

Editorial

Intercultural education

IT IS A PRIVILEGE, on behalf of my colleagues, to present their contributions to the journal **INTER DISCIPLINA** of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Sciences and Humanities of this University, whose objective is the study of *intercultural education*, a very relevant topic in our days, in which the way of how education should be provided in diverse and complex societies is debated, the most convenient educational model, the competencies of the teaching staff, as well as the type of content that should be taught to children and young people.

As a guest editor, I set out to put together a set of contributions from people dedicated to research, who approach the topic of intercultural education in an interdisciplinary, contextual, local or situated way, and as a phenomenon of increasing complexity, involving a large number of meanings and significances.

On the one hand, we can relate interculturality to migratory phenomena, the internationalization of economic and social processes, as well as cultural convergence and organization for work, in communities that implement archetypal educational models, generally from countries that have established themselves as hegemonic throughout history.

Other definitions identify interculturality with the history of peoples, their contexts and the culture of each one of them, with the exercise of power, manipulation, control and dispossession, as well as with racism and discrimination. This is the type of interculturality with which social groups in Latin America and in particular in Mexico are most familiar. Pilar M  ynez and Javier Garc  a, in their contribution, endorse this approach when they describe, evaluate and criticize how educational and linguistic policies, imposed by those in power on indigenous peoples, have fostered asymmetries and situations of segregation. As a representative example, they review the case of Santa Ana Tlacotenco, Milpa Alta, in Mexico City.

Mario Castillo and Hugo Pacheco focus their collaboration on the importance of teachers in educational practice for “linguistic resistance”, which will allow the survival of subordinate languages. They consider that intercultural education is part of the political struggle, by promoting, in school contexts, attitudes and values based on oral and written language. This type of interculturality con-

stitutes the denial of belonging to a certain group, society, culture, as an attitude of defense against a society that has discriminated against and excluded them for more than 500 years. They highlight the work of the Bilingual and Intercultural Normal School of Oaxaca (ENBIO, by its acronym in Spanish) with a focus on the life, languages and cultures of that federal entity.

In this sense, Benjamín Maldonado affirms that if interculturality is a characteristic that society should have, it is necessary to create a model that recognizes differences and builds dialogues between those who are different, not unequal. He considers it necessary to return to fifty years of union and pedagogical struggle to promote intercultural education as a process of social mobilization based on a pedagogy of differences.

Coincidentally, Gervasio Montero proposes to create a linguistic project from the classroom as a pedagogical practice that starts from diversity, but identifying the points of convergence between the same and the different to value and understand the richness of the linguistic and cultural composition.

In her contribution, Estefanía Cruz highlights community knowledge as a wealth of ethnopharmacological knowledge of respect for life and nature, shared as a heritage with the new generations. Based on her studies carried out in the community of Pepexta, in the Sierra Norte of Puebla, Mexico, people consider themselves a product of the earth, which they appreciate as a mother and not as their owners.

It is understandable, in agreement with the authors cited above, the very valuable and pertinent Carlos Maldonado's collaboration, since he identifies the original knowledge in *Abya-Yala* as a key to the new civilization in emergence and a differentiating cultural element that advocates for the common good. He maintains that, given the wealth of ethnicities, languages, knowledge and traditions, which are the product of learning and not of education, they are in the position to achieve a synthesis of knowledge, that is, the harmonious articulation of the knowledge that distinguishes us as a product of Mother Earth.

For many years, Western culture has promoted narratives such as *civilization*, *modernity*, *democracy*, *development* and *globalization*, to name a few, as totalizing, natural, irreversible and monolithic processes; however, there is a great diversity of worldviews that struggle to survive, that are alive and proliferating throughout the world. In Latin America and in Mexico, communities in resistance in the states of Guerrero, Puebla, Oaxaca, Michoacán, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Sonora, among many others, in which the teaching profession, as part of the original communities, has become the vanguard of this struggle, use intercultural education as an ideological instrument.

Descartes was right in asserting the existence of a demon, or many, that in an omnipotent and omnipresent way construct a reality that manipulates social

thought, making use of the complex networks that unfold in the interstices of power and micro powers: across education, science, and media, they deceive us to keep us alienated, subjected, living an inauthentic existence, devoured by the world, as beings who are not aware of their possibilities and of building a world for themselves.

In Latin America, we have the inescapable freedom to choose a future, to think and propose a model of humanistic existence, of fair production relations, in a manner consistent with the culture and aspirations of the communities. As beings for themselves, responsible for our future, we must position ourselves freely. We must choose our alternatives and choose ourselves, according to our culture, interests and aspirations.

That is why Latin Americanist thought, through a more pertinent intercultural education and a contextual, local, situated or complex thought, must seek the transformation of a sociopolitical system that privileges the interests of economic groups that, at the expense of community and social well-being, promote and benefit from the corruption and inefficiency of authorities of all colors and parties, who defend particular interests alien to the common good. □

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Guest Editor