



History of Education and Covid-19: The crisis of the school according to african (Akanbi, Chisholm), american (Boto, Civera, Cunha, Kinne, Rocha, Romano, Rousmaniere, Southwell, Souza, Taborda, Veiga, Vidal) and european (Depaepe, Escolano, Magalhães, Nóvoa) researchers¹

Tony Honorato^{1*} and Ana Clara Bortoleto Nery²

¹State University of Londrina, Londrina, Paraná, Brazil. ²Paulista State University, Marília, São Paulo, Brasil. *Autor para correspondência. E-mail: tony@uel.br

ABSTRACT. What possible types of knowledge or devices develop from research in the History of Education for in-depth understanding and the assessment of impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in School Education? This question was answered by renowned researchers in the field of History of Education: Agustín Escolano Benito (Spain); Alicia Civera (Mexico); Andrea Bennett-Kinne (USA); António Nóvoa (Portugal); Antonio Romano (Uruguay); Carlota Boto (Brazil); Cynthia Greive Veiga (Brazil); Diana Gonçalves Vidal (Brazil); Gizele de Souza (Brazil); Grace Oluremilekun Akanbi (Nigeria); Heloísa Helena Pimenta Rocha (Brazil); Justino Magalhães (Portugal); Kate Rousmaniere (USA); Linda Chisholm (South Africa); Marc Depaepe (Belgium); Marcus Aurélio Taborda de Oliveira (Brazil); Maria Teresa Santos Cunha (Brazil); Myriam Southwell (Argentina). Answers are given in full and they have been distributed within five non-compartmentalized themes in text organization: 1) Suspension, decline of the school model; 2) Territoriality and the right to education: South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, US and Nigeria; 3) Places-spaces, times and materials of school cultures; 4) Health and divergent sensitiveness in education; 5) De-schooling, old innovations and present time between impositions and resistances.

Keywords: history of education; historiography; school; covid-19; coronavírus; sars-cov-2.

Introduction

No-time

Thank you very much for your invitation. I appreciate your attitude in recording depositions during this long 'night', in which death surveys life. However, I still do not have the spiritual strength to write. Panic has overridden reason. I fear that such apocalyptic times produce new types of messiahs and hasty decisions. As Walter Benjamin warns us, 'the state of exception' favors tyrants. School is a highly vulnerable entity. Critiques have been increasing throughout the years: some think that it does not prepare us for facing life, whilst others declare it does not suit the new generations. Now that life stopped and the pandemic is increasing the many excluded people, as never before, what guidelines will be attributed and what consequences will come from an early change in the school? To educate mainly means leading towards a place and the school has brought humanity up to this place. The school is a burdensome institution and is not made lighter by distance learning sessions or by minimalizing curricula. What right does one have to discard or even reduce humanity's great heritage and person-ness to future generations? If this is a no-time period, then postpone decisions (Justino Magalhães, author's note²).

The 'night' referred to by Magalhães makes us ponder on the period of a Pandemic which hovers ominously over human history. Covid-19 or the novel corona virus is a worldwide disease, a Pandemic acknowledged by WHO. It uncovered the great crisis in public health, economic production, social inequality, ecological changes, schooling, human subjectivity, values of life in the face of death. However, in the case of scientific production, it has been disseminated that the Pandemic and its effects are being tackled by the priority sciences for biological health, quantification of life and development of technologies

¹ Translation by Thomas Bonnici.

² Reply to the interview's question explained in current introduction.

for the cure of infirmities. Of course, we are neither denying Covid-19's biological conditions nor contesting the scientific efficiency for its eradication through the discovery of vaccines and medicines to be produced on a large scale. However, we must be aware that the effects of the Pandemic are multiple in our social, economic, political, cultural and educational life.

This is especially true for School Education, from the kindergarten to higher education, whose activities were immediately suspended and will probably be the last to reopen entirely. This is far from returning to 'normality', since several impacts will be felt. Covid-19 has caused the closing of schools and has affected approximately 87% of the world's student population, some 1.5 billion students in 165 countries, according to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [Unesco] (2020). Consequently, the solutions for a return to the 'new normality', mainly in the non-presential format, have had a controversial and contradictory reception by school agents.

Several issues on the school crisis, emerging due to the Pandemic, hail from a temporally much widened process and at present they are experiencing the tension of acceleration in their process in real time. Within the local and global milieu, it will be difficult for School Education to begin from scratch and radically change its course. Within the 'new normality' of schooling there will be a lot of the 'old normality' which constitutes the history of school education!

Within this scenario, one may problematize the importance of the History of Education in research and in the coping with issues inherent to the Pandemic Covid-19. The initial anxiety provided the following question of the interview answered by relevant researchers in the History of Education:

In 2020, the Covid-19 Pandemic has demolished several configurations in society. The crisis has impacted School Education experienced by many people in different situations and countries. Further, there are debates in History and the Historiography of Education on the presence of the past in the present and in the future of School Education which allow the acknowledgement of or reveal continuities, discontinuities and several different emerging situations. What possible types of knowledge or devices develop from research in the History of Education for in-depth understanding and the assessment of impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in School Education?

The interview comprised the responses of researchers from Africa (Grace Oluremilekun Akanbi; Linda Chisholm), America (Andrea Bennett-Kinne; Alicia Civera; Antonio Romano; Carlota Boto; Cynthia Greive Veiga; Diana Gonçalves Vidal; Gizele de Souza; Heloísa Helena Pimenta Rocha; Kate Rousmaniere; Marcus Aurélio Taborda de Oliveira; Maria Teresa Santos Cunha; Myriam Southwell) and Europe (Agustin Escolano Benito; António Nóvoa; Justino Magalhães; Marc Depaepe). Answers were received between May 21 and June 10, 2020.

Answers are given in full and they have been distributed within five non-compartmentalized themes in text organization: 1) Suspension, decline of the school model; 2) Territoriality and the right to education: South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, US and Nigeria; 3) Places-spaces, times and materials of school cultures; 4) Health and divergent sensitiveness in education; 5) De-schooling, old innovations and present time between impositions and resistances.

Suspension, decline of the school model

António Nóvoa

University of Lisbon, Portugal.

The Covid-19 pandemic has made visible the decline of the school model. Historians have already made reference to this issue for some time now, coupled with the need to open a new period for school life. Current pandemic has accelerated the course of History and placed every one of us to face decisions that are unavoidable.

In a greatly simplified way, especially for historians of Education, the school model may be defined within three dimensions:

1. Specialized educational systems organized at three great levels – primary, secondary higher education –, relatively homogeneous, which progressively impose compulsory schooling on all children.
2. Normalized schools around similar spaces (with the classroom as their central reference), with regular timetables, curriculum by subject matters and a didactic structure based on lectures or lessons.
3. Teachers giving lessons individually to students in groups by age and levels of learning progress.

The 'school model' (or schooling form or the grammar of the school), largely disseminated worldwide as from the mid-19th, has been criticized throughout the 20th century, even though, in its essence, it remained unaltered till the present.

What will happen? Many types of future are possible: resistance of the school model, trying to survive any dynamics of change? The disintegration of the school, with an increasingly heavier load of learning, concretized within the family context? A systematic recourse to technologies, even to artificial intelligence, highlighting educational trends as 'consumer goods'?

It is difficult to write the history of the future, albeit necessary. On my part, I would like to involve myself in the process of a deep transformation of the school, within the framework of strengthening its public dimensions. Similar to Maxine Greene, I cannot imagine a coherent proposition for education if something 'common' does not happen within the public 'space'.

Taking once more the three dimensions referred to above, I would prefer the following guidelines:

1. An effort for public space in education. Education does not end at the school and we need new bonds and commitments by families and society in children's education – many responses to the pandemic worldwide have revealed the importance of such evolution.
2. A transformation of the school, through a diversity of spaces and work times (individual study and in groups, follow-up by teachers, research projects, lessons, and others), establishing new environments in study and learning, within and outside the school – the best responses to the pandemic revealed such a 'metamorphosis of the school'.
3. A change in teachers' role, highlighting their responsibility within the wholeness of educational work (follow-up, tutorial, supports, and others, and not mere 'lessons'), reinforcing their activities in the production of curricular and pedagogical production and developing towards collaborative activities – the best responses to the pandemic were the result of collaboration among groups of teachers.

I have to insist. The debate is not new but the pandemic has exposed the issues with great sharpness. Education is defined within a long time period and never within a short time. At certain instances, such as at present, the choices are clearer and more urgent. There are neither unavoidable things nor determined histories. Every day we decide something, or many things, in the history of the future.

Carlota Boto

University of São Paulo, Brazil

We are living in a time of crisis³. Coronavirus times. The ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic has placed all societies worldwide within a novel reality. Specifically, it is a reality in which school has been interrupted. For the first time in a century we are living an instance in which the school has become a virtual reality. The school became an instance projected on a computer screen. In fact, the school has been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. The school has been impacted because students quitted school. The school has been impacted because teachers have lost the school as their specific territory. Willy-nilly, lessons are being given remotely. A question may be asked: How may such an experience help teachers to project future transformations of the school? Several people have highlighted loss of quality in virtually-given lessons; they are pointing out the risks in transforming presential education by distance education, with concern for the integral reposition of lost lessons. Others are pondering on the potential of what is happening, or rather, what lessons may we deduce in these times when schools are out of sight?

Schooling has been a fact in modernity, through the Protestant Reformation, when it was thought that everybody should know how to read and write. Schools were opened so that at least some young people could learn the mechanisms of written culture and, thus, the habits of conviviality and civility. Of course, there were schools in Antiquity. They were schools in which the reading-writing complex was transmitted: the grammar schools of Ancient Greece and the parish schools of the Middle Ages, the monastic schools and the municipal schools of the 12th century. Up to a certain point, Universities did their role too. However, schooling gained method in the 16th century colleges in Catholic and Protestant countries. It gained techniques and has been inscribed according to the groups that would be taught simultaneously. The schooling method was subsequently appropriated by the State. The absolute states and the French Revolution, particularly, when the idea of nation was put forward, foregrounded systematic schooling.

³ A previous version of this text was published in the *Jornal da USP*, on April 8, 2020, with the title *Education and school in times of coronavirus*.

Consequently, the teaching methods, already employed in colleges, were adopted for the formation of the country's future citizens. Networks of public education were developed throughout the 19th century and gradually simultaneous teaching started.

By the start of the 20th century, schooling began to be criticized as inefficient. The internationally renowned movement of the New School criticized the obsolescence of the methods adopted, their limitations, the conservatism of schooling, the stagnation of teaching practices excessively centered on teachers and their lessons. A greater student autonomy, freedom in teaching methods adopted, innovations in didactic strategies were defended. Further, the need to place previous knowledge as the departure point was underscored, or rather, the knowledge that students have and carry with them. Apparently, the school starts opening its holdings. However, schooling formats were so bonded to habits and usages of a crystalized routine that much that was insisted upon stood at the school's threshold but failed to reach the classroom. Debates on pedagogical renovation were consistent through the early 20th century, even though practices were rather timid during the period.

During the 1960s, the great theme of pedagogical debate was to overcome school failure. The democratization of the school was heralded: democratization denoted extension of opportunities in learning and democratization in the field of internal relationships to schooling. Further, questions were asked why a significant percentage of children enrolled in the school failed to reach the succeeding steps in schooling. What determined the failure of schooling? Were these situations the result of school children hailing from families in which all type of scarcity existed? Deficits and lacks were hypothesized.

In the 1970s, theories on de-schooling were being discussed. They problematized the very social place occupied by the school within society. During this period, a political critique on the conditions of school life was debated. Leftist authors insisted that the school represented the cultural reproduction of social inequality, underscoring that the school would be the State's ideological apparatus and that schooling performs the role of ideological certificate of bourgeoisie culture and that the cultural capital of the economically higher layers of society made easy their schooling.

The late 20th century and the early 21st century evidenced the displacement of such discourse. Current debate is centered on the discussion on the school's target public and its interaction with cultural contents worked by the school. Multiculturalism and identity are the themes discussed within the educational field. The idea of a decentralized and multicultural curriculum, opposite to the European and US models, is gaining ground. However, one perceives that most forms of selection, evaluation and promotion of students largely correspond to inequalities already seen in society. In other words, the school produces new inequalities through the criteria used by its routine tactics and strategies. In this case, exclusion does not merely exist outside the school; the school copies the assessment mechanisms and establishes selection devices in students' performance. Consequently, selections marks in students' performance produce a novel distribution of merit.

The period between the latter decades of the 20th century and the early ones of the 21st century has been impacted by the computer with regard to schooling culture. For the first time, the culture of printed code is questioned. In fact, schooling has, from the very beginning, dealt rather badly with the computer and, above all, with the Internet. How may one maintain schools within the context of a worldwide network of computers?

A discussion may ensue on emergent remote activities developed during Pandemic times. On the one hand, the transformation of learning contents given in activities at a distance leads us to a standstill. This is due to an absolute datum: there are students in public schools and even in universities without access to the Internet which frequently brings about the unfeasibility of using the Internet for subsequent lessons. What will one cope with students without any real conditions to follow distant teaching? If we do not take them into account, we are favoring social segregation which, of all things, is absolutely inadmissible. By definition and by principle, we have to integrate all students in the educational project. These pupils should be reached and this is a must.

On the other hand, we are living in exceptional times and they require, in some measure, the reinvention of education and of the school. Inventiveness and experimentation are mandatory. One must have the courage to create. Creation requires a rupture from presumed certainties and presupposed truths. Consequently, the use of new platforms and new strategies needs in-depth decision and urgency in action. The new platforms which open new teaching methods will take the Internet into the school. This does not boil down to definitely transforming presential teaching into virtual practices. It does mean, however, that,

in this specific moment, technological resources should be employed to plan the future, a future which will not adhere to distance teaching. It will be a future that will mobilize intelligently the tools and platforms of the Internet. Educators should discover how to act in such emergency with inventiveness, with the courage to recreate, respecting traditions and without any exclusion.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the school has arrived at computer and Internet times. All Faculties of Education, Education Secretaries and all educators committed to public education should integrate and interpret this process. People who do not profit from the occasion that History is demonstrating will be left behind. These are sad times but they have given us a pedagogical opportunity. We have to step forward and look in front of us.

Agustín Escolano Benito

International Centre of School Culture, CEINCE, Spain.

We are still immersed within the process of a pandemic on a global scale that was a great surprise to all communities, with severe effects worldwide on life, culture and education. It is very early to interpret and evaluate what happened and what is happening, within such a short period of time, in and outside the school milieu, within the variegated family and national contexts and what will happen after the foreseen return to the previous situation, how such a return will occur and the changes it will present.

From a historical perspective, it is not easy to perceive neither its evolution at global, regional and national levels nor its future developments. A very deep historical issue should be tackled: for the first time in a hundred years, all people in all industrialized countries failed to go to school. The statement would not be said for a century and, in several cases, for a shorter period. Such a conquest in full schooling, with certain national and regional differences, has been a historical process which started from the 19th century and has continuously been alive till the present. Consequently, adults and children alike do not have any experience of no-school, except in cases of non-enrolment or non-frequency.

During such a long period, the school has been not merely an institution for learning, but also a socializing agency for same-age children and adults. Such sociability has actually affected relationships of gender, equality, personal identity and national identity. Disrupting schooling would be introducing disorder in sociocultural ritualization networks which give cohesion to our societies and warrant conditions of equality for all which, doubtlessly, should be improved. On the other hand, historians should avoid apocalyptic or fundamentalist interpretations of the 'current time', even though they are unexpected and full of surprises.

The transference within a short time from the usual school model to the online one or to hybrid formulae between the telematic relationship and personalized tutorials makes us ponder that we are facing a revolution involving strategies, curricula and methods of formal education, with very fast, positive conquests, such as the universalization of digital innovations, the effectiveness of non-presential interaction, family collaboration, the opening of new centers and others. Several targets which took decades to mature and formulate as a desideratum were partially accomplished or were perceived as plausible expectations for the future.

What remains of the past as a response to such emergency? The strictness of subject matters for the transmission of a more flexible curriculum is a proof of the weight of tradition that conditions domestic spaces; evaluation difficulties by competences instead of by contents are the co-relationship of the former; the de-synchronization of students-teachers time deregulated timetables and work conditions of teachers and families; digital deficit increased inequalities; interfamily difficulties also reinforced inequalities

School culture is full of great inertias. Students and teachers who started from highly structured costumes and behaviors managed to find resistance and difficulties within the weight of routine and traditions of the so-called 'the grammar of schooling', even though they encountered new options to react to the crisis. The weight of the past is present in new practices and is conditioned by it.

What may a contemporary historian say to the future? Surely, we cannot be prophets, neither may we assume apocalyptic or fundamentalist stances. As it has always been for the classical period, History is the basis of prudence. The history of the school has numberless examples that reveal resistance to innovations, continuities and changes in times of reform, weight of teachers' habitus in the performance of the teaching profession, the rigidity of educational and social structures that compose the context, and even a regression to traditional forms in the experimentation of advanced projects.

Probably students and teachers will shortly return to the previous situation and to the well-known geometry of the classroom. However, they will learn that many things may change: the need to focus more on competences than on discipline codes within the teaching-learning process and assessment; many topics of school knowledge may be studied under different perspectives and within an interdisciplinary form; a more efficient, rational and critical usage should be endeavored through Internet resources; the school-family collaboration should be tightened; albeit tutorized study is a personal cognitive process. We may also conclude that a return to school is a source of indispensable social and affective learning. Let us remind ourselves that even the first rehearsals on the deschooling of society (Illich; Reimer) foresaw the establishment of skill markets and interchange networks that would guarantee children's sociability. The school is and will continue to be a public agency that goes beyond its learning dispositions and promotes the formation of citizens and the cohesion of society.

Territoriality and the right to education: South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, USA and Nigeria

Linda Chisholm

University of Johannesburg, África do Sul.

In 2020, South Africa's response to Covid-19 was swift and radical: the country was placed in a stringent lockdown enforced by both the police and military. It is as if, in 2020, the country has learnt the lessons of the great influenza epidemic of 1918. Its effects in South Africa were similar to those across the globe: "[...] high levels of mortality, a disproportionate toll on adults aged between 20–40, ineffective medical services, official resistance to preventive measures, and a subsequent failure of collective memory, except at the individual and family level" (Hardy, 2006, p. 641-43). The historian Howard Phillips (2018, 1990) has given the subject dedicated attention. He provides insights into the impact on schooling and children and argues that pandemics are a window into broader social features of a society not normally visible. His work enables a comparison of past and present that helps provide perspective on present anxieties.

Compared with 1918, when combating the disease was left to haphazard initiatives at local level, the response in 2020 is nationally controlled and coordinated through a National Command Centre consisting of Cabinet members and supported by a National Institute for Communicable Diseases. The epidemic took the country by surprise in 1918, raging for a two week period over the country and killing an estimated 300,000 to 350,000 people, fully 6% of the population, making it the fourth worst hit state in the world. Just over a century later, South Africa was well-prepared, taking advice from international organisations as well as its own scientists experienced in and by the HIV-AIDS epidemic to isolate, prepare, screen, test and trace before the virus struck. Since the lockdown, between 25 March and 25 May, the number of deaths have risen from to an internationally comparatively low 481.

In 1918, there was no uniformity in how long schools closed for, or guidelines on what to do during closure. Many schools were turned into hospitals and emergency depots, teachers were recruited to help with the sick and children to run messages and errands. Even when provincial authorities eventually gazetted regulations for the re-opening of schools, many parents refused to return their children. A century later, schools officially closed 21 days after the first identified cases. Two thirds of school-children lost access to school meals. Whether the increased Child Support Grant mitigated the effects are not yet known. Teachers and students were urged to remain at home and proceed with online learning, although it soon became clear that only 20% of the school population could do so efficaciously. If the school subject Health Education assumed a new importance after 1918, home-schooling and online learning did so in 2020.

In 1918, the entire final quarter of schooling was lost, with devastating consequences for those affected. Not only did the 'Spanish' flu leave many orphans, it also disrupted schooling with dramatic effects. Curricula were compressed to enable catch-up, whole grades were promoted automatically, complaints emerged about academic lag and the schools' medical officer lamented that schools had been closed at all. In 2020, after two months' of lockdown, the infection peak not yet reached, the Department began a controversial phased return to school by different grades and recruitment of unemployed youth and graduates between the ages of 18 and 35 to assist with screening, data capturing and safety compliance-monitoring at schools. The emphasis of contemporary official initiatives is today by contrast to try to 'save

the school year' at all costs. Advice of international agencies not yet in existence in 1918 seems to have been critical.

More important perhaps than these comparisons of differences between the past and present are what they reveal about contemporary society. The epidemic has once again laid bare how South Africa's deep inequalities structure possibility and learning. These differences have long historical roots, but the state now addressing them has a different composition and mandate to that in 1918. Even though the epidemic had swept through all communities in 1918, the new state constructed in 1910 to unite the 'white races' focused its efforts on only that part of the society. Even though local responses had revealed great cooperation and empathy among races, subsequent state action was deeply racialized, privileging white orphans through the creation of a welfare infrastructure, alongside schooling, for them. Although the long-term consequences of Covid-19 are not yet evident, history suggests that it is an opportunity for the state to reconfigure how it addresses its proclaimed priorities relating to inequality in school infrastructure ensuring health and safety as well as teaching and learning. Home-schooling and online learning have clearly not worked for the majority. Re-opening schools even when the disease has not yet peaked means the state can reinforce schooling's welfare dimensions through its school meals programme. However, it is clear from 1918 that it was not until the epidemic was over that schooling resumed. Such historical comparisons underscore how education is a site of contestation – between whose interests should be prioritized, different approaches to dealing with the pandemic, and to teaching and learning - as well as how integrally connected it is to broader international and local social events and developments.

Myriam Southwell

Directora Provincial de Educación Secundaria, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Since December 2019, I have been working at the Educational Administration of the Province of Buenos Aires, as headmistress of Secondary Education. I am, thus, greatly linked to the tensions of schooling within the pandemic context. There are three items that I would like to discuss to answer the question on the knowledge of the History of Education and Pedagogy that would help us interpret, intervene and analyze the education dynamics of the present moment.

The first issue refers to the territoriality of the educational administration with its historical roots which, as in the case of the province of Buenos Aires, has its starting point in Domingo F. Sarmiento as Director of Schools of Buenos Aires in mid-19th century when there was a need to establish school councils in town 'to create a place in which it did not exist'. It was a manner to construct a State and include civil society in political and community forms. Similarly, there was the development of capillarity through teaching inspectors at each level, in each town or district, in each region. The network of school inspectors and councils, constructed since the mid-19th century and restructured, strengthened and consolidated throughout the 20th century have been crucial within this context since we started to be aware where, how and how many students existed in a province with almost five million inhabitants, belonging to 29,000 institutions, disseminated within a territory of 307,000 square kilometers. This year, the province of Buenos Aires is commemorating 200 years of history and, within this context, the territoriality, thought by Sarmiento, and the capillarity reached by educational policies have attained an enormous centrality.

Within the situation in which we are living where we had to opt for virtual teaching, we insisted that this was not a conversion of our educational system into a type of home schooling – although the option is subscribed by entrepreneurs. We are continuously insisting that it is only an emergency option and that the school will not convert itself in an individualized service bank, but will continue to be the representation of the republic.

One should also underscore that the school is the site where we learn together. Or rather, the two terms are important, 'learn' and 'together'. Consequently, in this context, even in situations of social distancing and remote communication, we are trying to produce networks, community work, bonds with colleagues, generation links. Pedagogical imagination and the productivity of knowledge were foregrounded to develop alternatives within such a milieu.

A great deal of thought and debates are being enacted on how to continue schooling within the context of isolation and quarantine. An expression has emerged, or rather, it would be an occasion for the home to be converted into a 'laboratory' to learn measurements, weights or chemistry, in the kitchen, involving

children and young people within the context of domestic labor and care. It is an important idea even though I would like to highlight three other ideas. On the one hand, having one's home, in good conditions, sufficient for the number of people who live in it, with adequate infrastructure and all that, deepens the issue of inequality which lies at the base of our social and school exchanges. Another issue is the risk in shunning the centrality of the curriculum. The curriculum is the product of debates and struggles which have progressed within the democratization and formation stance. Putting these higher definitions on a second plane, above private interests, may make us retrocede in democracy. Putting decisions on teaching in the hands of families will not provide us with the best conditions to strengthen collectivity, the common good and the progress that should be directed towards democratization. The third aspect that I insist on is a return to the idea of the Greek *scholé*, the school is a way of having 'free time', time free from other obligations of people for whom, due to their social origin, access to information and cultural contact, was not foreseen.

In the case of the social sectors whose life seems to be encumbered by survival, the school has produced 'free time'. Within the context of the suspension of presential lessons, coupled to the need to obtain survival, this means greater risks so that young people become more unprotected in the wake of the requirements of work. Consequently, the multiple attempts to maintain the bond with the school institution – even though remote – and with students. This is the manner more bridges with schooling are being produced.

Cynthia Greive Veiga

Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil.

Within current pandemic context, social distancing and suspension of presential schooling, administrators of education firms, mayors and state governors have introduced distance education throughout Brazil. However, for the efficaciousness of such measures, the home computer or mobile telephone and free quality Internet are a must. The newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* (Coronavirus, 2020) has published data on the access to the Internet by Brazilians: 42 million people, mostly D and E classes, never accessed the Internet; 85% of connected people use the Internet by mobile telephone and with very limited packages; 70 million people have a highly precarious or inexistent access; 56% live in rural area without any access to the Internet. The Covid-19 pandemic has given visibility to digital inequality and thus deepening the unequal access to knowledge.

Art. 205 of the 1988 Brazilian Constitution says: "Education, a right to all and the duty of the State and the family, shall be promoted and encouraged with the collaboration of society for the full development of the person, his/her preparation to the exercise of citizenship and for the qualification of labor". Distance lessons have not taken into account this constitutional principle. Many governors have disregarded this fact, such as the Education Secretary of the State of Minas Gerais, Julia Sant'Anna. While communicating measures with regard to distance education for 'the return to the classroom' during the pandemic, she stated: "We are greatly optimistic on the different strategies of coverage. We are aware that not all strategies will reach all the students, but our idea is to provide solutions" (Minas Gerais state. Rede Minas will transmit classes from the state network starting in May, 2020)⁴.

Ironically, the secretary's speech abounds in historicity. What does the History of Education tell us on such a contradiction? Let's have a look at some issues, albeit briefly. Since its origin, the organization of the public school for all children is rife with inequalities. Although, as a rule, there have been time variations in its establishment, it was by the end of the 19th century that the monopolization of Education by the State was put into effect, with expenditure and compulsion. The Industrial Revolution occurred in the same century and the exploitation of child labor (due to family impoverishment) was a common practice in the West. In spite of compulsory education, many children did not go to school not merely because of work, but also because cloths, school material and food were not available. Due to this situation, a school economy was established within the hierarchy of studies, with difference in contents and school types according to the children's habitats and ethnic-social origin.

In countries such as Brazil, inequalities in schooling supply was naturalized over time and restrictive policies for the financing of public education were consolidated, based on long-term evidence, namely, low

⁴ In the state of Minas Gerais, only 50.8 out of 100 homes have broad band fixed Internet

salaries, payment delays, poorly built premises, lack of equipments, inadequate furniture and even the favoring of private initiative. It should be underscored that in society where market logic is imperative, such situations do not occur due to economic crisis, but because of a political option.

Another issue insists on the invention of new identifications for children, adolescents, teachers and family members. In the History of Education, the institutionalization of compulsory education plus access difficulties and regular frequency labeled whole populations as ignorant due to their illiteracy. Children without the proper school uniform or without school material were identified as 'poor students'. Teachers with low salaries or delayed salaries were becoming sick. We have verified that historically school inequality has contributed towards the inferiority of people by stigmatization and humiliation, favoring an increase in affective tensions between students, teachers and parents.

As a general rule, the History of Education demonstrates that there has never been a true commitment by state governors in the promotion of schooling equality through a guarantee of access and frequency of all children in quality public schools and the improvement of teachers' conditions. On the other hand, there has been a constant struggle for improvements in teaching quality and in teachers' work, triggered by student movements and teachers' trade unions. History shows us that the struggle for equality and school quality is a permanent one due to the contradictions hailing from its historical origins. We should never give up or be weakened: the school is a right for all and the duty of the State.

Andrea Bennett-Kinne & Kate Rousmaniere

Miami University, USA.

These Historic Times. Here is a joke that is broadcast on a local radio station in our community: In a somber voice, the narrator intones: 'In these historic times, the only thing you can count on is people saying that these are historic times.' The line is a joke because, since the pandemic erupted in full force in the United States in early March, popular media has been saturated with similarly somber comments about the great changes we are experiencing, how we must take care of ourselves and each other, and how (in the case of advertising) a certain product is supporting us in this cause. We are both grateful and annoyed by such efforts and by a parallel effort both inside and outside of academia to document the change. These are historic times, we are constantly reminded: so make sure to record the history. Suddenly, we are all historians, asked to record our thoughts, feelings and responses to 'these historic times.'

Even as historians, part of us just want to survive these historic times as fast as possible without reflecting more than we have to. We are reminded of our parents' dismissal of questions about living through the Depression and the Second World War—it was so awful, they would say, that they really didn't want to remember it.

And yet, we know this is a powerfully educative time period and that, as historians of education, we may be able to provide some context. As Bernard Bailyn wrote in his 1960 plea for historians to broaden their attention to outside of formal schooling, education is "[...] the entire process by which a culture transmits itself across the generations" (Bailyn, 1960, p. 1). How can a historian of education provide context to this crisis, and particularly to the changes in educative structures that we have experienced?

In the United States, the pandemic led to the rapid transition in Mid-March to online learning in every elementary, secondary and higher education institution across the country. Everybody was shocked and overwhelmed, and there was much talk of the unprecedented nature of the change to distance, digital, learning offered from private homes. The change itself was certainly unprecedented, but the concept of distance learning was not. Since the early 18th century, distance education has been practiced in one way or another across the nation—beginning with mail-in tutoring and correspondence education that relied on the postal service to deliver lessons. Distance education of this sort tended to expand the educational opportunities of women, who were otherwise restricted from leaving the home for school, as well as a growing number of non-traditional students, male and female, who were workers, and in some cases incarcerated prisoners, seeking a high school, professional or advanced certification that would offer them economic mobility (Nicholson, 2007; Casey, 2008; Barbour & Reeves, 2009; Kentor, 2015; Hampel, 2017).

Nor is the concept of schooling at home unprecedented. Before the establishment of formal public school systems in the United States in the late 20th century, many students studied "at home." Today, American children are taught with pride that President Abraham Lincoln learned to read and eventually

learned the law on his own, borrowing books and studying at home. The modern and more formal practice of homeschooling began in the 1960s, initiated both by the liberal left who advocated for “unschooling” and conservative Christians who sought freedom from religious restrictions. Both groups found public education at odds with their beliefs about childhood, learning, and the role of the government in schooling (Murphy, 2013; Reich, 2002).

The invention of the telephone, radio, television, computers and the internet added to the wave of innovative educational formats in the 20th and 21st centuries. *Sesame Street*, a public access educational program for young children that was first broadcast on American television in 1969, is a case in point (Lepore, 2020). In the early 1970s, the microprocessor furthered the ability of students to interact with instruction, versus simply receiving a curriculum via mail, radio or television. By 1985, telecommunications allowed continuing and graduate degree programs to be offered online using satellite transmission (Casey, 2008; Kentor, 2015).

Beginning in the 1990s, online learning, or ‘virtual schooling’ took on different forms including full-time online programs and schools that drew on the booming electronic industry and that provided a wide variety of blended learning models in individual classrooms, across grade levels. In 1996, President Bill Clinton stated that every US classroom would be linked to the internet and that computer literacy would be fundamental to K-12 education. At the same time, school choice policies gained momentum, offering opportunities for private, profit making online ventures in school programming (Trend, 2001; Ravitch, 2010; Watson & Murín, 2014). In higher education, the increasing enrollment of part-time and working students supported online learning. In 2018, 15%, or one in 6 American college students, were enrolled in an exclusively online learning program. A slightly higher number of students took some on-line classes (Lederman, 2018).

Debates about the value of distance, or online learning preceded the current crisis. Advocates for such programs argue for increased access for students living in remote areas, working students, and students with certain disabilities (Barnard-Brak & Sulak, 2010; Fernandez, Ferdig, Thompson, Schottke, & Black, 2016). Particularly active in the last two months are arguments that digital learning can provide creative collaborative learning.

Other argue the opposite: that online education cannot support democratic aims, and that access to online learning is limited by a ‘digital divide’ in which people in poverty and in remote geographic areas do not have reliable internet access. Virtual K-12 schools tend to be highly segregated by race and class, characterized by higher enrollments of poor and underachieving students than typical brick and mortar schools. Further complicating the debate is that policies for on-line education are often interwoven in and supported by neoliberal and corporate interest in for-profit curriculum and school management, so that discussions about pedagogy are often colored by debates over policy (Tarrant & Thiele, 2014; Molnar, et al., 2015; Hornbeck, Abowitz, & Saultz, 2019; Mann, 2019).

This history does not negate the significance of educational developments occasioned by the pandemic or the struggles of teachers and students who have had to adopt to new types of classroom work in a very rushed manner. But it may offer some context: these ‘historic times’ also have a history.

Grace Oluremilekun Akanbi

Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Nigeria.

Leaving history and history of education out of any discourse can portend grave danger for any society. All of our activities have historical root - written or unwritten. Though the past cannot be changed, it can help us to make informed decisions about today's activities to avoid the mistakes of the past. Covid-19, as it has been observed generally, is not the world's first pandemic. However, the education system has always been at the receiving end in times of uncertainty; courtesy of history that has documented the earlier occurrences and the attended effects in the society. The earlier pandemics, probably, might have stirred up the development of technology-driven education in developed nations of the world, with a lesson from history that is brought to bear on their education. It is equally important to note that the scientific research publications that have been carried out concerning Covid-19, should have drawn their conclusions and recommendations from some historical facts.

It is not on record in the historiography of the history of education in Nigeria that at times of emergencies, Nigeria planned for uninterrupted education for her citizens; schools were closed down even

during the civil war between 1967 and 1970. Though there were post-war remedial strategies by the Nigeria government to revamp the education sector. Like in other developing nations, the issue of the Covid-19 in Nigeria met an education system that is not IT-driven, as most institutions of learning had no template for online education for Emergency Response Teaching/Learning (ERT). Therefore, it will go down in the history of education in Nigeria, that her education system, has not shown adequate integration of any lesson learned from the history of education during emergencies over the years.

Learning from the past experiences of coping strategies in education all over the world, what then should be the way forward in the face of this current pandemic with no solution in sight? Historians of education all over the world have the responsibility of encouraging their various governments to develop and include emergency-related contents in the education scheme at all levels. What has happened now is an experience that has become History which should help governments all over the world to plan new pedagogy in teaching and learning. As could be noted, online/distance education, with its root in relevant historical happenings, suddenly become an imperative tool for coping with educational services in this pandemic season. This is in line with the submission by this research initiators⁵ that "School education, within the local and global conditions, have to start from the scratch and radically change its directions"

For an in-depth understanding and the assessment of impacts of Covid-19 pandemic in School Education, examination of studies in historical perspectives could help in Nigeria and other nations. Knowledge from historical surveys, comparative studies, case studies, and examination of ethnographic responses to earlier emergencies in history can adequately provide leeway in the understanding of Covid-19 scourge, vis-à-vis education or schooling.

The occurrence of Covid-19 pandemic has also leveraged the repeated calls in history by historians of education on the importance of sound education for Nigerian citizens, no matter their location. The initial reactions of some citizens that there is nothing like Covid-19 leaves much to be desired. It will go down in history as an exhibition of a level of monumental ignorance of the population due to lack of sound education. This ignorance, if not properly tracked down by mass education, shortly, could be more damaging than Covid-19 in Nigeria.

Places-spaces, times and materials of school cultures

Antonio Romano

University of the Republic, Uruguay.

In my view, the History of Education offers an interesting reading key to make an in-depth study on the comprehension of transformations that are happening caused by social confinement. In fact, it temporarily closed the door of the premises of school institutions. In the first place, I would like to highlight the historical importance of the school space in modernity as different from that occupied by the family, providing a place for children's development. Such space division and separation caused the de-bonding between learning and experience shared with adults. It allowed the emergence of teaching as a specific professional activity developed by educators which is currently placed in doubt due to the fact that the classroom space overrides the domestic one. The latter discards the teacher within the pedagogical scene and has to turn to adults that would accompany children as teaching mediators. A reflection on the genesis of spaces and the distribution of responsibilities in the History of Education may be a great asset in the assessment of the impact produced by the change from the classroom to the home.

In the second place, results, which are producing the need to maintain the pedagogical bond with the students by teachers, are underscoring the important of this liaison as a condition for maintaining the existence of the educational processes. The bond, however, always cogitated in a presential form, will have consequences within the tradition of teaching for all which the methods of the new education have already relativized. When the incorporation of the virtual mode individualizes relationships with students due to their participation in the homes, it allows the possibility of combining the 'to all' with 'to each one'. In a hasty investigation with teachers, it is an aspect that starts coming forward. Teachers may identify, with greater sharpness, moments when students do not work out the tasks through the parents' mediations and thus, teachers will start debating specific strategies as this fact makes difficult the overcoming of new

⁵ Akanbi refers to the text of the project that supported the preparation of the interviews and which resulted in the present text. [Authors' Note]

pedagogical companions. Full incorporation of virtualization in presential institutions will probably produce a sort of hybridization between the simultaneous and the tutorial methods. This will trigger a change which may be able to translate itself in forms of organization of education institutes when normality returns. In a recent article, Philippe Meirieu has indicated a similar direction.

In the third place, the expansion of virtualization is evidencing that procedures of simultaneous teaching were causing serious inequalities in students' learning, a gap which is currently becoming larger and larger. Two situations arise: a) the need for other types of follow-up that provide equalitarian scenarios for each student; b) the centrality of teachers' activity as a factor that may contribute towards a decrease in social inequality gaps which would not be transformed into educational inequalities.

Finally, the importance of school activity as an integral part of the normality in social life within the town and country should be underscored. The first measures that the government took as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic was the temporary suspension of presential activities in education institutions, although confinement strictures in Uruguay were not mandatory. Similarly, when return to 'normality' is rethought, it will be associated with a sort of planning for students' return to the classroom. In only a very few cases in the history of society the centrality of school activity for the life of the city in which it is inserted has been put in evidence.

Gizele de Souza

Federal University of Paraná, Brazil.

When Natalie Davis was interviewed by Denis Crouzet (2006) on the requirement of pleasures of history and on the construction of possibilities in the narratives of past times, she argued that within the rich and fertile work for historical analysis with a range of sources, the effort is to try to "[...] understand the world, emotions, conversation, words, gestures that define the time on which one is interested in and comprehends it" (Davis, 2006, p. 14). In current Pandemic times, the decoding of emotions, gestures and consequences of social distancing within the educational field and its relationship with the History of Education make me ponder on two possible interpretations.

The first item concerns studies on the history of schooling of children and the social inequalities in the process. The analysis of several school compositions has been greatly discussed, comprising political and social motivations of dissemination and implantation processes, institutional and professional configurations and cultures, and mechanisms and practices of the agents involved. Within this academic investment, several studies denaturalized the schooling process and the overlaying social inequalities. Which children and which schools were the focus of the debate? In current times, these themes remain strong, since it is highly interesting to know on which schooling proposals they are being forwarded in municipal and state contexts, for what type of children and young people are they designed and in what times and formats they should be organized? Within this issue, I perceive a preponderant role in studies on school form and culture. The extensive bibliography on this theme has contributed towards an understanding on the nature of the school milieu, on the specificities that the activity produces, on rites and practices that are products and producers of social relationships, the pedagogical repertoire targeted and involved in the institutions' activities and the agents produced therein and strengthen school life. The above reveals that other modes of 'being school' and 'being in the school' are possible owing to the distancing of children and young people from the physical spaces of teaching institutions to which they are bound and, at present, with the home environment. A new relational combination is formed – non-professional adults and other children not from the same school unit monitor and help in studies, other daily demands and requirements of school routines with domestic apparatuses and, in several situations, materially disfavored. What educational practices may be derived from such conformations?

The second theme which may be forwarded in current crisis is the historiographical production on the culture of school material. What has been produced in the field makes us take into account not merely the material constitution of the school but the manufacture, dissemination and use of such materiality. A type of interesting research is an investigation on school objects in use and on the constitution of practices in the home milieu, such as exercise-books, books, study schemes, lists of activities and prescribe media supports used by children and young people. The contribution of studies in this field of History is greatly significant to understand which objects are being used, mobilized and re-signified at present to attend to school requirements in experimented places and times.

Another promising aspect in the same analytic direction may be placed, namely, the comprehension of the new place of the school in post-pandemic times with regard to its materiality. Several proposals and ideas are circulating on the return of school life featuring institutional spaces and new apparatuses being used, such as masks, disinfectants, separation cabins for desks, coupled to different models of school periods (alternate days for children and young people, different grouping, not by terms, and others). However, in my opinion, the possibility does not lie in the objects in themselves (even though they reveal other and interesting social experiences), but on the logic of manufacturing and disposing of usages with objects already consolidated within the school environment within a didactic program that should be reinvented or accommodated in the context of this material presence. In a study with my colleague Vera Gaspar on world expositions and pedagogical museums at the end of the 19th century, we have demonstrated that material objects had a practical dimension and strategy since “[...] they educated for the consumption of industrialized products, besides supporting pedagogical activity” (Silva & Souza, 2018, p. 131-132). Consequently, it is highly interesting to accompany the insertion of these possible new objects that enter the school environment and manufacture and consumption network, interfaces with the State, factories and school establishments.

A final observation is required. The History of Education and especially the History of Childhood have shown us the richness of the history narrative when the participating agents are present with their honors and their problems. We have already published articles on records, memories, biography of teachers and children on their school experiences and their lives. It would be significant if in these times we forward appreciations and critiques of new modes in ‘being’ children and teachers within the context of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Alicia Civera

Department of Educational Research, CINVESTAV, Mexico.

If anything may be learned from History, surely it is the axiom that the present is past and future. It has roots and consequences and the present is constructed day by day. History helps us to de-naturalize the school from Covid-19, the school of confinement (for some) and the return to ‘normality’ within social distancing. Beyond underscoring what is happening as an exception, one should see that the treatment for current pandemics enhanced and accelerated the processes that preceded it and defined the guidelines for the school of the future. Some notes on the above will be forwarded.

The school has been one of the first activities to lay low and, in many countries, the last activity to start again. It has not been listed among the priorities and first necessities of current capitalism. Besides perceiving this fact as a strategy that removed many people from circulation, it should also be seen as the result of a discourse that in recent years has endeavored to insist on the crisis of the school which does not improve neither by international exams nor by educational reforms, which frequently puts the blame on the teachers that seem to be disposable personnel in the wake of the promise of technology. Let’s remember the fast growing movement of home education in several countries, such as the United States.

School time was also debated within the narrative that highlighted the shock of a rhythm that did not seem to harmonize with the movement and anxiety of the 21st century’s young people and children. Let us think on the growing number of young people that prefer to complete their study through the online mode and to do so within their own rhythm or, above all, those who need to do so within the rhythms of the scarcity of jobs.

Dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic through preventive confinement in the homes and through social distancing is also a historical construction (albeit not the only one), which is not a new fact in the educational field. Due to the denunciation of violence against women and children, physical contacts started to be seen as something dangerous. Instead of arguing for more and better respect within society, the avoidance of contact between teachers and students and between students themselves has been determined. Rules and even a sort of business with regard to denunciations against teachers have been developed with perverse results (at least in Mexico). Consequently, we have forgotten that knowledge and learning of skills pass through the body (Freud would tremble in his tomb) where cognition and affection gain form, and that the school’s basic task is socialization, an alternative socialization different from that of the family, based on the conviviality with others: other types of girls and boys, other types of young people and adults. We do not only speak and listen but we play, observe, smell and touch. One learns through all

the senses (not merely by sight and hearing as through the screen) in interactions that move in multiple and surprising directions, in complex and diverse relationships that escape the school's controlling apparatus.

Presence is sacrificed in the Covid-19 school and, concomitantly, works side by side, the building of Us, several possibilities of Us, raising the morality of social distancing which, in the name of hygiene, is not the mere result of a pandemic but to the primordial place given to safety in a globalized world (resulting in successful undertakings) which tries to avoid any risk (as Dufourmantelle [2015], in *In praise of risk*, has highlighted) within a type of arrogance that challenges mortality and extends youth even to the detriment of the same nature on which we depend.

The school has also been the encounter of inequalities caused by the emergence state. They accelerated and made invisible the existing and growing differences in educational opportunities: people with no access to Wi-Fi, people who do not have a home computer, people who live crowded in small huts and houses, people who do not have the aid of relatives, homeless people. Speed has also made us forget that agents who sustain education change through time: families, status, firms.

The school currently depends on private firms which have a control on the digital mode and the formation of subjectivities as a rule: shall formats of possible interactions and school contents be defined by them? For the State administration, schools are expenditure, even though a highly profitable business for private entrepreneurs. But, before anything else, the school is and should be, for all and of all.

Let us not forget the great debates when many feared that TV would replace the school and would interfere even in family life. We should not reflect on the school as a countercurrent of technology, but as an asset of what is most dear: meetings, dialogues, companionship, collectivity, the value of the writing culture, interval period for thought and rethinking oneself, to know oneself without haste. To understand, among other things, that knowledge is built and is debated socially, that we should not be merely worried on fake news, but with the several devices that, in our daily life, limit our ways of thinking and feeling, and separate us from the others. The school is of paramount importance in the construction of a better future.

Health and divergent sensitiveness in education

Heloisa Helena Pimenta Rocha

University of Campinas, Brazil. CNPq

In December 2019, the world saw in the Chinese city of Wuhan the emergence of first suspects of having been infected by a new type of coronavirus which causes severe respiratory complications, attacking the entire organism, and has been responsible for two previous outbreaks, SARs (2003) and MERS (2012). The dissemination of the new coronavirus strain (SARS-CoV-2) has put populations in apocalyptic situations very similar to those seen in scientific fiction or horror films.

Highly perplexed, inhabitants from different parts of the globe saw scenes featuring field hospitals constructed in record time, ICU beds with respirators, health professionals vested in white or blue and wearing protection masks; medical ventilation procedures; patients with tubes; people waiting for hospital beds. Compounded to such scenes, there were images of corpses, coffins, funeral cars, exhausted caretakers, rows of holes for mass burial, provoking emotions and feelings related to fear, anguish, anxiety and sorrow in the wake of the disease and large scale deaths.

To such images, there is the representation of the virus which the creators of its visual identity call 'the fatal pose' to refer to the details and individualization of the circumference surrounded by multi-color points. Further, constant updating exhibited an alarming number of sick and hospitalized people that did not resist the disease, associated to statistical data that try to foresee the risks of a fatal outcome, co-related to factors such as age and pre-existing diseases. On the other hand, the social media registered progress on tests, medicines, treatments and the production of vaccines. There also abound depositions for the unceasing work by health professionals, besides narratives of people who were cured of the disease or people who lost their beloved ones, always appealing to 'Stay at home'.

The high transmissibility of the virus and the fast dissemination eliminated funeral rites, suspended contact with relatives and friends of the dying and the dead. Health professionals worked daily to save lives and accompany people in their final moments. Several health professionals did not escape contamination, others succumbed, while others faced the challenge on deciding on life and death in the wake of full

hospitals. As in the case of other epidemic outbreaks, war metaphors were recurrent in the jargon for combating the Covid-19 pandemic, as may be seen in references to war, combat, battle, enemy, suspects, front line, and others. Besides the number of contaminated and dead people, the graphic representation of exponential growth, expressed in curve, was given, where the plateau situation would mitigate health systems, followed by appeals to a commitment in the establishment of new social dynamics. All these items were the center of concern in all spheres of society, with political haranguing in Brazil where the government tried to escape from responsibilities to 'save lives' and Foucault's terms.

In January 2020, the World Health Organization – WHO (OPAS/OMS, 2020) declared that the outbreak caused by the new coronavirus – already disseminated in 18 countries, with thousands of infected people and almost two hundred deaths in China – was an 'international public health emergence', the highest given by the organization. By the beginning of February, WHO was trying to see the possibility in reining the outbreak from a crisis with global dimensions. After one month, on the 11th March 2020, Covid-19 was proclaimed as a pandemic. In Brazil, the first case was diagnosed in February and was co-related with a trip to Italy, a country with one of the highest contamination indexes. The reappearance of historical quarantines, closing of borders, recommendations for social isolation followed the progress of the disease which, in the case of Brazil, has revealed the historical social inequalities in its advance into the peripheries of the great urban conglomerations whose populations daily experience social vulnerability and its tragic effects, coupled to more remote regions with their fragile health systems.

The pandemic scene required a series of emergences to brake the virus's rapid dissemination and protect people's lives. These measures were adopted to avoid overcrowding and guarantee social and physical distancing. As in other historical instances, the eclosion of the pandemic and health rules to avoid propagation impacted the school, an institution which historically is the privileged agency for children's socialization. The closing of schools in several countries has significant impacts on the central elements of school culture, such as spaces, time, teaching and learning modes. During pandemic, children and young people had to remain at home, with or without the follow-up of adults for the development of school tasks, whilst teachers and administration agents have tried to create new forms to maintain the commitment of the school with the socialization of future generations.

Reflecting on such a dramatic moment for the history of humanity and, as must necessary occurs, in the History of Education, it is important to trust knowledge and science, as António Nóvoa (2020) proposes in his message for the future, and bring forth the best of our imagination to 'act with urgency' and 'think of the future', especially in a country whose authorities must be reminded constantly that all life matters.

In the case of the Historian of Education whose discussions have made possible the comprehension of historical relationships between education and health and the role that the school has in the implantation of health policies, it is a moment to reflect once more on the school within the scenario of epidemics, wars, natural catastrophes, instigated by questions placed at the present moment. Such a task will make us think, within the current situation, in the future of education and the school. Surely, several pathways will emerge in the small acts of welcome and solidarity, in the daily work of educators to appropriate themselves of technological tools in the wake of present urgencies, in the unceasing work of scientists to mitigate human suffering and pain.

Marcus Aurélio Taborda de Oliveira

Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil.

In my opinion, the impacts of the new Pandemic we are experiencing extrapolate concerns with school education since, in several ways, education (or its lack) have revealed how difficult it is to face all types of beliefs, superstition, fear, lack of solidarity and sharing, when one deals with a society highlighting naturalization, trivialization of violence and exclusion in all forms, including educational ones. These range from simples issues such as the hygiene of hands, widely disseminated in medical and educational discourses at least since the 19th century, to issues on denials of rational forms of treatments, vaccines and research on the history of disease and possible cure and others. The History of Education has always revealed that hygiene has been one of the vectors of mass school expansion. This is the same school that showed that science had an encyclopedic curriculum - or scientificism – as a structuring basis, coupled to the moralizing feature which never abandoned the school, especially the primary school.

What do the History of Education and Historiography currently say on the issues? From the point of view of the History of Education, it has much to say on feelings and sensitivity, including doubts on the efficaciousness of the Western schooling project. We should ask how it is possible that, in spite of more than a century of discourses and school practices on hygiene, so many people still have to be taught elementary things on hygiene? This does not apply to Brazil alone but it seems to be an issue for the Western world. Did the school project fail? Or was it an unfulfilled promise of elucidation, as the philosopher Theodor Adorno insists? If the school has been widely defended as the place for the transmission and production of culture, one of the 'temples of reason', how such irrationality may be possible that it threatens life massively?

In other words, the History of Education helps us demonstrate that nothing is easily malleable when education is concerned. This is applicable to those who defend the school and other educational instances and to its detractors. Sensitivities are historically shaped through the encounter of our body with the world through the senses. If the formation processes imply that people are acknowledged in their relationship with the world, with others and with themselves, we should pay more attention to the polysemy of the term education. We should see educational possibilities as a kaleidoscope which may not lead us to the place we intended and wished to go. As Edward Thompson (1998, p. 18) underscored on the effects of schooling on the poor masses in England, it was an "[...] acceleration motor and cultural distancing". It is a truism that education may do something, but not everything. The History of Sensitivities demonstrates that, perhaps, the formal processes of education may do less than imagined, such as political sensitiveness studied by Pierre Ansart. This may also apply to health, the valorization of reason, cooperation and even solidarity. They are all questioned currently.

Therefore, from the historiographical point of view, we have to investigate more plural educational experiences and, particularly, their results. This does not amount to deny the strength of discourse, legal dispositions or prescriptive rhetoric in history, but to comprehend how different persons and social groups reacted to attempts for formal education, such as the school. Sometimes, they are against and sometimes they are in its favor. And how did they educate themselves in spite of constantly insisting on the positivity stance in 'educating'.

The path between research in the History of Education and school reality may lie in the tension between divergent 'sensitivities'. For example, discussing how, since the 19th century (and even before) several populations have doubted, questioned and were against what was considered certain and 'scientific'. Or questioning how a type of historical experience (on health, disease, death and others) extrapolates the individual place in society since it is also full of racial, religious, gender and class issues. Researching, making inventories and sharing historical experiences may help us to see that, in determined circumstances, fear, despair, indifference, hate, but also, solidarity, reciprocity, 'walking together' form a mosaic of what we are, against the homogenizing and standardized logic fabricated by the State or by other control entities. In other words, the History of Education of senses and sensitivities may help us understand how people are influenced, and also the different responses given to the affectation that the world produces in us, either in a Pandemic, relationships with disease and death, manners of (re)invention of types to stay together and share the world. One may also add memory which acts in the present and (re)elaborates the past, perhaps contributing so that the future may be lived on a more rational basis, albeit with greater solidarity and cooperation.

De-schooling, old innovations and present time between impositions and resistances

Marc Depaepe

University de Leuven, Bélgica; University de Latvia, Riga, Letônia.

Towards a 'deschooling society' thanks to the Corona crisis? A piece about the Corona crisis. After two months of lockdown, it was bound to happen.⁶ Not only virologists but also other experts from various backgrounds are now giving their opinions on this subject every day. This time an educational historian, who is not very inclined to go along with historiographical trends that want to draw lessons from the past.

⁶ The reflections are based in Depaepe (2000) [Authors' note].

As I have been able to demonstrate several times, I am a big fan of the intrinsic value of historical craft. If history has to 'serve' for something else, it usually ceases to be history. A fortiori that applies to educational historiography. Anyone who delves into the history of our field will recognise that the so-called pedagogical heritage was often used – if not misused – to underpin certain contemporary programmes, which has led to all kinds of one-sidedness, skews and gross generalisations.

Moreover, the turning points announced with much fanfare in history do not appear to have had as drastic a character as their promoters had hoped. This may be the case with multiple methodological 'turns' in historiography itself, but it is much more if one looks at the concrete content of the history of education. In retrospect, almost all of the pedagogical innovations that have emerged over the years have shown little change in people's educational behaviour or the organisation of schools. Known in this respect is how many child-centred attempts at renewal on the so-called 'grammar of schooling' have failed. As I have shown about the development in Belgium, teaching is dominated by several persistent patterns of action that leave little room for the implementation of a 'new' school, such as several progressive and creative educational reformers since the last quarter of the 19th century suggested. At the most, their 'innovative experiments' have resulted in some adaptations of the 'old' school towards a more 'modern' (but no less schoolish) school. The basic concepts of what was meant by teaching in the broad mentality and reality of the pedagogical life weren't affected. Ultimately, the same applies to many 'new' didactic tools that education has embraced over time: from school radio to school television to computer class... they did not really cause a 'disruptive' innovation.

Which brings me seamlessly to the question: is the Corona crisis, which has been forced to promote all kinds of digital education due to the temporary closure of the schools, capable of causing such disruptive innovation? And, therefore, realising a kind of 'deschooling society' for which Ivan Illich laid out a blueprint in the 1970s: a society in which the prominent role of the school is exchanged for the network of the 'self-motivated learner' who decides how, what, and from whom he/she learns and in which – how visionary a person can be – the computer plays an important role?

Honestly, I don't think so. And for the same reason as most pedagogical innovations have not been successful in the past. The emancipatory premises that usually underlie them – focusing on the child, youth or young adults at the expense of teacher or subject matter – did not match the assumptions of 'modern', i.e. neoliberal society. This gradually developed according to a different logic. Although today you repeatedly hear that society will no longer look like it used to after the Corona crisis, it is still questionable to what extent humanity will be prepared to give up the myth of 'the self-perpetuating progress' (as long as it is not forced to do so by some ecological disaster [which Illich also warned] that could be much more serious than a pandemic, because no vaccine can help in that situation...). In many cases, back to (the new?) normal will be back to business as usual again, I fear... Incidentally, apart from the fact that it takes place in the 'digital space', using computers in education seems to be more for preservation than to encourage a move away from traditional teaching methods. The 'home teaching' by suddenly enlisted parents revolved around 'teaching packages' and assignments from the school. The focus was not the 'learner' but the 'subject matter'... Not to mention the social exclusion that all this has brought about, because it certainly hasn't narrowed the gap with the poor. On the contrary.

In short, I don't see an immediate change in the illusions touched on by Illich (1971, p. 28, 13) such as “[...] children need school [...]” and that “[...] most learning is the result of teaching”. And even though, from a social point of view, the pursuit of a more humane society remains vital, schooling may not need to be overhauled immediately. Even in its historical form, it has been of crucial importance for the informal and social development of people. Despite its pronounced disciplinary character and the many alienating objectives of various political-ideological programmes, people were able to rise above this with education and training. Autonomy and emancipation as an unintended side effect of schooling? Here too, the history of education seems to contain more continuity than discontinuity.

Diana Gonçalves Vidal

University of São Paulo, Brazil.

In an article published in the journal *Histoire de l'Éducation*, in 2013, Jean-Luc Le Cam asked whether the History of Education is a discipline in historical research or an auxiliary science of pedagogical activity. In his conclusions, he stated that the History of Education

Highlights the structural permanence and the capacity offered by a combination of complex factors, narrates the inertia of social restrictions, but also the fertility of cultural changes. Due to the distance in the observation of the past, a critical and historical approach opened to other social sciences finds the exercise field which allows the return to the present with a less wary gaze (Le Cam, 2013, p. 123).

Ten years previously, debating on the nature and the statute of the History of Education, Richard Aldrich enunciated the three commitments of the historian of Education, namely, people of the past, our own generation and the search for truth. He refused the existing distinction, current among academics, that attributed to historians the task of reconstructing the past in the light of the present, whereas he understood that, in the case of historians, the evocation of the past would be just a lesson to be applied to the concerns of the present (Aldrich, 2003).

The problems raised by the question of current interview are not new and reappear persistently under the pen of the histori@ns of education. Owing to its interdisciplinary subject matter, the History of Education balances within the injunction of the dispositions of two fields: History and Education. However, at the present instance, pandemic times, they emerge, with more vehemence, to investigate how historiographical reflection in Education may contribute towards the interpretations of challenges faced by society. I would like to mention two recent publications through which I would like to discuss the issue.

On the 27th April, I published in a page of the Institute of Brazilian Studies of USP a podcast titled *Cinema educativo e internet: novas formas de ensinar e aprender* (Vidal, 2020), in which, referring to the Covid-19 pandemic and the stimulus that the online world confers to the achievements of new teaching forms and the extravasation of the classroom space, I dealt with the introduction of educational cinema in schools in the 1920s and the discussions within the educational media of those times. On the 7th May, the *Jornal da USP* published an article titled *Zoom meeting e tempo escolar* (Vidal, 2020), where I pondered on the relationship between social time and school time at the present moment, dealing with debates on the theme within society, retrieved from investigations on the Fernando de Azevedo (1927-1930) and Anísio Teixeira (1931-1935) reforms in the capital of the Republic.

I think they are examples of the capacity of research within the History of Education to have in-depth discussions on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in school education and on the relationship between school and the social medium. In fact, they demonstrate how educ@ators, parents and students cope with such disruptive situations in day-to-day schooling and how they are able to reinvent things from novel demands. They also illustrate the ways these agents resist the contingencies of the present and negotiate responses to social and educational situations with what they encounter.

Responses were not homogeneous. On the contrary, they evidence the historical moment as something constructed contradictorily within the struggles between social and economic groups and within the different representations on the school and its social function defended by them.

I am not intending that the suggestions of yesterday may satisfy today's appeals. I would rather insist that historical information in Education will make us perceive experience as a constant tension between impositions and resistances, underlining the immense human capacity of reinventing experience and revive the comprehension that significance and the practices of the schooling process of the social stance were and continue to be the object of discussion by several groups and sectors of society. Therefore, we have to question the supposed stability of school education projected on the imaginary for the pre-pandemic period and reconstitute its permanent state of crisis.

Maria Teresa Santos Cunha

State University of Santa Catarina, Brazil.

I believe that we will be able to deepen research in History and Historiography of Education by employing possibilities opened by theoretical-methodological tools of the History of the Present Time. The emergence of a new regime in Historicity (Hartog, 2013) since the 1980s is of paramount importance, or rather, a new method in perceiving the relationships between past, present and future. The suspicion that the past is not an example for the present and the disillusion with utopias, that would have a place in a promising future, have led the historian to be interested in the present time without discarding the weight of the past.

This mode in thinking broadens towards the notion of 'layers of time' suggested by the German historian Reinhart Koselleck. Through metaphors for the theorizing of time, Koselleck loaned the word 'layers' from

Geology, or rather, the different layers that, one above the other, form rocks. He suggests that, by comparison, historical time is also foregrounded on several time layers which are not incompatible or fixed, but which co-exist or juxtaposed and move in a permanent 'adjustment'.

Metaphorically relating time and space, Koselleck (2014, p. 19) provides the historian the proposal that "[...] permits the analytic separation [and interrogation] of several temporal planes in which people move, occurrences develop and presuppositions of longer durations are investigated [...]", in other words, the manner such different layers constitute the 'present'.

Time layers or experience layers which remain or modify themselves according to their own speed coexist in the present and make the historian ask: How many pasts make the present? How much past makes up the present? Taking into account time as the historian's prime matter, the issue on the 'amount' of the past that inhabits the present allows us to investigate, within the texture of human experience, the continuities (permanence), ruptures (discontinuities) and re-significations that pervade the present of our research objects constituted by the pasts which remain.

Methodologically, it is the role of the historian to investigate the different layers of time to observe occurrences in its layers, layers placed one over the other that go back to distinct temporalities and thrust this new historicity regime in which the present imposes itself. The relationship between the past and the present and future is not merely temporal, but continuous, with layers of meanings. In such an approach, we should take into account that temporal notions were relativized and the perception of several temporalities in which events are inscribed legitimizes its meaning as a past that remains, plagues the present and goes between overcoming and resistance in a movement that one may see multiple temporalities in a single object.

When one deals with educators' personal files, I consider them as places in which time layers accumulate. They are layers of experience that remain and modify themselves, through current research, at their own speed. It is the present that is a sort of guide and leads the acts for the analysis of the protected.

Experience in the treatment of personal files that guard a particular experience of agents have plagued life in the present and affected the 'space of experience' as a place to preserve the past and which is concretized in the present within several modes. Rousso (2016, p. 18, author's note) characterizes it as "[...] a past which has not finished [...] in which the subject of the narration is 'still here'". These experiences have equally demanded questions that opened the *horizons of expectations* which, in the present, target the future and interfere in the activities of men and women of our time, influencing their fears, interpretations and dreams, desires, hopes and, consequently, the way one researches and writes History.

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