The narrated memory in experiences of school disengagement: For a situated knowledge to improve education

La memoria narrada en experiencias de desenganche escolar: Por un conocimiento situado para la mejora educativa

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Background

Memory does not only refer to mental processes. Memory has a hermeneutical dimension that grants it its epistemic narrative value. Narratives are not only a way of representing reality but also of sustaining a social order. Narratives have an ethical-political character. Memory, as a constitutive source of the human being from which reaching reality, allows us to analyze the general in the singular, and with it, and in turn, inscribe the political and the discursive practices established in the particular and singular experience of the subjects and collectives. Also, narrated memory offers the situated knowledge of the privileged epistemic subject (Harding, 1996) builds on the lived reality. Heed to narrated memory is to attend to the "voices of the voiceless" (Thompson, 1989). This recognition helps improve educational practices, making its more inclusive. This vision is assumed by qualitative research and narrative approaches.

Aims

The principal aim is to analyze the role of memory in the processes of narrating the experiences of school disengagement of teenager and young people to contribute to educational improvement.

Method & procedures

The research is positioned in the qualitative methodology and has been developed in the Andalusian context (Spain). There have been carried a total of 91 ethnographic interviews with teenager and young people who have lived the school disengagement over his years in the education system. Some students have ended up experiencing school failure and others school dropout. The ages are between 12 and 26 years old and the proportion of girls and boys is 33% and 67%, respectively. The information was subjected to a triangulation process, contemplated both in its collection and in the analysis of the results. The quality and rigor of the research was ensured at all stages of its development, following the guidelines of Flick (2014). Negotiation, confidentiality, equity, participation, consent and commitment to knowledge (Vázquez, 2014) have been the guiding ethical principles.

Results & discussion

The narratives have been presented as tales of presences and as tales of absences. These tales have made it possible to identify the enclaves of memory that are appeared as mental spaces strongly linked to the construction of the identity of the subject. The enclaves are built from the reworking of lived experiences. The relevant enclaves in the experiences of school disengagement: 1. The parts of discipline and expulsions: they are part of the disciplinary technology of educational institutions and it exercises symbolic violence on students; these procedures help to standardize the behaviors required by the institutions within hierarchical relationships, buried by compliance with the school curriculum 2. Teachers: between "being good" and "being bad"; this differentiation tackles two issues: interpersonal relationships and the way of teaching. 3. Classmates: they can be a help and a reference to continue in the educational system, or quite the opposite; negative relationships and "bad company" also contribute to school disengagement. 4. Subjects: those that depend on the teachers, who will make contents easy or difficult; the subjects reflect the fragmentation of knowledge and the impossibility of an integrated and interdisciplinary curriculum. The disciplinary domain responds to a logic of exclusion and favors school disengagement. 5. Exams: are the main instrument of evaluation; these contribute to establishing a hierarchy between students who remain in the educational system and those who drop out. The exams measure the effort of the students and set their merits. 6. Transition from primary to secondary: the differences that exist both at the pedagogical, curricular and organizational levels between primary education and secondary education can become the transition a process that

favors or not school disengagement and 7. Self-image: the image that he reveals about himself shows an unfavorable assessment in which he has had to see the received recognition and the conditions in which it is produced; this enclave of memory makes the conception of the "deficit" visible.

Conclusion

The memory enclaves analyzed show how the educational institution goes through the experiences that adolescents and young people narrate from their way of being and feeling it. Their testimonies reveal educational practices and organizational contexts that tend to be not very inclusive and are more aimed at maintaining structural and curricular determinants that reinforce exclusionary dynamics, insensitive to the realities of the students. The narrated memory of educational experiences is presented as a tool for critical analysis and as a powerful way of study, both for school disengagement and for any other educational phenomenon. It is necessary to continue research in this line and to do it from intersectionality. The situated knowledge, sustained in the narrated memory, can help to improve education to guarantee equity and inclusión.

Keywords: enclave, improve education, memory, school disengagement, situated knowledge

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