

Chapter 25

Education for Citizenship and Identities

Antoni Santisteban Fernández

Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain

Neus González-Monfort

Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain

ABSTRACT

Individual identity is defined by unique traits and is constructed from the diversity of human beings and, at the same time, in relationships with other people. This gives rise to a plurality of ways of thinking and perceiving the world. The collective identity is constructed through the discourse or the story that is shared in the community, relationships, or in socialization spaces, among others, in the school, through the discourse of the teaching staff or the school texts. Otherness acts as a mirror where we look at ourselves to recognize ourselves. Otherness is the acceptance that there are different views when we interpret the world, different ways of thinking or ideologies, but it also shows that we human beings have much in common. Education for citizenship should aim to enable people to define their diverse identities in an education for freedom, equality, and participation. Education for citizenship must ask what identities are invisible and why, and demand the social change.

INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY, COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND NARRATIVE IN SCHOOLS

Individual identity is defined by personal features, by unique characteristics, whereby every person is different from any other. Individual identity is constructed, firstly, from the inherent diversity of human beings; and, secondly, out of interrelation with other people and one's surroundings. This gives rise to the multitude of ways of imagining and perceiving the world, and we could say that each person constructs different social representations of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1986; Moscovici, 1988).

Collective identity is constructed through socialisation processes and on the basis of social experiences shared with other people, in the family, at school, through the media, in interrelationships within one's community, through belonging to an association, in the city or in traditional meeting places, at cultural or religious events and so on. Collective identity is formed both by specific knowledge about

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society and its characteristics, as well as by the established procedures for social organization, leadership, commitment, social responsibility, etc.

Collective identity coexists alongside individual identities. We form part of a community where we must live together with other people who are and think different from us. That is why we organise ourselves and give ourselves rules that, if they are democratic, are the same for everyone, and we establish certain rights and duties. We belong to natural groups or associations where we find common elements or aspects that unite us to others. In these groups or associations we acquire a way of understanding social or political organisation, based on two essential aspects: a) the way that power is understood; b) the processes established to resolve conflicts (Santisteban & Pagès, 2007).

The idea that the group is stronger than the isolated individual is the basis for the creation of a collective identity, which shares goals and, to achieve them, shares strategies for action and seeks cohesion to show strength. So the collective is above the individual and group interests are above personal interests. This is important, for example, in the configuration of a political identity, when the ideals of a certain ideology are shared, which have to do with the ideas that the group shares about change or permanence or, in other words, about a collective's beliefs with regard to the possibilities and convenience of social changes.

Collective identity is also based on the place, on the territory where people of the same ethnicity or culture, with the same language, and with the same common history, coexist. These people share a natural environment and build together a social environment that is adapted to physical conditions, the climate, the vegetation, etc. Territorial identity is associated with a landscape and, at the same time, with traditional ways of life that resist the pressure of globalisation. National identity has to do with ethnicity, culture and language, but it is also possible for there to be national identities that integrate diverse cultures, even those with different languages. On the other hand, a national identity may coincide with the territory of a single state or may be located in different states. Schools have traditionally been spaces for the defence of the nation-state, and have fostered the narrative of the origin and defence of a single identity, in opposition to other more inclusive or more intercultural educational options (Ferro, 2007; Falaize, Heimberg & Loubes, 2013; Lantheaume & Létourneau, 2016).

Collective identity favours the creation of tradition, as a way of honouring the process by which the community was constructed and consolidated, and the drive for coexistence. Collective memory is an instrument of cohesion that is gaining form and strength with the passage of time, and that is fed by new experiences and new challenges, which return time again and time again to memories built on the past, in constant tribute to achievements in times gone by. Sometimes, collective identity is based on the memory of defeat (Amar, 2010) or on resentment (Ferro, 2009). Far too often, teachers transmit an official narrative that highlights 'traumatic' events and the role of the victims, heroes and antiheroes (Anderson, 1983; Kaplowitz, 1990; Carretero, Castorina & Levinas, 2013). Teachers' narratives are also often uncritical, and fail to question the protagonists and their attitudes, and this benefits neither autonomy nor social responsibility.

Identity is evidently constructed through the discourse or narrative that is shared in the community, which is exchanged in social relations and in spaces where people socialise, which include, among others, schools, through the discourse of teachers and textbooks (Atienza & Van Dijk, 2010). Discourse analysis has become an instrument that allows us to analyse gender, age, ethnicity, class and other identities, their relationship with power and their ideological forms (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; De Fina, Schiffrrin & Bamberg, 2006; Bamberg, De Fina & Schiffrrin, 2011). In this regard, historical narrative is a kind of account that justifies the meaning of identities (Ricoeur, 1984, Falaize, Heimberg & Loubes, 2013).

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