

# ARTÍCULOS

## **Experiential Learning, Cultural Identity, Second and Foreign Language Learning at Ancestral Nasa Community**

## **Aprendizaje experiencial, identidad cultural, aprendizaje de lengua seg- unda y extranjera en la comunidad an- cestral Nasa**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper is the product of an ethnographic field trip research to San Andres de Pisimbalà, and highlights the paramount role of Experiential Learning in the process of learning the native language and reviving NASA culture within the community as a remarkable example to keep and strengthen own identity when learning a second language (Spanish) and a foreign language (English).

**Keywords:** Own Education, Identity, Territory, Elder's right, Collective memory, Origin's law, Nasa-yuwe.

## RESUMEN

Este documento es el producto de una salida académica investigativa y resalta el rol preponderante de la educación experiencial en el proceso de aprendizaje y reivindicación de la lengua ancestral Nasa-Yuwe en la comunidad San Andrés de Pisimbala, como un ejemplo significativo para mantener y fortalecer la identidad propia cuando se aprende una segunda lengua para el caso del español y una lengua extranjera como el inglés (EFL).

**Palabras clave:** Educación propia, Identidad, Territorio, Derecho de los Ancianos, Memoria colectiva, Ley de origen, Nasa-yuwe.

## **CONTEXT**

This paper came out to light as a product of a research field trip to the innermost of the Cauca's north eastern territory Tier radentro, specifically to San Andres de Pisimbala in Inzá, a town with (aprox) 27.200 inhabitants. The field trip was done by fourth semester students belonging to the School of Teachers at University of Cundinamarca located in Girardot, Cundinamarca.

San Andrés de Pisimbala is a small refuge (resguardo) recognized as human heritage archeological park, where ancient hypogeal tombs are found. The population is a mixture of whites, colonos, afro descendants and indigenous. Whites are the owners of hostals and touristic shops, colonos, afro descendants and indigenous are scattered among the mountains where they build shelters and crop the land being fruit, maize, yucca and plantain the main products.

Tierra Adentro is mainly an oral community, where writing does not play a paramount role, therefore education and traditions are taught orally. "At first there was not writing and a man was valued by his Word" states Anselmo, an indigenous leader. The spoken word is polyvalent; it embodies all sensations and visceral feelings as it is uttered and listened. Orality makes words sound and messenger simultaneously. The spoken word, according to Ong (1982), conveys an artistic and human value that makes beauty itself out of them.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The data was collected using various methods such as direct observation, semistructured interviews and notes on interaction with community members: children, teachers, and council members. A survey was applied orally and notes taken, in order not to disturb the speaker natural confidence. We also had access to a student's school notebook which was photographed and later analyzed; we visit ancient tombs and the local museum from where pictures were taken and interviews were conducted to teachers and community leaders and some video clips were done as well.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAME

In order to understand better how different processes are interrelated and the paramount role of the native language in the preservation of Nasa's identity the following frame briefly details key terms recurrently used in the text.

### BILINGUAL COMMUNITY: SECOND AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE

On the one hand it is important to make it clear that Nasa-yuwe is the mother language learnt and used at home and among members of the community, Spanish is learnt and used by Nasa's children as a second language within a bilingual context defined by Hamers (1981), as the state of a linguistic community in which two languages are in contact with the result that two codes can be used in the same interaction and that a number of individuals are bilingual. English on the other hand is learnt as a foreign language and makes part of the curriculum at school. To this respect, Colombian Constitution (1991) on its title (i), article (8) reads "It is obligation of the state and of individuals to protect the cultural and natural assets of the nation"; similarly, article (10) reads "Spanish is the official language of Colombia. The languages and dialects of ethnic groups are also official in their territories. The education provided in communities with their own linguistic traditions will be bilingual"<sup>3</sup>. Legally supported by the national constitution Spanish is learnt as a second language whereas English is as a foreign language.

### COMMUNITY DIVERSITY

After Guajira, Cauca is the department with the most indigenous population in Colombia with 247.987 members, among Nasa, Guanaca, Totoroe, and Eperara Siapidara communities (DANE, 2008). Race, culture and language diversity is therefore present there among the northeastern Cauca's territory communities. More precisely, and depending on their geographical location within the department's territory, there are either afro-colombians, mestizos or Nasa indigenous people. San Andres de Pisimbala is a rural small town at the northeast where live and interact white, mestizos, colonos, and a large number of indigenous, be-

3. Translation from Spanish into English by the author

ing Spanish the official language for the formers and Nasa-Yuwe for the indigenous.

**To be a Nasa**

“Nasa” means water people; they have their own language: Nasa- yuwe, and their social organization is based upon respect for family, community and nature.



Nasa is mainly an oral community guided by Elders’ word<sup>4</sup> and traditional authorities; who served as interpreters and messengers of the dreams, the lightening, the sun, the moon, the creeks, rivers and, in short, mother earth or so called Pachamama. Which means all mighty mother, who has granted the community with life, food, shelter, and has provided them with the values, norms and knowledge they use to live by in harmony since ancient times.

**OWN EDUCATION**

There is a national public school in town, which is opened for whites, indigenous and colonos. Indigenous, however, have their own school, which is also open to all, but curiously it does not have many whites or colonos attending it, opposite to what happens with indigenous attending public school.

Traditional public schools bring teachers from other regions to teach conventional subjects normally taught at public schools nationwide. Similarly teachers at indigenous school are for the most part indigenous, but also there are non-indigenous ones who usually teach Spanish, generally they are not to teach the traditional way it is done in public school, but rather they use their own conception of school and education “own-education” which implies daily experiential activities with a more social and community approach.



4. Elder’s word: it is the advice provided by Elder people in the community who usually are there for counselling.

Children learn math, science, nature and literature in an experiential and practical way and knowledge is applied to their day-to-day reality. For example, in literature there is no distinction between reality and fantasy when learning about myths, due indigenous phantasy, spirituality and mythology merge into a single dimension. In math, they would apply operations to calculate the number of knots it would take to knit a chumbe as they term a belt (faja); and in natural science, they would plant holly herbs to heal the spirit. Own education, as they term it, is “hands on” contextualized learning experiences that trigger learning to take place while children are involved in the daily doing.

On fields where there are native teachers, subjects are taught in the native language (Nasa-Yuwe), but the remaining ones are taught in Spanish, including English subject. Interaction among Nasa community members always takes place in the native language; but outside the community it is done in Spanish.

From a sociocultural perspective on second language learning, Vygotsky (1978), highlights that all learning, including language learning, is based on social interaction.



In this sense, language usage understood as an open, dynamic, energetic, constantly evolving and personal process (Shohamy, 2007) implies that its learning process takes shape along with the learning of its culture. Furthermore, in an intercultural bilingual indigenous community and school, own education is the only means for carrying on the responsibility of keeping alive Nasa-Yuwe language and its cultural heritage.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

This paper attempts to provide answers to the questions: How does Nasa community members understand life, keep their cultural practices, recover the right to be indigenous, and how they project it to their children thru experiential education “*Own-education*” in their mother tongue Nasa-Yuwe, despite the presence of a second and a foreign language?



### State of the art

Nasa community were once the inhabitants of Magdalena's valley (Correal, 1974), however and due to continuous fight among other tribes, and later during the colony period (1500-1700) with the Spanish conquerors, they were obliged to leave the valley and move deep up into the mountains Tierradentro. Such a region was latter inhabited by Colonos and Afro communities who were freed after the republican Colombian history term



The encounter in their own territory with colonos, afros, mestizos, and later on with industrial communities, changed Nasa's native condition and depicted cultural aspects such as education, language, dress code, food custom, and all in all, indigenous identity, which was hindered during the colony and republican periods.

In the latest half of the XX century, and taking as example the Cuban cane industrial revolution; there in Cauca's valleys, a great sugar cane industrialization took place and was the foundation of great concentrations of workers in places like Puerto Tejada, Santander de Quilichao, Corinto and Miranda. Such phenomena let the indigenous a bit freer in the eastern mountains, what made it easier for them to recover, develop and foster their culture in a more autonomous way (Palacios, 1998.)

Provided Nasa has traditionally been an oral community until recent decades, there is not much literature regarding their ancestral development; however there is still traditional orality in Nasa-yuwe and a large number of uncovered and just few discovered hypogeal tombs, which provide traces of their ancestors' culture thru pictographic and archeological findings.



## INDIGENOUS OWN EDUCATION SYSTEM (IOES)

According to Anselmo, an indigenous leader, the concept *colonization* is directly linked to the term *cultural imposition*. Likewise, the traditional term education is seen as a tool for imposition and domination, usually associated to religion and product of ignorance and rejection of wisdom and cultural richness of their own communities.

Nasa Indigenous see themselves as cultural fighters who have defended their Pachamama as its legitimated descendants. They value the right to defend and recreate their own language and particular languages they use to communicate among themselves and with mother earth. It is only to the light of Pachamama that they learned to sense, construct and share particular forms, attitudes and customs attached to a communal identity and culture diversity, relates Anselmo.

Collective work and rituality go along with educational practices, which are led by elder's authority, and guided by their own community members. Own education, according to teacher Tatiana, is understood as a way to learn, defend life in any manifestation, love their territory and defend memories to value the way elders have established ways to keep their identity alive. Work is considered of great value within the Nasa community. Through work children learn to accomplish daily community tasks such as fishing, cropping raising, hunting and handcrafting. Work is also used as the vehicle to pedagogically and didactically teach and learn cultural daily life's aspects like traditional medicine, local economy, social organization, art manifestations and language itself. Work's load varies from one to another individual depending on age, gender and purpose; it is gradually introduced and assumed as people grow older through hands on experience processes.

IOES is made out of a set of elements that tightens stories, cosmogony, values and today's communities reality oriented and projected to the future in a sustainable way along with their identity, preservation of their own seeds, culture and customs framed within the political, academic and administrative fields. It is also understood as the union between earth and human culture, taking into account the principles of integrity, diversity, belonging, autonomy and governability.



IOES is legally framed within Origin's law<sup>5</sup> and the Elder's right,<sup>6</sup> with its own government, community laws and decisions made in council meetings. Following there is a set of terminology used within members of Nasa community when referring to IOES:

**Resistance** (endurance) is the capability to oppose or reject any action or force intended to cause harm or damage to any certain community or territory.

**Authority** embodies representative community members who are responsible for organizing, executing, representing and harmonizing territorial equilibrium as stated by origin law and elder's right. Authority is always present among members of a family, community council at a local level, Cauca's Indigenous Regional Council (CRIC) at regional zones, and the National Organization of Cauca's Indigenous (ONIC) at a national level.

**Identity** is their very own added value that provides community's day to day life with shapes and color, and it is what identifies themselves with and among others. It is also a generational gap that allows them to retake ancient elements which make them stronger in unity, dignified in life, autonomous in authority and free in their territories. It is their strength understood as their umbilical cord that links to earth, family and community. It is also the reason they feel proud of being indigenous.

**Territory** is not mere a piece of hill, valley or mountain that provides food, keeps diversity and treasures water; but as they live in it, work on it, enjoy it and suffer because of it, territory means

5. *Origin's law: defines and regulates individual and community relationship with the cosmos.*

6. *Elder's right: reflective process that starts with recognition of Pachamama's wisdom and ancestors' knowledge.*

the roots of life and therefore they conceive it and defend it as the root of their culture. It is the only context where current and future existence is possible, it is from where they establish connections to the symbolic world and the rest of the universe, which makes sense and give meaning to life.

The concept of territory is integral and it includes the possibility of other worlds along with Pachamama, thought, dreams and memory. There also exists the recognition of private and communal property. Thought as it relates to spiritual and nonspiritual beings whose ultimate goal is to keep happiness and equilibrium among all.

**Origin's law** defines and regulates individual and community relationship with the cosmos. It is ancestral knowledge transmitted from generation to generation thru daily practices and oral tradition Nasa-yuwe, ceremonies, myths, dreams and other different forms of knowledge. The following are some remarkable examples of Origin's law:}

- Each three months in the family there must be a harmonization ritual.
- Each year the power sticks need to be refreshed in a community council.
- To participate in the ritual fire's extinction on a daily basis.
- To participate in the sun raising ritual.
- To offer tributes to the different Gods.
- To pay visits to sacred sites as defined by the community.

**Elder's right** is a reflective process that starts with recognition of Pachamama's wisdom and ancestor's knowledge. It is defined as individual and community's thought with its own control forms. Aimed to keep equilibrium among people, nature and other beings living in their territory with the ultimate goal of enduring their existence. Elder's Right takes place at any different communal interaction and decision – making moments, such as in the Minga, Community Council, Refreshment Ceremonies, Harmonization Rituals, Demonstrations, and National Indigenous Congress. It is also carried out around the "Tulpa" within each family with elder, women, men, and specially adolescents and children, who

**Collective Memory** is to knit ancestral thought while living daily life, it is also to think and reflect on the different beings and forces that coexist and share the territory, it also implies to recall the past, live the present constructing the processes in the community.



**The Bilingual Education Program (Spanish acronyms PEB)** was established and initiated in 1971. It was understood as the tool to research and construct an indigenous autonomous proposal. With the creation of CRIC (1971) the government was pushed to create general ethno-educative principles and regional development policies (resolution 1142 1978), which was followed by several actions leading into Law 115 (1994), which states the rights and vision for Indigenous Own Education politics. More specifically, resolution 804 (1995) states the basis for own education processes, pedagogical components, experiential practices with community teachers, teacher's training and community project making. Beginning in 2001 the Own Indigenous Education System states the development of three main aspects: political organization, pedagogy and administration.

Organizational politics was the pioneer component which formerly led to the creation of CRIC and the following law reforms. It is important to highlight that as stated in National Constitution (1991), it is the community and its authorities who contribute to strengthen educational system thru Community Educative Projects (Proyectos Comunitarios Educativos PCE), taking into account life and contextual conditions as well as Origin's law.

## **PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

PEB aims to keep alive their native languages and validate cultural educative practices, as they realized traditional official school is the main system of acculturation they faced. Likewise PEB stated the bilingual teaching training need. Until the decade of 90s they started graduating teachers as technician (Normalistas), however in 2000 they consolidated teacher training in the Indigenous Autonomous University (UAI) where Undergraduate programs, Research Centers and Knowledge School are found.

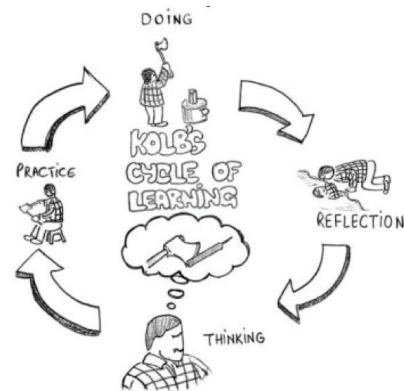
Administrative: With the beginning of PEB international partnership and alliances were established, which led to national agreements with Ministry of education, Territorial Secretaries and Universities to guarantee professionalization of members of their community in management and administration of their own resources and processes.

## ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

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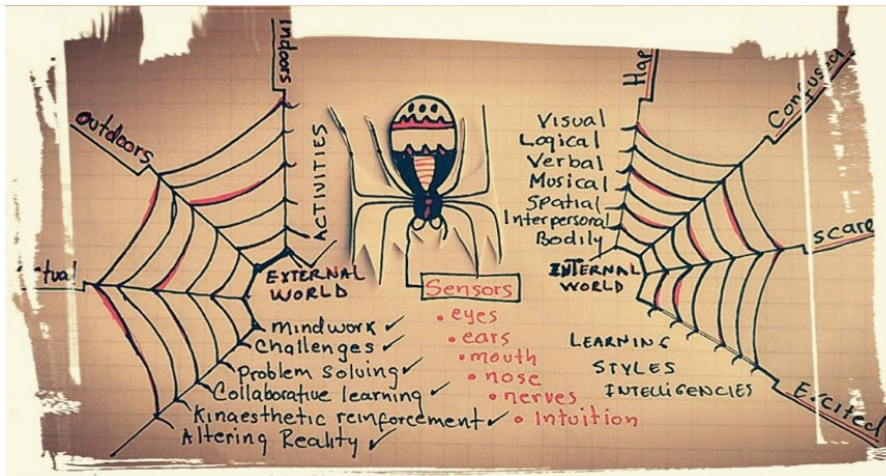
## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

First quoted by Confucius (551-479 BC) "I hear, I forget; I see, I remember; I do, I understand" doing is at the core of significant learning. David Kolb (1984) came up with "the learning cycle" to better explain the process of doing as a never ending experiential process.



Experiential Learning is a sense, and thru senses, making process involving significant experiences as the primary source for learning processes. It is a process in which experiences actively immerse and reflectively link the inner with the outer world of the learner thru the mediation of the common five senses, plus intuition and thermodynamic. It is framed within an elastic emotional spider web determined by the conscious or unconscious state of mind and predominant emotion, which defines the particular learning strategy.





In contrast to the “banking approach” termed by Freire (1970), where learning is neither didactic, nor passive and the learner always plays a passive role and merely absorbs the expertness of the teacher, Experiential Learning is rather an active process, but not solely in the physical sense; but it simultaneously takes several dimensions from the individuals: the physical, the sensorial, the emotional, the cognitive, the bodily and the inner psyche. It is a holistic approach and therefore, too much focus on one dimension can lead to an imbalance in the experience (Colin Beard, 2010).

Experiences can be both either positive or negative, to this respect Heron (2001) states that the perfect life’s web is never complete but often torn and damaged in certain places and times. Traditionally negative experiences are less likely to be considered as learning experiences, however the furthest the individual moves from the “comfort valley” in either positive or negative way, the richest the experiences are.

Fenwick (2003) explains, in his psychoanalytic theory, how in the inner world the unconscious desires of the learner impact upon the conscious state as it relates to power, environment, authority and culture in the outer world. Attending to immersive participation and learning from within community practices changes individuals and transform social order.

**Own Education: Hands-on Practices**

The concept of education taking place at school, different from the conventional western's one, is widened at Nasa community and it involves the whole community and possible settings where daily life takes shapes and forms.



From the Greek, the term “escholé” (escuela) was first used to refer to “playtime”, then it passed on to Latin as a synonym of “pause or break during the work”, which according to scholars has to do with the instruction time taking place during the breaks; and it ended up in today’s misconception “Public Classroom where instruction takes place (Wikipedia 2016). For experiential education to take place school needs to stop being constrained to a classroom. It necessarily needs to be projected to regular context where daily social life happens, so learning could socially and culturally be constructed with some reflective breaks or “escholé” where reflection, either deliberately or not, is always present.

At Nasa community cognitive and behavioral development, along with identity take place since early childhood and mainly in two settings: the individual and the collective one. Both are equally important and help children identify themselves as beings belonging to a certain community or context, what Lluís Due (1992) states it in terms of descendant and resident entities respectively. On the one hand, regarding residence or community interaction; interaction provides children with learning opportunities, which lead them towards community, ethnic, religious, and cultural recognition, and ends up with a feeling of appreciation and belonging. School, though it physically exists, is everywhere and the learning process takes place within the different community settings, and it is understood from its ethnical, religious, linguistic and cultural origin. It encompasses the physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development of each child. The whole community including parents, families, traditional authorities, and tribe’s elder promote and support the use of the native language, the one of its aborigines, of its spirits, the language of



their cultural practices, their own thoughts of the world, of their way of dress. It is thru language and community practices and interaction that they live, play, eat, learn, dream and construct their world.

On the other hand, in terms of individuality or descendents, identity begins by individually recognizing her or himself as a unique male or female within a body and as part of a whole Pachamama, who responds to circumstances in a particular way of behavior acquired from family patterns in an immersed context. To this respect and in the light of sociocultural theories of learning, Singh and Richards (2009) state that human learning is emergent through social interaction, and that events and processes, and the way they interact shape the individual's thoughts, feelings and behavior.

Regarding instruction taking place at the physical school, for the most teachers are native, it means members of their own authorities, community and families, who get children to develop abilities and skills suitable of being applied to their own context in a harmonic natural way. For those few teachers who are not native, they are shaped into their community by means of involving them in the most remarkable aspects by an acculturation process that last about a year of daily practices. At the end of each academic term the council evaluated teacher's work and decided on keeping them or not.

**Bilingual Culture: The Role of a Second and a Foreign Language**  
Children learn their native language "Nasa-yuwe" at home and it is spoken among members of their own community, but at the time of interacting outside their native communities, they switch to Spanish. Likewise it happens when they have access to the external world like in the case of radio and the internet; what at times suggests that interaction in the outer language (Spanish) has more relevance than interaction in the innermost "Nasa-yuwe" language.

One of the main aspects of Own Education for Nasas lies on the fact that students interact in the native language with teachers and other members of the community, and it is precisely in

that interactional dynamic that anthropological heritage passes on from one to another generation. To this respect, Bates & Mac – Whinney (1987) assert that continuous interaction between the dynamics of language behavior at the societal level and language behavior at the individual level always happens. At the individual level, language behavior is the outcome of societal factors, but also language behavior at the societal level is the outcome of individual language behavior.

Humans have evolved thanks to the development of language, but language is nothing but a mere abstraction of reality. As Hamers & Blanc, (1982) state, language behavior is the product of culture and as such, it follows the rules of enculturated behavior. It is not a mere product of a biological faculty, but it is a product of culture itself, transmitted from one generation to the next through the socialization process and appropriated by each individual; but, in turn, language behavior shapes culture, that is, cultural representations are molded by language behavior.

Own education as well as experiential education take into account learner's behavior, but it is not seen as a mere response to stimuli, but rather as the sum of all past experiences, therefore it is an evaluative response calling upon the individual's cognitive and emotional functioning adapted to a particular given situation.

Ong (1967) asserts that human beings communicate through countless ways making use of all their senses: touch, smell, taste and especially sight. The author highlights that some non-oral communication is exceedingly rich such in the case of gestures. Indigenous communication has mainly been oral; written language, as the transcription of oral discourse rather than graphical interpretation of natural phenomena as in the case of carved rocks or sculptures, is a relative new concept.

Originally language was oral and, according to Saussure (1959) nestled in sound. Former scholar Henry Sweet (1896) stated that words are made up not of letters but functional sounds. Historically among indigenous communities in America, orality has been the way knowledge passes from one to another generation.

But the spoken word needs to be heard in the world of sounds, which is made up of human and nature sounds as understood by indigenous. According to Misael, an indigenous leader, “nature speaks to them and they speak back to nature”. He adds that nature speaks in countless ways depending on the specific moment and circumstances. Likewise community individuals have learned the value of a specific uttered word: whispered, narrated, invoked, susurrated, mumbled, hummed, joked, sung, cried, prayed, inspired, ordered, etc. each one has a specific value and a speaker that none else can do. Every time language is used and words are made, the word empowers the individual with a certain community value, which only is possible thru language use.

Valorization is the product out of the interactional dynamic between the community and the individuals. Hamers & Blanc (1982) state that the concept of valorization is of the utmost importance in any language contact situation. By valorization they mean the attribution of certain positive values to language as a functional tool; that is, as an instrument which facilitates the fulfillment of communicative and cognitive functioning at all societal and individual levels. For instance, the linguistic and nonlinguistic discourse of an elder or “Shaman” takes form and is valued by the community as healing word.

But the concept of valorization gains important value at the time of analyzing the way two languages come into usage; because usually and depending on the situation one is highly valued, while the other is diminished. Nasa culture, however has kept an equilibrium among languages in order to avoid the loss of their own ancestral cultural legacy. The extreme importance of Nasa-yuwe language valorization is evidenced at all community and individual levels. They understood that if native language is not valorized and used as a tool for communication during day to day activities such as the “minga”, education activities at home and school, ceremonies and other societal activities, language attrition and language shift are likely to occur; and along with language the end of all the community’s anthropological value attached to it.

## OWN EDUCATION OR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AT NASA CULTURE

Traditional education starts with the “what” and ends with the “why”; in experiential education, however, the order is flipped over, and the reason why something happens is followed by learning the how. Following the most remarkable features of “own education” methodology.

**Why:** learning takes place because it makes parts of becoming more sensitive and sensible creature in the relationship with themselves as unique beings, members of a community and part of Pachamama; it is the only way to access the sacred word and elder’s knowledge and collective memory.

**How:** There are two aspects to consider. First: the more senses are use in an activity, the more memorable the learning experience will be. Second: the greater the involvement of the participant in the learning activity, the deeper the participant’s learning will be. The degree to which a learning activity is learnt and perceived as real, would depends on the degree of involvement of the learner as well as of the manipulation done by facilitators when designing and delivering the experience. Perceptions of reality has to do with the many dimensions of the experience, including the learning process, the activities provided, community value and impact, and the location in which projects take place.

**Where:** learning occurs in a natural day to day environment. Learning literally and metaphorically breaks out of the concept of traditional classrooms at school. There are as many learning experiences as environmental features might exist. For example, involving the participants in an orienteering walk while participating in a hunting exercise, or watching the sun setting while a ceremony in Nasa-yuwe takes place. Outdoors as the primal elements of earth, rain, air, fire, water, and nature in general are always incorporated within the learning activity to help learners explore by themselves, discover new things and create personal and communal new knowledge.

**What:** the learners learn by doing and are involved from beginning to end working both as individual and community members. Most indoor and outdoor learning activities consist of a number of basic tasks that normally have some aspect of physical and intellectual involvement: tasks usually provide a challenge to engage and test mental and physical skills and endurance; for instance, building and using a raft for fishing purposes. Sometimes the activity involves a journey, which implies planning, social role playing, sorting out problems, keeping all members safe, etc. The most activities involve obstacles and problems to be overcome by the participants as a group and sometimes individually. New obstacles can be introduced, rules altered and targets changed depending upon the learning aims and objectives.

### Emotions

The root of the word emotion from the Latin “movere” means “to move”, and the prefix “e” makes it mean “to move away”. Emotions therefore suggest a tendency to act based on the feelings the person is experiencing in a particular moment and situation. In developing learning experiences Nasa individuals consider the paramount role of emotions in the learning process. It is according to the state of mind and emotional estate that learners make choices and take an action upon another. To this respect Goleman (1996), in his book *Emotional Intelligence*, argued that, although intelligence or IQ (Intelligence Quotient) was important, it was emotional intelligence (EQ) that was more likely to determine a person’s achievements in life. In Nasa community emotions are also associated to another state of mind: that of spiritual intelligence (SQ). Some individuals learn better in the morning, others in the late hours, some others using movement or music, and some particularly learn by the role they play as activists, pragmatists, theorists, etc. This has to do with personal learning theories and it is very influential on behavior. Zohar and Marshall (2001) suggest that Gardner’s forms of intelligence are basically composed of IQ, EQ and SQ, and that SQ is “an internal, innate ability of the human brain and psyche, drawing its deepest resources from the heart of the universe... Spiritual intelligence is the soul’s intelligence. It is the intelligence with which we heal ourselves and with which we make ourselves whole”. Aligned

with this theory seems to be the above mentioned Nasa concepts of identity, territory, origin's law, elder's right and collective memory. Nothing is separated and casual but holistic, elastic and integrated with the environment as a spider web.

## **EXPERIENCE AND CHANGE**

Life is such an efficient teacher that if you do not learn the first time, it provides you as many chances as you might need. Systematization of experiences or "learning" is the product of coherent understanding of the way practice and theory relate to each other. Wilson (2005) defined learning as a permanent but relative change of knowledge, attitude or behavior occurring as a result of experiences. Experiences alone are enough for learning to take place; only those upon which reflection is done consciously result into learning. Change happens when the learning that flows from experiences is integrated into individuals and community daily practices; according to Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993) integration of new experience is multifaceted, multi-layered and so inextricably connected with other experiences that it is impossible to locate it temporally or spatially. Integrating of new knowledge in daily activities is a linking process between action and thought. Dewey (1916) defines the process as the intentional endeavor to discover specific connections between something which we do and the consequences which result, so that the two become continuous. For Rogers (1996) experience, apart from constituting the basis of all learning, it encompasses all forms of genetic memory, which is passed down from parents to their children. Culture as the product of all social practices changes as experiences are never the same. For instance, regarding punishment at Nasa community the "cepo" was originally introduced by Spaniards during the invasion (conquest) period to punish slaves. Later on when "Resguardos" were established, the "cepo" was adopted and adapted as a tool to punish and correct foreign behavior such as rape, stealing and homicides. Initially it was used to hold people by their neck, nowadays they are hold from their ankles holding the body upside down. They also keep traditional remedial ways like "fusta", "calabozo" and "destierro", which has passed from one to another generation.

Traditions at Nasa community keeps thru daily practices or experiential learning in Nasa-yuwe, and are inherited to new generations, some remarkable examples include: eating well and preserving seeds for future generations, ceremonial rituals, community mingas, pre-hispanic mythology, the “tulpa” as the center for discussion and connection to Pachamama, death understood as a new cyclical beginning, healing and aromatic plants crop, a rolled snake as the symbol for the existence cycle and transformation of the universe.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

As a concluding remark, on the one hand, it is important to highlight that to keep alive the native language and cultural heritage is a huge responsibility and a difficult task for young Nasa community members, due to the influence of daily interaction in a second language and the inclusion of English as a foreign language –EFL– mainly at school, plus the prominent role of media and technology and the way current life either interferes or deprives children from tracing their ancestors’ native cultural tracks. The remarkable role of “own education” or experiential learning, however, seems to be the key tool for children to inherit cultural values, activities, products and traditions. It is because children are exposed thru experience, that they build and identity, learn the meaning of Pachamama, territory and origin law, respect and understands elder’s right, and construct a collective memory.

On the other hand, it is also important to keep in mind that culture is always embedded in language and therefore ideologies, and identity. Kolb (1984) states that learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. In this sense, Nasa’s own worlds is the product of a daily interaction between two and sometimes three cultures, what makes us review the Sapir-Whorf “Linguistic Relativity” concept, which states that two speakers of different languages conceptualize the same phenomenon differently, therefore knowledge in a bilingual speaker is wider and in a way stronger than it is in a monolingual individual which perfectly applies to Nasa community individuals although it necessarily alters, changes and transform reality.



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