

## Introduction

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Our main topic brings together texts that address research on the educational challenges faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. Some of the concepts reviewed offer important knowledge and experiences on virtual learning environments, situations experienced by teachers and students of different levels and systems, online education and its transformations, creative practices brought about by this health emergency, knowledge that emerged from communicative experiences, and didactic resources that helped cope with the pandemic.

This issue of *Diálogos sobre Educación* features fourteen articles whose main focus is to reflect on the multiple links between education and pandemic. They prioritize especially empirical approaches and experiences of application in the different environments of education. The sections "Otros artículos" and "Debate" include four more articles as well as reviews of a recently published book and an organization in Peru, for a total of twenty texts that help and provide tools to better understand and reflect on the times we live in.

The first contribution is a text by Miguel Ángel Urbina on the challenges to physical and mental health created by the world emergency that began earlier this year. It addresses the implications that social isolation might have on the wellbeing of children and students. The article's main focus is on the psychological effect of social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially on young children. The author suggests systematizing scientific literature to analyze the negative effects of social isolation on children, and offers recommendations for parents and professionals to help safeguard students' mental health.

It is followed by an article by Erick Hernández and Oscar Valencia, who wonder how students are spending the time of the pandemic, a key issue to understand the tumultuous times we have been living through this year. The aim of this text is to share knowledge on the strategies, motivations and practices that have emerged during the lockdown. Its methodological strategy included applying surveys, recording observations, and conducting semi-structured interviews with a sample of undergraduate, masters' degree and doctorate degree students. Some of its main findings point to the apparent adaptation of educational contents and practices to environments mediated by information and communication technologies.

The third article was written by Ulises Delgado and Fernanda Martínez, who conducted a review of the virtual learning environments adopted by universities due to the lockdown. It is an empirical text based on a questionnaire that explored the effectiveness, usefulness and use of Virtual Learning Environments (VLE). The results show some differences between informal

and personal environments and the formal ones used by institutions. Thanks to the number of participants and their profile, the questionnaire offers interesting hints on how to build and apply an instrument to a sample of different but comparable subjects.

In the following article, Uriel López Marques discusses feedback as a pedagogical tool for basic level students and as an opportunity to improve the conditions in which learning takes place through the use of a technological application. Feedback is seen as a fundamental tool for learning and for the achievement of different educational goals. The author's research is based on views on feedback from a Learning and Visible Teaching perspective as an important element to follow up on students' progress. The methodology used has a mostly qualitative perspective, with semi-structured interviews and participant observation to access the situations experienced by the students.

In the fifth text in this issue, Alexandro Escudero Nahón conducts an interesting review of the educational narratives of the pandemic. It is an analytical and descriptive text on what was and has been the response of different academic institutions to give continuity to their education. The text documents systematically the different responses of a number of Mexican bodies in virtual forums and seminars created with the express purpose of attending to the adverse conditions created by the quarantine. Escudero's review included an analysis of the official websites of higher education institutions, as well as online forums and seminars recorded on video. His conclusions are relevant to understand the emergency's evolution and its implications for academic continuity, as well as the definition of public institution policies.

Nali Borrego Ramírez, in her text "Panorama del OrgWare de la educación virtual en tiempo de COVID-19: Países de América Latina y el Caribe", reviews the components of the OrgWare during the months the pandemic has lasted. Her methodological approach is creative because she uses a combination of strategies with a modality that prioritizes the use of grounded theory. Some of her results reveal that teachers' digital competencies are not sufficient in already unequal contexts of connectivity and different levels of experience.

In the following text, a group of Cuban scholars offers a detailed analysis of the transformations that took place at the University of Matanzas due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The article shows different transformations in the context of the adaptation that higher education institutions have had to undertake not only from an institutional perspective but also through a view that gives voice to other relevant actors of education, and accounts for the huge efforts made by academic institutions to incorporate students into actions to provide direct attention to the population in this emergency, as well as to validate their social practice as part of the disciplinary knowledge to be achieved in their respective major.

The article "Prácticas creativas en contextos educativos desiguales. Un estudio con docentes argentinos en tiempos de COVID-19" by Romina Elisondo, María Fernanda Melgar, Rosana Chesta and Marcela Siracusa, describes an exploratory study that analyzes the creative teaching

practices implemented during the social isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, conducted in Argentina between March and April 2020. Their methodology involved the application of an online questionnaire to 140 teachers, whose data was analyzed and systematized through the Atlas.ti software. The authors propose four relevant analytic categories to organize their results and reflect on the data obtained. Their conclusions show that teachers construct creative practices that allow them to fulfill their commitment to education in uncertain and unequal contexts. It is also remarkable how this article clearly favors the construction of knowledge about the relationship between education and creativity as an essential link in contexts and periods rife with uncertainty.

The ninth text, by Betzaida Riascos and Pastor Benavides, offers a very interesting reflection on the relationship between information and communication technologies in the context of the transformations and challenges the pandemic has brought upon to educational systems. From a qualitative perspective, they analyze the repercussions of COVID-19 in the academic activities of teachers and students of public education institutions, and describe in detail the changes that took place in teaching activities as well as their implications in the transformation of their teaching and learning processes.

The text “Interacciones en el ecosistema educomunicativo ante la pandemia del COVID-19: caso de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación de la UATx” by Diana Corona and José González identifies from a qualitative perspective the conditions under which students and teachers face the experience of out-of-classroom education by describing the interactions of the environments that make up the educommunicative ecosystem in which a number of educational actors have been working. The authors analyze an educommunicative ecosystem characterized by socio-emotional, logistical, digital, communicative, and pedagogical environments.

The eleventh text in this issue, “La realidad como mito: el contexto de las universidades ante la complejidad posmoderna”, an essay by Guillermo González, is an approach from the perspective of institutional change and the generation of utopias and dystopias as myths that provide certainty to higher education institutions to reflect in detail on the limitations of traditional education and how it has been surpassed by the urgent need of a virtual and digital educational model that makes it possible to ensure the continuity of education from a critical and efficient perspective.

The next text, by Ivet García and Ruth Bustos, offers partial results of research on competencies of self-regulation of learning. It is a methodological proposal based on a qualitative perspective that articulates the principles of participative action-research and the genetic method developed by the historical approach in the framework of grounded theory. The results offered are constructed through the problematization and active participation of learners in the generation of viable alternatives, highlighting the analysis of the learning difficulties faced and the mediating actions that make it possible to develop self-regulation to take on educational challenges during the pandemic.

The article “El diseño de recursos didácticos digitales: criterios teóricos para su elaboración e implementación” proposes an argumentative dialog on theoretical criteria that may be taken into consideration for the design and implementation of digital didactic resources. It is an updated discussion on the modalities of *e-learning* and the need to work more thoroughly on virtual and face-to-face education to cope with the challenge of a pandemic. Verónica Pérez-Serrano underscores the importance of theory as a body of relevant knowledge to create and implement digital resources for basic education.

A text written by Zaira Navarrete, Héctor Manzanilla and Lorena Ocaña rounds up the main topic of this issue of *Diálogos sobre Educación* with a proposal for the implementation of a model for Basic Education at Distance that seeks to answer three questions: Is it possible to structure a permanent project of education at distance for basic education? Would the distance modality allow for greater inclusion and coverage? Is it viable to establish the distance modality for primary and secondary education? The proposal presented in this article seeks to offer students more coverage and support despite the adverse circumstances under which many of them live.

The section “Otros artículos” includes three texts that offer relevant reflections on the field of education, especially in regard to methodology, professional practices, and the teaching and learning process.

The first article in this section presents an instrument to diagnose processes of inclusion in education oriented to teacher training. The authors argue that this instrument has proven to be significantly relevant in its contents and highly reliable. For those interested in the educational processes that are part of teacher training, this text will be very interesting and useful.

In “Valoraciones de las prácticas profesionalizantes del sector informático del nivel superior técnico”, Ana María D’Andrea, María Paula Buontempo and Federico Butti worked with an international sample of three Bachelor’s degree programs to analyze the professional practices of technicians, administrators, teachers, students, and alumni. They reflect on the idea of educational policy as a process of social construction shaped by a field in dispute among different actors or groups who intervene with different resource, interests and assessments.

The last text in this section, “La configuración de la enseñanza y aprendizaje de la historia como campo de conocimiento”, presents an analysis of the shaping of the field of research into the teaching of history. The authors’ review also focuses on the description of and differences between historical education, whose main interest is the development of historical thought taking into account local contexts, and research into the teaching of history, that reviews the production of knowledge in the framework of social science.

In the section “Debate”, the reader will find a text that reviews the central postulates of Media Literacy. José Manuel Corona’s proposal updates the main premises and objects of study of the field, and also suggests a number of questions and dualities that show the importance of Media Literacy in the educational context of the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020.

Finally, the two reviews that complete this issue of *Diálogos sobre Educación* offer very interesting ideas about the complex times we live in. Cristina Palomar Vereá writes on *La dictature des identités*, by French thinker Laurent Dubreuil, while Andrea del Pilar Riestra and Carlos Enrique Huarcaya share with us a review of the Misky Wayra organization that, with an interdisciplinary approach, has been run by scholars and students to offer proposals and carry out ludic and creative actions in favor of children in Lima, Peru since 2015. In the complicated context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the authors describe the organization's ups and downs as well as the strategic actions they have implemented to protect their children.

This issue of *Diálogos sobre Educación* has been conceived and constructed in the hope that our readers find in its articles a degree of certainty, some reasons for hope and a few relevant experiences to help them understand and reflect on the complex circumstances that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to our societies. Let it also be a token of our admiration and support to all those who, in one way or another, have made and contributed their greatest effort, willpower, and energies to make the health crisis experienced in 2020 cause the least possible damage and help us create a better future for all of us.