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CALL FOR PAPERS

Public schools for educational transformation in the Knowledge Society

Escuelas públicas para la transformación en la Sociedad del Conocimiento

Thematic Editors

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Scope

Whilst learning is central to most understandings of what it is to be human, we now live, it is commonly understood, in a knowledge society where being educated defines life chances more than ever before. Increasingly researchers question the provision of education, especially on secondary level, as developed during the last century. Education systems in most countries around the world face challenges in addressing increased complexity in processes of learning and diversity among the student population. In the transition to the 21st century, voices from many different fields have stressed the need to explore ways and models of transforming this system, so it can be more inclusive and engaging, addressing the inequality of conditions among learners and the challenges of the Knowledge Society.

Transformative education has become a core term in grasping both possibilities and tensions in creating new trajectories for student engagement and participation. Most initiatives of change have been defined from top-down as political reforms. We rather draw attention to bottom-up initiatives for innovative

practices. Our interest is about how such initiatives also point to more complex issues that go beyond school and education. In several countries there are examples of public schools that have important impacts on students' lives, their families and communities. Providing more autonomy for schools and conditions to make decisions and implement changes could have a potential to transform the society.

Three issues will be of importance for this special issue. First, we look for contributions that address how schools connect with the young people's lives, their communities and other institutions, with the objective of generating spaces where all students, with different backgrounds and knowledge, can learn together. That is also why we are preferably interested in the public school system, because it relates to all students with diverse backgrounds. Approaches like the learning lives, the funds of knowledge or the personalized learning share this interest of understanding better how to provide opportunities for all young people to learn in more meaningful and contextualized ways.

The second issue is about how to create more inclusive schools, by generating awareness of the inequalities (socioeconomic class, ethnicity, gender, religion and functional diversity) that affect the students' opportunities to learn. The objective here is to receive contributions that show that this goal is not only about respecting diversity, but also about providing opportunities for all students to become citizens that promote relationships based on respect, recognition and care, and find out which are the tensions involved in this endeavour.

The third issue is how to understand and use digital technologies in educational environments with an active, respectful and critical perspective. The dominant discourses and initiatives of digital inclusion are focused mainly on the use and the acquisition of digital devices, and on the development of digital competence. Nevertheless, some schools are starting to use the potential of digital technologies to trigger transformation and therefore, it is of great interest to collect cases that illustrate the possibilities and obstacles faced by the drivers of these initiatives.

Finally, the objective of this special issue is to gather research from around the world, based on empirical data from public schools, where the grounds of the current educational system are being contested and questioned. We search for innovative and anti-hegemonic initiatives, that might inspire the design of an education system formed by environments where all students can participate, learn and experience belonging. The call pays special attention to research conducted in public schools that address contradictions and diverse tensions, since the purpose is not to collect idealized portraits of schools. This is a call for research that looks at the consequences and limitations of schools' initiatives, to find out what kind of contradictions are faced by educators, politicians and citizens who want to transform the educational system and make it more inclusive and democratic. We believe that it is in these contradictions that we might find the key questions for future developments.

Descriptors

- Initiatives promoted by public schools to transform the educational system.
- Educational challenges of the Knowledge and Information Society.
- School practices connected to learning lives and funds of knowledge of young people, their families and communities.
- Public schools engaged with social inclusion and the provision of educational opportunities for all students.
- Potential of digital technology to transform society.
- Students engagement in school activities.

- Democratic and collective values in society and schools.
- Initiatives to identify and question inequalities related with gender, class and ethnicity.
- Power relationships and participatory dynamics in schools.
- Critical and decolonial perspectives of the curriculum.

Questions

- What are the contradictions faced by educational actors who want to design a school based on democratic and collective values?
- What kind of school cultures generate opportunities for young people to identify and question social inequalities?
- How are digital technologies used in schools with a transformative goal?
- What school practices allow all students make sense of their daily lives?
- What initiatives are oriented to generate relationships in schools based on respect, recognition and care among all?
- What dynamics get to participate and engage students from different background, gender and class?
- What school initiatives provide opportunities to learn for all students?

Thematic Editors Profile

Dr. Ola Erstad, University of Oslo, Norway

Professor and Head of Department of Education, University of Oslo, Norway. He is an internationally leading researcher with a focus on digital literacy, but firmly rooted in the wider social and cultural context of learning beyond the technological aspects. His areas of expertise are learning, technology and education, children and youth in modern society. He has been leading several national and international research projects and is part of several international networks and committees. Recent books are “Learning Beyond the School. International perspectives on the schooled society” (Sefton-Green & Erstad (eds.), 2019, Routledge) and “Learning Identities, Education and Community” (Erstad, Gilje & Sefton-Green, 2016, Cambridge University Press).

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