

Reflections about education, memory and human rights

Marizabel Vásquez Bedoya

Phd Student - Universidad Nacional de la Plata (Argentina)

Spanish Teacher - Portsmouth Public Schools

Abstract

Education, memory, and human rights form the subject of this research article in order to evaluate the critical role of education practice in recalling and enhancing human rights. In totality, the research brings into focus the significance of education when it comes to explaining history, self, and the world within which we live through the evaluation of ancient and current case studies. This article focuses on the exploration of notions relating to human rights education, including its objectives and approaches, as well as the effects of the implementation of human rights education in societies. By using examples of HRE implementation in Germany, South Africa, and Chile, it explains successful practices and impacts on the culture of remembrance and human rights. The article also covers the difficulties of providing good HRE, including lack of resources, political impetus, and, to some extent, the assimilation needs of teachers. Based on the analysis of the current status of HRE programs, it provides valuable suggestions for the improvement of HRE programs globally and especially stresses the acknowledgement and support from the international community and organizations. This research notes that the practice of disseminating human rights information for curricula in various countries across the globe remains vital in making the next generation of leaders agents of justice and equality, hence enhancing justice in society.

Introduction

Education and memory are intertwined aspects of people's lives and human rights, and education and memory are interconnected concepts that supply societies with knowledge of basic justice, equality, and historical identity. In other words, education is the formal passing from generation to generation through procreation and the impartation of knowledge, teachings, and beliefs. It is an indispensable component of the social construction of such bodies of knowledge as the story that defines the standards and values peculiar to a certain community. On the other hand, human rights are preconditions that belong to everyone as citizens of the world; they need education to create awareness, knowledge, and independence.

The UDHR, also known as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, was endorsed in 1948 by the United Nations. Major human rights encompassed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights include: Despite the awareness created at the international level, the protection and implementation of such rights are still a challenge, depending on the way history and human rights are taught and recalled. Memory then becomes a tool in the fight for educational significance, as it is also for human rights.

The Role of Education in Shaping Memory

This paper establishes that education is pivotal in determining the collective memory that in health governs the nation's identity, belonging, and future generations. Thus, knowledge is inscribed in curricula, textbooks, and practicing education, which contribute to shaping and maintaining collective memory as well as to the transmission and preservation of history and certain cultures's values. The following are true when it comes to telling history: these stories can be oppressive when they support social injustice; otherwise, they can be emancipatory.

Education in democracies, therefore, endeavors to ensure that a more favorable and active representation and portrayal of history is conveyed to enable the learning subjects to develop positive approaches and attributes of justice and equality. However, in authoritarian societies, history is twisted intentionally to strengthen

authority and maintain law and order within the respective society. Education, in this way, becomes a war ground for ideologies and how these are associated with history as the text.

Education and Human Rights

HRE is a crucial component of any education system that seeks to increase awareness of human rights for the development of humanity. HRE is about providing people with information on what they can do and what is expected of them as individuals, while promoting the development of reason, concern for other people's rights, and dedication to fair treatment. This entails the incorporation of human rights themes within general subjects like history, literature, and social studies so as to widen the students' understanding of human rights and their applicability in general.

HRE works to raise awareness of rights as well as the relevant measures, so people are able to stand up for themselves and others. It encourages awareness of human rights, which involves people's perceived duty to respect the rights of others as well as respect for their own rights.

Case Studies

Rethinking education in the Colombian context based on its history, advances, and setbacks implies an arduous discussion with the system that hosts it. Since Colombia has professionals who love education and who care about imagining and reinventing it, it is difficult to fight against a system that seeks to compete with developed countries in which the economic conditions are completely different from the national ones, but beyond the economic, vast socio-cultural differences left standing all professionals facing the educational system and its responsibility for not equalizing the burdens in this cultural issue.

In the text *Ideas in Latin American Education* compiled by Dr. Nicolás Arata and Dr. Myriam Southwell, in the section entitled "A historiographic balance", special emphasis is placed on the impossibility of writing or agreeing on the history of education in Latin America, since to do so it is necessary to understand the particularities of each territory and to that extent there would be no consensus, but rather a compendium of experiences, which of course, is also a great challenge, since education is made up of many aspects, for example what they affirm: "those who intend to tackle this task must, on the one hand, abandon any pretension of writing a "total history" of the continent's education and, on the other, assume the challenge posed by thematic diversification as a central organizer of the research and writing processes" (Southwell & Aratta, 2014, p. 14).

Thus, each intellectual makes his or her bets and embraces some topic that (according to him or her) can affect the development of the country, progress, or systemic advancement, and countless themes appear: didactics, methodology, pedagogy, strategies, teacher-student relationships, multiple intelligences, models based on learning, models based on teaching, among the many that escape me but that you as readers will remember, and perhaps they nod as they remember how, intentionally and even unintentionally, progress is made in a nation's educational system.

Particularly, I highlight that for several weeks I have suffered from the syndrome of the misunderstood teacher, the frustrated leader or the failed principal, perhaps none of them exist, or if they exist they have other names, the truth is that in the search for wanting to transform a system that sickens and disappoints me, I find myself in the worst position in terms of knowledge, employment and consciousness; and I could make some apology regarding each one of them, since in terms of knowledge, each time I find out a little more about what I lack, in terms of my work, I have a position in which I am an imposed leader and therefore they are I have few followers and my conscience has been tormented by knowing that despite not knowing anything, there is one certainty and that is that the educational system, education as it is currently conceived, does not make any sense to me.

I have subjected the subjects of pedagogical knowledge to my judgment (I don't know how objective it is), and I see in them the embodiment of the grossest mistake that any human being can commit: violating the other, whether that other parent, general services man, salesman, student, academic peer, boss, or family member, that other who is always there in front of us, and that instead of trying to make him a better human being and contribute from our individuality, we manage to harm him through words and our actions. Now, what leads a human being to harm another being? How much ethics exists in a subject of pedagogical knowledge when he uses the word to destroy? What is the origin of the unusual development of a decadent educational system due to its actors? Is it perhaps an issue that emerges from the present or from the past? without resolving?.

In the midst of these questions and the countless issues raised, my interest in memory arises and how, from it, we can contribute to the improvement of the educational processes of the Colombian nation. Because talking about history is undoubtedly talking about memory, history is built from the compilation of data that converges in official memories that seek to extol certain milestones, characters, or events according to the interests of nations. In that same sense, when it comes to education, memory enables the transmission of knowledge, and it is through this type of process that ways of acting in educational systems are configured and, behind them, theories that support or illuminate education and its assumptions within some given context.

I have to mention that in the Colombian sphere, the topic of memory has gradually gained space, starting in the second half of the nineties, when the topic of oral history began to be addressed, the orality of the subject as a source, and its relationship with narrative and narrative thinking. Accordingly, memory has been approached as a changing and dynamic process that allows us to understand the past and grasp the memories of the conflict to transform the environment, imagine, and build possibilities of peace and hope from educational practices in school (Neira U. and others, 2012).

At school, it is common to find many memories about conflicts and today about peace processes that emerged in posterity, since it is a space in which the confluence of experiences is possible that helps the group to redefine their own history with intentional forgetting, giving voice to silence, raising symbolic actions, remembering the gesticulation of those who accompanied him in the space that meant some training, and thinking in this sense of teachers as subjects of pedagogical knowledge who leave traces through their emancipatory discourse in students.

Therefore, the school as a setting for training and socialization tries to configure itself as a space conducive to interaction, negotiation, and structuring of new content, a space that develops a pedagogical activity, contributing to the construction of the individual and collective identity of the actors involved in the educational process and process, and promoting a socialization activity; a social activity refers to the various modes of thought that constitute society (Durkheim, 1976).

The school must be the right place for the subjects who attend it to feel included and motivated to be themselves, with a human perspective, recognizing them as educable beings that move through knowledge, singular, unique, and unrepeatable, that seek to inhabit their own space and conquer it. The school is the place of the educable subject, especially because the formative actions necessary for its development and socialization are projected inside (Zambrano, 2000, p. 52).

In this way, the school not only socializes and educates students to link subjects to networks of social meanings but, at the same time, helps them to get involved in the construction of new cultural patterns, making sense of research around the processes of transmission of historical memory regarding the practices and experiences of human rights in school, since within it it involves the mobilization of relationship practices, evaluative senses, feelings, and ways of thinking of the students.

“School must be conceived as an opportunity to leave marks on the subjects of a society that is a little more just and egalitarian, and also of a culture that values difference and promotes it as a basis for personal and social enrichment” (DsselDssel, 2004, page 331).

Talking about memory within any social space, in this case the school space, implies thinking about who remembers and who forgets, that is, about the subject or subjects, the society involved in the process of memory reconstruction and reconstruction, and what those remember or forget: their experiences, beliefs, patterns, and feelings. How this memory is generated or elaborated and when. Many times the actors in the memory reconstruction process do not want to remember, and when this happens, the memory reconstruction process is difficult. Jelin maintains that “the exercise of the capacities to remember and forget is unique. Each person has their own memories, which cannot be transmitted” (2002, page 19), this particularity being what defines personal identity and the continuity of the self over time. Therefore, to reconstruct these processes, one must directly contact the actors involved in the event that one wants to reconstruct from memory.

Furthermore, it is necessary to understand that the school is a scenario par excellence for transmission, as mentioned by Dr. Martín Legarralde (2012) in his text "studies on the school transmission of the memories of the last military dictatorship," dictatorship," in which he alludes to the history chair at school and how it becomes a transmitter of the hegemonic discourses of the state state (Legarralde, 2012). However, in the face of this interpretation, doubt also arises about the role of the teacher as a critical subject of knowledge who, in the midst of his pedagogical practices, manages to be a transmitter not only of hegemonic discourses

but also of those that are buried and undermined, those that do not exist. They are official and are found in the subject of pedagogical knowledge.

Hoalbwachs, cited by Jelin (2002), introduces the concept of social framework and maintains that individual memories are always socially framed, that is, they have a context. Asserting that one can only remember in said frameworks, otherwise forgetting would be explained, the author says that one can only remember when it is possible to recover the position of past events within the framework of collective memory. As the frames are historical and changing, the memories are more of a reconstruction than a memory, since they are reconstructed from the subject's present. Thus, when the aim is to reconstruct the memory transmission processes of the practices and experiences of human rights in school by teachers in the voices of graduates who have different realities according to the context in which they live and to their particular realities, the theory enunciated by Jelin comes to life in which silences, forgetfulness, and senses will have a voice (Jelin, 2002, pp. 20–21).

Meanwhile, a concern arises: What is the place of forgetting or silence in the processes of reconstruction of memories? And that is that forgetting, as mentioned by Jelin (2002), rejects identity; forgettings and silences are not transmitted because they are not said; they must go through the discourse to contribute to the construction of identity; otherwise, they are part of the change, the transformation of culture, and new transmissions and new questions arise. Is the identity of society transformed by the whim of the subject who forgets? Are they intentional or forced? ¿ When faced with the same event, are there subjects who remember and others who forget? ¿ What is the role of the forgetting subject in the construction of collective identity and in the reconstruction processes of memory?

Jelin (2002) postulates memory as the present of the past and also says that the past sustains identity and that the past and memories are not things that we think about but with which we think. That being the case, if memory and the past are things with which we think, what things can we think with them? If they are considered a resource of thought, are they useful for thinking about the present, identity, projecting the future, and questioning history? However, in the midst of the issues, it is clear that without memory, there is no identity; it is only in periods of crisis that it is necessary to reinterpret memory and question one's own identity.

Thus, the intention to understand the processes of transmission of memory about the experiences and practices of human rights was born, as a response of the school to the de-escalation of the conflict and with the desire to know what the processes of transmission of these rights have been like in the pedagogical practices of teachers of public educational institutions in communes 5 and 6 of the municipality of Bello. The stated intention also pursues the construction of citizenship for the graduates of the public educational institutions of said communes, wanting to reconstruct the stories of the actors to confront them with the institutional planning documents, the field diaries, and the databases, making a cross-section of information and evidencing the impact that the transmission of teachers' memories had on the construction of citizenship for the graduates of the public educational institutions of the communities in question between 2013 and 2018.

To understand the processes of memory transmission, it is necessary to first understand what this matter of memory is and how transmission can be understood in the processes of memory reconstruction. To do this, texts such as “The Works of Memory” by Elizabeth Jelin are addressed. (2002), “Memory, oblivion, silence” by Michael Pollak (2006), “studies on the school transmission of memories about the last military dictatorship” by Professor Martín Legarralde (2006), “between generations. Notes on education in “The Filiation of Time” by Fernando Bárcena (2012) and some notes from other authors (and fellow students) who make contributions to concepts addressed throughout this dissertation.

Jelin (2002) assumes that it is not possible to speak of memory in the singular; it is necessary to name “memories” in the plural as a process of historical construction in which not only the individuals who remember but also the collective participate. Jelin proposes that the individual can reconstruct his past from his present and uses the works of Ricoeur to clarify these concepts. For the author, addressing memory implies referring not only to memories but also to forgettings, silences, narratives, acts, and gestures.

Communes 5 and 6 of the municipality of Bello (Antioquia, Colombia) have been the cradle of diverse generations that have starred in the development of the city, in contrast to the legitimization of criminal practices that have been established in these same communes by its inhabitants. From these contrasted experiences and the exercise of reconstruction of the processes of transmission of memories about experiences and practices of human rights, from the narrative point of view, it implies building a new

commitment between the past and the present. According to Jelin (2002), in order to remember, one must narrate; only what has a minimum of coherence can be recognized as memory, and although traumatic events generate cracks in the narrative experience, which can lead to forgetfulness and/or absences, they also provide meaning to that experience. Narration that will bring to light the processes that have been taking place inside the school and have contributed to the construction of collective identity within communes 5 and 6 of the municipality of Bello.

Pollak highlights the postulates of thinkers such as Durkheim and Halbwachs to begin his proposal about what collective memory means and from what principles we can talk about it. It is clear to the author that common memory enables social cohesion, and it is through it that the cultural identity of each population group emerges, without ignoring the impact of silences that seek to hide pain, wounds, shame, and feelings of unease that have left their mark on the subjects who remember them at certain moments in history (Pollak, 2006, pp. 17–19).

Pollak gives a fairly important place to the "unsaid," to those damaged memories that are transmitted silently in small groups, families, or political groups that overlap their feelings and remain anonymous, areas that, according to the author, are found in the shadows, in the fear of not being heard, in the fear of being punished for saying it, telling it, or expressing it. It is at this point where the transmissions become significant because, although unconscious, they are reflected in the terrain of the conscious through the construction of collective identity, since the sharing of generations causes unintentionally there to be attitudes, thoughts, actions, phrases, metaphors, sayings, and myths that are transmitted and remain in the imagination of those who have encountered them on their path. (Pollak, 2006, p. 24).

At this level, oblivion is not absence or emptiness; it is the presence of that absence, the representation of something that was and is no longer there, erased, silenced, or denied; every narrative of the past implies a selection; Does trauma not constitute or be part of the subject's identity? Does that, which cannot be remembered, also constitute who I am? Memory is selective, giving an important place to forgetting and silence. However, it has happened that already forgotten events reappear within the framework of new social and cultural contexts, giving meaning to traces and remains that did not have it before.

Wounded memories are those that have traumatic issues and are not communicable. Erasures and forgettings can also be the product of the will or policy of forgetting, in favor of not having memories in the future, destroying traces and evidence. Even so, in contrast, every policy of conservation of memory carries with it the will of oblivion. In this sense, Jelin explains that the task of memory entrepreneurs is to reveal the traces of the past, to find them, and to do so through the different mechanisms of repression. Try to overcome the obstacles imposed by the hegemonies of the moment. Can we only have political hegemonies? Can't social practices be considered hegemonic? However, there are evasive forgettings, which they do not want to remember, and there is the other side, which is silence, in which the only thing that awaits is the opportunity to express themselves and bring to light everything that they have kept silent about (Jelin, 2002, page 31).

By the way, Bárcena says:

I believe that education is something like an encounter and transmission between generations in the filiation of time—the renewal of society through generations. A meeting between different times. What happens in this meeting has to do with the exercise of transmissions, of things that were already there and that we have encountered, things that try to translate the strangeness, the chance, and the language of the world into a voice of our own (Bárcena, 2012, p. 46).

At this point, the question also arises about the role of the teacher in the transmission processes and how his hegemonic discourse on paper (official curriculum), but free in practice (hidden curriculum), aims to transmit the impositions of history or by On the contrary, their silence and forgetfulness: could it be that the pedagogical practice of the teacher in the classroom has been framed in the transmission of experiences and practices around human rights, from what they mean for the international community and treaties, or has it focused on the transmission of hegemonic experiences, from his knowledge, which places him in a place of power in front of the student, and from there he forgets the discourse of rights and their practice to be a generator and transmitter of other types of practices that underlie the social reality of the municipality of Bello? Could it be that there is a memory about the processes of transmission of experiences and pedagogical practices around human rights that has directly resulted in the construction of the identity of the graduates of the public educational institutions of the municipality of Bello?

It seems that the critical stance of the adult transmitter is fundamental for the meeting between generations

(adult-young people), especially in a digital society where information is constantly within the reach of young people (who have become transmitters) and cannot be more the argument that privileges the position of the first with respect to the second. Can responsibility be transmitted? Can the experience be transmitted? This indissoluble relationship between what is said and what is not, between what is confessed and what is not confessed, between what is lived and what is learned, between what is lived and what is transmitted, is found in that conjunctural moment where the underground memory manages to emerge. from silence, to come to light and have recognition, to be official, national, and show the pain it brings with it; its truth. Thus, becoming a voice, an event worthy of being narrated and, above all, heard, transmitted, and possibly an icon not to be repeated, frees those who kept silent about it from the weight of silence through the freedom that disclosure will bring. Now, regarding the true reason for the silence, the concealment, the forgetting, and the memory, one can ask if it is perhaps because of fear that the history of minorities is not written. Could it be that the transmission of diminished, simplified, hidden, and silenced local memories is avoided by the fear of those who keep them or those who make them official? Could it be that the practices and experiences around human rights imply silences, forgetfulness, rejections, voices, screams, memories, oblivion, or each of the above?

"This relationship between generations—where the game of transmissions, disagreements, asymmetries, discontinuities, and alterities takes place—implies an encounter between two modalities of experience of time: an adult time and a young time or child time." (Bárcena, 2012, page 6) This quote from Bárcena makes it possible to understand a little the issue of memory and transmission, from school, as a generational meeting that brings together everything that was previously mentioned around memory, silence, and oblivion, unraveling the spirit of education as a bridge that connects generations in discourse, in experience, in the representations of being, of non-being, of what is lived, of the presence of the present, of the very presence of the absence of a past that is no longer there but that accompanies the memory of those who remember it and reinterpret it in the light of their present.

Thinking about this in terms of history and memory, history and its hegemonic official discourse could be identified under the metaphor of the firefly that seeks to illuminate the past from its dominant discourse, but what happens when—for example, from what Elizabeth Jelin calls the entrepreneurs of memory—are other versions narrated that could lead to the disappearance of the fireflies or the fall of official history? Does education really imply a commitment to memory? And if only the general can be transmitted, and each pedagogical experience is unique, can it be learned? Can it be transmitted without teaching? What I can't teach, can I transmit?

Finally, as Bárcena (2012) says, "We become what we are, in the sphere of time, through the mediation of what we ourselves create in the form of culture, or what is the same, through the necessary mediation of others" (p. 12).

So this is the beginning of a journey through the memories of the transmitters, teachers, students, graduates; of their forgetfulness, their silences, their absences, presences, unpublished memories, and those not so much; Let this be the beginning of what is supposed to be a revelation of practices and experiences around the human, what is inherent to their condition: (human) rights, and the reality in which these have been born and die due to the practices and experiences that surround them in the pedagogical work of the teacher and the identities of the graduates of communes 5 and 6 of the municipality of Bello, between the years 2002 and 2018; coinciding with the start of a conflict de-escalation in the country and 2018 with the de-escalation of the internal conflict within the post-conflict framework.

Conclusion

Learning, remembering, and human rights are interconnected on such a deep level, so educational practices promote the processes of creating collective memory and encouraging human rights culture. Thus, it underscores that in addition to imparting knowledge, education also builds histories that continue to shape the people of a society. The enhancement of these capacities and consciousness is informed through human rights education (HRE), which is the knowledge and skills needed to fight for justice. By using the cases of Germany, South Africa, and Chile, the article portrays how well HRE can address previous violations of human rights, hence calling for reconciliation and the embrace of human rights even in nations that have committed serious atrocities.

Although HRE is an essential tool in promoting human rights, integrating HRE in schools has many difficulties, including limited resources for teaching human rights, political opposition to the teaching of

human rights, and inadequate teacher training. To solve these, the article suggests the following: Call for more support from international organizations; urge all countries to incorporate HRE into their policies; engage more people in the community. As for the future action, it envisages the transformation of HRE to fit modern human rights problems as well as addressing the wider community through the internet. Finally, the implementation of HRE in education systems at the global level plays a significant role in preparing society's future generations to become human rights promoters as well as in creating new social justice.

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