

Renato Huarte Cuéllar - IV, 19, 32

From Human Education in the 3rd Millennium

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19) Traditional understandings of education. Different perspectives then and now around how we understand human education in the different traditions: North and South, East and West (pedagogical influence of geopolitics of knowledge and education)

Traditions in Education – From the Past to the Future

“Education”, as many other words, can be understood in many ways. Some argue that it comes from the Latin verbs *educare* and *ex-ducere*. The former often refers to the way in which we instruct something according to certain rules. The latter, the way in which the “inner” possibilities of each human being could be taken out.

Nonetheless, although many take this etymological as the “real” origin of our modern word “education”, it cannot be found in any Latin text from the Roman period. It is quite late in the 16th Century, when Latin was spoken by the Humanist elite, that we find the first approach to “education” as having its origin in these two Latin words.

Nonetheless, each human tradition throughout time has named in different ways what we can understand as “education”. In that sense, many have thought that the Greek word *paideia* is almost a perfect match for our word “education”. Werner Jaeger clearly states that, although it is the title of his opus magnum, the word *paideia* does not appear in Archaic Greece, but rather much later in Greek culture (ca. 6th Century BCE).

Using an approach to how words are a way of looking into the past, the argument of this paper will try to show that there will never be a complete match between those words that we understand as “education” using some examples in different languages. Thus, this paper will try to show that understanding these ways of naming “education” have always varied within each tradition: East and West, North and South.

In an era where modern societies are looking for innovation in education, looking at our own past within the great variety of traditions could enable us to go back and bring forward very old proposals, whose differences in approaches, methods, educators, disposition of space and time, etc. are very rich. Understanding “education” throughout different traditions is the only way of breaking a homogenous pretention of thinking education only possible in one way.

Language and Education

The approach to language could be very problematic since it is one of Humanity’s largest problem. We need language to define it. The diversity of languages, the translation between them, the variation in time and space, among many other things, make language a very difficult

32. New educational forms of life other than formal schooling and other educational institutions, not dominated by chronological order, performativity, efficientization. The aims and means of various forms of education as practiced throughout history and in various contexts, will be discussed and critically evaluated.

In his famous speech in the 1960s, Phillip H. Coombs used the term “informal education” to refer to educational experiences beyond school. This term, or its “synonym” – “non-formal education” – are still quite difficult to understand not as an equivocal term. By defining education starting from the standpoint of school makes it even more difficult. What are we understanding for “school”? Assuming, *ceteris paribus*, that a school is the same idea of educational institution with similar agents, processes, aims, disposition in space, among a wide variety of elements, then the rest of the institutions that we might call “educational” must fall into the category of “nonformal” or “informal” education.

Using some concrete examples, I would like to show that this way of classifying educational spaces is impossible. Each institution, space, agent, etc. that defines itself as “educational” might have differences in so many aspects. My standpoint will be that whoever wants to classify any “educational” phenomenon tries to impose elements of other educational phenomena. For example, those trying to define “education for adults” as non-formal education, would not necessarily have the same elements as museum education or religious education within one specific tradition or case.

Beyond this problem, I will present a way in which we could understand educational phenomena beyond the abstraction of classification. In this sense I will try to suggest only one way to approach educational phenomena through philosophical and anthropological perspectives: all the elements of any given educational phenomenon have a specific dynamic within the elements (people’s disposition, entourage, etc.) in time and space that make evident some of the aims and ways of understanding education. In this sense, maybe we could understand educational spaces beyond school, and beyond trying to classify educational phenomena through categories that were based on a school model. Thus, we could approach “education” in diverse forms in the third millennium.

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