

Sharing Language And Historical Memory: An Intergenerational Educational Experience

Pedro Teixeira Pereira

¹Institute of Contemporary History, NOVA University of Lisbon (Portugal)

Abstract

Bridging generations can be a powerful and meaningful two-way educational process. Intergenerational learning experiences have different positive impacts and outcomes in both the young and senior learners, through the exchange of competencies and knowledge. They are also an educational experience that enables the realisation of different paradigms of values, which nurture the broadening of learners' mindset. Intergenerational learning configures itself as a relevant tool for historical education, as young students benefit from the seniors' lifetime experience of historical events and contexts, which may be explained and testified first-hand with a positive spillover to young children's learning process.

This paper aims to share an intergeneration learning experience that brought an English as Additional Language class from middle school students together with seniors aged 65 to 94 years old, over the period of eight weekly sessions in a Portuguese international school context, under the principle objective of developing English language knowledge and skills in the elder participants and, contrariwise, to foster children's perception on the value of life experience to their own world view, historical knowledge, memory and socialisation. Each session was assessed by the children, seniors, teacher-facilitator and observer, from which data was gathered via pre, post and weekly questionnaires which asserted a mutual meaningful learning impact on both younger and older participants.

Keywords: Intergenerational education, Language skills, Historical education, Memory