levels	Dimensions	Categories	Indicators	RAC's practices Teaching objectives (TO) Learning objectives (LO)
OL	- Company's economic activity	- activities carried out - head-office and branches - networks of relations with other companies	- types of products and services provided - location of head-office and branches	<p>Reflexive practice</p> <p>TO: develop the reflective abilities of students about the articulation of corporate economic activities</p> <p>LO: characterise the economic activities carried out and reflect on the profiles of the networks of relations with other companies</p> <p>Active practice</p> <p>TO: encourage active practices of search for information about the companies' export activity, in the classroom and in the companies</p> <p>LO: identify and analyse qualitative and quantitative data provided by companies and researched in and outside the classroom about the corporate export strategies</p> <p>Collaborative practice</p> <p>TO: promote collaborative practices in and outside the classroom, to understand how corporate exports work</p> <p>LO: share and compare information about the different export strategies of the visited companies</p>

Students must design questions-eliciting-questions (Dickman, 2009) that promote complex and critical thinking and challenge the teacher to manage the discussions in the classroom. Here, the teacher's role involves doing something with students and being with students (Ramsey & Fitzgibbons, 2005), in order to promote the students' contact with different sources of information about the history of the company, so that they know how to analyse the data resulting therefrom based on the experiences obtained at the companies. The meaning of this analytical level lies in the collaborative opportunities among students to help them work on their ability to identify information, understand the difference between what seem important and irrelevant, especially in an ever-changing corporate world. Furthermore, these collaborative opportunities enable them to combine various pieces of information to provide a picture of the internal and external operating contexts of companies.

The second organizational level that students analyse deals with the organization of the company, focusing on the two essential requirements of any organized human activity, the division of labour and the coordination of divided labour. The meaning of this dimension of analysis is based in its potential to enhance reflection on how corporate organizations are structured and operate, within increasingly more ephemeral, uncertain, complex and ambiguous contexts. Given that reflection without action is passive (Berdrow & Evers, 2011), it is essential to promote the sharing and comparison of information about the different strategies used in the construction of the physical and social organizational spaces of the various companies, based on data from their

organizational charts. Furthermore, it is fundamental to understand how this organizational level evolves over time, which means that it incorporates development phases that historically embody the company, the first organizational level.

Considering the third organizational level, students discuss the companies' economic activity, enabling them to understand the activities carried out, and learn more about their head-offices and branches, bearing in mind the second organizational level about company structure, as well as the networks of relationships between companies. Students have to outline this network in the classroom together and not individually, based on the quantitative and qualitative data provided by the companies and researched within and outside the classroom on the corporate export strategies. The working framework promoted by this dimension is of particular interest, as it is inspired on the concept of community of practice (Monaghan, 2011), in particular on two of its features: the members are involved in the creation of new knowledge and the fact that learning occurs in real time.

The group level that students debate deals with the organization of work/production (Table 2).

Table 2 Framework for building a place-based learning multilevel approach from companies: group level (GL)

Level	Dimension	Categories	Indicators	RAC's practices Teaching objectives (TO) Learning objectives (LO)
GL	Work organization / production	- job organization	- division - coordination - working flows - planning and control	<p>Reflexive practice</p> <p>TO: develop the students' reflective abilities about the relationship between the organization's structure and how it works</p> <p>LO: identify and analyse the organization and specialisation of work, and of the decision-making processes</p>
		- job specialisation	- number of tasks - monitoring	<p>Active practice</p> <p>TO: promote active research practices in the classroom and in the companies about the logics that support the corporate structures and operating methods</p>
		- decision-making processes	- centralisation - decentralisation	<p>LO: identify and analyse how productive and administrative work are divided, by observing companies in loco and consulting documents provided by these companies</p> <p>Collaborative practice</p> <p>TO: promote collaborative practices in and outside the classroom to understand the differences between corporate structures and operating methods</p> <p>LO: share and compare information obtained from the observations and documentary sources of the various visited companies, so as to design types of structures and corporate methods of operation</p>

It gives priority to the reflection on the relation between the organization's structure, comprising the second and third organizational levels, and its operation, so that students understand that companies must be regarded as emerging processes rather than reified realities. Understanding the job organization and specialisation, and the decision-making processes lived by companies, allow to promote reflections about companies being dependent from the external context around them. By sharing and comparing information obtained from the observations and from documentary research on the various visited companies, students capture their structures and modes of operation.

Students analyse the individual level related to workers, focusing on their characteristics, communication strategies and type of socialisation at their workplaces.

Table 3 Framework for building a place-based learning multilevel approach from companies: individual level (IL)

Levels	Dimension	Category	Indicators	RAC practices Teaching objectives (TO) Learning objectives (LO)
IL	Workers	-characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - age - gender - qualifications - job - attire 	<p>Reflexive practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TO: increase the students' reflective abilities about the diversity of workers in the social space of companies - LO: identify the different types of profiles of workers and understand their contributions to the companies' structures and operations <p>Active practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TO: increase active survey practices in the classroom and in the companies of workers, their communication networks and socialisation - LO: identify and analyse how the social space of work is organised, by observing companies in loco and their official documents <p>Collaborative practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TO: promote collaborative practices in and outside the classroom to understand how workers are distributed within each company and between companies, depending on their economic activities - LO: share and compare information obtained from the observations and documentary sources of the various visited companies, so as to associate the profile type of workers to types of structures and corporate methods of operation
		- communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - informal relations - formal relations 	
		- socialisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - upward - downward - horizontal or lateral 	

They reflect on the diversity of workers within the social space of companies. Actually, in addition to the workers who hold managerial positions (Mintzberg, 2009), students are aware that there is a large number of professionals who, in the exercise of their roles and interdependencies, contribute to the structuring of these organizations. In doing so, they capture that individuals are nested in groups arrangements which in turn are nested in organizational dynamics. This focus on the professional activity of those who work at these companies also helps overcome the intellectual divide between theorists of labour and organizations (Haveman & Khaire, 2006) who tend to view these realities as autonomous entities. Based on the economic activities of companies, students share and process data obtained from the observations and documentary research of the visited companies, in order to associate the different type of workers to corporate structures and methods of operation.

One relevant issue that runs through this discussion is about possible tensions between pedagogical goals around collaboration among students, teachers and industry representatives, and limited foundation knowledge of students and its application in order to interrogate an organizational environment. Obviously it is a challenge, specially because in the first year students have scarce tools and the majority of them are also more comfortable with traditional pedagogy where they are more passive than active. As Auger, Mirvis & Woodman (2018) suggested, changes in teaching pedagogy raises questions related to identity and legitimacy and requires news mindsets and skills for both teachers and students. Actually, to the construction of these new mindsets and skills it is crucial to design exercises like the one proposed in this paper about explore company engagement in the sociology of organizations course. The framework for building a place-based learning multilevel approach from companies advocated in this paper is anchored in particular pedagogical, didactic and assessment strategies that demand taking a position as participant among different moments of an intensive process of co-creating knowledge that is informed by looking back before looking forward (Bell & Bridgman, 2017). As identified above, each teaching objective (TO) is aligned with a learning objective (LO) framed for reflection, action and collaboration practices in order to share knowledge and skill to support synergistic thinking mainly about sociological studies on organizations, management and organization studies. In fact, this paper demonstrates the effectiveness of this approach through inclusion of not only reflexive and collaborative practices, but also active practices highlighting empirical discussion about the complexity and ambiguity of organizations, the social construction of their management principles and managerial work in an unstable economic environment.

Final remarks

This article proposes a framework for building a place-based learning multilevel approach from companies. It urges business administration educators to re-situate their strategies within a more place conscious that is fundamental to enrich the place-based learning in this educational area. A multilevel approach that considers organizational, group and individual levels is crucial to business research, but also to enrich the place-based learning in business education. Actually, it deepens students' knowledge of organizational structures and dynamics, group arrangements and individuals diversity within the social space of companies. It nurtures a deeper understanding of the interconnections between the different levels and thus can lead to more effective teaching and learning strategies. The multilevel framework proposed in this paper provides theoretically-grounded pedagogical strategies to consider place-based learning from companies as the result of influences emanating from different levels of analysis. Despite the social media and technologies that allows educators integrate classroom with what is happening in the corporate world, this exercise about company visits in the sociology organizations course allows students to see for themselves what work is like in different companies that they visited and make sense of it through reflective, active and collaborative practices.

Considering this framework, it is important to continue to promote place-based perspectives and further develop the pedagogical tools that will improve students' chances for learning in their communities and in the world around them. Further research would be required not only about how this experience will affect students future learning along the bachelor in business administration, but also how far this community (students, teachers and industry representatives) will continue to collaborate together by a constructive alignment in order to meet standards of academic integrity and corporate social responsibility. Likewise, it would be interesting to explore how business administration students learn from visiting nonprofit organizations, to see how this multilevel level approach promotes the capturing of the process of creating places and strengthening their dynamic and plural identities.

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