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Cultural and Intercultural Education: Experiences of Ethnoeducational Teachers in Colombia

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Abstract: This article focuses on the analysis of the pedagogical component of ethno-educational experiences developed in different departments of Colombia. A qualitative methodology that integrated a systemic explanatory analysis model was chosen for this study together with a content analysis of these experiences from a systemic point of view, in order to consider those educational practices as the expression of interests, struggles, relationships and social dynamics. The text includes a fragment on the emergence of ethno-educational processes in Latin America and examines the conceptualization of the term, the objectives, the emphasis given in literature to political empowerment, the struggle for preserving culture, and the debates concerning the need to focus on the pedagogical component of the ethno-educational experience. The results of this analysis confirm the importance that struggles of Afro-descendant and indigenous peoples have had in strengthening pedagogical processes in the ethno-educational proposal in Colombia.

Introduction

As part of a process of recognition of the diversity, cultural wealth and contributions of human groups that have been made invisible and excluded from political and economic decision-making bodies, from the origin of nations until now, several Latin American countries have created regulatory frameworks that are considered pluriethnic and multicultural.

One concrete action has been the creation of ethno-educational programs for indigenous, Afro-descendants, Rom (gypsy groups), and others to help them preserve their traditions while cultivating intercultural relations that facilitate the assessment and recognition of the above-mentioned traditions (Feijoo, Marchesi and Poggi, 2011).

In Latin America, literature on ethno-education has focused mainly on the analysis of its legal frameworks, its political potential as a tool to claim historically violated rights, and the possibility of advancing in the battle against prejudice and discrimination while achieving the recognition of these expressions by the rest of society. Although these experiences have dealt with aspects related to the curriculum, through the teaching of the language and other concrete strategies for the rescue of the customs and traditions of the ethnic groups, very few have delved in the pedagogical and didactic components.

As far as Colombia is concerned, in addition to the above, the ethno-educational proposals have constituted a scenario for the reconstruction of the social fabric and community links affected by the phenomena of violence and displacement. We believe that by analyzing the pedagogical aspects in greater depth, these aspects can be enhanced. For this reason, we decided to focus on the analysis of the pedagogical component by reviewing 26 ethno-educational experiences. The qualitative methodology used, integrated a model of systemic explanatory analysis and a content analysis, which enabled us to read educational practices as manifestations of interests, struggles, relationships and social dynamics.

The text includes a fragment on the emergence of ethno-educational processes in Latin America and a subsequent presentation of the conceptualization of the term, the objectives, and the emphasis on political empowerment, the struggle for cultural aspects, and the debates that have raised the need to focus on the pedagogical component of the aforementioned experiences. Finally, we present the results, a discussion and the conclusions reached.

The Emergence of Ethno-Education in Latin America

Based on the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination held in 1965, the First Congress of Black Culture of the Americas (1977), the C169 ILO (Indigenous and Tribal Peoples) Convention of 1989, the Declaration of the World Decade of Indigenous Peoples (1994-2004), the Third World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (2001), several Latin American nations have modified their constitutions to legally accept their diverse and heterogeneous character. Thus, in the cultural sphere, they are now considered as multiethnic, as a way of recognizing the indigenous peoples living in those countries. This situation poses a real challenge to the educational systems (López and Küper, 2000). Peru, Ecuador, Chile, Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia and Bolivia have designed and implemented ethno-educational policies whose main orientations are to provide a bilingual education, advance intercultural relations, rescue and preserve the cultural identity, and make the needs and expectations of ethnic groups visible. The publication "Educación y Diversidad Cultural: Lecciones desde la práctica innovadora en América Latina" ("Education and Cultural Diversity: Lessons from the innovative practice in Latin America"), of the Regional Network of Educational Innovations of UNESCO (2008)

... emphasized that the most significant contribution of ethno-educational experiences lies in the recognition and appreciation of the ethnic and cultural diversity of its students and communities, as a starting point for the development of new learning and for the affirmation of its identity; also, that life in the educational centers promotes intercultural relations of respect and fraternity in a local and subregional socio-geographical context characterized by multiculturalism (p. 8).

On the other hand, ethno-educational policies have focused on the Afro-descendant, indigenous and gypsy populations. In this context, the C169 ILO Convention (1989) emphasizes the implementation of policies for indigenous groups as an important milestone because they enable communities to "take control of their own institutions, ways of life, and economic development, and also to maintain and strengthen their identities, languages and religions within the framework of the States in which they live "(p.4).

In the case of the Afro-descendant communities, the First Congress of Black Culture of the Americas (1977) announced that two of their future objectives were to carry out actions aimed at "enhancing African-American culture, and to show the relevance of studies and research on the cultural elements of African descent and their incorporation into the field of education" (p.7).

From these approaches that lie in the background of ethno-educational policies in the region we can identify two central objectives:

...first, "to generate the necessary conditions of equity and expand the possibilities of choice that are offered to all, meeting the aspirations of the native peoples, Afro-Americans, migrants, religious minorities and others, in order to achieve global development, of which they are all part; and second, to develop public policies that grant the same rights and guarantees to those who belong to different cultural minorities and ethnic groups, to Afro-descendants, migrants, displaced persons, religious minorities and others, as well as to members of the majorities, without pretending to homogenize them or to allow some groups to discriminate, exclude or dominate others "(UNESCO, 2008: 14).

López (2011) considers that the normative scaffolding built in these countries is one of the enablers of ethno-educational policies regarding the vindication of indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples' rights. The construction of this scaffolding is based on the declaration that education is a right and that its subsequent development must be founded on the principle of non-discrimination. This author also points out that these advances in normativity have been favored by the great impetus of the organizations that, through their historical struggles, their demands and pressure on the different States, have played a fundamental role during the construction of the normative framework. Thanks to the struggle of these communities by means of consultation and participation mechanisms, the State has now recognized the rights of these groups and has created the normativity that has allowed the ethno-educational practices to be institutionalized, for example in the Ministry of Education.

Ethno-Education in Colombia: Its Objectives and Extent

Indians and Afro-descendants have historically transmitted their cultural legacy to the new generations through traditional oral teaching. However, the origins of ethno-education in Colombia have to be understood in the context of the emergence of bilingual, intercultural and pluralistic educational processes, which, as shown in the previous section, occurred largely in different countries in Latin America at the end of last century and at the beginning of the present one. From its origins, ethno-education was considered as a proposal to help make indigenous groups and Afro-descendants visible, since historically they have been treated as invisible and have been excluded from important decisions and from the nations' power scenarios. In addition to having been left out of social and economic development, these groups have also been marginalized from access to many forms of knowledge in a clear attack on the principle of equality, the pillar of democracy. (Reimers, and Villegas-Reimers 2006, Romero, 2010).

The peasants' and workers' movements, which took place in the country after the 1920s, also found echo in the struggle of indigenous and Afro-descendants for an education of their own. These movements, that were able to reveal the needs of the large masses living in rural and urban areas, became spaces where social organizations originated, influenced by the liberation

theology (Garces, 2007, Romero, 2010). They also found echo in communities of indigenous and Afro-descendants, and although back then no one spoke of “the ethnic”, the first discussions about the need for an education of their own took place.

From Orrego’s perspective (2012), the emergence of ethno-education is also related to the abandonment of the “etic” or the outside conception of what the indigenous’ and Afro-descendants’ education should be. It is also related to the construction of the “emic”; for example, of what they believe they want for their schooling. This shift from the etic to the emic occurred parallel to the concept of ethno-development, defined as “the social capacity of a people to build their future, taking advantage of the lessons of their historical experience and the real and potential resources of their culture, within a project that is to be defined according to their own values and aspirations” (Bonfil, G.1995, pp. 467).

On the other hand, the indigenous movements of the 1980s also had a strong impact on the crystallization of ethno-education. Initially, they appeared in the Department of Cauca and subsequently they extended to other regions of the country. The claims they advocated were related to an education of their own and later, in the 1990s, they focused on the struggle for black communities’ ethnic recognition. (Castillo, 2008).

Even though Castillo (2008) points out that the processes of vindication of these ethnic groups have different trajectories and express some variances in their conceptions and political actions, what they do share is the desire to make their cultural traditions visible. As Rojas and Castillo (2005), Walsh 2009 and Charry (2012) point out, ethno-education emerges as a project and a political commitment of indigenous and black organizations to claim the right to cultural otherness, based on a respectful dialogue between ancestral wisdom and knowledge.

Throughout these decades, there have been several definitions of ethno-education. For Sosa (2014), “it is a process that includes pedagogical principles whose objective is to consolidate the construction of educational structures for ethnic communities” (1). In Chapter 3, Article 55 of Law 115, or General Law of Education, it is defined as: “the education for ethnic groups, offered to communities that comprise the Colombian nationality, who have a culture, a language, traditions and some autochthonous jurisdiction of their own”(25). In the Ethno-Educational Bulletin No. 1, it is defined as: “the process through which the members of a group internalize, construct knowledge and values, and develop skills and abilities according to their needs, aspirations and interests to allow them to perform adequately in their environment and to appear before other human groups, while maintaining their identity” (MEN, 1992: 8).

The Ministry of National Education (1996) complemented the definition of Law 115, making it more complex, expressing it as a “permanent social process of reflection and collective construction, by means of which indigenous peoples and ethnic groups strengthen their autonomy in the framework of interculturality, bringing about the internalization and production of values and knowledge and the development of skills and abilities according to their cultural reality, as expressed in their life projects.

These definitions indicate several things: that although historically, indigenous and Afro-descendant groups have had the intention of guiding educational actions, these acquire formality from the legal order and more concretely from the Constitutional order of 1991. Also, that ethno-education was perceived as a great opportunity for these communities to make their cultural wealth visible, while fighting for their political demands. This definition of ethno-education led to the possibility of giving content to the struggle for the recognition of indigenous and Afro-descendants, thus making visible what Colombian society has denied them, even if the majority of its population lives in conditions of poverty and misery.

These definitions also stress three aspects that are important in the systematization of pedagogical practices. In the first place, it emphasizes that ethno-education is a process and therefore goes beyond short and medium-term activities and programs. Secondly, this process is seen as an opportunity for political empowerment and conservation of ancestral traditions. Third, it is based on the principle that its dynamics take place in the framework of intercultural relations in which the enrichment of all actors involved is expected. In general terms, the policy intends to promote intercultural education, which contributes to the recognition, knowledge and appreciation of the cultural and ethnic differences of the Nation and to promote educational processes of ethnic groups within the framework of interculturality to favor identities and the sense of belonging to the communities (MEN, 2002).

Accordingly, the objective of ethno-education is to "position cultural education in national educational processes and, by strengthening a culturally differentiated society, provide the opportunity to consolidate cultural ambits, such as those in which the indigenous communities, Afro-Colombians and Roms have been involved since the 1970s" (Sosa, 2014; 2-3). Following this reasoning, we cannot ignore that as underlined by Gárces (2008), García (2014), Castillo (2011 and 2016) and Caicedo (2008), ethno-education embraces the historical struggles against racism, discrimination, exclusion and marginalization that indigenous and Afro-descendants had embraced since the first decades of the 20th century.

Political Empowerment and the Struggle for Culture

A review of Colombian literature on ethno-education reveals that the communities have had two outlooks regarding this process: the political empowerment and the struggle for recognition of their cultural wealth. As for the first aspect, Castillo (2008) emphasizes that ethno-education has become a field for political dispute between ethnic groups and the State, due to the approach given to normativity or to actions taken when executing policies that ethnic groups consider as violations of their autonomy. As for the second aspect, a coincident feature in the pedagogical proposals, is that these have become a propitious setting for the defense of customs and traditions that the communities are committed to keep alive.

One of the struggles shared with other trade unions and social organizations not necessarily linked to ethno-educational demands was the declaration of education as a right and not as a service. According to Castillo (2008), ethnic groups understood that the categorization of education as a right empowered them to design curricula, select teachers, and establish school dynamics and evaluation processes in line with their interests and needs. Ethnic groups consider that viewing education as a service and not as a right, limits their participation in educational processes, since the service is provided within the framework of the current educational policy, and its action is subject to decisions taken by the territorial authorities to which the institutions belong.

As a result, Rojas and Castillo (2005) claim that although ethnic groups resort to normative frameworks to legitimize their educational interests and their political project, the room for maneuver narrows when the scope of the law widens, and the frameworks of action, with autonomy of the communities, close down. This entails all actions to become subject to the framework established by the norm, proving that, as Hall (2003) and Charry (2012) emphasized, ethno-education aims at positioning other ways of being, doing and thinking that allow individuals to make decisions, be critical and active.

The ethno-educational experiences researched and documented by Castillo (2016), show that "learning to read and write in an ethno-literacy model constitutes a central process to favor personal and collective identity and to enhance the existence of highly vulnerable populations prone to present low self-esteem and a weak self-confidence "(252-253).

According to Castro (2009) and Sosa (2014), ethno-education is not limited to the concepts of cultural inclusion or integration. This proposal goes beyond these, since it is a matter of recognizing diversity; it is an attempt to lay the foundations to build a project that responds to the needs and requirements of ethnic groups for the benefit of a multicultural and inclusive education. In this same vein, Bonfil, Ibarra, Varese, Verissimo and Tumiri (1982) consider ethno-educational processes as "the expansion and consolidation of the ambits of a culture, by strengthening the autonomous decision-making capacity of a culturally differentiated society so it can lead its own development and exercise self-determination. "(24).

In the ethno-educational context, the defense and exaltation of ancestral cultural riches do not, in any way, imply "a return to being as we were before, but a look at how we are now and above all, at how we want to be" (Orrego , 2012: 93). What this suggests is a clear commitment to an intercultural ethno-education that facilitates a harmonious coexistence in a society like the Colombian one (Trillos, 2001).

Method

The qualitative methodology chosen integrated a model of systemic explanatory analysis and a content analysis of the ethno-educational experiences. 26 indigenous and Afro-Colombian experiences in the different departments of the country were reviewed (see map).

The reading of the ethno-educational pedagogical experiences raised the need for a holistic and comprehensive analysis. Therefore, a qualitative methodology, which integrated a systemic explanatory analysis model (Álvarez, 2017) and a content analysis (López, 2002), was used.

We opted for a systemic analysis model because it facilitates the understanding of the pedagogical experiences in their complexity and uniqueness. It enabled the visualization not only of the emergence of the fundamental aspects of the pedagogical practices—such as the contexts in which they arose, the motivations that preceded them, the pedagogical and didactic components, their results, achievements and impacts—but also of the broad and general framework of the various ways in which ethno-educational policies in Colombia have been materializing.

As illustrated in the map, we worked on 26 indigenous and Afro-Colombian experiences in several departments of the country.

The categories of analysis (figure 1) emerged from the reflective reading of the experiences, taking as reference the systematization of pedagogical practices carried out by the Fundación Compartir (2015). These categories were organized into three groups:

Regarding the analysis of the data, the information of each one of the experiences was recorded in a file divided into three modules related to the variables being analyzed: contextualization, pedagogical and didactic component, and achievements and impacts of the experience. The reading of the documents was recorded in worksheets to collect information such as: title, nature of the document, denomination, author and addressee, periodicity, if any, origin and date of production, content, direction and orientation (De la Torre and Navarro, 1990).

Location of the ethno-educational experiences



To select these experiences, these criteria were applied: They needed to have been developed in basic and secondary educational institutions and narrated by the participants. An additional criterion was the fact that these experiences had already been presented in different academic events such as the First National Afro-Colombian Ethno-Educational Forum celebrated in Bogota in 2002 and the Pedagogical Congress: “Towards an Educational Agenda for the Colombian Southwest” that took place in Tumaco in 2014. Experiences that were part of the article published by the Ministry of Education of Colombia: “Colombia Afrodescendiente.

Lineamientos curriculares de la cátedra de estudios afrocolombianos” (2010) (“Afro-descendant Colombia. Curricular Guidelines of the Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies”) were also selected.

In defining the analysis variables, we referred to the work performed by Compartir Foundation on the systematization of experiences (2015); also, some experiences of our authorship were included. These categories were organized in three groups: (See Figure 1)

Context of Experiences

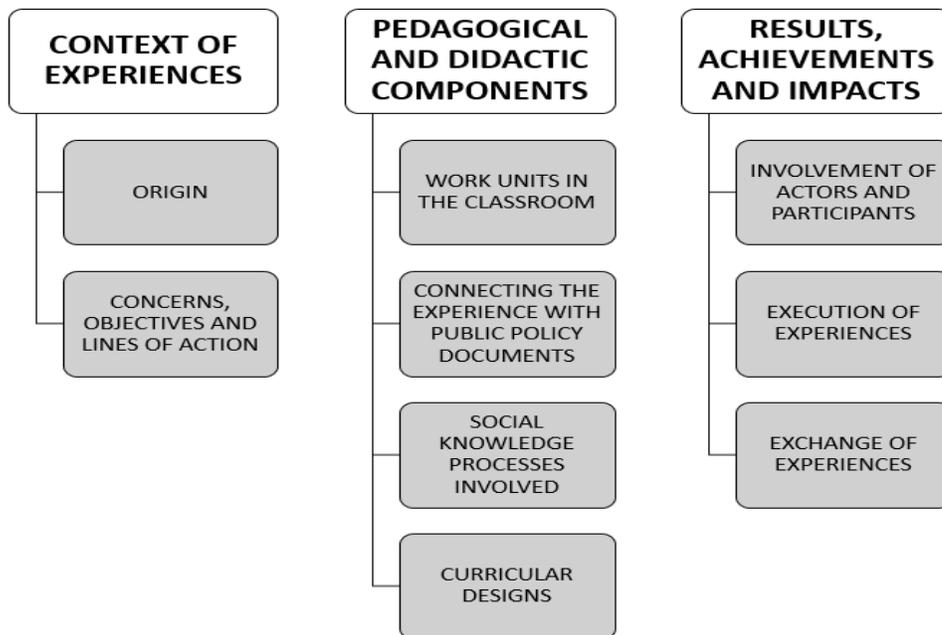


Figure 1. Categories and subcategories identified in the experiences.
Sources: Compartir Foundation (2015) and our own work.

Categories and Subcategories Identified in the Experiences.

By means of a documentary analysis, the information of each experience was recorded in a worksheet divided into three modules related to the analysis variables: contextualization, pedagogical and didactic components, and achievements and impacts. The analysis was recorded in worksheets to collect information such as: title, nature of the document, designation, author and recipient, origin, periodicity if applicable, source and date of production, content, direction and orientation (De la Torre y Navarro. 1900).

The objective of these worksheets was to record most of the information on the ethno-educational experiences described by the protagonists, particularly those that provided information about the motivations, the context in which they were produced, and the history and struggles that made them possible. The systematization of the information required several stages: the sorting of worksheets by themes, the creation of a coding system for the contents of each one of the experiences based on the analysis variables, and the elaboration of a data matrix based on the aforementioned coding system.

The analytical model - systemic explanatory - showed that the ethno-educational experiences studied, have the characteristics of an open system with a large number of interactions and feedback between the parties involved, the educational actors and their objectives, the communities with their needs and problems, and the State and public policy (Forrester 1978; Hall and Fagen, 1975; Rodríguez and Arnold, 1991). These interactions determine both the construction and the transformation of the educational experiences. The model allowed us to understand that not only the dynamics that occur in ethno-educational experiences and the process as a whole are determined by the conditions, concerns and objectives that originated them, but also, that they follow their own process of evolution. This suggests that at present, the field of ethno-educational practices in Colombia is determined both by the initial conditions and by the nature of the process itself, reaffirming our intuition that we are facing an open system.

The analysis of the content of the texts of the experiences is descriptive, so as to discover the basic components of each one of them. Fragments and phrases were extracted to allow us to find correlations between the categories of analysis and the authors' narratives of their educational proposals. An internal analysis of the 26 experiences was performed to highlight their meaning and fundamental characteristics. This methodology aims to replace the interpretative and subjective dimensions of the study of documents by increasingly standardized procedures that attempt to objectify and translate the contents of certain documents or communications into data so they can be analyzed and treated mechanically (López, 2003:173).

Results

Pedagogical and Didactic Components

The pertinence of presenting the results in a systemic explanatory model resides in its holistic and integrating perspective, for which the important issues are the relationships and the dynamics that emerge from them. The theoretical assumptions underlying the systemic explanatory model such as the one we have used, relate to various forms, notions and categories, concepts, and operating schemes developed by holistic and non-linear approaches according to Forrester (1978), Hall and Fagen (1975), Rodríguez and Arnold (1991). These approaches invite us to consider educational practices from a framework of observation and analysis of the phenomena. Based on the rupture of the traditional individualist framework, they propose to respond to the reason for certain behaviors in terms of "contexts" and interrelationships that occur in them and among them, (Palomar and Suarez 1993). Figure 2 presents the explanatory-systemic model used, which represents the ethno-educational practices that were analyzed, the objectives, the pedagogical and didactic approaches and the impact of the experiences. As can be seen in this figure, in the central axis we placed the claim of knowledge and cultural practices expressed from three fundamental categories, each of which has subcategories, as illustrated below:

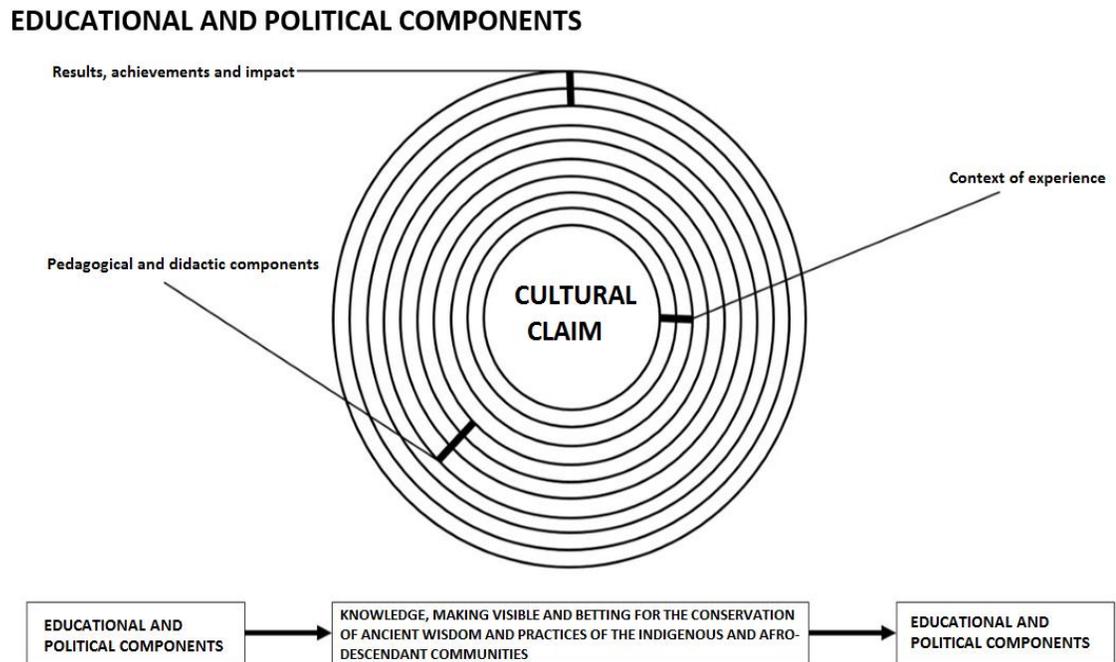


Figure 2. Explanatory-systemic model of the ethno-educational experiences

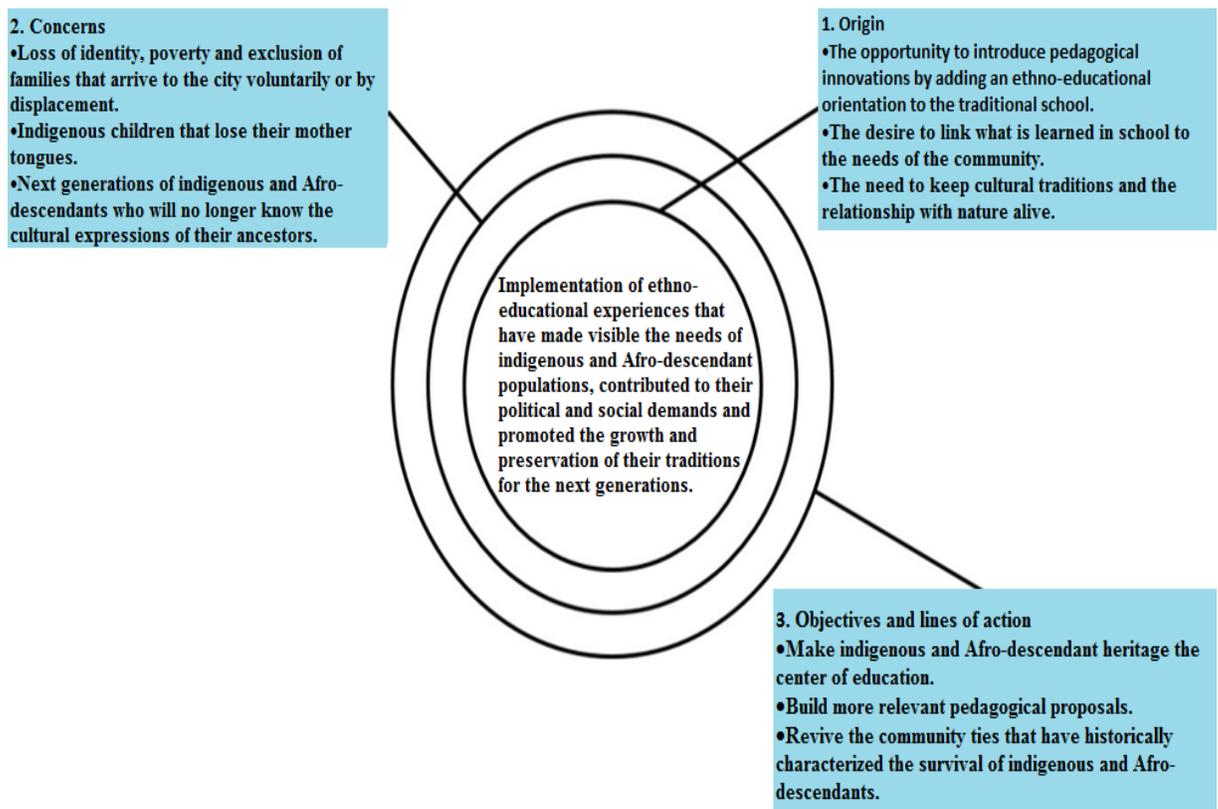


Figure 3. The context of ethno-educational experience

The Context of Ethno-educational Experiences

With regard to the context of ethno-educational experiences, the origin of these stems mainly from the desire to break with the rigidity of the school, insofar as its inability to recognize multiculturalism and what it implies. Unfortunately, schools have been characterized by practicing exclusion, non-recognition of diversity and forced displacement, making poverty invisible, among other social problems that occur in our country. We found that the emergence of these educational initiatives seeks to establish pedagogical practices that articulate the recognition of all these aspects and to integrate cultural diversity into the curriculum.

Most of these proposals intend to integrate the ancient wisdom of indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants with pedagogically innovative proposals, adding to the traditional schools an ethno-educational orientation that encourages the development not only of the children who attend them, but also of their families and communities. They mean to link what is learned in school to the needs of the communities, while keeping alive both the cultural traditions and the relationship with nature, since these two elements have always been present in the cultures of Colombian indigenous and Afro-descendant communities. To achieve this, it is necessary to review the existing pedagogical practices, typify them, reach a proper articulation of the ethno-educational proposals and train teachers in researching the reality of the immediate environment.

The objective and lines of action are aimed at considering the indigenous and Afro-descendant heritage as the center of education, building more pertinent pedagogical proposals to strengthen and revive the community ties that have historically characterized the coexistence of indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants. The recognition and recovery of these traditions and forms of coexistence will entail the integration of all of the actors involved in and with the school, strengthening the social fabric.

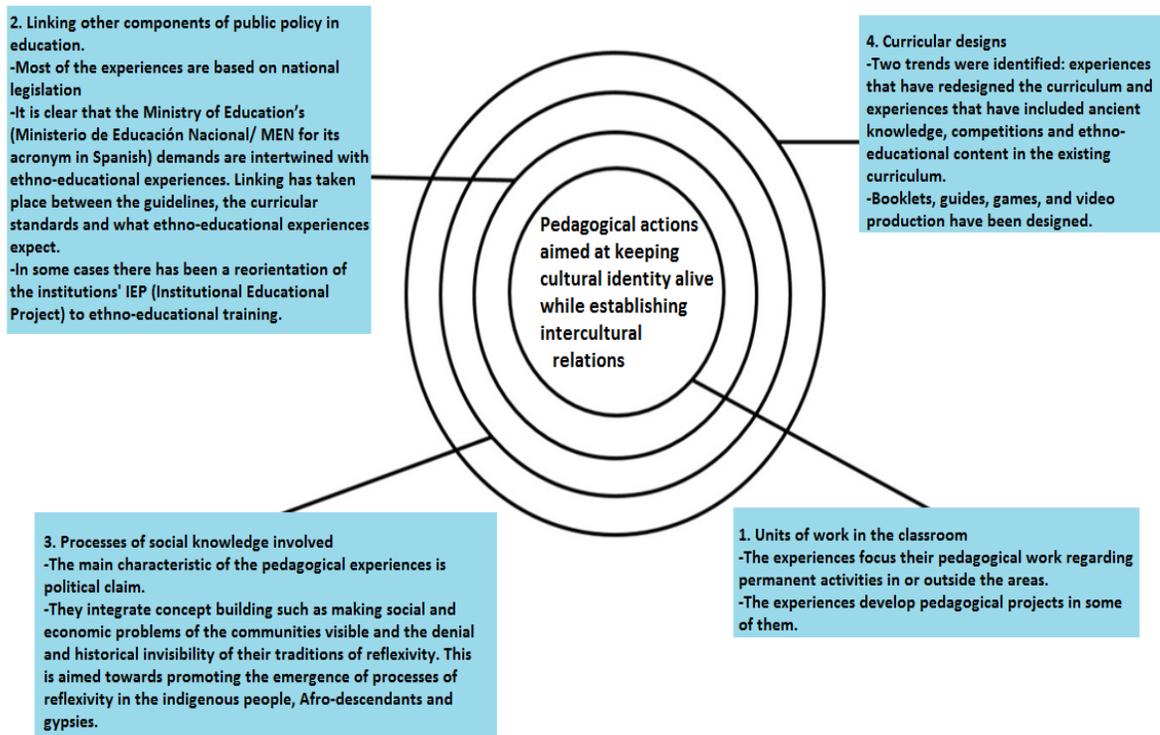


Figure 4. Educational and didactic component of ethno-educational experiences.

Educational and Didactic Components of Ethno-Educational Experiences.

Most ethno-educational experiences are based on general national legislation from the 1991 Constitution, Law 70 of 1993, Law 115 of 1994 and Decrees 1122 of 1998, and 1275 of 2001, in which the rights of indigenous and Afro-Colombian peoples are recognized.

The intertwining of the rationale of the proposal with the guidelines, standards and requirements of the MEN is evident in the above-mentioned laws and decrees. In some cases, the experiences and their processes influenced the reorientation of the educational institutions' IEPs towards an ethno-educational formation.

In this sense, in educational institutions processes of social knowledge have been developed, in which social notions such as race, ethnicity, culture, identity, colonialism and emancipation are conceptualized, generating a claim and recognition of their origins. It was concluded that the main characteristic of the experiences is that they are based on a pedagogy of the political claim. Also, in their conceptual and pedagogical proposal, these experiences integrate the development of concepts such as making the communities' social and economic problems visible. On the other hand, they evidence the denial and historical invisibility of their cultural traditions, with the intention of creating processes of reflexivity both in the indigenous and Afro-descendant participants as in those who do not belong to these ethnic groups.

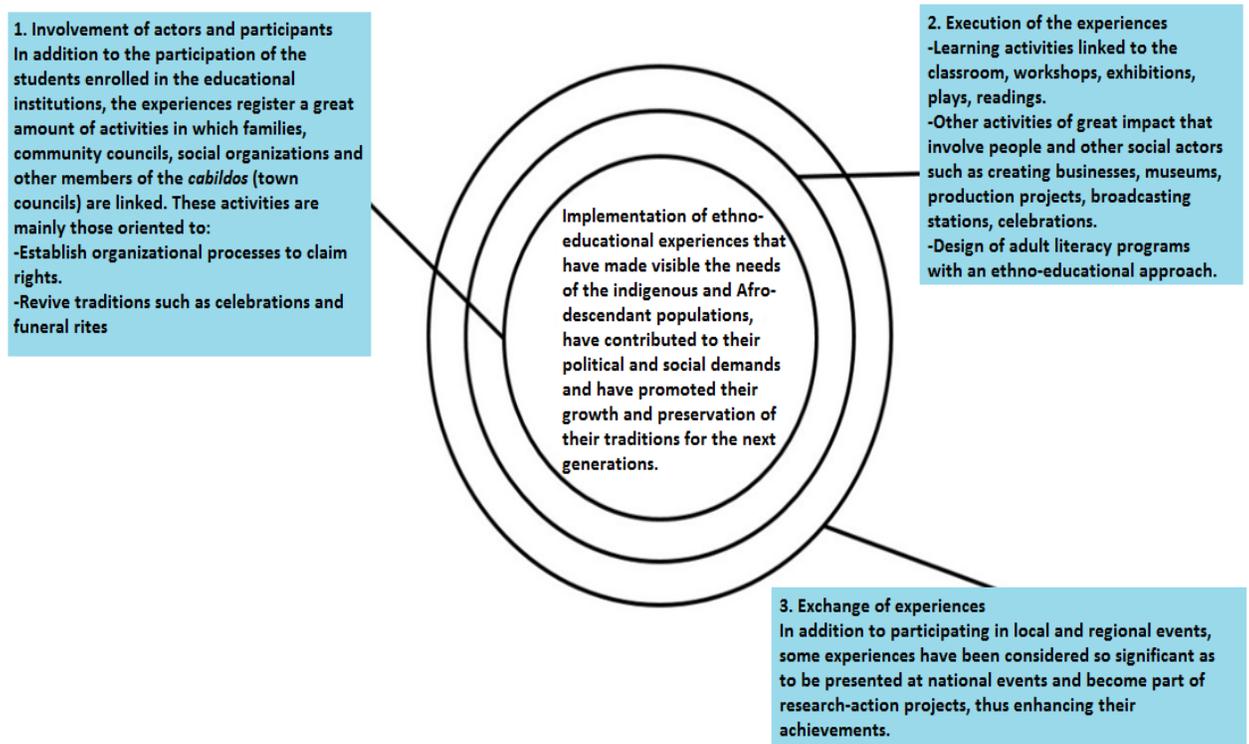


Figure 5. Results, achievements and impact of the experiences in the forms of participation.

Achievements and Impact of the Experiences in the Forms of Participation.

With regard to the participation of the different actors in the educational community, the experiences show that there is a great amount of activities in which families, community

councils, social organizations and other members of the councils are linked. These activities are mainly oriented to the formation of organizational processes to claim rights and revive traditions such as celebrations and funeral rites.

In addition to participating in local and regional events, in which an exchange of experiences took place, the experiences in question were considered significant processes in their contents and were presented at national events. They also became part of research-action projects, thus enhancing their achievements.

In general terms, these experiences have contributed to increase the number of actors involved in their development and expand the learning activities in the classrooms through workshops, exhibitions, plays, and readings, among others. Other activities have made possible the creation of productive projects, businesses, museums, the revival of celebrations, and the design of adult literacy programs with an ethno-educational approach.

Approaches and pedagogical currents are not specified in the experiences. They are intuited from their content when the units of work that they use are stated clearly. Namely, there is one group of experiences that has developed complex units of work such as projects or pedagogy based on problems, in which traces of at least incipient forms of active pedagogies, mainly of some traits of constructivism can be found. In the second group, where work with simple units such as workshops or permanent activities is carried out, traces of more traditional pedagogies are present. These consist of special events and actions such as gastronomic festivals, artistic encounters, tributes to prominent people, among others.

The first group includes experiences in which ethno-educational considerations mainstream the design or redesign of the curriculum so that the ancient knowledge and learning of all or at least some of these experiences, are coordinated with these considerations. In the second group, ethno-education is a complement to the curriculum. Activities are not linked to the fields of knowledge but are somehow planned to the rhythm of some event, related to cultural traditions or to grounds for vindication of ethnic groups that needs to be highlighted.

As for the content of what is learned, the descriptions of the experiences leave few traces on the cognitive; some have made progress in the procedural and attitudinal contents evidenced in food processing and medicinal products. Other learning activities that have involved cognitive, procedural and attitudinal competences are: literary production, the setting up of museums, usage of oral tradition and the ancestral knowledge that exists in the communities, especially among the elderly.

In teacher training college's experiences, there is a clear commitment to ask the teachers to introduce in the classroom the customs and cultural traditions of indigenous people and Afro-descendants. For this reason, they have included a component of formative research that will allow future teachers to carry out action-research exercises in their practices. In these exercises, families of students and the whole community join systematically in activities to rescue these traditions. The children are the main protagonists of these experiences.

In urban experiences there is a clear concern that a loss of the autochthonous language and other expressions of identity might take place. The indigenous and Afro-descendants struggle to survive in cities where they are forced to live because of displacement, poverty, exclusion and marginalization, causing children and young adults to live through processes of acculturation. These are also encouraged by the impossibility and low motivation of adults to pursue their practice of ancestral rites, knowledge, celebrations and other cultural expressions, since most of their time is spent rummaging and working in the informal economy to support their families.

Although it was established that the enactment of the legislation is a fact that empowers and that the communities have used normative frameworks in ethno-educational matters to carry out their educational proposals, it was evident that none of the experiences analyzed have included in their foundation the curricular guidelines of the Afro-Colombian Chair published in 2010 by the Ministry of National Education. Thus, it is clear that these have had little dissemination in teacher training, or that they have not been considered relevant.

Dances, gastronomic festivals, representations of funeral rites, exercises and teaching of the native tongue stand out among the learning activities.

Discussion and Conclusions

The academic production on ethno-education in Colombia is quite broad, ranging from undergraduate and postgraduate studies, art and articles, to memoirs of events, essays and public policy documents. Within the framework of this proposal, we want to highlight two areas of the above-mentioned production: the advances and difficulties of ethno-educational policy in the field of education.

Among the advances, the works of Rojas and Castillo (2005), MEN (2002), Romero (2010) Rodríguez (2011) and Castillo (2015) call attention to the development of a broad legislation related to the education of ethnic groups. This legislation has contributed to institutionally legitimize the educational projects of ethnic groups and significantly modify the forms and frameworks of State action. Other outstanding advances are: the development of ethno-educational experiences in different regions of the country; the existence of an academic and community movement for ethno-education, which is perceived in the different events and spaces for pedagogical debates; the training processes offered by universities and other organizations, and the creation of networks of ethno-educational experiences and publications that account for the intellectual production on the subject.

We have focused on the pedagogical component of politics, and more specifically on the pedagogical strategies in the development of politics. The works consulted agree that the ethno-educational policy has least advanced in the field of pedagogy and more concretely in its implementation in schools.

Although in this area progress has been made in the construction of curricular guidelines, teachers have been appointed to occupy ethno-educational tenures and educational projects have been structured with a differential approach. The works consulted expressed that attempts to implement ethno-education in the classrooms have encountered many difficulties. Some of the difficulties identified in the experiences we analyzed, which have also been underlined by other authors, are the following:

1. Ethno-education, as a constitutive element, has not been incorporated in the sector responsible for educational policy; also, the coexistence of a national public education system on the one hand, and an educational system for ethnic groups on the other, generates various difficulties for the fulfillment of its objectives (Castillo and Rojas, 2005: p 96 and 97).
2. The implementation of a national educational model based on standardization and competitiveness has created a rivalry between ethno-educational policies and the official approach. Ethno-education faces the dilemma of an outward discursive recognition and

the concrete denial in the field of educational policies of the multicultural nation (Castillo 2008: p22 and 25) 96 and 97).

3. Interdisciplinarity has not been fully managed. There are still teachers with a minimal professional training and teachers who have found it difficult to specialize in disciplinary fields. There is a tendency to strengthen traditions and not to theorize or guide from the pedagogical point of view. In some places, the way in which the educational reorganization was understood has caused serious traumas, due to the transfer of teachers, who have not been trained, to institutions where ethno-educational processes are implemented. (Enciso, 2004: p.51, 53 and 54).
4. The proliferation of classes taught with expository methods persists, methods that are not related to the discourse of ethno or bilingual education (Castro, 2009a: p. 362).
5. The experiences show that there has been a setback in recent years, whose main causes, according to the researchers and the work analyzed, are the reduction of an already scarce budget and the adoption of a skills-based education in the country. The actors perceive that there is a lack of tools and pedagogical support; thus, ethno-education is considered as an alternative in which there are no actions that will render this result. Although guidelines have been proposed, there is no adequate support in the construction of school curricula that specify and materialize governmental proposals (Sosa, 2014: p.9).

The existence of the aforementioned problems ranging from the national, regional, and institutional scale to the dynamics of the classroom, pose many needs and new challenges to ethno-education. There seems to be a stagnation in the pedagogical implementation of politics. The revised works suggest that precisely at the moment when normativity and curricular orientations crystallized, the expected development in the pedagogical and didactic components was not produced, and the dynamic evolution brought about by ethno-education in the early years stopped. Nevertheless, the existence of significant pedagogical experiences that have generated great impact in their institutions and in their communities is acknowledged. The experiences analyzed coincide that there is still a long way to go before the dream of ethno-education crystallizes.

This work's proposal intends to reveal the need to promote initiatives that contribute to the development of ethno-education, to ponder, systematize and disseminate successful experiences, and to generate strategies that enrich the work in the classroom based on the ancestral knowledge and the active participation of teachers.

The pedagogical and didactic components of the ethno-educational experiences we have presented, allow us to infer that for the indigenous and Afro-descendant communities in which they have been implemented, education is no longer understood as a tool to destroy their roots and impose a standard and values of the dominant culture. The intention is to redirect it towards the vision of the world, values, traditions, and cultural history of the ethnic communities (García and Martín Sánchez, 2011 and 2014).

One of the problems encountered by the implementation of ethno-education is the discrepancy between its objectives and the way the Colombian State operates. One of the conclusions of Rodriguez's work (2011) is that the weak administrative processes of decentralization has caused the Ministry of Education to exert little influence and orientation in the ethno-educational processes. This author established that many factors have become obstacles for the ethno-educational projects. Among them, we can mention the ignorance of ethno-educational proposals by the State, the politicking, and the disconnection between normativity and administrative dynamics. In addition, and due to administrative corruption in the

territorial entities in charge of education, some of the resources destined to strengthen educational institutions are diverted or invested inadequately, causing these resources to be insufficient and making the infrastructure of school premises unsafe.

For Castillo (2008), the administrative marginality before the financing mechanisms of the territorial entities to which ethno-education is subjected, is an expression of the lack of tools that should guarantee its conception as a fundamental right. On one hand, there are no exclusive items for ethno-education and, on the other, their programs and projects are included "in the category of populations or vulnerable populations", a category with scarce economic funds that includes a large number of populations with many needs, so resources are always insufficient.

In this regard, Castillo and Rojas (2005) have posed as a factor that weakens educational processes, the fact that the actions of institutions "are embedded in the logics of bureaucratic functioning, under criteria of modernization and rationalization of resources with which, even assuming the goodwill of officials and entities, the viability of effective actions is reduced "(p.97). On the other hand, Miñana (2003) introduces another element to this discussion: the impact of neo-liberal policies on ethno-education. From his point of view, "ethno-education ideologically clashes with neoliberalism because, while the former moves the gravitational center of education from the nation-state to the ethnic groups with their collective project, neoliberalism focuses on the individual with his/her freedom as a fundamental value "(p.9). For Miñana, neoliberal educational policies will support any type of education that pretends to be nothing more than an educational offer that competes in the educational market.

Castillo (2008) goes even further and points out that the neoliberal policies implemented by the Colombian State detract from the symbolic and political value of ethno-education by placing it as institutional discursiveness, so it no longer has the political meaning for ethnic groups that was granted in its initial stages. For this author, ethno-education is depoliticized when its handling is reduced to the needs of the national educational policy, subordinating the demands for an educational autonomy to the administrative model of the ethnic groups as a service.

For the authors of the pedagogical experiences analyzed, another element that has affected its implementation is the adoption of education by competition, since the decisions that result from this type of education, such as the standardization of curricula and the measurement of the quality of education based on some indicators like national and international tests, which mainly attend to efficiency and effectiveness criteria, are not always in harmony with the ethno-educational principles that advocate for a differential education of their own. According to Rodríguez (2011), for the indigenous groups participating in the research, the evaluation systems adopted are homogenizing and do not take into account one of the pillars of ethno-education that refers to the ethnic cultural singularities of the educational participants. Therefore, using the same evaluation for all students in the country, results in ignoring the peculiarities that ethno-educational projects seek.

In agreement with Rodríguez, Castillo (2008) sustains that the implementation of the competency-based educational model "has implied a rivalry of conceptions between ethno-educational politics and an official national approach, which is based on the homogenization of practices, ancestral knowledge and school culture and which defines the principles of quality, relevance and efficiency in the service as a curricular and pedagogical horizon for all educational processes " (p.22).

For Romero (2010), the intention to articulate ethno-educational experiences to normal curricula, makes one of the foundations of politics –to give greater visibility and appreciation to

the contributions of the ethnic groups—unable to advance significantly in its approaches and claims.

Ortuntuaga (1997) raised the need to build one's own materials, emphasizing that materials, fruit of the work of communities and teachers, constitute a direct support as a didactic resource for curricular development.

Another motive for tension in the implementation of ethno-education, has to do with the process of creating close ties in teachers. Although there have been important advances in this regard, in some Ministries of Education across the nation, participants and researchers express that teachers hired, do not always meet the profile, are not interested in staying in communities and are "permanently awaiting their transfer". All of the above prevents them from establishing a sense of belonging to institutions and communities and therefore, they do not propose ethno-educational projects or initiatives.

In some experiences, it has been noted that teachers often arrive with no interest to participate and even less to lead these projects. In this sense, as Rojas (1999) points out, "it would be desirable for teachers to have an ethnographic knowledge to allow them to face the points of convergence and divergence between cultures, so that they can propose elements for an educational program to highlight the uniqueness of their students and to enable them to successfully assume the difficult task of inserting themselves in today's world "(p.54).

Rodríguez (2011) states that beside the designation issue, leaders of territorial entities show no political will to define training programs and teacher training. He also declares that an additional problem is the permanence of officials who do not have the profile to understand the issue in a relevant way.

The effect of violence appeared as a central theme in several rural and urban experiences bearing a common axis: the concern that the uprooting of communities precludes the transmission of cultural traditions from generation to generation among ethnic groups. In this regard, research papers, such as those by Castillo (2016), Rodríguez, Alfonso and Cavelier (2009), and the Historical Memory Group (2013), have demonstrated how the situation of violence that seized many of the settlements of indigenous and Afro-descendant communities produced the breakdown of the social fabric and the impossibility of a free exercise of cultural expressions that historically enriched the life and survival of these communities.

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