

Editorial

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What has changed, what remains?

When news about what was happening in China began to circulate in December 2019, we were far from imagining how this – which as we would later learn was a new virus whose spread would be declared a pandemic – would change our lives. Our everyday life, our ways of socialization, and our relationship with public spaces were to undergo dramatic changes.

In particular the school, that central social space for the actors of education, would be disrupted as the place for the shared experience of schooling, as a space for contention, meeting, recreation, learning and construction of identities, would suddenly vanish despite the fact that *new* technologies have been present in the classroom for over two decades. Although schools moved into virtual environments – since the unanimous consensus has been that education must continue – the material absence of the classroom created a feeling of loneliness and nostalgia for the encounter of peers and teachers, and also became an opportunity to learn. For almost one year of virtual education, the homes and even the workplaces of parents or young and adult students have become spaces for school work. That is, when it has been possible to continue school work at distance, because once again we have been confronted with the evidence that we live in highly unequal societies in which not everyone has access to digital platforms, where many families do not have enough screens and many children and where many young people cannot count on the accompaniment of parents or tutors who can provide follow up to their education under these circumstances.

This sudden interruption of classroom work and the forced move into distance teaching presents us with the opportunity not only to understand that the presence of *new* technologies in education is here to stay, but also to reflect on the changes that it implies: its repercussions on the contents, the teaching, the transformation of the time and spaces of the school, the new demands it places both on students and on teachers, the new ways of learning and of living as a whole, and the latter as a core element: the kind of learning that is generated when we are together.

According to UNESCO, due to the health contingency caused by the coronavirus (SARS-CoV2) pandemic, children, young people, and adults stopped attending classes in elementary and secondary schools, high schools, universities and other educational centers all over the world. The learning processes of more than 1.5 billion children and young people in schools has been

interrupted by the pandemic and forced to move into isolated spaces. In Mexico, more than 37 million students had to stop attending school. Schools were closed, and in many cases the conversion to education at distance was rushed, without the conditions and training it required. What has been changing because of this? What is happening to pedagogical communities? How have students and teachers experienced the closing of their spaces for pedagogical encounter and communication? Does this prove that school as we knew it is a thing of the past? How are children and young adults learning at home – when the minimal conditions for such learning exist – through a screen? How do they experience the absence of a space for recreation and their dependence on household spaces?

The alteration that the pandemic has brought about in education, not only with its displacement to virtual environments through the use of *new* technologies, its implications for pedagogy and teaching themselves, the virtual experience of teachers and students, the increasing intervention of families, and the stress on social inequalities, but also with the vigorous capacity for agency of the actors of education that has emerged during the pandemic, are some of the issues that we consider it essential to address.

It is for this reason, because we believe the contingency is a crisis of considerable proportions that has a direct impact on education, that we celebrate that doctor José Manuel Corona has coordinated this issue of *Diálogos sobre Educación*. We are thankful for the rigorous and punctual work that made Issue 22, “Education and pandemic. Educational practices and challenges in the times of COVID-19”, possible. We hope it will contribute to an essential debate on our current reality.

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Editor