

# Nelson Mandela's vision of education in *Long Walk to Freedom*

Conrad Hughes

## Introduction

This article synthesises the approach Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (1918-2013) took to education in his autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom*, published in 1994. I think it is valuable to examine the theme of education through the lens of Mandela's autobiography because the reflections are rich and made at many levels. What I will show is that in his autobiography, Mandela presents education at three analytical levels that all point to the fundamental question: what is an education for?

First, we see that education transcends the institution: it goes beyond the school and the university into the streets. Mandela shows us that a competent person does not necessarily have an academic education and that, on the contrary, institutionalised education can lead to compromise, quietism and moral ambiguity. This was particularly salient in the context of apartheid South Africa, where that educational systems lacked moral legitimacy, but as the examples will show, the question has implications that go well beyond South Africa and make us think hard about the extent to which we can reach worthwhile educational goals through institutionalised means.

Second, education is power. Mandela's lifelong learning helped him to survive and ultimately vanquish the system of white minority rule in South Africa. Education not only has the ability to liberate individuals from the shackles of poverty, it gives them insights that allow them to build new realities and imagine new worlds. This might seem obvious, but the way it is articulated in *Long Walk to Freedom* is subtle, suggesting that an education for a better world is as much a question of attitude as it is one of access.

Thirdly, education is about cultural transmission. I will cite those passages from *Long Walk to Freedom* that speak of African history, cultural practices and ancient traditions and how these are communicated and learned. These educational moments of cultural transmission take place through oral history, group discussion, performance and art.

In my conclusion I hold that these three pillars of education (its de-institutionalisation, potential for empowerment and vehicle for cultural transmission) are essential to understand today, not only because they bear the testimony of an extraordinary historic leader, but because they give form to the oft-cited statement "education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world" that Mandela made at the University of the Witwatersrand in 2003. I will argue that in a globalised world where neo-liberal positivistic assumptions are driving educational discourse (education for technological growth, a globalised economy made up of extreme corporate values and a type of new age Futurism), we need to stand back and reflect on the stories of those that have gone before, for whom education points to more enduring values such as past wisdom, higher-order moral imperatives, social justice and ideological freedom.

## Education transcends the institution

Mandela's early education took him, successively through missionary schools, from a one-room school in the village of Mqhekezweni (1994, p. 20) to the "far grander" (p. 38) Clarkebury, then Healdtown, which "in 1937 [...] was the largest African school south of the equator" and finally the university of Fort Hare, "both home and incubator of some of the greatest African scholars the continent has ever known" (p. 52). Mandela says of these experiences that "the learning environment of the missionary schools, while often morally rigid, was far more open than the racist principles underlying government schools" (p. 52). Indeed, it is not of insignificance that Mandela escaped Bantu education and, due to this, was allowed to flourish intellectually – albeit within the confines of a colonial model of education.

Part One of *Long Walk to Freedom* is filled with anecdotes that describe the various experiences Mandela had at these institutions. The reader senses the colonisation of the mind and European acculturation that missionary education entailed:

Dr Wellington [...] a stout and stuffy Englishman [...] would walk on stage and say: 'I am the descendant of the great Duke of Wellington, aristocrat, statesman, and general, who crushed the Frenchman Napoleon at Waterloo and thereby saved civilization for Europe – and for you, the natives'. At this we would all enthusiastically applaud, each of us profoundly grateful that a descendent of the Great Duke of Wellington would take the trouble to educate natives such as ourselves. (pp. 43-44)

Yet it is here that Mandela suggests that the seed of his political activity is planted as we see in a discussion with student called Nyathi Khongisa after the students have listened to a lecture by General Jan Smuts on why South Africa should fight alongside the British in WW2:

During one session, a contemporary of mine [...] condemned Smuts as a racist. He said that we might consider ourselves 'black Englishmen', but the English had oppressed us at the same time as they tried to 'civilise' us. Whatever the mutual antagonism between Boer and British, he said, the two white groups would unite to confront the black threat. [...] A fellow student whispered to me that Nyathi was a member of the African National Congress [ANC], an organization that I had vaguely heard of but knew very little about. (p. 58)

Essentially, it is the experiences out of the classroom that mark the young Mandela the most: the mingling of different Africans steadily draws him beyond his Thembu and Xhosa identity to a broader sense of what it means to be African, the way certain black teachers stand up to the white head of school teach Mandela the lesson that "a black man did not have to defer automatically to a white, however senior he was" (p. 45). These observations help to form his notion of humanity. Mandela also notices habits and behaviours that build his metacognitive awareness (or ability to learn about learning): "I saw many young men who had natural ability, but who did not have the self-discipline and patience to build on their endowment" (p. 55).

At this stage of his life, Mandela idealises the importance of an academic education and says that “a university degree, I believed, was a passport not only to community leadership but to financial success” (p.59). However, an extremely significant event at Fort Hare, recounted in detail, means that he will not complete his degree there. Mandela is elected to the Student Representative Council unfairly as the elections have been boycotted by the students and he therefore resigns. However, “Dr Kerr, a graduate of Edinburgh University, [...] virtually the founder of Fort Hare and [...] a greatly respected man” (p. 61) threatens to expel him from Fort Hare if he does not accept what is, effectively, an illegitimate position. Mandela struggles with the moral dilemma somewhat in the vein of St Augustine in *The Confessions*: “shaken” and spending “a restless night”, he asks himself “was I sabotaging my academic career over an abstract moral principle that mattered very little?” (p. 61). Finally, he will not budge and rather than compromise his values he refuses to stand on the council and is expelled by Dr Kerr.

Ironically, it is Mandela’s expulsion from Fort Hare that marks one of the most profound elements of his early education – education in the deep sense of growth or more specifically ‘leading out’ - as it is the first of many acts of self-sacrifice he will make, later defining him as the freedom fighter who will risk his life and spend over 27 years of his life in prison for his beliefs. It is also because of this decision that he travels to Johannesburg and follows a path other than the one set for him in the Transkei. What these passages from *Long Walk to Freedom* suggest is that an institutionalised education is not necessarily the path to freedom or justice but on the contrary to compromise and selfishness, and we see that Mandela will not buckle under the injustice it suggests.

In Johannesburg, Mandela meets Walter Sisulu, a lifelong friend and high-ranking member of the ANC. He is surprised to learn that “Walter Sisulu had never gone beyond Standard VI” (p.80) and points out that he “found that many of the most outstanding leaders had never been to university at all”, this being a lesson from Fort Hare that he has to “unlearn” in Johannesburg. The point is made more emphatically in describing ANC stalwart Gaur Radebe:

Gaur was an example of a man without a BA who seemed infinitely better educated than the fellows who left Fort Hare with glittering degrees. Not only was he more knowledgeable, he was bolder and more confident. Although I intended to finish my degree and enter law school, I learned from Gaur that a degree was not in itself a guarantee of leadership and it meant nothing unless one went out into the community to prove oneself. (p.85)

The point is, naturally, linked to the type of education that a black person could expect in South Africa in the 1940s and the fact that institutional discourses were ingrained with racism and iniquity. Years later, on Robben Island, Mandela compares prison to school in remarking that the brutal prison warden, Piet Badenhorst “like a teacher who takes over a rowdy class, [...] sought to discipline the student he regarded as the principal troublemaker” (p. 545).

However, the reflections are not only significant in the context of 1940s South Africa but should speak to all of us about the limits of an institutionalised education to bring about meaningful change since the moral principles, risk-taking and freedom of spirit of those who have the capacity to transform society will often conflict with the stayed established ritual of an academic education and in some instances might even go against the grain in uncomfortable ways. We should remember those historical geniuses who represented thinking outside of the confines of the institution, people like Shakespeare who did not attend university, or the many brilliant minds who were expelled from school including Shelley, Frost, Einstein and Dali.

In Johannesburg, Mandela continues to study law at the University of the Witwatersrand where “despite the university’s liberal values, [he] never felt entirely comfortable there” (p. 103). Part Two of *Long Walk to Freedom* describes how one of Mandela’s law professors holds that women and Africans are not meant to be lawyers and how many whites make him feel that he did not belong there (p. 104). Here again, it is not the written curriculum or the institutional discourse that shape Mandela’s moral education directly but the interactions he has with fellow students, usually outside of lectures in late night discussions:

Wits opened a new world to me, a world of ideas and political beliefs and debates, a world where people were passionate about politics. I was among white and Indian intellectuals of my own generation, young men who would form the vanguard of the most important political movements of the next few years. (p. 105)

These reflections bare testimony to the real educational experience Mandela had at Wits, for though he failed his examinations several times (p. 171), it was here that his political consciousness developed substantially.

What these extracts show us is that the idea that an education means qualifications falls short of education in the broader, more spiritual sense of developing character. Mandela reiterates the point during the treason trial: “to a narrow-thinking person, it is hard to explain that to be ‘educated’ does not only mean being literate and having a BA, and that an illiterate man can be a far more ‘educated’ voter than someone with an advanced degree” (p. 299). This is a citation that we might wish to ponder over in a modern educational climate where literacy and numeracy are seen, understandably, as essential but, worldwide, few assessments are done to test traditional knowledge systems, a person’s moral fabric, wisdom or non-academic competences.

Under the oppression of the apartheid government, it is clearly the school of life that teaches Mandela his most valuable lessons. The accounts of political actions and decisions are strewn with reflections that suggest this: in discussing the relationship between the ANC’s executive and grass-roots level support, “it was one of the first times that I saw it was foolhardy to go against the people. It is no use to take an action to which the masses are opposed, for it will then be impossible to enforce” (p. 153); in prison he shares with the reader lessons learnt empirically about the human spirit: “strong convictions are the secret of surviving deprivation” (p. 494), “prison was a kind of crucible that tested a man’s character. Some men, under the pressure of

incarceration, showed true mettle, while other revealed themselves as less than what they had appeared to be" (p. 539).

The trials and tribulations that Mandela faces and his reactions to them are testimony to his remarkable person and ability he has to extract valuable lessons from life, including seemingly unremarkable incidents: he draws salient symbolic parallels between the struggle for freedom and Antigone's rebellion when playing Creon in a prison production of Sophocles' play (pp. 540-541), when Badenhorst, upon leaving Robben Island, wishes him "good luck" he philosophises that "all men, even the most seemingly cold-blooded, have a core of decency, and if their hearts are touched, they are capable of changing" (p. 549), when tending his garden on Robben Island he learns "through trial and error" (p. 582) as he draws metaphorical parallels between his work as a leader and a gardener ("the leader must take responsibilities for what he cultivates; he must mind his work, try to repel enemies, preserve what can be preserved and eliminate what cannot succeed" [p. 583]).

Passages like these (there are many) show the reader that the self-taught learner in Mandela is what distinguishes him from others, as he is constantly alert and reflective, a genuine inquirer at all times. He remarks "it is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another" (p. 194). Indeed, to read *Long Walk to Freedom* in itself is a powerful educational experience as the lessons are real and the way they are presented to the reader full of the wit and perspicacity that made Nelson Mandela such an extraordinary human being. Again, all this shows that the ingredients of a remarkable education are not just about curriculum and diplomas, they are about lessons that are drawn from life itself.

### **Education is power**

Of course, it is not because Mandela in *Long Walk to Freedom* recognises that true wisdom and conscientiousness often exist beyond the walls of the institution that he totally disregards what an institutional education has to offer. On the contrary, Mandela sees the battle for access to quality education as paramount in the struggle, making it clear how a conventional school education can empower and liberate individuals and communities of people. A seminal passage reads:

Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that the child of farmworkers can become the president of a great nation. (p. 194)

This is why one of the most pernicious apartheid acts to be passed was the 1953 Bantu Education Act whereby missionaries were to relinquish their schools to the Native Affairs Department so that, from then on, Africans would be "trained to be menial workers" (p. 195). This Act was accompanied by the 1959 Extension of University Education Act "which barred nonwhites from racially 'open' universities" (p. 270).

However, whilst school and university education would be a vital ideological battleground for the ANC, Mandela realises that strategically political action is a more immediate route: "education is all well and good,' Gaur said, 'but if we are to depend on education, we will wait a thousand years for our freedom" (p. 99). It is here that we see a different type of learning grow and sustain the liberation struggle, away from the impoverished classrooms of Bantu education. Indeed, Gaur Radebe brings the theory that Mandela learned in the classroom to life: "I had taken two courses in modern history at Fort Hare, and while I knew many facts, Gaur was able to explain the causes for particular actions, the reasons that men and nations had acted as they did. I felt as though I was learning history afresh" (p. 99). The extract is important because it shows the power of education when revitalised, contextualised and made relevant. More especially, we see how Gaur Radebe brings understanding to history, and it is with that understanding that there is the power that allows for analysis and application.

In the 1950s, when Mandela becomes a banned person, he elaborates a series of political lectures for ANC members: "there were three courses, 'The World We Live In', 'How We Are Governed' and 'The Need for Change' (p. 168). These courses in politics and economics are supplemented by courses on African history and culture, delivered by imprisoned ANC activists awaiting trial in 1952 (p. 234). Robben Island becomes known as "the University" because of the rich exchange of ideas that circulate among political prisoners: "we became our own faculty, with our own professors, our own curriculum, our own courses" (p. 556). Courses in Marxism, political economy, the history of the ANC, the history of the Indian struggle are described as a syllabus, "the style of teaching was Socratic in nature; ideas and theories were elucidated through the leaders asking and answering questions".

This informal education of that time does not only take place amongst ANC members, Mandela takes any opportunity to educate white South Africans about the history of the organisation and what he stands for, and his long speeches from the dock in the treason and Rivonia trials are extremely historical and didactic. On Robben Island, in discussing the prison warders he says "I wanted to demystify the ANC for them, to peel away their prejudices" (p. 542); "it was ANC policy to try to educate all people, even our enemies: we believed that all men, even prison service warders, were capable of change, and we did our utmost to try to sway them" (p. 497). The first day of talks with the Nationalist government in 1990 are described as "more or less a history lesson" (p. 693) with Mandela explaining that "the ANC from its inception in 1912 had always sought negotiations with the government in power". These quotations show how education outside the school and university had a crucial role to play in the struggle against apartheid. More specifically, knowledge of history that had been suppressed by propaganda and censorship, played a crucial role in the shaping of opinions (p. 498) and reaffirms Mandela's "long held belief that education was the enemy of prejudice" (p. 601).

Education as power comes through *Long Walk to Freedom* in another, manner: Mandela is a genuine lifelong learner and his continual study of the law allows him insights into the legal system that empower him and those who he represented as an attorney while free and in prison.

Throughout the Rivonia trial, Mandela continues to study for his LLB by correspondence with the University of London (p. 443). Recognising the importance of study, the political prisoners on Robben Island enrol in correspondence courses and despite being deprived of decent study conditions, “within months, virtually all of us were studying for one qualification or another. At night our cell block seemed more like a study hall than a prison” (p. 489). This course of action proves to be crucial for it allows the men reading materials to which they would otherwise not have had access: “the authorities attempted to impose a complete blackout; they did not want us to learn anything that might raise our morale or reassure us that people on the outside were thinking of us” (p. 492). Knowledge of the law in particular is described as power as it allows knowledge of the legal system that challenges the prison warders: “Mac had studied law and was adept at putting the authorities on the defensive” (p. 515).

Mandela’s reading of Nadine Gordimer, John Steinbeck, and Leo Tolstoy in prison (p. 585) further develop his philosophical reflections on leadership and social justice while his constant efforts to learn the languages of South Africa are borne from deep thoughts on identity and culture:

Without language, one cannot talk to people and understand them; once cannot share their hopes and aspirations; grasp their history; appreciate their poetry or savour their songs. I again realized that we were not different people with separate languages; we were one people, with different tongues”. (p. 97)

Education in *Long Walk to Freedom* represents power in social, ideological, historical and cultural realms. It is the spirit of lifelong learning that Mandela incarnates and propagates in and outside any formal educational setting that characterises not only his personal development, that of his family (his children are saved from Bantu education through private schooling [p. 198] and then outside South Africa in a boarding school in Swaziland [p. 505]), but much of the core struggle against apartheid: the June 16 massacre in 1976, known as “Soweto Day” came about after students took to the streets to protest against a Secondary School curriculum that was half in Afrikaans, the language of oppression.

The passages that I have termed “education is power” resonate with the theories of Antonio Gramsci, Paulo Freire and Frantz Fanon: education empowers when it is developed away from the institutional organs of ideological propaganda; it is here that it offers the oppressed an alternative to the master narrative that enslaves them. Whether this means escaping Bantu education by self-educating or organising underground educational systems, it is the thread of education that allows the resistance to remain linked to its historical roots.

This is particularly valuable to reflect upon today in a world where the media plays a powerful role in shaping opinions through normalising constructs such as “free market economy”, “developing world”, “illegal immigrant”, “anti-democratic” or “terrorist” to give but a few examples. These officialised narratives, if unchallenged, constitute reality for millions of people. It is the counter-narratives of whistle-blowers such as Julian Assange and John Pilger that represent an alternative story. The theme of education in *Long Walk to Freedom* reminds us not only of the valuable testimony of apartheid

South Africa but also calls out for the underground stories that feature less prominently in history text books such as those – to mention just a few - of the Aborigines, the Native Americans, Armenians, Palestinians, Burmese, the stories of the slave trade and colonisation.

### Education as Cultural Transmission

So what was it that made Nelson Mandela such an exceptional leader? The question that haunts us about great figures of history can be asked of him, was it his upbringing, his lineage, the circumstances, his education? Part Three of *Long Walk to Freedom*, “Birth of a Freedom Fighter” starts with a remarkable passage that tells of Mandela’s decision to dedicate his life to the struggle. The inception remains elusive:

I cannot pinpoint a moment when I became politicized, when I knew that I would spend my life in the liberation struggle. [...] I had no epiphany, no singular revelation, no moment of truth, but a steady accumulation of a thousand slights, a thousand indignities and a thousand unremembered moments produced in me an anger, a rebelliousness, a desire to fight the system that imprisoned my people. (p. 109)

So trying to pinpoint the birth of Mandela’s political conscience is difficult, but what his autobiography does tell the reader is how formative his childhood experiences were in rural Transkei. Indeed, the traditional African education that Mandela received clearly laid the path that he would take to his destiny as president of South Africa. In Part One (“A Country Childhood”), in speaking of the chieftaincy, Mandela wrote: “My later notions of leadership were profoundly influenced by observing the regent and his court. I watched and learned from the tribal meetings that were regularly held at the Great Place” (p. 24).

In these meetings “it was democracy in its purest form. [...] The foundation of self-government was that all men were free to voice their opinion and were equal in their value as citizens”. The young Mandela observes the different speakers and clearly draws valuable lessons on oratory from this:

I noticed how some speakers rambled and never seemed to get to the point. I grasped how others came to the matter at hand directly, and who made a set of arguments succinctly and cogently. I observed how some speakers used emotion and dramatic language, and tried to move the audience with such techniques, while others were sober and even, and shunned emotion. (p. 25)

He goes on to make it clear how essential these observations were for his education in a famous passage:

As a leader, I have always followed the principles I first saw demonstrated by the regent at the Great Place. I have always endeavoured to listen to what each and every person in a discussion had to say before venturing my own opinion. Oftentimes, my own opinion will simply represent a consensus of what I hear in the discussion. I always remember the regent’s axiom: a leader, he said, is like a

shepherd. He stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go on ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realizing that all along they are being directed from behind. (pp. 25-26)

Indeed, it is useful to remember how distinctly African Mandela's style of leadership was as this debunks the view one hears in certain corners that traditional African society is not congenial to democracy because of tribal organisational structures and chieftaincy when quite clearly these passages show that this was not the case in traditional Xhosa society at all. It was in Mandela's speech at the Rivonia trial that he articulated clearly the value of his cultural heritage in his world view:

The structure and organization of early African societies in this country fascinated me very much and greatly influenced the evolution of my political outlook. The land, then the main means of production, belonged to the whole tribe and there was no individual ownership whatsoever. (p. 391)

The experiences Mandela has as a youth in the Transkei do not only expose him to models of leadership but to history from an African perspective. The most ancient of all, Chief Joyi, educates Mandela about the Thembu, the Pondo, the Xhosa and the Zulu: "In pantomime, Chief Joyi would fling his spear and creep along the veld as he narrated the victories and defeats" (p. 26). He also tells Mandela of the coming of the white man ("abelungu"):

I did not yet know that the real history of our country was not to be found in standard British textbooks, which claimed South Africa began with the landing of Jan van Riebeeck at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. It was from Chief Joyi that I began to discover that the history of the Bantu-speaking peoples began far to the north, in a country of lakes and green plains and valleys. (p. 27)

Mandela's traditional circumcision at the age of 16 is described in detail (pp. 30-36). It is through this rite of passage that, according to Xhosa ritual, he becomes a man but the chapter ends with a reflection: "looking back, I know that I was not a man that day and would not truly become one for many years" (p. 36). Many years later, on Robben Island, Mandela agrees to secret circumcision for young Xhosa inmates. He reflects that circumcision "was a cultural ritual [...]. It was a rite that strengthened group identification and inculcated positive values" (p. 511). This is an important step in the education of Xhosa males and the discussion around circumcision school in *Long Walk to Freedom* is significant as we see traditional values carried through society as fundamental educational values.

The deep messages that Mandela received from his traditional upbringing would not leave him. Instead of allowing this cultural heritage to create tribal divisions between him and other Africans, which would have suited the strategy of divide and rule that the apartheid government thrived on, mainly in the creation of the homelands and the way the mines were managed, Mandela saw commonality and a sense of African humanity in the stories of other ethnic groups. A powerful passage resonates with this sense of African nationalism as it describes a lecture on Zulu music by an ANC prisoner at the time of the treason trials:

Yengwa draped himself with a blanket, rolled up a newspaper to imitate a sword, and began to stride back and forth reciting lines from the praise song. All of us, even those who did not understand Zulu, were entranced. Then he paused dramatically and called out the lines [that] liken Shaka to a great bird of prey that relentlessly slays its enemies. At the conclusion of these words, pandemonium broke out. Chief Lutuli, who until then had remained quiet, sprang this feet and bellowed 'Ngu Shaka lowo!' ('That is Shaka!'), and then began to dance and chant. His movements electrified us, and we all took to our feet. [...] Suddenly there were no Xhosas or Zulus, no Indians or Africans, no rightists or leftists, no religious or political leaders; we were all nationalists and patriots bound together by a love of our common history, our culture, our country and our people. In that moment, something stirred deep inside all of us, something strong and intimate, that bound us to one another. In that moment we felt the hand of a great past that made us that we were and the power of the great cause that linked us all together. (pp. 234-235)

It is here that we clearly experience one of the most electric moments of Mandela's lifelong education, not in the classroom or over a book but through the living memory of ancient history in traditional dance and song. The passage is one of the most important in *Long Walk to Freedom* because it not only gets to the core of the spirit of unity that characterised Mandela as a political figure and led to the freedom of South Africa, but in it we see the seeds of what might one day liberate South Africa further still to bring white and black culture together in honour of a common African culture and history.

Mandela's message of unity expressed in this passage speaks not only to South Africa but to the whole continent of Africa, for it is through such unity that the continent might seek respite from the internecine wars, exploitation of resources, dictatorships and corruption that fetter the continent and stand in the way of the harmony that is needed for it to federate and consolidate its natural wealth.

## Conclusion

Nelson Mandela's vision of education in *Long Walk to Freedom* makes profound statements on the only real question there is: what is an education for?

Clearly education has the power to liberate the individual socially, politically and philosophically, to open and sharpen the mind and to develop one's personality. In a context where there is no freedom and/or no access to knowledge, it is the will to carve out an education that will determine the success of this goal. The accounts Mandela gives of de-institutionalised education, knowledge as empowerment and traditional education are all bound by his willingness to learn, to extract values and lessons from events and to generalise principles from experience. In this regard, the purpose of an education is lifelong learning; it creates the conditions that make an individual passionate about life, determined to continue in the face of adversity and always ready to re-evaluate, re-think and re-adjust. Whether a school or a curriculum could ever create such conditions for this to be possible remains to be seen but one is tempted to quote Oscar Wilde's flippant but disturbing "education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught".

At the same time, we see the tremendous power of the narratives of the past and the structure of ancient social organisation on Mandela's world view. In this regard, the purpose of an education is to transmit the past to the present for future generations. We are reminded how important the subject of history is, not only ancient African history for Mandela, the unofficial narrative of the ANC's historical past whose survival was so important in the struggle against apartheid, but the inestimable historical value of a book like *Long Walk to Freedom* for the rich historical legacy it leaves behind. In an age where discourses on education, particularly in popular media, place a significant if not disproportionately large emphasis on new technologies, higher-order cognition such as creativity and critical thinking and learning to learn, there is less sound and fury about history. Now that Nelson Mandela has passed away, the responsibility to transmit his story to younger generations lies with us, a clear and vital goal of education remains, quite simply, that of the telling of history.

*Long Walk to Freedom* is full of wisdom and humility that make its educational discourse at once far less complex and far more demanding than those of the cluttered world of textbooks, websites, homework assignments and examinations that students move through if they spend their two million minutes in school. The final message with which the book leaves the reader in its last few pages, pages that shimmer with the vision and light of one of the world's most inspirational leaders, is the true and enduring goal of an education: education for freedom, whether it be psychological, philosophical, economic or political. It is the legacy of Nelson Mandela that will surely inspire us to move for our own freedom and the freedom of others with whom we share life, be it by courageous acts for truth and liberation, selfless acts of generosity or modest ones that simply acknowledge another person's dignity. The greatest educational message we have is the memory of Nelson Mandela himself and what he stood for. When one closes the last page of the book the overwhelming thought, a deeply educational thought, is surely that if each one of us could act as he did in the smallest of ways, there would be more light in the world, more peace, more freedom.

### Works Cited

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