

Editorial

We understand education as a process that people experience starting in their early childhood and that continues throughout their life, that allows them to construct their own uniqueness in relation to their environment, thus making it possible for them not only to acknowledge their place as social subjects but also to experience it more reflectively, fostering the formation of critical and proactive individuals. This is why we consider it vitally important to think in this fashion; that is, on the one hand, to deconstruct the school as the space that witnesses the development of formal education, and on the other hand, to recognize the multiplicity of places, models, and actors outside of educational institutions that, in unconventional spaces, also give rise to learning processes and experiences that make room for the appropriation of education in different ways.

Much of the work in the broad field of social science – and especially in educational research – in the last fifteen years has called attention to the profound crisis that education is going through as a formative institution, a producer of social identities such as those of childhood and youth, and a constitutive part of modernity. By this I mean education in the historic sense of a social space designed not only to transmit knowledge, but also as the primary place – after the family – that provided (and still provides) individuals with referents and relationships, socialization among peers, and that ensured upward mobility in the social network. The research I refer to shows that education, from the vantage point of modernity, no longer manages to shape or control individuals the way it used to. It has ceased to be the compulsory and only reference to become a full-fledged child, youth or even adult within an established social order, and hence it is time to examine these transformations in the light of the complex realities suffered by Latin Americans in order to better understand the reasons that have led to this blurred panorama, as well as to what large sectors of the population are now clinging to.

Thus, it becomes more important to consider these issues seeking to build explanations that help us to understand what has happened and what new meanings have been given to educational institutions, what transformations the school, as a social space, and the classroom, as a place of learning and formation of identities, norms and belonging, have undergone, what other places or spaces of socialization “beyond the classroom” have become relevant or important for children or youths, and which educational projects are being conducted outside an institution that regarded itself as the dominant place where learning, disciplining, and apprehension of norms and values were supposed to take place. It is domestication and, at the same time, the door that leads to freedom.

Faced with such questions, *Diálogos sobre educación. Temas actuales en investigación educativa* seeks to contribute by divulging results of empirical research that analyzes the many perspectives that nourish the school as a social issue, at a time when other lines of meaning and escape run parallel in the production of subjects as actors of diverse educational processes.

This issue advises us that, although we must analyze education as a process that overflows the spaces of educational institutions, we should also think about what takes place in classrooms, schoolyards, school doors and even school restrooms, to generate explanations that help to understand the complexity of the educational phenomenon in relation to the knowledge and tools that help to produce it, the shaping of subjectivities and spaces for dialog, the irruption of politics and the scenarios in which violence appears in many expressions, accompanied by significant anguish and pain. For this reason, this space of extension and divulgation of knowledge thanks the authors of this “Beyond the classroom” issue for their willingness to share the results of recent studies that contribute to understand both what happens beyond the boundaries of the school and what happens within, and especially to Danielle Strickland for her efforts to get this dialog started by coordinating a thematic axis that calls for the deconstruction of the educational model in formal spaces to recognize that education can certainly take place where we least expect it.

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Editor