



Visions and practices of education as transformative tools

Visões e práticas da educação como ferramentas transformativas

Visiones y prácticas de la educación como herramientas transformadoras

Organization

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Presentation

The six articles in this dossier were prepared for a cancelled symposium that was to take place in Salvador, Bahia, in July 2022. The planned symposium was part of a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Connection Grant¹, and was to gather members of the Theory and History of Education International Research Group (THEIRG), housed at the Faculty of Education, Queen's University (<https://educ.queensu.ca/their/>), along with members of the History of Education Research Group (NIEPHE) (<https://sites.usp.br/niephe/>) and the Thematic Project Education in Borders (<https://sites.usp.br/educacaoemfronteiras/>) of the University of São Paulo².

¹ Connection Grant of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, file no 611-2019-0427.

² FAPESP, proc.nr. 2018/26699-4.

The papers have in common the analysis of visions of education and educational aims in relation to social conceptions of change, along with a theological, philosophical, or socio-political ethical foundation. The authors do not neglect the agency of the individual as either an individual or a collective self – neither the contextual nuances nor the unexpected implications of the educational process.

The first two articles deal with significant cases of globalism, networks, and international development, and have, as a common background, an expansive notion of space. **Rosa Bruno-Jofré and Ana Jofre** authored “The Early Jesuits’ Transformative Vision of Education in the Context of Colonization from Their Sixteenth-Century Beginnings to Their Suppression in 1773: A *Longue Durée* Synthesis and Online Interactive Map Locating the Colleges.” The Society of Jesus (Jesuits), founded with the approval of the pope in 1540, embraced education as its ministry, creating a network of full-fledged schools whose educational vision and pedagogies were grounded in Thomism, renaissance humanism, and Erasmus’ notion of piety. The schools were at what we now call the secondary and university levels, and they were for male students, who were viewed as future leaders. An interactive map illustrates their missions and schools across the globe and elucidates the political connections they built. The analysis and the interactive map reveal the Jesuits’ inculturation in the midst of coloniality and empires, showing the globality of the transnational enterprise. The map has been made freely available on the web.

Parallel to the spatial/geographical analysis, the paper does a historical analysis of how the Society embraced the notion of confessionality in relation to the good of Church and society with a nuanced notion of “coloniality of being.”³ The authors also examine how the Jesuits (despite internal conflicts) positioned themselves in relation to the political, ideological, and theological configurations of their localities, and to the emerging ecologies of knowledge of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe. The authors explore how the Jesuits related to these knowledges and the limits to their articulation with those knowledges to which they sometimes contributed.

The article is followed by “The New Education Fellowship and South America: An Overview of the Constitution of Networks, 1920s and 1930s,” written by **Diana Gonçalves Vidal, Rafaela Silva Rabelo, and Vinicius de Moraes Monção**, which like the previous article delves into the transnational history of education. The authors acknowledge that the New Education Fellowship is a widely visited subject in the historiography of education, mainly considering its congresses and its journals. However, they emphasize that this historiography is markedly circumscribed in Europe, with some works also referring to Oceania and North America. The networks created through NEF in South America are still a subject rarely pursued and that is the aim of the article, which seeks to retrace the relationship among the NEF and South American educators in the 1920s and 1930s, having the Conference of Locarno in 1927 as a milestone. The main sources are exchanged correspondence between South American educators, NEF reports, and the journals *The New Era* and *Pour l’Ère Nouvelle*. The discussion is developed from a transnational history perspective. In this sense, the agency of educators not only acquires prominence in the narrative, in contrast to the focus on state delegates, but also the conventional boundaries – states, nations, empires or regions – are put on hold, placing emphasis in the analyses to the circulation of ideas, subjects, and institutions that go beyond geographical boundaries. Therefore, notions and tools from network theory and digital history are mobilized. The network approach helps to bring visibility to the exchanges resulting from the encounters, thus overcoming a dichotomous view of center and periphery. The digital history is the methodology used to consult and process digital archives and mass documentation, such as the journals’ collections. Thus, the authors made use of the ATLAS.Ti,

³ Nelson Maldonado-Torres, “On the Coloniality of Being,” *Cultural Studies* 21, nos. 2–3 (2007): 240–270.

a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), as a way to analyze the data/source, whether digital or digitalized.

The article by **Jon Igelmo Zaldívar, Gonzalo Jover, Olmeda, and Patricia Quiroga Uceda**, “Ivan Illich’s Vision on Education in Practice: From Countercultural Educational Projects in the 1970s to Indigenous Decolonial Pedagogy from the 1990s,” examines this alternative notion of education. Ivan Illich published *Deschooling Society* in 1971, a book that had a notable influence on educational activism and the academic debate in the 1970s, particularly in the Western world. Illich’s critique of schooling and its relationship with the state, and his not fully articulated vision of education, inspired those exploring the margins of the pedagogical imaginary. In this paper, the authors examine educational projects and movements grounded either in a countercultural vision or in Indigenous pedagogical proposals. The authors’ central questions are: “How did these projects read Illich within the specific context in which they were inserted? What was the intentionality of those who drew from Illich’s ideas?”

To answer them, the article examines two spaces that worked with notions of counterculture: CIDOC in Cuernavaca (Mexico) and The Learning Exchange, located in Evanston (Chicago, United States). CIDOC remained open between 1963 and 1976, and Illich’s intellectual leadership was key to its activities. The Learning Exchange began as a result of a conference delivered by Illich himself in 1971 at Northwestern University. Next, the focus of the article changes to Illich’s influence on John Holt and to the long-standing home-schooling movement he led from 1977, and to the work of Lee Felsenstein and the way Illich’s ideas influenced the Homebrew Computer Club from 1975 onwards. The authors argue that “this group was the vanguard of a movement of engineers related to the appropriate technology movement.” Finally, they provide a study on the theoretical foundations underlying “La Universidad de la Tierra.” This initiative started in Mexico in 2002 in the wake of the Indigenous Zapatista uprising in the Mexican Southeast in 1994. Gustavo Esteva, initiator of the project, has reinterpreted Illich’s work from the perspective of the Indigenous movement.

The late 1960s and early 1970s was a time for critical approaches to education. The work of Paulo Freire, in particular *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, published more than fifty years ago and rooted in his adult education practice, continues to be a focus of examination for those scholars interested in transformative practices. Freire developed a political ethics of social change and generated an epistemological rupture in the discourse of adult education that has been recreated within new contexts and often co-opted. “The Theological Anthropology of Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: A Contribution to the Discussion*,” by **Michael Attridge**, brings an entirely original study to the dossier. Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is one of the most important books in the field of philosophy of education and critical pedagogy. The book, and the ideas behind it, were also influential for the bishops of Latin America in their 1968 conference at Medellín (CELAM II), especially for their vision of an emancipatory education. Freire considered himself a Catholic throughout his entire life, even while he was critical of the power structures that existed within the hierarchy of the Church. In their assessments, some scholars have taken seriously how Freire’s Catholic faith and identity were at play in his writings, while many others have simply overlooked or ignored this. None of these, though, have been theologians, professionally speaking.

The author argues that even though *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is not a work of theology, it has nevertheless a clearly operative theology in its approach to liberation and its vision of the human person since it was written at a time when Catholic theology was undergoing a profound transformation. To date, no one has examined the work from a

theological standpoint, using the fundamental categories of theology as a means to understand Freire's own thinking as a Catholic. To address this lacuna, this article analyzes the underlying theology of the book through the primary lenses of theological anthropology, in other words, sin and grace, freedom, hope, and eschatology. It seeks to understand how Freire's earlier faith formation gave rise to his later theological vision and argues that his theology helped to secure his influence in shaping the Catholic vision of education at CELAM II.

Mohammad Fateh is the author of "BRAC's (ব্রজক) Adoption of Community-Based Primary Education for Socially Disadvantaged Children in Bangladesh," in which he analyzes the largest non-governmental organization in the world, Building Resources Across Communities (BRAC). It is also the second largest employer in Bangladesh following the state. The article examines how BRAC, initially inspired by the pedagogy of Paulo Freire, aimed at empowering people to move to traditional, market-oriented skills and at developing a literacy program for children in poor communities, an issue that has not been discussed before. The author works out the interplay between BRAC's founder, Dr. Fazle H.Abed, and the internal forces, and the neoliberal framework that led BRAC, a non-profit organization, to be engaged in for-profit commercial ventures. However, the focus is on the Non-Formal Primary Education Program.

The collection closes with an article by **James Scott Johnston**, "Idealism, Pragmatism, and the Birth of Pragmatist Educational Thought in America." One of the most significant changes in philosophy of education, with profound pedagogical implications, was the movement from idealism to pragmatism at the end of the nineteenth century in North America. Taking the period of 1866–1895 into consideration, the article delves into the transitional period in educational thought in America, from historical and philosophical points of view, with the purpose of framing "the movement away from idealism towards pragmatism as the basis for educational thought." As the author argues, "contemporaneous with the development of pragmatism was a development in educational thought that stressed naturalism, functionalism, and the organic nature of mind and behavior." To inquire into the transition, the article explores America's first philosophy of education, idealism, and the change to pragmatism that occurred in the mid-1890s, which dominated the philosophic presuppositions of educational thought and emerged "as the first bona fide philosophy of education in 20th century America." Modifying the lens of analyses to focus on idealism in American educational thought, the author challenges the history of philosophy by presenting the "nascent yet emerging pragmatism in light of the dominant philosophy of education – idealism." Exploring the transition from idealism to pragmatism also involves examining the main motifs common to both, as well as delving specifically into the philosophical interventions of Dewey.

This issue provides the reader with original research related to conceptions of education and their various uses, including their political dimension.