



CREATIVITY

TRANSFORM EDUCATION, CHANGE THE WORLD

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TRANSFORM EDUCATION, CHANGE THE WORLD

1st edition
São Paulo
Ashoka / Alana Institute
ISBN: 978-85-99848-36-4
2019







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The **Changemaker Schools Program** is an initiative of Ashoka, the first and largest social entrepreneurs' community in the world. Based upon the belief that everyone can be a changemaker of society, the program envisions the school as a special place for fostering experiences that can promote people with a sense of responsibility towards the world. Children and young people who are willing to take on an active role in the face of necessary changes, in a variety of social contexts, with the support of tools and skills such as empathy, teamwork, creativity and changemaking.

The program began in 2009, in the United States, and since then it has spread through 35 countries. It currently has a network of over 270 schools, 21 of which are based in Brazil. Here, the initiative was launched in September 2015, in partnership with Alana Institute, a non-profit civil society organisation (CSO) with its own programs and partners that seek to guarantee full conditions for the experiencing of early childhood.

After a careful review process, schools are invited to join a community consisting of several key players who share the view that everyone can be a changemaker. This group includes social entrepreneurs and other leaders of the social field, as well as journalists, scholars, government managers, and young changemakers.

This co-lead community sees children and the young adults through an integral perspective of development, in which body, emotions and reason are not separate, all being essential for the constitution of free and independent people, capable of establishing empathy in

their relationships to search for solutions that can better the world, now and into the future. The experiences and paths trailed by schools and other members of the **Changemaker Schools Program** community inspire and help to expand the social demand for this kind of education and society.

By recognizing, promoting and connecting Changemaker Schools, between themselves and to the wider communities, we seek to help enable these school teams to establish themselves as leaders of a deep transformation in the country's educational scene and abroad.

More than just replicating a new program or curriculum, here we are talking about a fight for changing the mindset and views over education. We are also talking about creating and promoting, together, a new benchmark for education, helping the whole of society to understand that today's complex and constantly changing world requires that children and young people grow with the ability to exercise empathy and other skills that allow them to become agents for positive social transformations.

For this, the program promotes rounds of talks and debates, organizes publications, connects and promotes engagement between the co-lead community and various partners, such as government institutions, press vehicles, education schools, as well as trade unions, associations and movements within the field of education, early childhood and youth, so that together we may build a world where everyone is a changemaker.

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FOREWORD

*Abdalaziz de Moura, David Silva, Fernando Leão,
Maria Amélia Cupertino and Raquel Franzim*

Crea[c]tion, crea[c]tive, crea[c]tivity... the act of creating, in its very essence, means action. Hence, just as life itself, creation is generated through movement. Ever since mythological ages, the creation of the world (cosmogony) reflected from two standards of action: harmonic or conflictive, the latter being more prevalent in ancient civilizations, which were subject not only to the challenges presented by natural phenomena, but also those presented by organization as a group, a society. If conflict was the rule, at those times, for the creation and development of anything, nowadays it's no different.

Faced with a scenario in which education is still in need of some room for the construction of personal and collective meaning, where plurality (liberality) of ideas, practices and pedagogical concepts seem to be threatened once again, the co-lead community of Brazil Changemaker Schools Program placed its bets on making a book from the democratic exercise of its network, regarding the importance of creative problem-solving to overcome challenges posed by education and society. It is this *Creativity: Transform Education, Change the World*, the third book in a series about changemaker skills, following *The Importance of Empathy in Education* and *Change-making: The Power of the School Community*.

This publication was born out of the national Changemaker Education gathering held in August 2018. At that time, the program coordinators organized shared experiencing on creativity, seeking to nurture dialogue and exchanges among their network. One of these experiences was a roundtable on creativity which meant to lay the very basis for the editing of this book. The group that gathered at that time came up with the idea of organizing an Editorial Committee, comprised of representatives from the Changemaker Schools, who would work side by side with the program coordination, along with a guest editor, to facilitate the process. From this committee, also came the group who wrote this foreword.

Our first task was to determine the issues on which the articles would be focused. For this, we took into account the network's contributions in the appraisal of previous publications by the program, and the main topics raised in the meeting's roundtables: the expansion of the concept of creation beyond the areas normally considered "creative," especially arts; the view that creativity is not an individual gift or quality, but rather a

skill for problem-solving that can – and should – be cultivated in schools; creativity's social and cultural dimension, and its political and ethical aspects; its cognitive and emotional character and its relationship to issues of authorship and autonomy.

In those debates, the cases of absence, challenge and revolt when faced with an adverse situation were seen as factors that generated creative processes and answers. On the other hand, both in these exchanges themselves as well as in the later discussions held in the committee, there was concern that creativity could be taken over by market logic, which tends to reduce it to a factor for adding value to products and services, including pedagogic ones, which can undermine its emancipation potential.

Once the five core themes which make up for the sections of the book had been defined, there was still the matter of deciding which authors would contribute to the book, based on these discussions. We tried to draw from the widest possible range of people and groups who could offer varied points of view, prioritizing those who had not taken part in previous publications, and reserving others for the fourth and last volume of the series, which will be focused on *teamwork* skill. Thus, we engaged forty-two people, men and women, including students, teachers, school citizen-sector leaders, researchers, and university professors. In other words, a much representative mixture, gathered from twelve Brazilian cities, of nine different states, and from all five regions of the country. To strengthen the work of our network of networks we also activated a changemaker school from United States. Our team was completed!

Carlos Brandão opens the book with “Some Steps on the Path to Another Education,” a provocative and poetic text. Rubbing some salt into the schools’ wounds – the logic of competition, accelerated learning pace, repetition... – the author demands for bolder curriculum and pedagogic concepts. He remembers that there is an invisible mass of people that, for being in subordinate roles, really need our “labor as educators.”

Next, moving forward on the theme of “Complexity, Interdisciplinarity, Ethics” of creativity, Rodrigo Mendes invites the reader to think about an inclusive perspective for education, reporting on experiences carried out from North to South of Brazil. “Creativity: A Powerful Catalyst for School Inclusion” is based upon two cases and

elaborates on the existing creative potential of young people (with or without disabilities) for problem-solving and social commitment. It also highlights the benefits of teaching practices when they are truly aiming for inclusiveness.

Closing the first section of the book, we have “Ecology of Resistance: Educational Experiences from ‘Vila’ School” which presents Ecosystemic Pedagogy, developed and exercised at this institution in Fortaleza. In Patricia Limaverde’s accounting, we can appreciate the way in which, at this school, creative processes are present all around, starting from the school curriculum, which is structured in a transdisciplinary manner around three “axes of care” – care for the individual, for the environment, and for the social medium – and implemented in spaces called “life experiencing laboratories,” like the live pharmacy, the vegetable garden, and the fruit orchard.

“Hands-on Learning: When Engagement Boosts Creative Changes within School Space” opens the second part of the book, which is dedicated to “The Creative Process.” In this text, Simone Lederman, Rita de Camargo and Paola Ricci, founders of the ‘Catalisador’ Institute in São Paulo, share experiences that have been carried out in public and community schools, in which they applied the proposals of Creative Learning. In the “catalyzed” actions, we see how imagining solutions for daily problems and working practically to solve them can strengthen the power of creation, both at a group level, as that of the person’s independence.

In turn, “Exploring the Knots in the Wire: Learning to Navigate Complexity and Uncertainty in Solidarity with Children” has been developed by Susan MacKay, from Opal School, in Portland, United States. It presents an interesting experience from the international network of Changemaker Schools, an example of the early childhood’s gift of interactive thought. It regards how the manipulation of a simple piece of wire brings about unique discussions among the children about issues such as identity and personality, offering the educator a key in order to overcome theoretical impasses.

To complete the section, “Creative Girls of (Con)Science” features an inspiring interview with a charismatic trio of Bahian teenagers who took part in the Brazilian Design for Change School Challenge 2018. Their project, known as *Minas na Ciência* (“Girls

in Science”), seeks to give greater visibility to female scientists. Íris Vitória, Maria Jilvani and Vitória Oliveira explain how the research they developed, and their publicity actions, have affected their own lives and that of their community, thereby expanding world view and self-conscience.

Opening the group focused on “Emotions and Languages,” we have the article “Brasilia-Manaus-Barcelona Connection: Acknowledging Children, Investigating Concepts, Reinventing the School,” which was established based on an interview conducted by Raquel Franzim, coordinator of the Changemaker Schools Brazil program, with the ‘Vivendo e Aprendendo’ (“Living and Learning”) Pro-Education Association, from Brasilia, represented by Pablo Martins and Wilma Lino; and the Municipal Early Childhood Education Center Hermann Gmeiner (Manaus, state of Amazonas), represented by Lucianny Matias, Maria Estela dos Santos and Zilene Trovão. Levindo Carvalho, a professor at the School of Education of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) – during a research stint in Barcelona – completes the group. This conversation revealed to be particularly enriching for the discussion on the concept of primary schools, their relationship to the community, and tensions between planning and spontaneity, among many other issues.

“The Web of Feelings,” by educators Tairine Matzenbacher and Taís Russo, presents an experience carried out in the ‘Amigos do Verde’ (“Green Friends”) School in Porto Alegre, state of Rio Grande do Sul. The authors of the study defend – and through their practice they prove – that self-knowledge, acknowledgment, and feelings expression are essential for an environment that facilitates new ways of being and coexisting.

In the collage-text “Anchor with Wings,” five students from the ‘Âncora’ (“Anchor”) Project, in the county of Cotia, in Greater São Paulo, talk about their discoveries, transformations, joys and pains



within a process of teaching and learning about life, both inside and outside the school. Enzo Nicolau, Luana Fonseca, Mariana Reis, Mariana Santino and Sofia Reis exploit the horizons of creativity from a very personal standpoint, one which outlines a search for more authentic and fuller “being in the world and with the world.” Moreover, we have a bonus here! Enzo shares the poem “Hey!,” an intense word play on learning and unlearning to be which amount to growing and the arrival of youth.

Entering the section on “The Power of Cultures and Memory,” we have the opportunity to get to know the ‘Odé Kayodê’ Multicultural School, from the City of Goiás, through the eyes of its founders, Robson Max and Rosângela Souza, and those of a former student and now educator, Renata Falleti. Their article “Multicultural Education: On the Roads to a Celebration Pedagogy” reflects on the values that sustain the ethical and political engagement in favor of a multicultural education, highlighting the role of “party” in this concept.

“I Got 99 Problems and School is Most of Them: Bodies and Voices in an Intercultural Education” is an incisive article by teacher Priscila Dias, who stands for decolonized education based on interculturality, questioning the acquisition of writing which disregards the *voiced cultures* inherited by young Afro-ascendants.

Next, “On the Thread of Memory: CIEJA Campo Limpo and its Timeline” brings together important reflections by Eda Luiz and Diego Elias, managers of the Center for Education of Adults and Young People of Campo Limpo (São Paulo city), alongside Paola Russano, the pedagogical coordinator, and Karen Carreiro, an Art Teacher, regarding the construction, consolidation, and expansion of a school which is a world reference when it comes down to democratic and inclusive education. Based on the report of a recollection of collective memory process which put the CIEJA-CL community in motion by the time of its twentieth anniversary, it shows the bases of a school culture which cultivates the expansion of freedom and creativity together with a sense of belonging and mutual care.

Ending the section, Leila Sarmento, from the ‘Nossa Senhora do Carmo’ School (Bananéiras, state of Paraíba) shares, in “The School of Our Dreams,” a sensitive report on

the consolidation of the school's ideals and, primarily, the struggle to maintain its core values and proposals in the midst of adversities. A historical account of the constant creation and re-creation of a school based on careful listening to the statements by different groups and collective dreaming.



Following, we have the story of creation of the 'Confisco' Network for Peace in Belo Horizonte (state of Minas Gerais), as told by Sandra Vicente, Maria Luiza Viana and Rosane Corgosinho. The authors tell us about the intense and conflicted social conjoining of different actors, including the Anne Frank Municipal School, to promote peace culture and defend the community's fundamental rights. It is a clear example in which creativity arises in response to a problem that affects everyone and generates embryos for public policy.

Closing the section on "Dialogues with Public Administration" and the book itself, "The Wind and the Vessel of Creative People: The Importance and Risks of BNCC," by Cesar Callegari, addresses the National Common Core Curriculum from a special viewpoint, that of one who's responsible for leading the project within the National Education Committee. Amid controversies involving the construction and implementation of this project, permeated by the fear that it could curtail liberties, Callegari points to the creative potential that it entails and indicates possible paths in which education professionals may democratically rework the curricula under the new standards and regulations.

It is important to note that, in many of the articles brought together in this book, one requests the recognition of the role played by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire in the process of "changemaker education." Far from being the only or the main theoretical reference of the schools as presented here, it comes as no surprise that, at a moment when his libertarian legacy is being cast into doubt, Freire is hailed as an inspiration when we consider creativity as a principle of emancipatory action based on conscience and autonomy. The patron of Brazilian education stands for the view that an own-thinking thought, rather than an outside-enforced thought, is fundamental in pedagogic

processes. In this regard, our book is strongly based on Freire's views, as it brings about this attitude. The texts we have gathered here are not boxes of certainties and absolute opinions. These are movements, experiences *of* people carried out *with* people. Freire is strongly questioned also for this reason: as he always invites people to reconsider and to look again, to read in greater depth and in a more critical fashion, and to recognize the dialectics of experiences with its subjects. It is movement, not stagnation.

We do not intend to offer answers or ready-made recipes here, but rather instigate readers to think a bit and move out of their comfort zone. Yes, this book also invites for action! The invented paths, the solutions created, the innumerable ways of being, coexisting and taking part in this world are all present in thoughts and experiences, whether within or outside the school, as narrated in this publication.

We hope you appreciate the texts and thus feel inspired to share your viewpoints, experiences and militancy, to get more people involved in an education in which empathy, changemaking, team work and creativity are core values for positive transformations that every student, educator, school manager and family are able to promote.

If you see yourself in this movement, please also feel welcome to share your experiences and thoughts with us. At the end of the book, there is an open space for these annotations, which will be regularly shared by the program through its networks.

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1. COMPLEXITY, TRANSDISCIPLINARITY, ETHICS



Some Steps on the Path to Another Education

Carlos Brandão

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We well know that, to a large extent, it is decrees and standards within “government policies” that drive much of the educational activity we carry out. However, we can trust that in our hands and minds of teaching professionals there is much of what we may dare to share with our students in our average day, between the classroom itself and other sceneries for teaching-learning work activities. Here are just a few bold and feasible suggestions

1 We can decolonize education from pedagogy and, even more, from “pedagogism” that does not dialogue with other ways of feeling, thinking, and practicing the vocation of teaching-and-learning. We can take a bold stance of refusing to allow education to be thought of as merely the bridge between science and technique. We can relativize its chief meaning of a late and limited choice focused on the scientific-didactic - which is resolved in the “prosaic,” as pointed by Edgar Morin - in the name of a more balanced vocation, also poetic-dialogical. Or even *poietic*, as Humberto Maturana puts it. We could learn to *poietize* education and *poetize* the school.

2 Let us dare to *de-rush* learning. Let us know how to delay learning-to-do in the name of living-to-be. Dedicating more and better time to slow and humanized progress through school years, and opening more time for the poetic in opposition to the prosaic; for dream and reverie in opposition to the conceptual (as in Gaston Bachelard); for the amorously dialogical in opposition to egoistic monologue; for the *poietic* = the construction of poetry-of-the-self in the person of each individual student, in opposition to the *pragmatic* = mere instruction of individuals to produce only... things.

3 We can re-establish the right to improvise, to the unpredictable, to the creative, rowing against the pre-established, the predictable, the predicted. We can conspire against the mechanization of teaching, like that which is established on strictly pre-assembled and packaged course programs. Let us know how to resume the lessons and dialogues established from fluid scripts, to be constructed in the middle of class or talk.

Let’s dare to question the increasing primacy of “Data show classes,” learning how to make creative use of computer resources, in the name of creative knowledge, drawn

up at the moment of teaching-learning. A *co-knowledge* with full right to improvisation on the part of the teachers and the pupils.

In this way, we may rediscover how to resume lessons in which speech from everyone who partners constructs its own knowledge, instead of reducing it to a mere repetitive piling up of ready-made information, not open to debate creation and the discovery of the taste of knowledge in the happening of learning and teaching.

4 Let us have the courage to abolish, or reduce as much as possible, competition and contests. School is not a sports stadium, neither education is an Olympiad. To put aside, or even scrap entirely, all competitions, and especially all form of ranking, in the name of a school of sharing and collective constructions, mutually solidary and not comparable in terms of hierarchy and scale.

Let us know how to relativize competitive individualization, in favor of a cooperative individuation. Let us know how to abolish or reduce exclusive awards (where only three fit on the podium), the “honors board,” “first places,” and the utter silence reserved for “all the others.”

When will schools and education assign value and awards to those who show most solidarity and “openness to the others,” to the most cooperative and capable of team dialogue, instead of loners who are obsessed with their exclusive individual performance and medals?

After all, do we want to produce machine-men who serve the powers of the market, or true humane people who can build a generously humanized society?

5 We may also rethink pedagogy as the art of creation, generation, sharing and circulation of knowledge. Like the territory of open meeting, to challenge people, and groups of people, to learn and integrate learning, and to collect information in a way that is merely complementary and accessory to personal and collective buildup of knowledge. Let’s not forget that the learning is to create knowledge together-with-my-other, so that after I internalize my personal part of a co-knowledge built in solidarity.

To resume the path that goes from information (that which is acquired and accumulated in a manual and instrumental manner, without any reflection or sharing) to learning (that which is internalized through reflective and critical dialogue with others), finally reaching knowledge (that which is only created in shared situations, and which flows between everyone, without being owned by anyone).

6 Therefore, let us dare to re-center the teaching-learning process, focusing on the “happening of learning,” re-positioning it inside collective lives and on the pedagogical experience of creation-among-us. To turn the classroom and its classmates into a co-learning community. A small and lively community centered on the person’s work-with-others, rather than on the egoistic effort of one individual-against-the-others, separate from the team, the class, and the small and thriving community that knows what it learns... and that learns what it builds.

7 We can relive the learning experience as a kind of work which is also based on reminiscences, on memories of what is live and has been lived; on the interaction of shared memories with what is happening here and now.

Let us know how to work so that the teaching-learning process focus originates not only from a concrete-abstract, dominated by the teacher and subordinate to a program’s routine, but that it may also be something well alive and remembered in and between personal and interactive situations, as they are lived and thought of by the pupils, from the experience of focal moments in daily lives.

If this has already been experimented, for many years now, through therapies that intend to start out from and to reach the heart of people’s inner lives, why not do the same with education? After all, here we are thinking of an education that can only intend to be integral and transdisciplinary if it takes, as its starting point, the personal-and-dialogical nucleus of each and every one of its participants.

However, for this to be achieved, we must remember that whoever the student-person in front of me may be, I am in front of a personal, unique sacred and unrepeatable source of one’s own experiences, senses, sensitivities and knowledge.

Comprehended from the inside outwards and setting out from oneself, the “worst of my pupils” is a sage-of-him/herself.

8 Without any fear, let us know how to relocate the focus of education on what used to be called “spirituality,” “inner life,” and “a personal and interactive quest for that which is good, beautiful, and truthful.”

Why is it that these deep and ancestral values of humanity’s path on planet Earth seem, today, to be something “of the past” in times where the efficiency of the moment, competent shallowness and the disposability of everything and everyone seems to colonize more and more space of our own... inner life?

9 Let us know how to deeply relativize the growing trend to functionalize education so as to qualify the competent-and-productive, in the name of our vocation as educators, centered on re-humanizing education for the making of the creative-conscience.

Let’s dare to change education’s focus towards a constant dialogue between the co-learning community and not only the useful and available information – like “functional English,” to learn how to speak to machines and businesspeople – in the name of an overflowing and challenging knowledge – like learning English to read Shakespeare and Robert Frost.

We may dedicate less time to dealing with fragments of instrumental-poetry, to teach functional-grammar to rushed students, and dedicate more school life-time to working with more profound grammars and philosophies of ideas, in order to create attentive and fervent readers of Brazilian authors and philosophers like Cecília Meireles, Clarice Lispector, Marilena Chauí and João Guimarães Rosa.

10 Let us learn to build in practice, rather than only on transdisciplinarity symposia and congresses theories, the interactions and integrations between art, philosophy, spirituality and science, on equal terms.

Let us know how to prepare educational curricula in which music recovers its role and place in the classroom and has a dialogue on equal terms with mathematics; where dance dances with geography and both create territories of life, rather than that of information about life. To let poetry be one of the reasons to teach “the national language.”

Let us have the courage to abolish, or reduce as much as possible, competition and contests. School is not a sports stadium, neither education is an Olympiad.

If necessary, we may learn with Leonardo da Vinci, Gaston Bachelard, Roland Barthes, Antonio Candido, Heitor Villa-Lobos, that art is not just a kind of idle knowledge for recreation or para-educational activities. Indeed, art is another form of knowing. It may come to be a form of knowledge as humanly deep as lesson from sciences. Sciences that, the denser and the more challenging they become, get closer and closer to mystery, philosophy and art.

11 Let’s dare to take the integrations and interactions between different kinds of knowledge beyond the mere “transdisciplinary.” Thus to open ourselves to the wholeness and the complexity of “world wisdom.” To take very seriously the proposal (forever incipient, always in bits) of a multiculturalist education to the limit. A place where there is an effective border-of-dialogue between scientific-knowledge (Western and academic) and other-knowledges. Every other knowledge.

We may accomplish this feat following from the assumption that any other kind of wisdom, coming from any other culture, is not so much a “curious and interesting way of thinking and living;” it is in fact, in itself and for-us, an original, interactive and complex source of lessons regarding the world and life. Other types of knowledge, other sensitivities, other cultural creations regarding the understanding of the humane, of life, and the world we live in: just different, but in no way unequally “smaller” than what Western scholar cultures have produced.

The knowledge from Cambridge and New York present a greater threat to our happiness and our very survival than those from the Aymara and the Guarani.

12 From the traditional knowledge and wisdom “coming from afar,” let us learn how to calm the education down a little bit more, how to make pedagogy more serene and to have a pause in didactics.

Maybe the classrooms’ buzz and the school’s violence would be reduced with the inclusion of “doing nothing” moments in schools. Moments for serene creativity in which everyone is given the right to be in-themselves, indulging in serene meditation or learning with Tai Chi lessons. Lessons where no one competes with anyone, and each one collectively harmonizes with all the others. To bring over practices intended to calm down the spirit and make the body more serene, from the inside out, to the very center of the school.

Could it be that much of what makes our classes “aggressive” and our schools “violent” comes from the fact that we are bringing in to the school that very same logic, the same rush, the same exhaustive competition, the same ethics (or pseudo-ethics) and the same competitive-competent sensitivity from the market-world which colonizes us and that, day in and day out, threatens to colonize all the spheres between society and education, between education and the school, and between the school and each of its inhabitants?

Let us pay attention to not turning integral education into something that, instead of integrating creative people, further disintegrates restless individuals through an accumulation of full-time activities, rushed and competitive.

13 In its most radically human and therefore transformative sense, let us know how to put politics back at the very center of school life. Firstly, politics in the sense of taking care of the *polis*. When we talk about a citizen education, this is what it is: learning, through experience, of the co-responsibility for highly participative and collective management of the destinies of local human groups, communities, the city, the nation, and the whole world.

Secondly, politics as a way of sharing the process of transforming people – the awareness-building as Paulo Freire puts it – to create, also from the school and

starting in early childhood, human beings with feelings and knowledge of freedom and autonomy, and hence of sharing, participation and active and solidary co-management of the processes through which the worlds of our lives and our destinies are transformed.

Let us remember: education does not change the world; education changes people; people change the world.

14 Thus, let us return to the idea of dedicating a humanistic and radically integral education to the vocation of qualifying conscientious-cooperative people for the humanizing transformation of society, rather than competent-competitive people for the reproduction of market and capital logics and power.

An education that goes beyond merely “inclusive.” An education which gives priority, yet and always (or for as long as it’s necessary), to serving the “disinherited of the Earth and the land.” An education which steers clear of the powerful people and is directed at the poor, those who are excluded, at the people and at our peoples, after all. May our labor as educators be preferably aimed at these people.

15 Let us learn to bring back to the school, and to education at large, the daily practices that, in their different scales, go against the knowledge, values and powers of capitalism and the mere world of business. To link integral education to processes led by social and popular movements which take part in fronts to fight against inequality, exclusion, the accumulation of wealth, and the exploitation of work and working people.

Let us dare to open the school, first and foremost, to its surrounding-territories that I prefer to call the “welcome community,” which is more of a sociocultural space than just the geographic area where the school is placed.

Then, let us know how to welcome people inside the school and how to dialog with old and new ways of living life, like the solidarity economy, voluntary simplicity, and popular fronts for social action.

16 Let us know how to dare to take leaps and to fly towards beyond. And let us also know how to start this pedagogic-poetic daring by divesting integral education of the masks which show it as “schools where pupils stay all day long.” Or as something that only slightly humanizes and integrates values and elements of an education dominated by the business world logics, intended to reproduce and reinforce the power of capitalism.

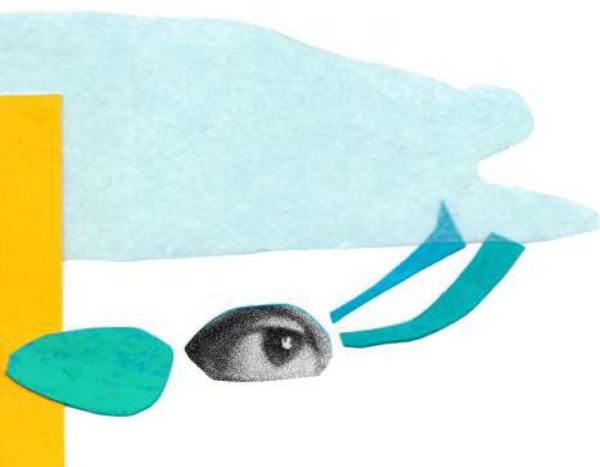
Based on daily practices, to think of the concrete terms and the practice of libertarian education, an education that seeks to construct itself as a place for the creation of new and renewing forms of interactive solidarity, and of a truly humanistic and humanizing form of socialism.

17 Let’s know how to return education to a vocation which is, in fact, culturally more “natural.” At a time when screens and electronic connections seem to move the reality of the world away from the experienced life and into the virtual sphere, let’s dare to learn to resume the paths of genuine nature-sharing-experiences.

Maybe it is now time for us to think – among so many innovative theories of teaching – whether the school should not try to be more like a Scout camp rather than an Internet-surfers Lab.

18 Finally, let us remember through Sartre that “what they did to us is one thing, what we do with what they did to us is something else...”

To start from the premise that, in fact, if we wish so, we are, and we’ll be, together with our heirs-teaching-students, those who shall have responsibility for the continuity and density of our work to transform our own lives, our destinies, and also the current and historical worlds in which we have shared our lives and destinies.



19 We must remember, at the end, that there will only be “another possible world” when, step by step, within and in between us there is another possible human being. In addition, this other more humane and humanizing human being will only come into existence when we know how to create another possible education, which is poetically human and humanely integral.

All of these “possible” depend on ourselves, much more than we ourselves imagine.

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Creativity: A Powerful Catalyst for School Inclusion

Rodrigo Mendes

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Give the pupils something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking; learning naturally results.

John Dewey

“What can I do to teach André physics?” Bruno asked himself, on welcoming his new student. André was blind and had just joined one of the High School classes at Professor Nagib Coelho Matni School, in the outskirts of the Northern Brazilian town of Belém do Pará. Bruno decided to rely on the creative capacity of his pupils to find answers. How can one talk about light, colors and formation of images to someone who cannot see? This was the challenge taken on by the teenagers who, after discussing some of the options, decided to produce materials that would favor the studying of optics concepts through touch.

After the pupils formed small groups, the first step was to conduct an Internet research on what already existed with regards to teaching physics to visually challenged people. Coming to contact with the work of specialists such as Eder Pires de Camargo, Jorge Adonai Coelho Brasil and Simone da Graça de Castro Fraiha¹, pupils developed their repertoire on the use of non-visual resources, and then proceeded to the phase of materials creation. They were starting from the principle of using recyclable and low-cost supplies. In addition to participating in one of the groups, André was responsible for the quality testing of each product, evaluating

1. These are all physicists who have dedicated themselves to this issue: Eder P. Camargo, a professor at the São Paulo State University (UNESP), was the first blind person to become an Associate Professor in Brazil and is now regarded as a specialist in this issue; Jorge A. C. Brasil, a professor from the Federal University of Pará (UFPA), addressed the issue in his final course essay, “Proposals for the teaching of physics to visually-challenged children” (2004); Simone Fraiha, also a professor at the UFPA, has inclusive approaches to the teaching of physics among her main lines of research.

its achievement in the goal of providing optical phenomena's understanding without a need for sight.

To teach image formation in flat mirrors, for example, the pupils created a "scale model" with a square wooden base, atop which two identical dolls were placed, facing each other, at opposite ends. The base was divided by an acrylic plaque, placed vertically at the center of the scale model. One of the dolls represented the real object, and the other the virtual image formed in the flat mirror. As a way to simulate rays of light between object and image, the students connected the dolls through four crocheted lines, tied to different body parts. These lines would go through the acrylic barrier, by crossing through holes. What caught Bruno's attention was the sophistication and efficiency of the materials that the class had invented. With the same level of complexity, other solutions were produced for the lessons on refraction, light dispersion, color formation, white light's composition, and image formation in concave mirrors.

It is important to mention that this experience² led the students to surpass the boundaries of physics, arousing their interest in significant issues for contemporary life, such as equality and respect. One of the questions raised was: "Who should take responsibility for making sure that André learns physics? The State? The school? The family?" In search of grounds to sustain a possible answer, the pupils conducted researches, read articles, and watched news reports. In this way, they developed actions which show a genuine process of appropriation of knowledge, in line with Dewey's reflections quoted in the epigraph above.

During this project's development, Bruno tried to encourage his pupils to take the lead over their own learning processes, whetting their curiosity and sharpening their researchers' glasses, both at the individual and group levels. According to Bruno, "from the educational project's initial concept through to its final material production, the entire creative process was carried out by themselves."

2. All the experiences mentioned in this article have been published and can be accessed through the website diversa.org.br.

The above-mentioned case shows the importance of creativity as a competence to be honed within the school environment. In addition, it goes to show the immense engagement potential of young people, when they are invited to draw up proposals with regard to social causes, such as the inclusion of differently abled people. It is also worth remembering that one of the ten general competencies³ established by the 'Base Nacional Comum Curricular' (BNCC, "National Common Core Curriculum"), a document designed to be a guiding light for the establishment of curricula used by primary school systems in Brazil, makes a direct reference to this issue. Given its relevance, could it be possible for us to identify fundamental conditions for the blossoming of creativity?

In 2010, on visiting the head office of Project Zero⁴, I was surprised at the quality of the collection of research studies on human creativity produced by this organization. As their object, many of those researches chose to study the phenomena observed in children that are experimenting some artistic form of activity. According to Howard Gardner, one of the project founders, early childhood is spontaneously filled by the ability to create. Many artists, such as Pablo Picasso, had already pointed this perception. In this regard, in the role of educators, we need to seek ways to keep children's minds and sensitivities alive. Instead of enforcing fixed routes that emphasize the memorization of certain information, schools should also encourage expressions

3. BNCC's second general competency: "To exercise intellectual curiosity and to resort to scientific approaches, including processes of investigation, reflection, critical analysis, imagination and creativity, for searching for cause, producing and testing different hypothesis, formulating and solving problems and for the creation of solutions (even technological ones) based on knowledge from different areas."

4. NCC's second general competency: "To exercise intellectual curiosity and to resort to scientific approaches, including processes of investigation, reflection, critical analysis, imagination and creativity, for searching for cause, producing and testing different hypothesis, formulating and solving problems and for the creation of solutions (even technological ones) based on knowledge from different areas."



of creativity, at all education levels. For this to be possible, Gardner highlights some ingredients that he considers essential, like challenging students to solve problems, to expose them to risk and to tolerate mistakes. According to him, if we are not incited to it, we will hardly get a chance to be creative.

It seems to me that nowadays there is a certain degree of consensus on the fact that the reproduction of the teaching standards that have prevailed in the world over the last centuries is not enough for us to achieve an inclusive education. In fact, those old standards are incompatible with this concept of education, making it more difficult to well receive children and teenagers who don't fit into the fantasy mold of "normal student," the reason for which they provoke such strangeness. We are therefore faced with the urgency of distancing ourselves from the traditional one-size-fits-all model, instead investing in the diversification of pedagogical practices. So, when we talk about the importance of creativity, we are not regarding the students alone.

In 2016, I had the opportunity to get to know, from close by, a project for inclusive Physical Education, created by educators at Terezinha Souza School, also in Belém. Out of the 750 elementary students at this school, twelve had some sort of difficulty or disorder of the autism spectrum. Having been encouraged to rethink all the traditional sports disciplines, aiming for the object of ensuring that all students take a part in the class, teachers Itair (Physical Education), Nazaré (Art) and Lena (Specialized Educational Support) chose tennis as their starting point. In other words, the project came about with a concern for involving professionals from different subject areas, with the support of the school coordination. To introduce tennis to the pupils, the team presented some videos on the traditional version and the one on wheelchairs. Next, the students were asked to make racquets and balls using materials of daily school use (cardboard pieces, different kinds of paper, crepe tape, etc.) and to experience the movements of this sport.

Seeking to better exploit the issue of sustainability, the team took the group to visit the Oikos Project, an initiative of the Federal Institute of Pará dedicated to encouraging the culture of recycling. On these occasions, the pupils were able to make

racquets out of reusable materials, such as Styrofoam and PET bottles, and to take part in theater activities related to environmental education. Seeking to adapt the physical premises of the school, teachers instructed the students to divide the sports court into “mini-courts,” markings the floor with chalk. This arrangement’s main purpose was to make it possible for many people to play at the same time. The nets were made from sisal and nylon, attached to PVC tubes, which were slotted into tires offered by a local car mechanic.

In the role of educators, we need to seek ways to keep children’s minds and sensitivities alive.

Having been named as mini-tennis, this game was played in doubles. The rules were flexed to make sure everyone could play. For example, players were allowed to serve in different ways, from anywhere within the court, and in addition the ball could bounce as many times on the ground as necessary, for the student to reach it. Instead of worrying about score, students concentrated their attention on carrying out the movements, each one in its own singularities. Replacing the competition aspect with a more cooperative approach led to enthusiasm, fun, and greater union of the group.

Several important aspects come to mind when we pore over this project: the multi-disciplinary approach, which combined knowledge from different areas; the educational perspective which explores the territory, extending well beyond the walls of the school, which was reflected in the coordination with Oikos; the coherence which each item was planned with, showing the team’s clarity in regard to the principles of an education that values differences. Together with these qualities, another point that warrants special mention is the notable creation skills shown by the teaching staff, as manifest from the mini-tennis invention.

I have observed this virtue in schools from all five regions of the country. In Belford Roxo (state of Rio de Janeiro), a teacher, challenged to lecture on the moon phases to a highly heterogeneous class, developed an experiment using a solar system representation made by a team of makers from Styrofoam balls, a mobile phone and a selfie stick. In Fortaleza (state of Ceará), the team produced a musical based on the story of the Lion King, in which the leading part was played by a child with disorder

from the autistic spectrum. In Cuiabá (state of Mato Grosso), the team managed to promote debates about complex matters, such as the difference between the integration paradigm and that of inclusion, from a context of discrimination that arose from among the students themselves. In Belo Horizonte (state of Minas Gerais), an English Language teacher managed to overcome socialization difficulties showed by some teenagers, by identifying the passion that one of them had for music and sorting to the use of one of his favorite band's lyrics for teaching grammar. In Cianorte (state of Paraná), educators established a wide range of actions aimed at discussing issues of prejudice and bullying, contemplating six different school disciplines and giving the students an opportunity to exercise the role of educators of their classmates.

In addition to their inventive ability, these different experiences share an extremely relevant characteristic: they benefited all the students, i. e., promoted a better education for each one of them. It is interesting to note that the elements pointed by Gardner as favoring student's creativity seem to make sense for teachers as well, especially the problem-situations posed by the challenges of welcoming diversity. Apart from these, could some other factor be considered common to all the experiences above-mentioned?



According to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, a psychologist who devoted much of his research to understanding creativity, for it to translate into concrete actions, the environment in which its author is situated must, at some level, want or defend the newly proposed ideas. In other words, these ideas must be regarded as usable and valuable. Such reflection is coincident with my perception that school administrators' attitudes are also a decisive element for the school to open itself to innovations. In all the most emblematic cases of inclusive education that I have known to this day, school management always showed a clear commitment to ensuring the rights of differently abled students, and exercised leadership in spreading this agenda to the whole community. In certain cases, the manager himself or herself showed creativity in shaping the solutions with his or her team, the surroundings and the public administration.

We are living a moment in which creativity is no longer a strategic issue just for people working in areas such as science, technology, communication and entertainment. Nowadays, creativity is a significant issue for many other fields, like that of schooling. So that it may be able to flourish, we need to intentionally insert, into the daily activities of education institutions, challenges to be engaged by students, educators and managers. This corresponds to making some space for risk, mistakes, and innovation. The school for everyone, that which we dream of, can only be materialized if it takes up creativity as a powerful catalyst for carrying out its honorable mission.

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Ecology of Resistance: Educational Experiences from 'Vila' School

Patricia Limaverde

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With much attention, we have observed the globalized and globalizing world, with its own ideology that penetrates social structures, pasteurizing different cultures and traditions of the countries it impacts, standardizing the fundamental values of their societies, homogenizing language and individuals' conduct. More and more, the economy has proved to be the driving force that guides social institutions. In the case of the conventional school institution, both in it and through it there is the spread of social codes that feed the reproduction of societies' automation, with a focus on the market.

Characteristics such as the fragmented and decontextualized school curriculum, the organization of students in confinement spaces, teachers training also fragmented and decontextualized, the pressure to score results, not only on students but on teachers as well, among many other aspects, tend to enhance the school's utilitarian character - which demands to focus mainly on training atomized individuals, aimed at compliance with targets and deadlines.

More than transmitting any subject matter, this type of school teaches a way of operating in the medium, i.e., it perpetuates our modern society's structural codes, both fragmented and fragmenting.

Usually, skills like autonomous thinking and to be critical, together with creativity and coexistence in diversity, are not developed within school. On the contrary, curricular structures, the architecture of classrooms and of the school as a whole, evaluation methods, and the very school routine incorporated as a habit followed by everyone, are all standard aspects of a conventional school that restrict the development of those skills.

Schools use to teach attitudes such as submission to authority, conformism, competition, discrimination, consumerism, and the willingness to exploit other people and to use natural resources in an imprudent manner. And, strangely enough, these values are more effectively taught than any subject matter.

At a collective level, individuals who have been "well-educated" in this way make up a society based on competition, exploitation and consumerism, along with



discrimination and social stratification. In this context, fragmented disciplinary view deprives the individual from developing a systematic and relational view – which would allow to see the whole without losing sight of each singular element, and to develop full social relationships – leading to atomization. The interdependence that is inherent to the human condition, both biological and cultural, is not acknowledged by such individual. In this way, mistrust in social relationships is fueled, just like competition and the surveillance of others, opening even more space for valuation criteria that are strange to culture itself. Thus what was originally shared by all members within a traditional community starts to be put aside, in favor of hegemonic valuation criteria, of general value, dictated by the imperatives of the most treacherous economic efficiency.

Without a liberating education, as Paulo Freire puts it to us, which can nurture the development of critical thinking, creativity, and coexisting in diversity, democracy becomes fragile, just as traditional knowledge, arts and particular forms of cultural expression become volatile.

Today, Brazil experiences a historical moment in which basic human rights, like free expression, are under threat. However, we must not forget that any historical event is co-constructed. One person alone cannot stage a revolution, nor can it proclaim war, free a nation, or impose dictatorship. All our individual actions are socially constructed, while at the same time a society's historical drifting is also effected by its individuals. Education lies at the center of this society-individual continuum: our collective and personal choices have a lot to do with the values and the conduct patterns that are spread and encouraged at school.

Based on this understanding, and discomfort in face of the expansion of a conformist and homogenizing educational model, 'Vila' ("Village") School proposes Ecosystemic Pedagogy.

Founded in 1981 in the city of Fortaleza, in the northeast of Brazil, the 'Vila' School sees itself as a social system intermixed with others, stemming from the idea that there is no such thing as a neutral social system. Conventional schools that refuse a

clear, propositional, critical and contextualized social engagement, those that have the sole goal to comply with curricular grids also work, even if involuntarily, to maintain a passive, non-critical and amorphous society. Against such tide, 'Vila' School promotes an imbricated and conscious vision of the role that the educational social system plays as a generator of spreading conducts, seeking to develop autonomous thinking, creativity and coexistence in diversity.

Transdisciplinarity, complex thought, and systemic vision form the theoretical framework of their ecosystemic education.

Transdisciplinarity stems from the understanding that there is a hidden curriculum, beyond the boundaries set by academic subjects. It opens us to an emerging confluence between the different types of knowledge of the arts, traditions, and science. It warns us to the fact that no one culture is located on a threshold of privilege from which it can declare superiority over another. Transdisciplinarity highlights the importance of corporeity and imagination in a curriculum and in knowledge production, questioning curricular hyper-specialization.

Complex thought implies an approach that allows us to envision the blind spots of given knowledge. Through the lenses of a systemic view, complexity considers the relations between the whole and its parts in a way that the whole can be larger and,



at the same time, smaller than the sum of its parts. Complexity also enables us to account for circularity, recursion, dialogues and the principles of self-eco-organization in the process of knowledge building.

With such approaches in mind, 'Vila' School commits, right from the outset, to consolidate and propagate a manner of thinking, acting, and constructing shared worlds, based on the relations that we establish with the environment, the social medium, and as individuals.

Our school stands out from more conventional institutions in many ways, for it has promoted a conscious change with regard to the dominant education model. However, this didn't come about overnight; it was the result of a long process. It was particularly challenging search in the first years, as initiatives of this type were very rare at the time of the foundation of 'Vila' School.

The curricular grid was developed into a complex curricular web, which organizes every element from the school's curriculum based on the relations that we produce in the world, and which compounds three main axes: care for the individual; care for nature; and care for the social medium. The curricular web at 'Vila' School presents three main aspects: attention to context and to local and global realities; attention to the harmonies between different forms of knowledge; and its process dynamic, being recurrent and open to the emergence of the school's curricular actions.

The curricular web also seeks to reconnect forms of knowledge, transposing and surpassing the limits of subject disciplines. It takes over blank spaces and legitimizes, within its structure, the places of the body, emotions, traditions, arts, interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, and those with nature. It seeks new languages and expression mechanisms for new ideas, feelings, desires and emotions. It points to bringing together the realms of science, art, and tradition, incorporating content that lies outside the boundaries of any discipline.

The methodology of ecosystemic pedagogy is based on constant teamwork, and engagement with researches and projects.

Inside classrooms, chairs and tables are always organized in groups, to facilitate interaction. Whenever is possible, teachers propose group activities, rather than individual ones, thereby favoring the development of social skills like cooperation, tolerance, communication, and mutual help. In group work, students are able to realize their differences and to learn how to live with them: different ways of solving problem situations, of thinking, of expressing oneself, particular limitations and skills, differences of opinion and so on. Teachers take care to rearrange students groups every week, so that, after a few weeks, everyone has interacted with each other.

Besides that, throughout its history, 'Vila' has organized its facilities into transdisciplinary sceneries, whilst it consolidated its space and developed ecosystemic pedagogy in practice. Today there are eight experiential laboratories, five spaces for creative expression, self-knowledge and transformation, six annual socio-environmental projects, as well as other open learning spaces and thematic rooms, which are always counting on groups work and work projects as constant trait of its daily teaching methods.

Creativity threatens and causes discomfort, for it is based on creativity that we are able to generate and spread social transformation.

The eight experiential laboratories are learning sites where the different curricular subjects are contemplated each day, in interconnected and transdisciplinary fashion, from kindergarten up to Year 9 of primary school. These learning sites are: animal life, vegetable garden, live pharmacy, fruit orchards, gardens, alternative technologies, maintenance, and health and nutrition. In each one, groups of students concretely deal with the issue at hand, in line with the curricular web's axes and crossings.

Caring for nature, for example, is encouraged through coexistence with plant and animal lives, in order to develop affective relationships with animals and plants and, at the same time, the ability to observe, and the skills to cultivate, and create pleasant environments. In the live pharmacy laboratory, students are encouraged to value traditional medicine by cultivating several different herbs from popular pharmacopoeia, while also working, in the same scenery, on the care for the social medium and for the individual. Another good example of transdisciplinarity is the laboratory for

alternative technologies, where students construct equipment and small buildings that contemplate the idea of sustainability and ecodesign from its conception, like harnessing solar energy for water heating, collecting and using rainwater, recycling, and reusing paper and scrap.

In the spaces for creation, expression, self-knowledge and transformation, five lessons are also offered on a daily basis and they cover plastic arts, handicrafts, theater, music, and the body. In these, pupils learn a range of techniques in each field, with the ultimate aim of exploiting languages for the concrete expression of internal content, such as emotions, thoughts, opinions, and impressions.

Ecosystemic pedagogy, which currently reaches out to other educational systems beyond 'Vila' School, considers that what brings us closest to freedom is the exercise of creative diversity, individual creative thought and actions, the appropriation of the multidimensional creative process, socially implicated with the co-construction of worlds in a propositional way.

Human beings only exist within a context of social systems, in a true social ecosystem. Maybe the first step towards exercising freedom and liberating creativity is to acknowledge one's own limitations. It's to recognize our incurable condition of codependence and, at the same time, realizing that this very limitation is the key for the creative promotion of liberties.

Creativity threatens and causes discomfort, for it is based on creativity that we are able to generate and spread social transformation. When we become aware of the fact that we create shared worlds, then we can do a lot. We create our worlds every moment, at each validation we promote interacting with the others. Creativity and autonomy are great generators of social transformation.

This ecosystemic viewpoint, in which we contemplate and recognize possible realities as products and projects constructed and shared individually and socially validated, in an unceasing symbiotic co-construction process, may enable the exercising of free, creative and critical thought. This is the main goal of the work at 'Vila' School.

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Have you ever stopped to consider that, sometimes, it is the void, the absence of meaning, which brings out one's full creative potential?



[Click here](#) and have a look at the thoughts of Anna Penido, of the Inspirare Institute, in the video "A Search for Meaning as a Starting Point for Creativity."





2. THE CREATIVE PROCESS



Hands-on Learning: When Engagement Boosts Creative Changes within School Space

Paola Ricci, Rita de Camargo and Simone Lederman

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We are three educators with different educational and professional backgrounds, in the areas of engineering, education, design and environmental management. As soon as we got to know each other, we found out that one thing we had in common was a shared enthusiasm for the surprising queries that children and young people tend to make about what they see every day – bouts of unrest that have the power to create novelty from that which already exists. The ‘Catalisador’ Institute was born from this encounter, from our shared enchantment, and from the will to work directly with this power.

Having an interest for a wide range of subject fields, and with previous experience in different areas under our belts, we have tried to, from the very start of our partnership come up with activities that could (re)interlace science and culture, technology and arts, in order to bring multiple languages into play. What drove us most was to see young people and children become more involved in school, learning in a genuinely meaningful and transforming way.

What we’ve chosen to be the axis for our proposals is what’s known as “hands-on” teaching and learning strategies, for we see these as a way to provide the students with meaningful routes for creation. Through such a practical approach, knowledge arises in an integrated manner, without being previously segmented into school areas and disciplines, thereby promoting research and meditation around construction processes, making space for personal expression and authorship.

Our fascination for hands-on activities is in tune with the assigned value of experience as a key element in the construction of subjectivity. In line with the thoughts of Spanish educators Nuria Pérez de Lara and José Contreras, we regard that the act of experimentation is, first and foremost, to be immerse in events or actions that bring lessons, learning and knowledge of their own; that involvement in doing something, a practice, is a precondition of experience, to immerse ourselves into the world that surrounds us and implicates us (Pérez de Lara & Contreras, pp. 25-26).

We understand the concept of “learning-by-doing” as an opportunity to reengage students in the process for knowledge construction, and thus we have looked into

Creative Learning, as designed by Mitchel Resnick, to find references and resources that might help us to draw up proposals that mix together conventional materials and new technologies.

In a nutshell, Resnick took upon the constructionist theory of Seymour Papert to propose that Creative Learning takes place through projects, peers, passion and play (p. 16). Papert, a South African mathematician who was passionate about gears, had worked with Jean Piaget in Geneva, later becoming one of the pioneers of Artificial Intelligence in the United States, at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Enthused with the creation of tools to help with the learning process, especially that of mathematics, he developed new projects and research studies so that children could make use of the emerging computational language to create. In Papert's own words, Constructionism

shares constructivism's view of learning as "building knowledge structures" [...] It then adds the idea that this happens especially felicitously in a context where the learner is consciously engaged in constructing a public entity, whether it's a sand castle on the beach or a theory of the universe (p. 1).

It is from such perspective that we consider creative processes to be relevant within the realm of education. Creative, for they are both connected to the construction and creation of artifacts, as well as of narratives that allow new (or other) meanings, opening the way to personal and/or group transformations.

In the preface to Resnick's book, *Lifelong Kindergarten: Cultivating Creativity through Projects, Passion, Peers and Play*, British pedagogue and educational consultant Ken Robinson helps us to further define what we understand by creativity:

Why does creativity matter anyway? Because being creative is part of what it means to be human. [...] The roots of human creativity lie in our unique powers of imagination, the ability to bring to mind things that are not present to our senses. Creativity is a step beyond imagination: it is putting your imagination to work (p. IX).

As a fundamental process within human experience, creativity is perceived beyond the worship of a few individuals' singular talents. Robinson himself highlights that "Creativity is not only incremental: it is collaborative. However original, creative thinking almost always builds on other people's ideas." (*idem*)

Edward Clapp, a researcher at the Project Zero initiative, a collaborative project undertaken with the School of Education at Harvard University, also points to the importance of moving beyond the "gifted-versus-ungifted debate" and puts creativity as being "a distributed process of idea development that takes place over time and incorporates the contributions of a diverse network of actors, each of whom uniquely participate in the development of ideas in various ways." (p. 7)

It was by taking on the concept of the four P's as suggested by Resnick to be the pillars for a Creative Learning experience, and with an emphasis on the participative aspect of the act of creation, that we conceived the 'Pontapé' ("Kickoff") Project. With this action, in short, we proposed to establish a catalyst space within the school grounds, aimed at

Why does creativity matter anyway? Because being creative is part of what it means to be human.

Ken Robinson

creation and creativity, thereby instigating a new style of learning driven by genuine interest in real projects implementing, which set out from actual needs and desires. Such a space is not necessarily placed in a fixed location, as the idea is that hands-on activities take place all around school, in classrooms, on the sports court, the playground, in the kitchen, the vegetable garden, the library, the art studio, the computer room, during regular school hours or after hours, when entering, leaving, or during breaks and cultural events, etc. The main goal here is to generate a mark to trigger, support, sustain and share hands-on Creative Learning practices, for students, teachers, families, and other members of the school community.

The pilot of the 'Pontapé' Project was first granted in 2015, by the Makers Educa education projects contest, promoted by Lemann Foundation and Vivo Telefônica Foundation. From that initiative came about the *Rede Brasileira de Aprendizagem Criativa*

(“Brazilian Network for Creative Learning,” RBAC)¹, which currently gathers more than three thousand people aiming to introduce new creative and interesting hands-on educational approaches into schools, universities, and other informal learning spaces.

Between 2015 and 2016, our ‘Pontapé’ Project unfolded into the creation, prototyping, and construction of a newly equipped playground at the ‘Âncora’ (“Anchor”) Project, in the county of Cotia, in Greater São Paulo, that which consisted in our first experience of participative creation process in a school environment.

At this time, we were able to put in practice our style of action, and our understanding of catalyzing as an attitude: to join up with the school community so as to promote latent transformations, i. e., to stimulate processes that might be already undertaking there and then, so to bring them about more quickly, or more potently, through the assistance of external participants. With a catalyzing attitude, we try to identify students’ and teachers’ knowledges and practices, to listen to their longings, to pay attention to their different styles, and only then to propose collective constructions that can act like scaffolds for particular changes.

That’s how it was at ‘Âncora’ Project. We got closer to educators and students and saw an opportunity to idealize, develop and implement a meaningful project. The “problem” was that many of school outdoor playground equipment needed maintenance and renovation. On the other hand, there was a series of colored iron bars, in many different shapes, that were going to be disposed of. Those bars were part of an old handrail that had to be removed and replaced for security reasons, but they would also be missed for their part in the visual identity of the place, having been designed by one of the founders of the project, who is an architect and city planner. Everyone felt that giving this material a new purpose, by making a new playground equipment to be put on the grass, could be an interesting possibility.

1. www.aprendizagemcriativa.org

Over a period of three months, we developed workshops with a group of students aged between eight and thirteen, accompanied by a partner tutor. There were twenty-five meetings for experimenting, creating, prototyping and constructing. We paid a visit to the “Playgrounds” exhibition² at São Paulo Art Museum (MASP), and played outside the school, in a park and a square, in order to expand the group’s repertoire. We also went to one of our partners’ maker-space, to use the 3D printer to make our scale model prototypes, and at specific moments within the project, we promoted talks with five architects. We also counted on assistance from the school’s carpenter, who was an actual jack-of-all-trades, and a welder, father of one of the students in the group. The scale models were presented by the students to an assembly of educators, employees, and parents. When it came to the playground equipment construction, children from several different groups also came to help to sand and paint the iron bars. The playground thusly became everyone’s project, and there was even an inauguration party.

In this first catalyzed project, Creative Learning proved to be an interesting and powerful route for a more meaningful education. We came to understand in practice that the four P’s yield the preconditions that enable participative creative processes to occur. We also confirmed that we made the right choice in developing the Creative Learning approach as proposed by Resnick towards hands-on practices, aiming to promote situations where participants dedicate themselves to doing, through a process in which action and reflection tune in to manufacture artifacts that act as scaffold for knowledge and meaning construction.

Since then, our actions have expanded in scope and variety. In 2016 we catalyzed partnerships between *Fab Labs Livres da Cidade de São Paulo*³ and municipal schools in the immediate surroundings. We also developed an itinerant program

2. <https://masp.org.br/exposicoes/playgrounds-2016>

3. “Free Fab Labs of São Paulo City,” a chain of public laboratories and spaces for creativity, learning and innovation, installed by São Paulo City Hall in 2015 <<http://fablablivresp.art.br>>.

that has been in place since 2017, known as 'Rodas de Invenções' ("Circles of Inventions"), in which the production of gadgets is mixed with reading groups and storytelling, it has been taken out to state and private schools, city cultural hotspots, and public libraries.

Between 2017 and 2018, in partnership with the MRV Institute, we implemented the 'Pontapé' Project in two state upper primary schools located in the Pirituba region of Northwestern São Paulo. One of the projects developed at Carlos F. W. Lacerda State School is another good example of a participative creative process where, as what had happened previously at the Anchor Project, the involvement of different actors led to the construction of something that was meaningful for the school. In this project, we could count with another three educators who became part of the 'Catalisador' Institute.

On the intersection of teachers', coordinators' and students' dreams, we saw a common desire for a stage that could fit big festivals, but which could also be used during breaks, or to host literary festivals and plays that the Portuguese teacher wanted so eagerly to organize to practice different text genres. With one group of students and two partner teachers, we explored different aspects of the "problem": Why didn't the school have a stage? What would be the uses of this stage? What makes a stage? What would be size of the stage to be built? What materials could be used in its construction? How much material would be needed?

The talks on where the stage would be placed were also great learning opportunities. After a lot of negotiation between different school instances and actors, it was decided that the stage would be mobile, though it would mostly be kept in the schoolyard. There were many hands-on meetings, in which the whole group sanded and varnished the pallets. As we were in the schoolyard, some groups of students that had "free periods" also got involved and contributed to finishing the pallets to be ready for use. A short scene performance, collectively created by the whole group, completed our project. Soon afterwards, in the celebration of the school's Golden Jubilee, the new stage was the center of attention and hosted presentations from several different performance groups.

The stage can also foster other creative and participative projects, like theater, music, and dance presentations. Once again, we were able to note the development of creative ideas as the converging effect of a mobilizing issue, people engaged in it and open to interaction with each other, besides the present materials that allow for different possibilities to take shape, be shared and enjoyed.

Both in the playground equipment building at 'Âncora' Project, as well as in the construction of the stage at Carlos Lacerda State School, more significant than any physical transformation in the school buildings are the ways in which students' perspectives were changed. Above all, hands-on practices trigger conquest cycles and open up more possibilities for new paths to be tried, not only in the workshop projects, but in other areas of one's life as well, both inside and outside the school. By the moment a construction, an authorial creation, shows itself to be practicable within the school's tangible space, then so many other might be too. Redesigning and editing the world becomes something within everyone's reach. This is what the Agency by Design research group - associated with the School of Education at Harvard University - calls Maker Empowerment: arousing, in the students, a sensitivity to the designed dimension of objects and systems, so that, in this way, they may also develop "the inclination and capacity to shape one's world through building, tinkering, re/designing, or hacking." (Clapp *et al.*, p. 98)

In the projects we've mentioned here, and in many others we have catalyzed, we have also borne witness to just how much creative processes make personal and collective transformations possible. Sometimes these are simple and private changes, like the personal discovery of skills or interests unknown before. Sometimes, these are visible changes that affect everyone around, like a graffitied wall which has been collectively painted with colors and phrases that change the daily environment.



Sometimes, it's a change in the way we look at the materials and objects we use on our daily lives, which can gain different meanings. Sometimes, it's a change in the way we speak to those around us. These transformations can be silent or sounding, harmonious or disruptive... but the effect is always to displace relations and stances, forms of being and acting in the world.

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Paola, Rita and Simone together thought of and created the 'Catalisador' Institute, through which they constantly explore creative and participative processes. Since 2015, they have been part of the Brazilian Network for Creative Learning, and are Creative Learning Fellows at the Lifelong Kindergarten, MIT Media Lab.

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Exploring the Knots in the Wire: Learning to Navigate Complexity and Uncertainty in Solidarity with Children

Susan MacKay

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It seems reasonable to begin from a point on which I imagine we are in agreement – that the need to approach creative problem solving as a means to greater human understanding, compassion, and empathy is an urgent one. Given this urgency, if we are to nurture this practice in our communities, it isn't hard to understand the urgency to create activities that support this approach in our schools. We struggle, though, because our actual practice doesn't support this theory. Traditional assumptions about teaching and learning are inadequate to the task and we are stuck.

Lucky for us, there are the children. Children have not yet learned to forget the things they know and if we create conditions that allow them to express their ideas and allow us to listen to them, they will help us. This is a fortunate situation because it is necessary also for *their* learning. Our attempts to pre-determine what we want to teach children about things like relationship, collaboration, and creative problem-solving diminish the very practice children need in order to sustain and expand their capacity to do those things. So turning to children for help as we try and figure out what to do gives them precisely the practice they need to take us all forward.

At Opal School, we are learning that by working alongside children, we are able to generate new possibilities for practices that support a theory of development of agency and empathy. We are finding that materials and ample use of the arts are a critical part of those conditions. Materials are metaphors you can hold in your hand, and so they are filled to bursting with possibility to create meaning and connection. When our fourth and fifth graders (ages nine to eleven years) were investigating the meaning of identity, for example, we brought them each a piece of artist's wire. As adults, we wondered: What problems might the wire pose, and so offer the children an experience in collective experimentation with a material, with metaphor, with ideas, and with meaning?

I brought strands of soft, silver aluminum wire for the children to use while we gathered in a circle on the floor, and there was hardly a hesitation before they made the connection:



STELLA: — It's like your, it's [*audible intake of breath*], oh my gosh! They each have their own identity!

AMELIA: — Yeah!

Metaphor is, at once, context and connection. The things we've seen, heard, tasted, and felt before become references for the things we can share through language, and imagination builds the bridge. We use metaphor to invite others to be inside our ideas with us, to stand inside memories – to name the patterns we've observed – and to check out whether others have noticed them, too. So my intentions are twofold: I want to create an experience that invites the children to engage in a practice of collective experimentation, reflection, collaborative meaning-making, and participation that strengthens the relationship between them and between them and the world *and* I want them to have this practice while they explore a concept that supports that practice.

Lucky for us, there are the children. Children have not yet learned to forget the things they know and if we create conditions that allow them to express their ideas and allow us to listen to them, they will help us.

I passed out one piece of wire, about 18 inches, to each child and asked: "What can the wire do that can help us think more about this concept of identity?"

CHASE: — You can shape the wire into anything. You can make a flower out of it, but you can also make a dagger.

KD: — It doesn't have to be one certain thing. Sometimes there can be multiple answers to one piece of wire.

CHASE: — Well, when you change it, there's still more of a twist in the wire so it's not completely straight anymore. You can still see traces. If it's a flower, you can still see traces of the dagger.

LUCIUS: — Yeah, you can't erase all of your identity.

THOMAS: — It's always going to be different after you bend it. [*Thomas continues to play with his wire as he talks.*] So this is different from that – that's [*pointing to a new crease in his wire*] always going to be part of it because you can still see

the creases. [*Continuing to twist his wire and reference various new creases and bends.*] If this is the experience, that experience is still going to live with it.

Right away, the wire helped move the children towards deep meaning and it took me there, too. The wire helped Thomas conceptualize the indelibility of experience in his hand, and his explanation helped everyone make sense of this big idea. Being able to imagine layers of experience is one thing but contemplating the impact of experience on an individual is another. Experience isn't simply cumulative - it is transformative. We don't just add on. We change. With the wire in their hands, they could see and feel and *understand* the concept in a way that they couldn't have by relying on words alone. The materials helped them say what they already knew, and, in the process, to discover more new connections than anyone could have predicted.

RUBY: — You can change your identity if you change the wire but you can't change your identity the whole way ...

LUCIUS: — You can change it but you can't erase it.

ALIJAH: — I think we're talking about personality. It's harder to change your identity than your personality.

NATE: — Your identity is like everything. But your personality is kind of like the current, most foremost part of your identity.

ALIJAH: — Your identity is what's inside of you and your personality is what comes out.

This new idea sent the group digging for a new metaphor — looking for connections, patterns, points of reference that would cultivate the meaning, enrich the understanding, and deepen the relationship.

CALVIN: — I agree with personality because really a lot of times your identity doesn't change as much like with wire. Identity is more like molding clay kind of. It's like molding clay that hardens super fast. So like you mold it and it's already there.

ALIJAH: — You know when you accidentally get that little loop — it's really difficult to get that out — when you get a knot in the wire it's really hard to undo.

ROAN: Wire can make the clay stronger.

They were thinking in metaphor, making sense of very abstract concepts by attaching to them pieces of the world that they've actually held in their hands.

We've tangled quite a knot in the wires that connect us as we've ignored the complexity of human understanding, compassion, and empathy in the classrooms that serve our youngest citizens. Every one of these classrooms in every corner of the world are rich landscapes in which to explore the terrain of emotion, relationship, and what it means to belong. Rarely are these kinds of courageous adventures seen as the work to be done in school. High-stakes accountability and limited assumptions about what young children are capable of have made the study of social and ecological interdependence and perspective-taking a sideshow in classrooms that spotlight the monotonous talk meant to fill the empty pails of children's minds with bite-sized bits of standardized information. Rather than igniting fires of agency and empathy and meaningful participation, there is a strategic effort to dampen them. The consequences of these choices are dire. As it turns out, these fires are tremendously difficult to get burning again and

Every classroom in every corner of the world are rich landscapes in which to explore the terrain of emotion, relationship, and what it means to belong.



the information we happen to have at any particular time doesn't do us a whole lot of good without them. Our creativity, our curiosity, our imagination, and our drive to seek relationship and connection are forced out of the classroom. Because children need to belong in order to survive, they willingly trade all these gifts away for the thing most valued in school: the right answer.

Perhaps you are wondering why we didn't simply have the children look in the dictionary, copy down what it said, and move on. Why bother with this extended and circuitous journey to construct meanings about words that already have established definitions? Why not just give them the answer? We did this, too. But here is what we found:

Iden·ti·ty /ɪ'den(t)ədē/ noun

1. the distinguishing character or personality of an individual
2. the condition of being the same with something

As is so frequently true in matters of human understanding, we found a paradox. We found complexity to open up and explore. We found a place where no right answers lived, and so we could offer that precious opportunity to children to exercise their powers of curiosity and creativity through an authentic act of participation in service of shared understanding.

ANGELINA: — But here's the really cool thing. Every single little bump is completely different. So everybody's wire, in the end, is going to look really different.

ALIYAH: — It's like you - sometimes there are knots and you can't get them out. Sometimes you just have to live with it and...

ROAN: — Sometimes you accidentally make something but then you like it.

ALIYAH: — You can live with it and turn it into something beautiful, or you can just stay in your mindset and say, "oh this is bad," I can't fix this.

LIAM: — You can have a growth mindset.

While the world gets increasingly interconnected, we need additional capacity to figure out how to navigate through this increasing complexity. If we don't, we'll remain fearful of change, of difference, of mistakes, of being wrong, of uncertainty, and of

losing. When our capacity to make meaning of the unfamiliar has been replaced with a need for certainty, fear takes over. We aren't resilient enough as community members to figure out what to do when nobody knows what to do in a way that works for everyone. We need to practice this in school.

ALIYAH: — Your identity is almost impossible to change like you can't change your race, or your story or your family history.

ANGELINA: — Where your family came from.

ALIYAH: — Where you are born.

TEACHER: — Can the wire make itself not be wire?

LUCIUS: — Not by itself.

ALIYAH: — If you neglect your identity, you won't be able to make your personality more of what you want it to be. It may just go on and transition into what everybody else wants it to be. If you put your hands on it and mold it to be what you want it to be, there might be some knots, but you might be able to fix it. You're going to stay you. Your experience, and your family history and your story. You can't go back.

LUCIUS: — But you can go back - you can change what you think, so that's kind of like going back in time.

LILLY: — Personality and identity are both you, but identity you can't really change like it includes other people in it. Because my identity is that I have my mom and dad. They're part of my identity. But they're not really part of my personality. I mean, they might impact it, but I'm the one who gets to decide. There are some things you can change, but there are things you can't change.

STELLA: — There are some that are fixed.

ALIYAH: You can change your personality. Like I used to draw all the time. That was the way I got away from things. I thought I was going to be an artist when I grew up. But then I got exposed to more things and I didn't just stay in the past. I still love to draw but I don't draw as much as I used to.

STELLA: — So, like, some people look at this as like maybe a bracelet or something like that, or an ocean or a sun in the water, but I see it as myself, maybe. So that's another way of your identity that sometimes you're used to seeing things a certain way.

Lucius: — When you're perceived as a bully by someone else, they see you as a bully, but that doesn't mean you are one. That doesn't mean that's you. It means that's just what someone perceives you to be. That doesn't mean that you're a bully.

KD: — I think we're talking about "persa-identity."

Consider what these children have constructed together, talking with each other through paradox while they played with a piece of wire in their hands. Without fear of being wrong, they willingly offered their thoughts as contributions they knew would lead to shared understanding. The wire helped them see their own connections and new ideas so they could say what they meant and share with others. They built the word *persadentity* by building a world of ideas in which they needed it.

Encounters with the arts aren't the only way to create these competencies, but their reflective, connective, and playful qualities make them one of the best. If we give the young humans in our care chances to connect and reflect, and then do it again and again, we don't need to tell them what words mean. *We can trust that there is greater value in asking them what meaning they are making of words, because their world is contained in those words.* What words do they need to share their world? Inviting children to find their own connections, to make their own sense of things, pulls them into a community that requires them to practice empathy and agency. This sense of belonging is the primary feeling we humans seek - so learning how to think our way there may be the most important thing we do in school. If we're aiming to solve our problems, real understanding must become our primary goal, and we must learn to recognize what it looks like and feels like. Because understanding is love. When love is the primary concern of the classroom, we'll untangle the knot we've tied and find ways to solve the problems of imagination present in an adult world that was taught to forget that it had one.

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Creative Girls of (Con)Science

*Gabriel Salgado, Íris Vitória,
Maria Jilvani and Vitória Oliveira*

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From the writing of a *cordel*¹ poem made to tell the story of the city, to the use of rap lyrics to generate more dynamic sociology classes. From the creation of a social currency designed to drive the local economy up, to the rallying of a community around “cultural public hearings.”

These are just a few activities created by school students in different parts of Brazil, who seek to solve the problems that bother them most and who join with each other directly or indirectly, in the belief that it is indeed possible to search for other worlds and realities. These are children and young people that feel, dream, create and spread their messages, whether through posting on social media, or dance steps practiced during the break between lessons, among many, many other actions and expressions.

To appreciate, dialogue, and – always – learn with each and every one of these students who are always coming up with something new, and in different ways – be it through science, technology, art, culture, history... – there is nothing better than to chat² with a group of students who are putting powerful actions into practice in search of one big aim: to reduce women’s invisibility in science, praising their creations.

Pupils at Aldemiro Vilas Boas State School (CEAVB), in the city of São Miguel das Matas, in the state of Bahia, Íris Vitória, aged eighteen, Maria Jilvani, aged seventeen, and Vitória Oliveira, aged seventeen, have developed the project known as ‘Minas na Ciência’ (“Girls in Science”), one of the eleven projects selected as part of the 2018 ‘Desafio Criativos da Escola’ (“School Creatives Challenge,” the Brazilian version of Design for Change School Challenge). Carried out by the program of the

1. Cordel is a traditional genre of narrative ballad, descendant of Iberian *romancero*, typical of the Brazilian Northeast.

2. This was an interview carried out via video call, in February 2019, connecting Íris, Maria and Vitória with the editor of this publication, Sergio Molina, as well as one of the ‘Critativos na Escola’ program coordinators, Gabriel Salgado.

same name³, this annual initiative adds value to transformative actions carried out by children and young people.

Among the actions carried out by the 'Minas na Ciência' project we have: a short film production⁴, a mobile app, a memory game, a jigsaw puzzle, and a twister-type game. "Always with the support of the chemistry teacher, Natália Oliveira dos Santos," as the students are always quick to add.

Below, we present a powerful conversation which addressed themes such as creativity, autonomy, science, and female representation.

What led you to come up with the project?

MARIA: When Ms. Natália started to teach science, seeing that few students knew anything about scientist women, she brought this debate to the classroom, and then we started to think about how we could make those women better known. We saw that, within science, there has been a lot of women who have created many inventions and theories, but who did not receive the acknowledgement they deserved for it.

VITÓRIA: It also has to do with the issue of representation, that we are inspired by the works of scientist women and want to show this to our classmates, to escape from the traditional stereotype of a man in a white apron inside a laboratory. We wanted to show that science is in fact a place which we women have the right to occupy.

3. 'Criativos da Escola' is a project by Alana Institute which encourages children and young people to transform their realities, recognizing them as lead players within their own histories of change. First launched in Brazil back in 2015, 'Criativos' is part of Design for Change, a global movement that began in India and is currently present in sixty-five countries. For further information, visit: www.criativosdaescola.com.br.

4. Available in youtu.be/tl5M4SpcvbE.

ÍRIS: And when we started to understand more about this scientific world, we realized that science does not happen only within the laboratory. It also happens to our mothers, when they take some leaves to make tea. Many scientists started in this way and created incredible works.

MARIA: We ourselves, when we entered the project, we did not know what all these female scientists had done, we just knew a few of their names. Then, when we went on to research, what surprised me the most was that, whenever we found a reference to a scientist woman, there was not much about her work, her discoveries, or her creations. People don't write biographies about them, simply because they are women. For example, there is the case of Alice Ball, a black female chemist who discovered the cure for leprosy. Many scientists were researching it at that time, but she still did not receive the attention she deserved, because she was a woman.

And how did you get together to carry out the actions of the 'Minas na Ciência' project?

ÍRIS: All was done on our free time, after class. We even spent Saturdays and Sundays at school. We often stayed there until ten o'clock at night working on the science project, so that it could fit with school work and other obligations.

So, you have applied a questionnaire to other students. How did you come with the questions, and what was most impressive in the results?

ÍRIS: Yes, we did a survey to find how many people knew female scientists. And the result was: that very few people were aware of scientist women, and even those didn't actually know what these scientists had done.

MARIA: In one of the schools, we found that only one out of every twenty-five students either knew or had heard of a female scientist, despite not knowing what she had done. In the other one, only three out of every twenty-five students could mention the name of a scientist woman, though they also did not know what they made.

During the project, you produced a short film⁵, a mobile app, a memory game, a jigsaw puzzle, and a twister-type game. How did you publicize these creations?

MARIA: We launched the app, the blog and the games officially as part of our school's science fair. There we showcased our creations to our colleagues and teachers, and also to Year 8 and 9 students from municipal schools. A few days later, we were invited to an interview at Criativa, to talk about the project.

VITÓRIA: Criativa is a news website [criativaonline.com.br] which covers the entire Recôncavo region of the Brazilian state of Bahia.

MARIA: And we were also called to give workshops at 'José Marcelino' and 'Antônio Carlos Magalhães' state schools, which had participated in the Science fairs, and where we conducted the questionnaires.

VITÓRIA: Besides that, we used social media to expand our work beyond the school walls, so that more people became aware of these scientist women.

During the research you undertook, which scientist impressed you most?

VITÓRIA, MARIA, ÍRIS: Marie Curie⁶!

VITÓRIA: We were most startled by Marie Curie, as she was the first woman to win the Nobel Prize.

MARIA: Just imagine a woman winning a Nobel prize in that day and age [1903

5. Available in: youtu.be/tl5M4SpcvbE.

6. To get to know the stories of this and all the other scientists mentioned in this interview, please access the 'Minas na Ciência' project social media: [instagram.com/minasnaciencia](https://www.instagram.com/minasnaciencia), [facebook.com/minasnaciencia](https://www.facebook.com/minasnaciencia), [app.vc/minas_na_ciencia](https://www.app.vc/minas_na_ciencia).

and 1911]. I think that she is at the center of everything that links women to science. She is a great inspiration to us! She demonstrates that, despite all the sexism in the world, women are still capable and can get what they want. We have included several of her quotes on our Instagram page.

To present the scientist women, you have not just shown what they accomplished, discovered and invented, but also inspirational phrases, and not just by Marie Curie. Out of all these messages, which do you believe is the most important to be told to other girls?

MARIA: There is a phrase right here, that we have placed in the very center, which is:

VITÓRIA: “We seek to be that which we see,” which is by Bárbara Carine, a black Brazilian scientist, and which underscores the whole message we want to get across through our project.

ÍRIS: Yes, this is the phrase that inspires us most. When we see something and we see ourselves in it, we are inspired by it. Everyone needs experiences and references to be in front of them, to be able to be inspired and to make decisions on what path to follow. If we don’t see ourselves, we get shy. This is what often happened with the girls in our school.

VITÓRIA: And it’s what happened to us, too. It was only when our tutor, Natália Oliveira, brought this issue inside the class that we realized that we had our own place within science.

In the project, you also show the importance of praising the identity of black scientist women, and in particular the Brazilian ones.

MARIA: We first thought of talking about female scientists as a whole, but then we thought, “it’s a big world, but it would be nice to bring in that perspective to our own country,” to show that there really are women here in Brazil who make the effort and manage to enter the world of science, dismantling the stereotypes.

From then on, we started to look at black scientist women too, such as Bárbara Carine, the author of the that inspiring phrase, and Maria Beatriz do Nascimento who is not only a scientist, but a black activist too, among many others.

ÍRIS: At 'Minas na Ciência,' we talk about scientist women, but in addition about feminism and female empowerment with black women. Because, if there is already prejudice against women in science, there is even more so against black women. Therefore, we sought out references to black women in science, especially Brazilians.

VITÓRIA: And throughout the research we noticed just how strong the erasure of the history of black Brazilian scientist women has been. It is much more difficult to find information about them. Another thing which saddened us was to notice that other important women had been erased from history, like Enedina Alves, the first black woman to be admitted to a Brazilian university, who established her right to be in that space and to study. This is a great inspiration for any girl of our age entering higher education.

Considering that sexism and racism are still very strong in Brazil, how did you handle this during the Project? Did you feel any kind of resistance to your work?

MARIA: At our school, there are always lectures addressing this issue, so, for all this work, most of the boys and girls who study there have somewhat done away with this kind of prejudice. It's cool there, we talk about racism, sexism, and homophobia. Everyone is very smooth in regard to all that, because the school is always handling these matters to show that, in the end, we are all equal.

ÍRIS: We understand that we cannot break a sexist culture, a discriminatory culture that is centuries old, in just a few years. But it is important that we touch this sore spot, the more we act, the more we see people opening their minds. Our school gave us the full support we need to develop ourselves, to break these taboos, but we know that throughout Brazil, and even in the rest of the world,

this is hard to get. So it's important that school, which we know to be the house of education, help the students to open their minds and better their conscience.

And what would you say to a girl who does not live in this context, one who does not have such an incredible school and teacher to help her?

ÍRIS: We know it is difficult when we have no support from anywhere, especially from school. But the way out is to look for people who share an interest with you. The more you bind with people who also want to grow, the better your chance to evolve and to build something else.

VITÓRIA: And also she might try to use whatever is available in her environment. If she sees that there is a teacher who encourages girls, the students, to seek something new, approach this person, do not be ashamed. Go up to the person and ask: "Teacher, can you give me some help?" If there is a library in the school, then search for the books, and look for something that interests you, you know? You need to find something to focus, something you like, and then invest in it. Because your thoughts have a future and, somewhere in the world, at some point, your idea will help someone, and change someone's life. Then, you must use whatever tools you have, and try to find something that can motivate others, so that this other person in the future may wish to showcase his or her ideas too.

We realized that science does not happen only within the laboratory. It also happens to our mothers, when they take some leaves to make tea

During the experience of the Design for Change School Challenge award prize-giving, you met ten other teams of students who carried out changemaking projects. What was your takeaway from this meeting with other people who, like you, are putting their ideas into practice in different places around Brazil?

MARIA: This was an incredible experience, it was very important for us to know that it's not only in Bahia, not only in the city where we live, that there are young

people who want to change the future, who want to pave a new way forward, who wish to help people, and to show that there are no limits when dealing with study, projects and innovation.

VITÓRIA: There is also the matter of welcoming, of feeling like we are home, so to speak, on seeing that there are other young people of our age who are also showing up, who also want to change to our country, and that gives a whole other boost. We came back with renewed ideas and with the desire to expand our knowledge to our colleagues, and to continue to produce more and more.

Now that you have just finished high school, how has the 'Minas na Ciência' project influenced each one of you to think about the future and your life projects?

MARIA: The 'Minas na Ciência' project provided me with several opportunities, because our teacher Natália had an academic advisor at the same university where I got entrance, the Federal University of the Recôncavo da Bahia (UFRB), and she will help us to proceed with the project over there. I have chosen the field of Materials Engineering.

VITÓRIA: I have also been admitted to university, where I will attend to the Social Work course, and I have already seen that there is a way to fight for women's rights and also for greater female representation within this area that I have chosen. So, in one way or another, I will be able to continue with the 'Minas na Ciência' project, only in a different part of the project, which is that of representativeness.

ÍRIS: I have also been admitted to university, at the University of the State of Bahia. I am going to study Geography. Even though my studies do not lie within the realm of hard sciences, which were prioritized by the 'Minas da Ciência' project, the whole experience opened my mind in an amazing way, especially in thinking about what path I really wanted to follow on.

And what has inspired you most, when making these choices and taking such paths?

MARIA: Something incredible, which inspired us tremendously, was seeing all this partnership between us women, and also realizing that there will always be a model-woman for you to follow.

ÍRIS: Yes, the idea of women who take inspiration from other women. We discovered incredible women, and from them, we took inspiration. We said: "We are also women, we are also capable of producing," and then we produced. No-one imagined we would have come so far.

VITÓRIA: And there is also the encouragement we received from our colleagues at 'Aldemiro Vilas Boas' school; from our adviser, Natália Oliveira; and from all the teachers, besides that from 'Criativos.' I think that it was the convergence of all this that showed us that we are capable and that we can reach whatever goals we want to.

MARIA: It is also great to know that everything we did was really worthwhile, as it is helping other girls, giving them inspiration to participate in projects. We had an amazing experience in the Bahian city of Jequié, when we took our project over to the local Science Village [uesb.br/viladaciencia], and some very small girls, aged eight or nine, came over and said they wanted to do the same things we did, to carry out projects. It was very inspiring: to see that we were serving as an example to them, and that our projects were moving them forward. It was great.

To wind it up, after so many creations and thoughts: how would you define creativity? How do you think of creativity within the project?

ÍRIS: Look, it is very usual to listen to someone talk in an art class, "oh, I lack the creativity to draw," "I am not a creative person." But I believe that creativity is borne in every one of us and is singular to each one. Creativity is inside you, and you just need some stimulus to awaken it. For example, in our case, it was our teacher who stirred this in us, and creativity arose.

MARIA: Everyone thinks that creativity is only in the creation of something new. However, creativity in science allows us not only to build something from scratch, but also to do research and create by enhancing something that already exists. You just need a little something to awake your creativity, and then it might become something great, as the case of 'Minas na Ciência.'

VITÓRIA: I think creativity is doing your share, making your contribution to change, whether it be within your reality, or something that will reach out to more people. In other words, creativity is to look inside yourself for something that can change the world, do you know what I mean?

Do you think that creativity is something difficult, even abstract?



[Click here](#) and watch the video “Creativity on a Daily Basis,” with Renata Falleti, from the ‘Odé Kayodê’ Multicultural School, and then look into how creativity appears within daily life and within the real contexts of everyone’s lives.





3. EMOTIONS AND LANGUAGES



The Brasilia-Manaus-Barcelona Connection: **Acknowledging Children, Investigating Concepts, Reinventing the School**

*Levindo Carvalho, Lucianny Matias,
Maria Estela dos Santos, Pablo Martins,
Raquel Franzim, Wilma Lino and Zilene Trovão*

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The following conversation took place on a November morning in 2018, between Pablo Martins and Wilma Lino, educators from the ‘Vivendo e Aprendendo’ (“Living and Learning”) Pro-Education Association, in Brasilia; Zilene Trovão, Lucianny Matias and Maria Estela dos Santos, from the Hermann Gmeiner Municipal Early Childhood Education Center (CMEI), in Manaus; professor Levindo Carvalho, of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), while on a short stint in Catalonia, and Raquel Franzim, from the Changemaker Schools Brazil Program.

RAQUEL: For starters, I would like you to comment on how the skill of creativity permeates the daily routine at your schools, beyond any specific activity, any project or “small project.”

PABLO: Indeed, to think about creativity brings us to consider where it is present in our lives: in our relationships, since the day we’re born, through to our family experiences, in our social ties, in school, learning expectations... Creativity is an opportunity that every subject has to construct oneself, expressing its own individuality, desires, and ethical and aesthetic hypotheses about the world. For this, it is important that we recognize children as subjects with desires and knowledge.

WILMA: I agree with Pablo, and also feel that to listen to and observe children is very important. In daily life, it’s important to observe the child, his or her ways and life story, so that we can start from there to make more room for creativity to be expressed spontaneously, without necessarily having activities aimed at this.

PABLO: In a school’s daily routine, creativity is present at all times. By starting out from the hypotheses that children construct based on their experiences, we may offer spaces and living experiences for creation to arise. It’s always by setting out from the child’s own hypotheses, of what they already know about such an experience, that we can manage to propose something new. Such acts legitimate the child as a subject with his or her own knowledge and desires, and invite the child to co-create a practicable world.

For example, on inviting children to cook a recipe, we ask them if they have already known the dish, if they have eaten it before, what do they think about it,

if they have prepared it at home, and who they have seen cooking it, etc. Stemming from there, we start offering them other instruments, thereby expanding their horizons of information and vocabulary. Once again, we then question what they think about it, giving them the opportunity to begin something new. From there, a new recipe may come forth, with new ingredients, different ways of organizing the making process, or the invention of new names for the dish, and so on.

WILMA: We educators think we are full of knowledge. We do indeed have our own knowledge, but at the same time we should not enter the classroom with an expectation of having all the knowledge to pass on to others. We need to make way for new things, for listening to and observing children. Every week, we have cooking activities here at 'Vivendo,' but it's always a different recipe, not only as a result of planning but also of what the children bring over from their own experiences and desires. In free and spontaneous moments too, we seek to pay close attention to what the children are saying, what they talk to each other, how they move around. At school meals, when they are chatting, the children express many ideas, sensations, feelings and desires, and it is an excellent opportunity to appreciate their creations, encouraging them and challenging them to make these possible.

Listening is no easy task. You might hear and yet not understand the meaning of what the child is saying. For example, this week we organized a bazaar, so the children could raise money for their end-of-year camp. And wow! The children proposed so many things for the organization that never crossed my mind! We let them express what they wanted to do, how to count the money, how to organize the place. We do have our own hypotheses, but in our day-to-day work it is important to let the children free to express their authorship.

RAQUEL: I would now like to give the floor to our friends from CMEI, by bringing up two issues for Zilene, Lucianny and Maria Estela: children's lives are made up of constant beginnings and authorship; we just need to look, listen, and recognize this in them. However, at the same time, the school has its own planning and knowledge, and a whole

world of its own. How do you deal with these two aspects – the spontaneous and the planned – on a daily basis within a state-run school?

ZILENE: Bearing in mind that the CMEI is a public institution, with its own legislation and which is historically perceived to be a form assistance benefit, in Hermann Gmeiner creativity became the foundation for dismantling the textbook system that was present in the school's routine. When we used this system, children from three years old would spend four hours in classrooms with books and textbooks, being prepared for literacy. We had to think about how to overcome such system.

During the process, we faced a range of obstacles, one of which was the resistance on the part of some teachers who would still say: "I don't know how to work in another way," and would keep asking the children to bring their notebooks and done homework. This was the school's mentality. How would we disrupt it? How could we undertake such deconstruction and build something at the same time? After all, as we began to study integral and democratic education, we saw that we had to break away from the tradition. The first thing we did was to remove the textbooks, and there were teachers who ended up quitting the school because they couldn't work without it. We had to go through this moment of deconstruction, study, and search. We went out to experience this perspective: we travelled to São Paulo, Brasília, and Rio de Janeiro, where we visited schools which develop perspectives of integral and full-time education.

We had to be creative. And we started out by rethinking the learning spaces: let's bring to life what we already have! We started to realize that we have very nice premises. We live in the forest, there are lots of trees here, twigs, and seeds. We went on to value these things and to use them as everyday instruments for pedagogical practices. Before, we would spend four hours a day confined in classrooms, only with books and textbooks, working on mimeographed notebooks! Then children began to collect sticks, dried leaves, insects and seeds. And integral education provided the medium for this deconstruction process.

Previously, children did not have the opportunity to express themselves and explore the learning spaces, all activities were limited to reference rooms, that is, planning was very much restricted.

RAQUEL: Levindo, it was pointed out the need to deconstruct that which we educators have learned about children and education, in order to create and to give more meaning to what we do. If the educator does not acknowledge him or herself to be curious, creative, active, he or she will find it difficult to perceive this in the children. Then it's possible that the organization of the educational work won't allow for authorship and creativity.

LEVINDO: The challenge lies in the way that we perceive who the school agents are. And how to rethink the institution itself, which is based on an outdated historical model that is not for children or teachers as we think of them today.

The school was originally set up to prepare children for the adult world, and by setting up the school we also created a model of what it is to be a student. Our challenge is to think of a school that is made for the child, and no longer for the "student."

This idea of creativity is very powerful because it encourages us to establish other logics of relationships, time, space and activities management; and other logic for listening to the children, as Wilma and Pablo were saying.

These ideas are not exactly new. Throughout the history of education, there have been different studies which help one to rethink educational processes in early childhood - names such as Froebel, Montessori, Freinet, and more recently Malaguzzi - elucidating how children relate to the world and how they learn. To some extent, the theoretical field has already brought the idea that education occurs within human relationships and through

This idea of creativity is very powerful because it encourages us to establish other logics of relationships, time, space and activities management; and other logic for listening to the children.

different forms of language. Language is the means through which a child relates to and interprets the social world, which means to symbolize, represent, formulate, and to give meaning to social values, roles and concepts. It is interesting to think of how, on many occasions, the school model can brew a lot of tension.

Being creative, therefore, also means to break free from some of the tensions which are present in the school model. For example, that existing between regular school time and free time. The school time structure is firmly set in stone, it hardly acknowledges the children's specificities, and the relations they establish with time. I always mention the case of a boy to whom I asked, "Is your home far from school?" And he answered, "No, my house is very close by. My house only takes longer when my grandpa goes to the butcher," because his grandfather would pick him up at school and then, if he dropped by the butcher on the way home, he would take longer to arrive. So, how do we get to know children's time perception? How to, based on children's logic, rethink issues related to timetabling in school?

Another important tension to think about is the dichotomy between practices often known as "pedagogical activities" and artistic, "free" activities or those in which children are given greater autonomy. It's like there is a divide in early childhood, between "serious" times and "cool" times at school. It is as if there is an inventive, creative moment for exploration, thinking, and inventing the world, and then another moment when you have to do notebook and textbook works. I think the exact opposite, in the same way that our colleagues in Brasilia were talking about: from the perspective of the children's own interests, from the questions they formulate about the world, one might work on the possibility of creating narratives about the social, cultural, physical and natural world. Children are curious and attentive, and the school could be an environment where their interests can be strengthened.

Therefore, there is a pedagogy which, so to speak, is more propaedeutic in nature, a knowledge "transmitter," which we don't believe in, but on the other hand

there is a pedagogy that's based on experiencing, that recognizes that children explore and acknowledge the world based on their different languages.

RAQUEL: Without a doubt, one of the main tensions present within the school environment is the concept of a child. Should we regard children only as people who absorb and assimilate information, values, knowledge and practices, to then reproduce what they have learnt? Levindo, the view of children as makers of their own cultures and languages is not (and it shouldn't be) exclusive to preschool, don't you think?

LEVINDO: It is interesting to think that childhood is not limited to early childhood education. Much to the contrary, the children are also in the first years of primary school, but the school of this stage is much more strongly centralized on the fields of knowledge rather than on its agents.

A very important issue that needs to be addressed is the transition from early childhood education to primary school, which might be marked by continuities as well as ruptures, but which should not lead to an artificial childhood segmentation. In the first years of primary school, on many occasions the sole focus is on oral and written language, and in a mechanical way, with little context and not attractive to the children. Writing is essential for the children's education and it's a basic right for their citizenship. However, it is also important that this type of language be introduced in a way that is fluid, interesting, and also creative, without being superposed over other developmental aspects or languages. This is actually an inter-relational process between writing and reading experiences along with drawing, imagining, playing and, of course, having access to the entire wealth of literature as an artistic expression.

Such debate involves questioning the very idea of a curricular structuring based solely on subject matters, or knowledge areas, within primary education, in contrasts with what early childhood education have called "fields of experience." To separate the children's experiences in school into areas of knowledge, might outline a specific development program for them, but it can also restrict the entirety of their education and put limits to researching and their time for exploring.

To widen the scope for thinking about children's experiences on the social world also implies to think of a more creative education, more participative and based on experiencing. And these tensions are not only generated by administrative issues or by the teacher's work conditions. Of course, without good work conditions the teacher is unable to progress on this issue; however, these tensions also arise from the concepts of what a school is,

what a school for children is, what a curriculum is, and how we perceive childhood through the first years of primary education. I remember a school I have visited, where the teacher said that the Board or the management team had put water fountains in the classroom for the children were always asking to be excused from class to drink, and so, if there was water in the classrooms, students would no longer have to leave. I said, "But look, what does this actually mean? Isn't it better to stop for a while to think about why the children keep asking to be excused so often?" These are questions we should always ask.

To take on a broader sense of belonging could praise everyday life as an element of learning processes, thereby strengthening relationships, reinforcing welcoming and listening, all our relationship as human beings.

The school has already been compared to prisons and hospitals, and I think now we have to think of it as a studio or a garden, inspired by Froebel, as a space for invention, creativity, like major cultural centers. We need to look for other images for schools, in line with what we want for our children.

MARIA ESTELA: This is what we realized here. This understanding first came from ourselves: how do we learn? We reflected on our learning right from the beginning, from where we started to break these barriers. We had been acting against the very nature of the child, against the way in which they learned. What moves the child forward? What motivates them? We therefore saw that, by steps, the child was being discouraged to follow his or her genuine desire for knowledge, as a standardized and homogenized adult model was being prioritized.

RAQUEL: Let us delve a bit deeper into these tensions? What new initiatives have the schools come up with to deal with these?

LUCIANNY: In our school we must cope with a kind of tension that hasn't yet been addressed, which is the issue of parents requesting, who often demand us to work with written activities, that the children should copy from the blackboard, while we do not work in this manner. Then we started to think about how children learn to write their names. We worked with writing names on the sand, and recognizing letters from the tree leaves that we found around the school. For example, in the yard, one of the children recognized her name's letter on the lines of a leaf, and said: "Ah, this is the letter R, the first letter of my name!"

Parents demand for photocopied activities to be passed as homework and for the students' notebooks to be filled with work. We have tried to bring families on board with our cause by means of dialogue and sought to show how children learn through interaction with spaces, materials in nature, and other children.

ZILENE: I usually mention two things that we have managed to regard: the family and the child. The relation between the family and the school used to be one which did not penetrate the school, but now parents have coffee with us, we have lunch, we chat. Since this new opening, we have built a strong bond between family and school, generating co-responsibility of all those involved in the children's educational process.

Our parent/guardians-teacher conference is often of pedagogical or administrative character, but the school's educational perspective allows for the rethinking and rearranging this engagement. Once we had a children's assembly on the issue "The parent/guardians-teacher conference," asking them what they knew and understood about this meeting, and then, based on their accounts, we sought ways of drawing the parents' attention to the importance of effective participation in the meetings. The children suggested making invitations, through videos, posters and pamphlets. Not only did they come up with the idea, but they were also protagonists of these materials' construction. And

thus, with the children's invitations and constant talks at home, the parents' participation notably increased.

LEVINDO: This is a great point of tension in child education – in early childhood education and primary school –: the families' expectations, which is a prevalent mark in the school culture, and which also falls upon the teachers' role. In families' imagination, the school is often represented by a written sheet of paper. The imagination as to what a school actually consists of is not only present in the way we look at it, but also in how the school is seen by families, based on the school where parents once studied. If we are going to detach ourselves from the notion that school is just about copying from the blackboard and filling a notebook with written sheets, this also means that we must be very effective in coming up with new ways to leave a register, what's being called "pedagogical documentation," so that the process experienced by children may be recorded in a memory that shows each one's traveled path.

We are not condemning written language, and neither are we proposing that the educator should only let it surface spontaneously, as if it were something forbidden within the school. Much to the contrary, we need to think about when it is important, reckoning that the right to written language is undebatable, as it expands the children's horizons of citizenship. Also reckoning that children's literature is a part of children's culture; if we think about the whole repertoire that currently exists in the realm of children's literature, both spoken and written, we cannot deprive children of having access to all this.

The main issue here is to break free from mechanistic and impoverished logics of providing access to written culture, as if it were an exercise for adult life. It is that old view of early childhood, which we seek to overcome. This wholeness view that we seek to construct regarding the child helps us understand the need to think of an integral education, and our colleagues from Manaus talked about this. This debate, which is a field of study in which I am active, brings out the idea of thinking about the integrality of the developmental aspects, from access to the social and legitimate use of written culture, all the way to, for example,

the ethical aspect of the care that we need to have towards children. Not only regarding to issues like health and hygiene, but also care to think school as a part of the network for the social protection of children, primary schools' care.

So, when I speak of this hegemony, I think that this field of knowledge, that of written language, must not be imposed or take center stage as it does today, because this has to do with a certain idea of what a school is, and what a school for children should be. And not only that: imagination and experience – and maybe we should be talking more about imagination, in the case of children, and less about creativity –, this child's symbolizing experience, is a fundamental way through which a child can project him or herself forward, to comprehend social values and roles, and comprehend representations, to comprehend logics and rationales, ethical and aesthetic values. So, the imagination is central, and thus, in many cases, mechanism and the impoverishment of written language related activities curtails the experimentation of children's integral development and their imagination.

PABLO: Indeed, the traditional school institution remains deeply permeated by a technicist view. In this way, written language becomes arid, devoid of poetry, creation, and transgression possibilities. Language ends up losing its lively nature, which is recreated with every word of slang, every new word, accent, rhyme and meaning subversion... I believe that the contemporary world also leads to the prevalence of some given senses at the expense of others. Senses that are encouraged and requested by means of communication, gadgets, virtual forms of relationship, the consumption universe, and that of to have rather than to be.

We need to re-educate ourselves in the other senses. We need to allow children and everyone of us to feel each other respectfully, but also affectionately; we need to allow ourselves to cry, to be happy or sad, or scared, angered, to feel hurt or desire, to walk through the vicissitudes of life; to re-educate our palates and save some time just to eat, without being on our mobile phones or watching television; to feel the smell of things; to dance and to listen music; to create and enjoy art. All of this will open space for new things and will invite creativity to meet with our desires, thoughts, dreams, tasks and relations.

LEVINDO: Another point I would like to return to is that which you, Pablo and Wilma, have mentioned at the beginning, the idea of children's investigation, and research with children. Much of what has been done in what is named "democratic schools" or "innovative schools" – like 'Escola da Ponte,' in Portugal; or 'Bressol' schools, in Spain; or the famous Italian experiences, such as those in Reggio Emilia – tries to operate within this logic, applying the idea that children do research, that they have interests, and that these interests could sum up to systematic investigation. Therefore researching, experimenting, formulating questions about the world and answering these questions is all part of participative education.

RAQUEL: Levindo, children's research is something that can take shape and gain power within the school, but it arises from the many relationships established beyond the school environment. Zilene mentioned this earlier, commenting on the participation of families, while Pablo presented contemporary challenges that permeate education in general. What do you have to say about this?

LEVINDO: It is very important to think of the relationship of the school with its surroundings, its territory. Its social aspect lies not only in its imaginative dimension, but also in the fact that schools have been historically established as a simulacrum of reality. For example, it was very usual to make a scale model of the world, at school, like a small world. To some extent, this is interesting for small children – Walter Benjamin already talked about this, that children create a smaller world within a larger one –, but the school can't just be a simulation of what the world is; it is rather *part* of the world and must be therefore integrated into it. How can we ponder over the educational potential of other places, the city, the neighborhood, the backyards? I think that to search for other school metaphors is to think of a school without walls too, it's to think of a school which dialogues with its surroundings, embodying other forms of knowledge, other types of logic, other actors, with more artists, cultural agents, and traditional knowledge...

MARIA ESTELA: Precisely, one key question which arose in our changemaking experience was: should we, as teachers, liaise with the children only in the

school? To take on a broader sense of belonging could praise everyday life as an element of learning processes, thereby strengthening relationships, reinforcing welcoming and listening, all our relationship as human beings. And then we have this experience of being invited to birthday parties, weddings, and graduations... This is a privilege, it's a great honor to be a part of the child's family. This is what education really means to us! It is not a case of placing barriers filled with labeling for the adult leading the child. No! We try to be friends with the father, the mother, or whoever takes on this role. This is very important for the family and for the child to be accepted as a citizen and to have the perception that he or she has his or her own identity. We have deep respect for this relationship. And it is then that we would go to the hospital to visit a child or some his or her family member, when they would say: "Ms., come by, he wants to see you." It goes to show that we can have a good relationship outside the school environment. They are just gonna get to know me a bit because I am their teacher? No! We walk in the street and talk to the neighbors... There are people who are not even our students, but still seek to be close to commune, who really want to be a part of the group.

PABLO: Maria Estela's story adds more weight to what Levindo has just said: the school can't just be a simulation of the world, but should take it upon itself to be part of it. Stereotypes, class structures, ethnic-racial and gender relations, cultural and consumption influences, successfulness concepts, the wish for a more just and democratic society, or that for a more conservative one... this is all between the lines, within school, taking effect through what is said and what is unsaid. Therefore, notwithstanding the school might propose an idyllic scenery apart from the social reality, the school's reality is made of its living matter, the interpersonal relationships, in which all our affections, contradictions, identifications, projections and desires are present.

We agree that imagination and creativity are not separated from the requirements of social bonds. After all, we are not born human, we become human individuals in our relationships with the others. In this sense, liberating education is not one that launches children into their own inner void, their egoistic

individuality, but rather one that invites them to form social bonds, praising their desires, the way they read the world and express themselves in the world. Taking into account that there is an Other with its own rights and desires.

In this regard, the school should understand the importance of outlines, borders, and the limits of the collectivity and of the spaces of the other. At some level, it should exercise responsible authority, which can make children safe and feel that we are at their sides to help them with their insecurities and fears. However, beyond exercising responsible authority, which was so strongly advocated by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire in his book *Pedagogy of Freedom*, we need to understand the importance of transgression. Whenever we feel the need to set rules, create agreements, routines, time structures, dispositions... we shall always bear in mind the important and creative role of transgression. It is not easy to find a balance between setting up borders and overpassing them, but we should be charmed by the children's transgressive will, even when we might need to set limits. It is precisely this transgression charm, and the understanding of its groundbreaking role, that allows us to facilitate the relationship between the child and the imaginative and symbolic world, which is a healthy form of tension between creativity's openness and the comforting knowledge that has been historically constructed by society.

I finish off by telling a very interesting case which took place around here:

There was a group of children, six-year-old, or so, who were playing to spit at each other. The adults, mothers and fathers, were uncomfortable with these attitudes, because they considered it disrespectful and socially reprehensible. However, the kids were having fun with it, and play had already been going on for some days.

Mothers and fathers then decided to talk to the teacher, asking her to take some sort of action, for that "innocent play" would soon lead to conflict. The teacher, much spirited and astute, agreed to it and said she would report back on how she solved the situation.

On meeting the children, she talked to them about this play and listened to them. At the end of the day, when she was approached by the families, the teacher said they had reached an agreement, which was put up in a poster. Being very curious, the families went over to read the “auspicious” agreement, which set that:

YOU MAY SPIT ON EACH OTHER, IF YOU WANT TO.

Being shocked, everybody went to argue with the teacher, who replied:

“We had a discussion, and all the children said they liked the game and wished to continue with it. So, I decided to let things happen, and I ask you to wait for a few days to see how it goes.”

The families, not at all happy, but placing their trust in the teacher, waited for the situation to unfold, day after day. Meanwhile, children were spitting at each other again, and again, and again... and the agreement on the wall would be altered with each situation they experienced and debated. Some days later, the poster announced:

You may spit, but not in the face!

Then:

You may only spit on the foot.

After that:

You may only spit on the foot, and during break time.

...

You may only spit on the foot, if the other person wants to.

Until they stopped spitting altogether.

We must let children have their own experiences, for experience cannot be transmitted. But created.

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The Web of Feelings

Tairine Matzenbacher and Taís Russo

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Amidst the weaving of daily activities at 'Amigos do Verde' ("Green Friends") school, interwoven among pupils, teachers, parents, staff and so many other beings working within the ecosystem, one of them gains special focus at this moment: an experience which was recently lived by primary school pupils, together with the reference teachers for this group: The Web of Feelings.

This proposal came about within a group that was going through a very nervous phase, with successive fights, and where the children showed great difficulty to concentrate on collective proposals. We soon identified that, in order for them to regain their calm and focus, it was first necessary for them to have contact with their very own feelings and emotions.

The reference teacher of the group, Maurício Neto, took on the challenge of coming up with dynamics that would allow the children to express their emotional states in concrete term. With his knowledge in pedagogy, and plenty of experience amassed in four years at the school in question, he understood that it was necessary to establish a starting point that could provide a strong base for the construction of this subtle handicraft. According to Neto:

I took inspiration from a panel I had seen at a health care center, with a wide range of artistic elements. Based on this, I proposed that the boys and girls used strands of string, different colors, and pieces of nature, to express what they were feeling. The children received this proposal with curiosity and chose colors that would represent the feelings they wanted to imprint on the web, and so, together with this, I proposed that they verbally expressed these feelings while the knots were tied, while the strands were superimposed, and while the web was being constructed. During the process, I noticed that the group gradually got calmer and concentrated more, thus leaving the initial conflict that had caused the activity to start, entering a profound connection with their feelings and emotions. In fact, this perception was verbalised by the group after the activity, and the children perceived, in a very conscientious manner, the benefits of this proposal, to the point that we repeated this activity many times, at their request.

As a starting base, a web of white strands gave space so that the children could paint and add new strands, according to whatever was vibrating inside them at the time, making it possible for the children to express themselves freely and, more significantly, to strike up connections with their self and others. According to Mauricio's interpretation, the layout of the strands of string and the movement of the children when putting them on the web were also ways to express feelings. The string was tied variously in bows, in blind knots, in straight and wavy lines, tightly or loosely... The children also reported that, during the construction of the web, they paid attention to the dyeing of the strands, always seeking those colors that would represent the feelings they were trying to show, respecting each color and each different appearance on feeling, recognising that anyone could live the web experience differently. All expressions were taken as an artistic exercise of free exploration of materials, and as a way to acquire awareness of one's own emotions, a way to externalise them and to dialogue about them.

In this regard, we recognize and identify our web as being a powerful means to express feelings and to learn about Self, Others, and Us. In this weaving process, creativity showed itself to be a process in which individual and group queries intermix with the strings of empathy.

The involvement of the children in the proposal was immediate. Two girls among the participants, aged seven and eight, said that they felt calmer and more relaxed after the activity. Next, the process led to new creations. "We had the idea of putting some messages inside the web, to cheer people up. Then we would walk around the classrooms of the school, asking for messages that people could give or mention to make other people feel better, or to increase the happiness of people who were already happy," said Pérola, a Year 2 pupil. Taís, who has followed this process as a mother and also as a school coordinator, adds: "It was very special to see the children inviting other families, schoolmates and staff to benefit from the messages which had been woven into this web of love, confidence, thought and tenderness. It was something in the group that pushed this forward, but the movement benefited all those who passed through the location and felt called up."

The families also got involved in this web. Jaqueline Maciel, mother of Valentina, another Year 2 student, commented:

One afternoon, when I went over to pick up my daughter, she and other children invited me to take part in the activity. Right at the entrance to the school, there was a web and a small box. We were invited to pick a slip of paper, containing a message. This message made us think about something profound, bringing a thought to the surface. I then realized that the dynamics that they had created arose at another moment when we had also been invited to express our feelings on a slip of paper and put the slip of paper in a web, made of string, which had been constructed on the branches of a tree. For me, these two moments were very important, because they invited us – after a day of work, after battling the traffic of our city, and after a period of (dis)connection – to stop for a while, to meditate a bit and to have dialogue with the children about a feeling, about the message that had chosen us. The children’s attentive eyes, and their empathic listening, as also their happiness in approaching every father and every mother, made me feel how much purpose had been constructed in that dynamic study. She had made us take up the habit of jointly choosing a feeling to permeate our day, on entering the school building, whenever this was possible.

This web, which got its first strands in 2018, but which is still being weaved today through sharing thoughts and conversations between the children and with their families and educators, clearly shows how we experience creativity at ‘Amigos do Verde.’ We seek to make things that can nourish the processes of each one, which gives a very special meaning to the experiences we have at school. We understand that creativity is directly related to sensitivity, with emotions and with the pulsation of life and conscience.

One of the ways in which we can feel this pulsation is through practices of auto(eco) knowledge, which are carried out with the children on a daily basis, in many of the meetings we have had with families and also with the staff. These are activities such as circular dancing, yarning circles, and moments of relaxation via meditation, yoga, and group harmonizing. Among these practices we also include awareness-building

games, whether using the “dice of feelings” or through special cards with phrases about some virtues and emotions that, when drawn, help us to give some thought to our present; a mood-board that reflects our moment in life, with cuttings, collages, paintings and drawings; or an exchange of messages and the designing of self-portraits – in a nutshell, any kind of proposal that arouses conscientiousness and therefore has an impact on the relationship between Self, Others, Us and the environment.

As explained by Silvia Carneiro, the founder and joint director of the school:

Regarding their educational philosophy, ‘Amigos do Verde’ is based on a systematic paradigm, both whole or holistic. [...] We consider it essential for there to be coherence between practice, which everyone in this community breathes day to day, and what is proposed by the institution, including theoretical references¹.

Therefore, we work so that the principles backing up the pedagogical proposal may enter both the daily routine of students and teachers, as well as their relations and all the activities pursued at school. The web of emotions is just a small sample that gives a good idea of our whole.

We have practical experience of each proposal and, with independence, we also provide the students with moments, situations, and points in time and space, which favor their creative processes and skills. In this regard, our attention lies in the contemplation of, and assistance with, each individual person’s process, thereby enriching the paths trailed by each person and, more importantly, by each of the learning experiences as lived.

1. “Reflexões sobre o significado da escola Amigos do Verde na vida de pais, alunos e educadores” (Thoughts on the significance of the ‘Amigos do Verde’ school in the lives of parents, pupils and educators). Master’s dissertation, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUC-RS), 2006. Available at: <<http://tede2.pucrs.br/tede2/bitstream/tede/3765/1/388461.pdf>>.

Silvia Carneiro understands, and makes us perceive, that creativity is not something external, but rather a living force in each and every one of us, which occurs in a cyclic fashion, as if in a pulse of life, in a movement of rest, expansion, rest and then contraction.


The web of emotions clearly shows this living cycle at its four moments. At the outset, we rest, then look into ourselves and look at the situations we have experienced. Next, with the impulse given by reflection, we expand our thoughts, our actions, and express ourselves, either through a conversation, a construction, or even a gesture. Exercising our conscience, this expansion is then followed by another period of rest, a moment when each person can embark on further calm self-observation, also taking in his or her surroundings, and peers, so that the contraction may be completed, so that learning may be recalled, and so that the transformations may also be reacquired, thereby beginning a new cycle.

An understanding of the creative process in these four cyclic stages is behind many of the proposals developed in our school. We understand that transformation is something that occurs every day, both internally and externally, and also that we, as a constituent part of this process, also feel the need to expand our life experiences, and to get more people involved in this big web, that is the 'Amigos do Verde' project.

It was therefore not by chance that Pérola, as other children felt the need to visit other groups and also put messages up, right at the entrance to the school, so that everyone, in some way, may be part of our web and also feel captivated by the creative sensitivity as cultivated in our daily lives.

The observation of that group of children, their periods of rest and of expansion, have all given rise





to this project, which started in one group and which has since reverberated around the whole school. We have shared this story because of the power that it represented for us, enabling pupils to express what they felt and develop new thoughts on how to solve conflicts or discontent. We believe in a form of education which banks on emotional intelligence as an element in the integral qualification of humans. In addition, through the Web of Feelings, we observe the expansion of the scope of learning within this group, in a move to expand emotional vocabulary, understand relationships and feelings with utmost empathy, in a way that is integrated with the creative processes as formerly experienced.

Here, we always try to offer the best conditions so that these processes may unfold without a hitch – encouraged by the environment, by the people, and also by the moments in time which allow us to reflect on situations experienced, in a sensitive and unique way, be we teachers, pupils, parents or staff.

We follow our creative processes, both individual and within a group, and we celebrate when we see the relations that have been struck up through such dynamics, giving particular interest to the paths trailed, and the webs that, every day, get us involved in our very coexistence.

We do not limit our action to the products of practices, and neither do we restrict our scope to some technique or creative pattern. Creativity is seen as something that is always present, whether in a yarnning circle, in the solution of some conflict, in play activities amid the lianas, in the construction of a bonfire, these among so many moments that let our feelings flow in a natural and spontaneous manner. Sometimes, there are other constructions and products that arise throughout the experience, like in case of the Web of Feelings, but even in these cases we want to focus on the individual and collective processes. In this way, we cast aside our reductionist perspectives that only aim at products, instead expanding our viewpoint to understand and give value to the paths that each one of us has trailed, as also the exchanges shared, the links constructed, accepting diversity and respecting the singularities and the inherent wealth of each person.

We understand that creativity is directly related to sensitivity, with emotions and with the pulsation of life and conscience.

All the educators, as also the other staff of the school, be they working in the administrative field and/or collaborators, also enjoy the feeling of creation at pedagogical meetings and seminars. Meetings take place once a week, while the seminars are at the beginning and the end of the school year, as also at the end of the first semester. On these occasions, the team takes part in activities and experiences of auto(eco) knowledge, many of which also involve fathers, mothers, specialists in the area, and friends, as well as the children themselves. Through these activities, everyone has the opportunity to feed his or her creative being, connecting with feelings and emotions, and letting sensitivity flourish.

And thus, weaving our acts, towards and with students, we feel a reverberation of the creative processes in teachers and staff. This involves many dimensions, bringing meaning to all. This is a pulse of life which, over time and space, helps grow everyone's autonomy. We can feel and experience creativity and it builds a large web, bringing together different threads, interweaving stories and practices of individuals and groups.

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Anchor with Wings

*Enzo Nicolau, Luana Fonseca, Mariana Reis,
Mariana Santino and Sofia Reis*

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On a December morning in 2018, in the library of the 'Âncora' ("Anchor") Project (county of Cotia, in Greater São Paulo), five students of this community school were asked to explore the issue of creativity from a very personal standpoint, reporting on experiences of reinvention and discovery. In this text-collage, we have collected a bit of that conversation and its revelations.

My name is Enzo, I am fifteen years old, and I have been here at 'Âncora' for less than two years. For me, studying has always been very important, as I really like to learn new things. This is for personal reasons that, yes, I shall explain here. Right from the start of Enzo's life, when I was at the most innocent phase, I wanted to learn *everything*, because I saw that people needed things, and there was no way I could help without understanding what was going on: a situation like that when someone gets hurt and you are unable to help, as you are not a doctor and hence could give the wrong medication or treat the wound without due care. And see that the person is suffering over there, something that did not help me to solve the case. Or when the person needs emotional support and you do not know what to say, because what you say could either improve or worsen the situation. Thus, right from when I was a child, I wanted to get to know things, so that I would know how to help when anyone needed help. My dream was that of being the only omniscient human being who could come over and firmly and surely say: "Oh, I know this, and I know how to help."

As I grew up, I realized that there was no way I could be omniscient, but I kept the dream of knowing as many things as I *wanted* to know. However, just before I joined 'Âncora,' I was almost giving up on this idea, because when I was interested in something and went over to ask someone, they would tell me: "No! You will learn this next year." And then I had to wait *a whole year* for something that interested me right now. Waiting a whole year for someone to talk briefly about the issue in half a class before already moving on to another issue. This was very frustrating: I wanted to get something, then sit down with a teacher and talk about it for days on end, you know? And apparently that was not possible. It seemed that everything was conspiring against me, asking me to wait until the day when one of those things could possibly be useful, instead of discovering its use directly or studying because of its usefulness.

And then, out of the blue, at the time when I was really disheartened with life, my mother told me she had signed me up for this school - in secret, without telling anyone - and that I had got in. I didn't even know that 'Âncora' existed. My mother found out by ferreting out through Facebook, and then showed interest in the project. She did everything herself: I think that not even my father knew. She just went there, signed me up, and said: "Well, who knows..."

Here you understand that you do not have to be at school to learn. You could be on a bus, at home, on the metro, just about anywhere, having a conversation. You see that everything is education!

Then, in the middle of the year, I joined 'Âncora.' I left everything behind and came here. Here I was more hopeful, because finally I managed to learn how to learn, you know? This phrase was very important to me. One tutor in particular helped me, I had several conversations with him, because here they give you some freedom, but this does not stop it from being a school. I wanted to understand how this was and kept asking myself: "Is this really a school? It is so different, there is no-one explaining things to me, and I look for the things myself." And then he uttered The Phrase: "Here you do not learn subjects; you learn to learn." Suggestively, the school teaches me to do what I like most. Here you understand that you do not have to be at school to learn. You could be on a bus, at home, on the metro, just about anywhere, having a conversation. You see that everything is education! This linked with what my father used to say when I was demotivated with school and wanted to quit studying. He said something like: "I'm sorry, but you will never stop studying." Here, I managed to understand that I really can know *everything* I want to know in my life. Finally, now I believe in this once again. I can say this for sure, in my words!

I am Sofia, and I am thirteen years old. While Enzo was speaking, I thought about something that was very important to me, and then I remembered by scribbles.

While I was attending the traditional school before 'Âncora,' I would almost always scribble on the margin of the pages, and the teachers would hate it when I did this, because this messed up the whole copybook and they thought that I was not paying attention. However, in fact, I scribbled because I was not able to pay attention to the

person speaking by looking directly at him or her. For this reason, I do other things, and then the person thinks I am not listening, while I do this for that very reason: to pay attention. However, the teachers would not understand this. Then, when I joined 'Âncora,' one of the things I learnt to do, something that everyone learns to do, is write up the minutes of meetings. While I was drawing up the minutes, I would still scribble, and nobody cared. This way, I managed to think and, at the same time, note down what was happening to me: if I was disheartened, I would, you know, draw spirals, and each moment I experienced had its own form... When I was angry, for example, I would draw triangles, you know? Being able to make these scribbles helped me a lot, both with regard to my drawing skills as also to make me more extroverted and speak at meetings, when I had something to say.

After that, last year, I took part in a project between the schools and NASA. This was a program that brought together people from several schools: 'Âncora,' a state school, the EMEF Perimetral in the *favela* of Paraisópolis; and a private school, the Dante Alighieri School in São Paulo. We gathered in groups, and then each group would propose an experiment to be taken to the Space Station. My project was selected, and it was a test to see how cement reacts when combined with green plastic, which is plastic made from sugar cane bagasse. This is important because plastic holds back radiation, and if it copes well enough with the strong radiation up in space, then it can be used as protection. So then they took the experiment to the Space Station, and stayed there for a whole month. Now, this coming week, we will be going to a Physics Laboratory at the University of São Paulo (USP) to see the results of the experiment.

There was a lot of hype with regard to this project, and people would always ask me if I thought if this could have an influence on what I plan to do in the future. But no, I really like Science, but this is not what I want to do as a career: not engineering or anything like that. I do my drawings... I want to be a writer.

I am Mariana Santino and am sixteen years old. I feel it was very important that Enzo said that education is not only within the school, but also in the streets, in meetings, in everything you do that transforms you. One experience that really impressed me

and changed my life was an exhibition I visited last year [2017] at Sesc Pinheiros, on Emory Douglas, an artist from the Black Panthers.

Those pictures had such a strong impact upon me that they opened my eyes to look at my own skin, and then I discovered something that was always present but which I had not perceived: that I was an Afro-descendant. This discovery made me understand a lot about my own identity, helped me to find answers, and also encouraged me to ask new questions. It also brought a situation of conflict, which I find very good, because at home I started to discuss these issues with my mother, with my mother insisting that I was white and me trying to show that we were both Afro-descendants. This discussion extends for a long way, and I find this good, as I well know of the strength of this discovery.

In addition, the many 'Âncora' activities linked to this issue became even more intense, with more deeper meanings. I know that my process is still in the early stages and there is a long way to go, but this is all very well as it makes me stronger.

My name is also Mariana, Mariana Reis, I am fifteen years old and am Sofia's sister. Even though everyone thinks I am younger than she is... Well, I come from the world of theatre, I started with the theatre, because my mother is an actress - and then I started to pursue a career in the theatre since I was very young, at home and at school, taking courses. However, I also like dancing, and in the end I discovered myself in the world of dance. I danced but never trained; it was loose dancing, without any kind of technique or anything like that. In the end, one day I came to an acting lesson, when I moved from one course to another, and when I arrived they were... dancing. So I thought: "Well, but isn't this an acting course?" I looked on, and thought it was wonderful, but didn't really understand what was happening. And then the teacher explained that there are some acting techniques that involve dancing, and that it is very important to dance within the theatre. So then I saw that one could bring the two things together, without barriers. Then I found out that it is also impossible to work on theatre within dance, and that the two areas could meet, on one side or the other. It could seem to be something small, but for me it was a major discovery, because it brought together two different parts of my existence, two things that I really liked doing but which, until then, had been separate.

There is also a very crazy experience which is taking place right now. I'll let Luana tell you about it.

My name is Luana and I am fifteen years old. I was born in Rio de Janeiro, and last year I moved to São Paulo to study at 'Âncora.' My mother always gave strong priority to education and always did what she could so that my siblings and I could always study at the best schools in Rio. However, I never felt that I really belonged to the school. I always had a lot of friends, liked my teachers, and my teachers also liked me. However, I never, in all that time, had much of a desire to get things done. When I came here, it was more than just a change of school: it was a change of state. I was that person who never thought of living in São Paulo, far from the beach – I still miss the beach –, but then I came here, joined 'Âncora,' and never had to adapt, because my real problem was adapting to the old school. When I entered, it was like "I have now found my place." I basically knew that here, once you have an idea, you can do practically anything you wish. One thing that 'Âncora' really helped me with was in making me feel inside myself, you know? Here was the only moment when I really said, "I want to do this, and I will do this."

And this is where the experience that Mariana comments just now: At the beginning of this year, we started to talk about university – because our time at 'Âncora' will end and we shall need to give a new direction to our lives, then what? After all, what is the point of breaking free from traditional schools and then go to a university which is just like that school? So then we thought: "Well, if I can do everything I want, why not take this attitude with me, outside the school, and then study at university?" So we started off asking ourselves what we would like to find in a university, and what this 'Universidade Livre' ("Free University") would be like, as we called it at the beginning, when the idea didn't even have a name. Then we understood that this could not be a physical university, as one place does not serve everyone, and does not serve people with social problems, people who live far away, people who live in areas without public transport... So we thought: one way would be to create a platform.

Having decided on this action, we started to look for people to help us to develop the project, and now we already have a host of people helping us. We also started

to take a course... I took a course with Eda, from CIEJA Campo Limpo, to get better knowledge of the experiences over there, and in this course we met a woman who is trying to bring Manish Jain, an Indian educator, to Brazil. This man has a free university in India and, when he found out about our project, he invited us to go there and participate in a congress. And so we went to India! It was back in October [2018].

However, when we were invited there, there were only two months to go for the congress, and there was no money. It was crazy! We had to raise funds through dinners and lectures, and also had to ask companies for contributions. At these lectures, we explained our project, why it was important to go there, and what we expected to do on our return...

So, one thing that really marked my life was this attitude based on "you can achieve whatever you like." A bit like "You can go as far as you want to go!"



Hey!

Enzo Nicolau

*I'm a genius, yet my knowledge is minimal,
I fight for my rights, and yet I'm a criminal.
I'm both a wise man and a man who knows
nothing,
I am a stagnant lake, and a waterfall rushing.*

*I am a sadist, as well as a pacifist,
I hate pain, but I'm a masochist.
I am happy with my lot, and yet suicidal,
I feel like a corpse, but my signs are vital.*

*I am everybody, and yet I am no one,
I am just a student, but already I'm someone.
I am a mindful being, but my mind is a void,
Sometimes I'm a girl, and sometimes, a boy.*

*I am perfect, but with a defect,
I do no nothing, but have an effect.
I am hyperactive, but also I'm lazy.
I am patient, but waiting drives me crazy.*

*I may be a saint, but I have also sinned,
I am earthbound, but I fly like the wind.
I am a pessimist, but hopelessly poetic,
I am a searing pain, and its anesthetic.*

*I have the devil's own luck, and a devil's curse,
I am life, I am death; I am rebirth.
I might look skinny, but I'm stronger than that.
Some call me graceful, but others say I'm fat.*

*That's who I am, I don't care what people say.
I'm a nightmare that recurs: night after night, day
after day.
I can't change this in me, because in me is change.
I'm anti-violence, but if needs must, I'll seek revenge.*

*And whether you accept me like this, or not,
It's the way I am. So, are you shocked?
Sometimes I hate—and sometimes I like—my style,
After the photo's been taken, I lose my smile.*

*I'm a god, but I am mortal,
I'm a god of fire in a snowfall,
I'm a god without moonlight, or any light at all,
I'm a normal human being. That's all.*

**Close your eyes and imagine where, within
your body, creativity shows itself.
Have you imagined just a part of it?**



[Click here](#) and think about it, based on the provocation made by Rosane Almeida, from the 'Bricante' Institute, about the fullness of the body within creative processes.



4. THE POWER OF CULTURES AND MEMORY



Multicultural Education: On the Roads to a Celebration Pedagogy

Renata Falleti, Robson Max and Rosângela Souza

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The commonest ways of understanding and of being understood in most societies are essentially via use of images. This is the case in particular among Native Brazilians and Africans, that make up the Brazilian multicultural matrix. This is a way of thinking with a strong power of producing senses, feelings and knowledge, full of metaphors and analogies that make up myths, epistemologies and philosophies. As Saturnino de la Torre, an author who inspires us in many of these thoughts, aptly points out, these are mental images of a type that “develops the imagination, connection and interaction between the elements, while also understanding the globality of what one wishes to transmit” (2016, p. 16). Even though these are universal resources, they are also situated in both time and space; they are created by, and are organizing elements of, each culture. This means that the more facets there are in the prism of knowledge about different cultural references, the greater the imaginary and creative repertoire will be.

The choice to construct a text full of metaphors goes hand in hand with the very principle that inspired the birth of the ‘Odé Kayodê’ Multicultural School, which has “been getting rooted in the terrain of a changemaker education,” to quote De la Torre himself.

As we see it, this root in question has a double meaning: first, there is the element that contemplates ancestral dimension: a principle of African civilization that is important for understanding the present, what we are now, through those who have come before us, so that we can then go on to desire and construct the future we want. Based on this viewpoint and on a perspective that has a cultural context as its reference, rather than as a limit, we can gain an understanding of the world. This root explains and sustains the present, which boosts and guarantees the future, that is whatever has still to blossom, flourish and bear fruit.

The second sense of rooting is related to knowledge and the theoretical bases that shed light on, and are grounds for, the proposal for multicultural education as proposed at ‘Odé Kayodê,’ and which are in the process of being enrooted. Viewed from this perspective, telling our story is an act of acknowledging our roots, our ancestral, and search for an epistemology that can explain and sustain our pedagogical

practice. At the same time, it makes us reclaim the terrain where this proposal is being cultivated. As De la Torre says in his work *Dialogando com a criatividade* (“Dialoguing with the Creativity”), “Love and creativity are like fruit-bearing trees. They only produce wealth if they are cultivated” (2005, p. 10)

The ‘Odé Kayodê’ Multicultural School was a seed that started to sprout in 1995, amid the fertile creative soil of dreams of the ‘Vila Esperança’ (“Hope Village”) Cultural Space, which was situated among a host of stones and a river. ‘Vila Esperança’ was founded in 1991 with the aim of working with art, culture and education in popular environments. Initially we worked on that matters joined with literacy, citizenship and playfulness, with classes of six-year-old children from three state-run schools in the county of Goiás, as complementary activities every fortnight. The following year, we started a partnership with Dom Abel State School that ended up branching out, and at one time we served three classes in this school. We continued like this for almost ten years, like a branch, an extension of the state and municipal education systems, with little autonomy of actions.

In 2004 ‘Odé Kayodê’ Multicultural School arose as an institution duly authorized and recognized by the Brazilian Ministry of Education (MEC). The year after, in 2005, the institution started to operate as a private school, but with a community characteristic meaning that remained free of charge. Since then, the enrooting of the multicultural proposal could get more profound and better nourished, initially by the intuition that the formation of a child’s identity and self-esteem is more important than any other type of learning, whether cognitive, emotional or social.

At ‘Vila Esperança,’ the work on history and culture through the perspective of multiculturalism began with the association itself, well before the changes that were made to the Lei de Diretrizes e Bases (“Brazilian Education Bases Law,” LDB) by Law 10,639/2003, which made “African and Afro-Brazilian History and Culture” a mandatory element in primary and secondary schooling in Brazil, and also by Law No. 11,645/2008, which expanded the scope of this mandatory ruling, making it also compulsory to have lessons in “Afro-Brazilian and Native Brazilian History and Culture.”

The multicultural proposal thus arose as more than just a conceptual concern, but rather as an ethical and political commitment, which also embodies the history of this territory and the people who established it. The City of Goiás, where we are, was built on Native Brazilian lands using Afrodescendant slave labor, and ever since then, young black people in the community continue to be decimated. For this reason, we have set up this school.

At this point, we should also present the theories that have nurtured us for thought during the process of growth, expansion and enrooting. The concept of critical multiculturalism that best defines 'Odé Kayodê's vision, is explained thus by Peter McLaren:

I am calling critical multiculturalism understands representation of race, class, and gender as the result of larger social struggles over signs and meanings, and in this way emphasizes not simply textual play or metaphorical displacement as a form as a form of resistance, but stresses the central of transforming the social, cultural, and institutional relations in which meanings are generated (p. 123).

Ever since its foundation, the school has been researching and trying to understand, within their routine education work, how culture can, at the same time, have a positive effect on differences and identities, transforming social relationships, especially those which seem at first to be unequal and oppressive.

To this end, the school follows the position summed up by Graça dos Santos Costa and Camila Costa de Carvalho, in their deeper study on the concept of critical multiculturalism, as follows:

This conception of multiculturalism, as implied in the fight against inequality, stresses a dialogical debate that goes well beyond tolerance between different cultures; above all, it seeks to move away from the *celebration* between cultures, also detaching itself from the descriptive aspect of diversity and proposing policies based on culturally committed actions.

Thus, critical multiculturalism is not restricted to thinking of the geopolitical

space where the different cultures coexist, but also seeks to bring to the surface the legitimization mechanisms that guarantee and establish prejudices, discriminations and racism. *The main purpose of multiculturalism is that of giving a voice to the socially oppressed group, affirming plural identities, in the name of a type of social justice that is as firmly committed to people's liberation and emancipation as it is to groups and society as a whole* (p. 84, highlights added).

Another observation, essential to forming a respectful relationship with others and more importantly with the differences of others, stresses communication between cultures, the so-called critical interculturality, which, according to Vera Maria Candau, is a matter of

casting doubts upon the differences and inequalities as constructed over time between different sociocultural groups, ethno-racial groups, genders, sexual orientations, religious groups, etc. [...] Interculturality suggests a construction of societies that take on differences as being constitutive elements of democracy, and that are able to construct new relationships, truly egalitarian between different social and cultural groups, and that assume the empowerment of those who have been historically cast in inferior positions (p. 244).

The terrain of dialogue open to the diversity of cultural references, and so committed to a type of changemaker education that fights different types of racism, prejudice and inequality, has enabled 'Odé Kayodê' to flourish. Evidence of this success can be seen in the planning and organizing of several events and parties, such as the "Grandparents' festival," which encourages family members to gather together in a circle and discuss essential issues of importance for the school over the coming year. With children, the conversation focuses on self-discovery, encouraging interviews with their grandparents, and the socialization of the information that surges out of these encounters. We also construct family trees, effectively registering an album of one's own life story, as defined collectively by each group. During this process, sprout poems, texts, songs, chants, and gifts made by the children in special honor of the elders, our closest ancestors. At such parties we share the fruits of a whole cycle and serve our mutual affection on the common table.

However, the best fruit are being carefully cultivated, and this has a lot to do with a lively and dynamic institution, willing to think over the relationships with everything around it. Not always is the context favorable to the prosperity of cultivation; there are also some adverse conditions, requiring even greater care, and the fertile fertilizer of hope.

In the current context, that of rapid changes and also new issues proposed by and for our society, it is the movement of actively creating and re-creating that makes it possible for us to think of education as being space/time of the what-to-do, as Paulo Freire beautifully expresses in his poem “Canção Óbvia” (“Obvious Song”), of 1971:

... One who waits and only waits
lives out a time of waiting in vain.

Therefore, while I wait for you,
I will work the fields, and
I will talk to the men.

My body burned by the sun, I will drench it in sweat;
my hands will become calloused hands,
my feet will learn the mystery of the paths,
my ears will hear more
my eyes will see what they did not see before,
while I am waiting for you.

I won't await you only waiting,
for my waiting time is
a what-to-do time.

An education cultivated on the soil of hope brings within its seed a creative and transformative movement, and this is what explains the co-existence of ‘Odé Kayodê’ amid a group of traditional and hegemonic learning institutions, which has always prevailed in City of Goiás. The school, its very survival, and its ability to resist can be considered as a constant movement of creativity. In this regard,

creativity starts to be seen as a quality that is not exclusive to individuals, but also present in organizations, communities, peoples and cultures. Creativity, from being simply a paradigm of complexity and of social and cultural interaction, becomes a power that blossoms in places with the appropriate conditions and atmospheres, so that new ideas may bud without any fear of rejection. Before, much to the contrary, valued as seeds of change. This is because it is now more and more evident that the person and the environment, and the organizational context, are not independent realities, but rather are complementary to each other (De la Torre, 2016, p. 21).

First and foremost, speaking about creativity at the 'Vila Esperança' Cultural Space and in its 'Odé Kayodé' Multicultural School is an act of returning to our sources. Our cornerstone is that of diversity of identity, of the vast wealth of different peoples and cultures, particularly those that have helped to form the Brazilian people. We must, right from the outset, turn our hearts and our viewpoints to the origins. So that we can, in a Freirian style, learn how to read into our cultures and learn through our Afrodescendant and Native Brazilian ancestors, taking them as our masters and as our references.

For us, as an educational institution - a school - taking on cultural elements as a curriculum component, as a project for studies and experiences, means "officially" accepting what is, in many ways, made invisible, discriminated against, and historically devalued.

This viewpoint and this choice have been finetuned by families of Afrodescendant and Native Brazilian workers, living on the land where 'Vila Esperança' took root. Washerwomen of the Rio Vermelho, prostitutes, landless peasants, domestic workers, salespeople and artisans, residents in the outskirts of the city, at that time almost rural spaces, became established as masters of wisdom and of social denouncement for the group of social activists and educators who got together for *mutirões de farinha* (communal labor on harvest and preparation of cassava flour), literacy classes, theatre, celebrations, and also meetings to discuss about Human Rights.

Addressing issues such as differences and equality is essential for the development of our political project for education and our ethical commitment for the qualification and formation of the Brazilian child, so that, from the very start of the development process, he or she may perceive difference as an element of identity, as a form of wealth, rather than the contrary. So, discussions on equality and differences characterize the pedagogical work at 'Odé Kayodê.'

According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos, with whom we agree, with regard to not discussing culture outside the historical context of the society in which we live, there is indeed a need for discussion of equality and differences beyond the scope presented in official and hegemonic discourse: "We have the right to be equal, whenever differences make us inferior; we have the right to be different, whenever equality mischaracterize us" (2006, p. 316). In addition, as Vera Maria Candau points out,

Intercultural Education sets out from the affirmation of difference as a kind of wealth. It promotes systematic processes for dialogue between several subjects – both individual and collective –, wisdoms and practices from the standpoint of an affirmation of Justice – socioeconomic, political, cognitive and cultural –; as well as the construction of egalitarian relations between social and cultural groups, and the democratization of society, by means of policies that articulate rights of equality and difference (p. 1).

Based on this assumption, the emphasis on differences is widened to include different knowledge and different ways of being and knowing, without the establishment of any kind of hierarchy, also considering, according to De la Torre (2016), the *ecology of knowledge*, *ecosystemic education*, and *interdisciplinarity* as principles of creative education. Hence the insight of what we consider the Celebration Pedagogy.

Celebrating or throwing parties is a "natural talent" of Brazilians. We cultivate, encourage, value and reference this "natural" talent. For us, as an educational institution – a school – taking on cultural elements as a curriculum component, as a project for studies and experiences, means "officially" accepting what is, in many ways, made invisible, discriminated against, and historically devalued. A party is a

celebration of creativity, of differences between people and between groups, difference in tastes and talents, in ways of doing and knowing. A party is the whole package, like an intersection between the process of development, learning, and celebration of conquests and of targets that have been achieved. It sheds light on the sheer complexity of life, and can only be shown as part of life, in a relationship based on dialogue. In Celebration Pedagogy, as well as in the ecosystemic educational paradigm, according to Maria Cândida Moraes,

the interactions that occur inside living organisms are always cognitive interactions, constructed in the very flow of life. It is in this life flow that, through actions and reactions, we model our world and are modelled by it. Based on this structural relationship, subject and world emerge together [...] In this way, we believe that the ecosystemic educational paradigm could help us to become aware of the fact that our fundamental relationships with life, with nature, with other people and also with the cosmos, also depend on our way of knowing, thinking and learning; they also depend on our internal representations and their respective values, as shown through our actions. In a nutshell, they depend on our way of living and being in this world (p. 23).

A party celebration is also the outcome: is the moment when all these subjectivities – and all the empiricism – become visible, palatable, tangible, in a splash of colors, tastes, movements and touches. However, its main importance could perhaps lie in the “process,” in the *how* and *when*, in the route. It is along the way that the trip takes place, rather than at departure or arrival, as Guimarães Rosa says. The collective process where each individual is called to take part, to contribute, to confront, to tackle, to establish dialogue, to exchange, analyze and synthesize: this is the place of education. To visualize the richness of diversity and the pleasure that can be obtained therefrom, we need to take up a position of respect towards other people. Respect brings confidence and acceptance. This is fertile territory for creativity to thrive. As De la Torre teaches us,

working from this prism is stressing the educational value of work, under the theories and principles of creativity. In this way, the development of creative skills

means the development of attitude skills and other skills that can be flexible in the light of new and unexpected situations, being open to change, as well as being original and intricate; intuitive and sensitive to one's surroundings, in individual or group manner; that allow independence but with initiative (2016, p. 22).

A school that helps each person to prepare his or her own terrain, alone and with company, individually and collectively, marrying affectivity with learning, and thus allowing a *thinking-feeling* (*Sentipensar*) about content, faced with the situation of the world. *Sentipensar* is a term coined by De la Torre, that

indicates the process through which we put thought and feelings to work together [...] it is the merging of two different ways of interpreting reality, based on reflection and emotional impact, until the acts of thinking and feeling come together in one same act of knowledge (1999, p. 1).

'Odé Kayodê' has been pollinating their experience in multicultural education and can collaborate in a transformative way to a creative and diverse society, starting out with its children, teenagers, young adults, educators and the community at large. A creative society that seeks and finds solutions, that establishes ways out and can also build staircases and bridges.

City of Goiás, December 2018.

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I Got 99 Problems and School is Most of Them: Bodies and Voices in an Intercultural Education

Priscila Dias

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Bro', I tell you, I hated that place, I wanted out
I didn't understand a fucking thing the teacher talked about.
She explained and explained, and wanted me to take the time,
To create an interest in a world that was nothing like mine

Thiago Elniño, Sant and KMKZ

I am a Black Brazilian educator, born in the outskirts of São Paulo, the daughter of Northeastern immigrants. My parents were clever, cultured people but never learnt to write. Their culture is the culture of the voice, of the spoken word, life anecdotes and lessons passed down from ancestors. This is also my own culture, which has overlaid the written culture contained in books. Differently from my parents, I entered the literate world, and it became a part of me. I am a History teacher and a researcher on the issue of racism in education.

I grew up and got my degree, torn between these two worlds – one pervaded by oral messages, and the other by letters and words. Throughout my childhood and adolescence, the dialogue between these two cultures was in constant conflict. My qualifications and my very own identity were built on the negotiation between nets of oral knowledge and written forms of knowledge. Even though I experienced both cultures, as Eric Havelock would have it, “not as [...] rival systems of thought, but as invention of a conceptual language” (p. 13), there was one space where the tensions between these cultural models of being, of understanding and expression became especially hard: the school.

Here, it is worth pointing out that the school where I studied was indeed excellent, following the constructivist line, that of an “open” school. At the school, we would plant, shear sheep, feed the ducks, turtles, fish and birds, milk the cows... I learnt a lot in those years at school, and I learnt that learning also lies in doing things, in actions. On the other hand, there I learnt that the silence surrounding racism and my traditions and customs effectively wiped out my own identity and my sense of belonging to the world. I was at school, but culturally I was not part of it. Being in an environment where there is a need to adapt, to behave according to manners of

others, proving one's own values and being polite all the times, is consummate to psychic, moral, social and cultural mutilation. It was a drawn-out experience, one which brewed an anger deep within me, and which I could only understand much later on.

This understanding was partly attained through an encounter with theory. The questions that arose within me during my years of basic schooling led me to study History. I thought that possibly, in this course, I could understand these feelings. On entering university, however, my anxiety to find answers to my juvenile restlessness was suffocated by tsunamis of texts and more texts; texts that did not bring any answers. In my third year at university, I was dying inside. Everything I had read up until then confused me. The turning point came when I began to study one module – the only module that touched on this topic– on African cultures and the whole of the Afro-Brazilian paraphernalia. This module was alone, stuck there on the curriculum, somewhere in the middle of the eight terms' worth of material, simply to comply with Law No. 10,639/03, which stated that schools should, within their syllabuses, include fundamentals of African and Native Brazilian history and cultures. As bell hooks,

I came to theory because I was hurting – the pain within me was so intense that I could not go on living. I came to theory desperate, wanting to comprehend – to grasp what was happening around and within me. [...] I saw in theory then a location for healing (p. 83).

When I read these words, I cried, because they came from the same place as mine, and spoke about the same pain: of open sewers, and fireflies shining under the full moonlight; of the lack of water, of samba beats through the night; of government's disregard for our lives, of wooden shacks; of dances thundering a mix of techno and Northeastern music, of people sitting around the bonfire; of violence and the alley stairs; of stray dogs, marbles, kites, and children running around, of skipping rope in the street; of desperation and camaraderie.

If theory healed me, this was mainly through contact with decolonial approach. On removing Europe from the center of the world and considering the historical and civilizational values beyond the legacy of this continent, it also gave me a revealing

perspective of the school world. With Muniz Sodré, I realized that “colonialism – or ‘coloniality,’ as some people prefer to call it – is the persistence of the primary of the absolute One over cultural pluralism, above all in ideologies that converge to educational insistences through canonical texts” (p. 22).

Aligned with thinkers such as José de Sousa Lopes, Edileuza Penha de Souza and István Mészáros, I observed that the Western reasoning is the very pillar of the crisis in modern education. This is because the West’s egotistical and unidimensional viewpoint restricts our ability to learn and apprehend the otherness in intercultural contact zones, crisscrossed by endless tensions.

With the tools provided by decolonial theory, I was able to grasp the fact that the discourse of Western schooling, under a disguise of modernity, civilization and progress, boosted an educational style based on European colonial reasoning. This monoculture of knowledge gives rise to prejudices against Native Brazilian peoples and Afroascendents¹, which are still very much presents in teaching practice in Brazil, where the lack of knowledge of such groups’ history and culture is rife.

My encounter with theory, however, is only half the story. It was through practice that my double and painful belonging turned into an impulse for transformation. The experience of learning without meaning directed me to the classroom with a burning desire to do things differently. Of course, I well knew that, as a teacher, I could never

1. I deliberately use the concept of “ascendence” rather than “descendence”, to distinguish a cultural perspective from a social and biological one, which is attached to the concept of “descendence” and regulates the use of the common terminology “Afrodescendent”. Ascendence is what emerges, what escapes and breaks the paradigms. The concept of Afroascendence breaks the Euro-Western logic, providing cultural reconstitutions on the part of the diasporas.



perpetuate the void that I had felt while at school, neither could I feed the strangeness that had also accompanied me throughout most of my university career. I realized that there was some need for a change in practice, as well as a change in attitude, in what is taught, and how it is taught.

Aware that education is not neutral, but rather sustained by a system of privileges and rewards, I could not teach for adjustment. This view was reinforced by one detail that is far from irrelevant: I had taken over a teaching post in a state-run school in the poor outskirts of São Paulo city, that was dogged with problems. It was a space in which many woes were concentrated, born of an education system that neglects and (dis)serves a population which is predominantly Afroascendant and from migrant families. That territory, therefore, was the ideal environment to carry out a crucial experiment in my role as educator, researcher and as individual: The Narrative Circles.

The purpose of these Circles is to probe into and handle the space between oral and written expression, within the school environment. Its dynamics consist of transform my lessons into moments of dialogue, opening space for exchange of ideas and thoughts, where everyone may speak and listen to their peers, with freedom. In essence, I want to invite the students to think critically about the school, to become critical thinkers in their daily life and co-authors of their own teaching-learning processes. For this, there was a need, first and foremost, to completely break with the figure of the teacher that threatens, reprehends, silences, colonizes bodies and spirits – that figure to which those students had grown accustomed.

In the first Circle meetings, we realize that even just physically setting up such meetings was an act of “disorganizing” established spaces of school dynamics. We chose a circular formation so that we could see each other, and be seen, while we spoke and listened. Attendance at meetings was always voluntary, and it soon become clear that the most dedicated and engaged students were those often branded as “problem students,” often held responsible for causing disorder and breaking rules.

During the opening sessions, we exchanged stories about our own lives, shared where we were born, how we came to where we are now, where our family members came

from, what we like to do outside school, what music we like to dance to, what films move us, our favorite colors... These meetings, which we call "rain of words," were enjoyable, exciting and fun, streaked with laughter. In such a context, putting myself on equal terms with the students, as if I were another narrator in the circle, proved to be a key gesture. On talking about my feelings and my family members, the district where I grew up, and also my relationship with reading and writing, I was granted access to a world with which I only had contact because I shared with the students my difficult journey as a black woman within borders.

The statements of both groups show their desire for the school to be the opposite of what it has been: a space for socializing, and true recognition and exchange, rather than segregation and humiliation.

In the following meetings, the students were invited to report on their experiences within the school space, and comment on their relationships with reading and writing. If during the "rain of words," the conversation was fluid and live, now the voices wilted, as it were, vanishing into whispers. However, what that group of teenagers stated on these occasions, with their painful utterances, was laden with truth and a rare forcefulness. Those "vocal writings" were brimming with dissatisfaction towards the school and the teachers, denouncing the disconnect between the curriculum and life; the lack of listening; tension with school rules and tasks, regarded as meaningless; and deep discomfort regarding the literate world. Among these utterances, I bring out some excerpts that sum up much of the strangeness and awareness of these young people:

How is it that a place where you come to learn can make you feel stupid? If we are meant to learn here, why do we feel stupid? Here we shouldn't be made to feel like this, we should be feeling better about ourselves and with the things we know. However, nothing we know is really important. They want to take away our consciousness away, and strip us of our culture, because our culture is the culture of the street - but the school doesn't want this. It just wants its own people, and fuck the rest! (H., aged fourteen)

I don't read anything. I hate writing, but I compose a rap or two now and then. If I like the subject, then I'll go ahead and do the work. However, what I really do is print everything from the Internet and don't even read it, because the teachers don't read it either [...] When I was in Year 3, the teacher would ask us to copy the book in our copybooks. But why copy, if it is already in the book? My mother tells me to respect the teacher. However, I only respect teachers when they respect me. (P.A., aged fifteen)

I never liked school. Ever since I was small, I only came because I had to. One day I asked the Portuguese teacher why she did not teach us to rhyme [...] And do you know what she said? That I could teach her to teach after I finished university, and that I should shut up and pay attention. But how can a teacher dare to ask you to shut up, like that, in front of everyone? So, I told her to fuck off, and I was suspended for a week. I was almost expelled from school, but she was not.

I see a lot of sad bodies, idle, on school grounds. I think we should dance, eat, and play. However, here everything is forbidden! All we can do is study. Why can't we study by dancing and singing – or even drawing, who knows? (O., aged seventeen)

Teacher, I don't like school because the school doesn't like me. I said good morning to the teachers: some answered, while others did not. I was polite, as my mother always taught me to be polite, but the teachers... The school treats us like trash, so I treat the school in the same way. School, for me, is trash. (B., aged sixteen)



I don't remember what I learnt in Year 4, or 5, or 6. If I don't remember, it's because I didn't learn anything. We need to learn many things, but why? Everything the school tries to drum into me has nothing to do with me at all... I am black, and the only thing that I knew to this day was that my ancestors were all slaves and *macumbeiros*². Sometimes I am ashamed of this, not of being black, but of these things... (J., aged fifteen)

School is like a prison. When I went to see my brother in prison, I thought: "Shit, the prison is just like school: there are railings, inspectors, a director, break times, you cannot enter and leave when you want." I think that school for rich people isn't like this. (O., aged seventeen)

I extended the process of research and questioning from the Circles to conversations with students' family members, and many of the same ideas were repeated: why does the school simply ignore the culture of its students? Why does the school insist on teaching things of no interest to the students, and in a way that crushes them? The statements of both groups show their desire for the school to be the opposite of what it has been: a space for socializing, and true recognition and exchange, rather than segregation and humiliation; a place for creation and expansion of people, rather than a center for oppression and cultural mutilation.

The experience with Narrative Circles has fed many of my educational practices both inside and outside the classroom. The students who do not participate in them soon ask: "Why do we not have classes like this?" They invited me to acknowledge that the method of teaching needed to be changed. Through Narrative Circles, I learnt to agree with hooks, when she remembers that "Students are eager to break through barriers to knowing. They are willing to surrender to the wonder of re-learning and learning ways of knowing that go against the grain" (p. 63).

2. *Macumbeiros* is a derogatory word to name the people who follow Afro-Brazilian religions as *Umbanda* and *Candomblé*.

I have faced, and still face, a strong institutional resistance to my commitment to adopt a pedagogical stance detached from the hierarchical power-knowledge. As hooks herself explains: "Certainly teachers who are trying to institutionalize progressive pedagogical practices risk being subjected to discrediting critiques" (page 189). I vividly remember a teachers' meeting when a colleague came up to me and said: "Hi, are you the teacher who does not teach? Who plays with the pupils all the time?" Perplexed by such aggression, I had to make a great internal effort to see things from these other teachers' point of view, for whom a classroom is nothing but a blackboard, chalk and information, and of course, within this idea, I was not "giving lessons." Yes, really, I don't *give* lessons, but construct them on a daily basis with the students.

In my daily practice as an educator, I can clearly see that the monoculture of knowledge lies behind the growing violence problem in schools attended by poor youngsters or people from migrant or immigrant families. Together with other researchers, I recognize that it is also behind high school dropout rates.

I also see that, fortunately, there is a rise in new pedagogical proposals that suggest ways out of this trap, sustaining the need to decentralize knowledge beyond the borders of written culture, suggesting ways towards intercultural education, in content and form - such as, for example, *Pedagogia das Encruzilhadas* ("Pedagogy of the Crossroads") by Luiz Rufino. In this regard, it is with satisfaction that I receive news of some schools throughout Brazil seeking to be creative, democratic and libertarian, introducing transformations... but I still ask myself, as also ask my partners and my Narrative Circle partners: why? Why is it that the type of education offered to those who need it most is still largely a machine of segregation and cultural genocide? My experience assures me that education can indeed be a space for belonging, affirmation, and expansion of identities, as well as liberation of bodies, minds and spirits.

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On the Thread of Memory: CIEJA Campo Limpo and its Timeline

Eda Luiz, Diego Elias, Karen Carreiro and Paola Russano

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The Integrated Center for Youth and Adult Education of Campo Limpo. This is the name of our school, better known as CIEJA-CL in the local community. It stands on a street in the outskirts of the South Zone of São Paulo, on the region bordering the neighborhoods of Capão Redondo, Jardim São Luís and Jardim Ângela – once sadly famous for one of the world's most violent neighborhoods.

When seen from the outside, the building is a surprise for first-time visitors. The narrow façade and its appearance as a townhouse do not correspond to the normal idea that people have of what a state-run school in São Paulo looks like. Soon your ears are also left surprised, as here we don't have any of the dreaded siren that make the sound environment of the school similar to that of factories and prisons. Instead, we have birdsong and roosters crowing. The open doors, without security guards, also make it clear that this is no private school.

CIEJA-CL is more than just a state-run school with over two decades of existence, but also a cradle and shelter for pedagogical innovations that have made it a success story in integral, democratic and inclusive education. There are no individual desks for the students here, but rather group tables; there are no class groups, but modules, where male and female students are integrated on a skills basis; in addition, there are no strict school time-tables, but a wide range of options, where each person can move around according to his or her personal availability; there is no enforced content, but “generator themes” and “problem situations” chosen democratically.

Above all, there are no barriers blocking anyone wishing to study here. Everyone is welcome with open arms; the only requirement is that the student must be over fifteen years old, and must not have completed primary schooling. Teenagers who have dropped out of school, housewives seeking to expand their knowledge – often without their husband knowing –, workers or retirees who wish to complete their studies, youth offenders who are carrying out socio-educational measures; differently abled students, drug addicts...

Without false modesty, what gives us pride at CIEJA-CL – much more than any award of academic recognition – is to see that the school is loved by these people, and that

the community to which it belongs holds it in high esteem as a reference point. Far from simply a school, CEIJA is also perceived as a cultural center that reinforces a feeling of belonging, a space for meetings, which can open the door for authentic change.

CIEJA-CL is by no means the only such case in São Paulo. There are across this city other schools where the seeds planted by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire have also borne fruit, such as two primary schools EMEF Desembargador Amorim Lima, and EMEF Campos Salles; and two Early Childhood Education schools, EMEI Chácara Sonho Azul, and EMEI Nelson Mandela. However, the story of each one is unique in itself: they are journeys setting out from different situations, within different communities, while facing obstacles that are never the same.

In May 2018, when we commemorated the twentieth anniversary of our school, we experienced an important moment for thinking about the path we have trailed. At that time, apart from the twentieth anniversary, which justified our choice of the “History of CEIJA-CL” as a generator theme, we were preparing for completion of a change of management, closing a transition cycle in which *Dona Eda* gradually delegated her decisions to her successor, *Diego Elias*, as he adapted to the responsibilities of the position.

One of the needs that *Diego* identified in this process was that of reinforcing group memories, to deal with the future with conscience about the past. He understood that it was particularly important to bring back memories of the first stages of CIEJA-CL, already distant and with very few first-hand witnesses still left in the communities,



as it was in those times when the school built the basis of its principles and strategies, which allowed us to overcome the many challenges we faced over the years.

Thinking of this, he invited two newly arrived educators – art teacher Karen Carreiro, and Paola Russano, a pedagogue who had taken over the *Sala da Liberdade* (Freedom Room)¹ – to prepare a timeline summing up the history of the school.

Karen and Paola, with the enchanted eyes of newcomers who are just discovering the thousand facets of CIEJA-CL, were aware that that welcoming space, with an incredible power to transform people’s lives, was also extremely complex. In response to the challenge presented, they drew up a plan that listed the following aims and goals:

- Remember dates and historic facts;
- Reconstruction of the path trailed by the CIEJA-CL in a chronological way;
- Strengthen the identity of the school through its achievements;
- Help students, educators, employees and visitors in clearly understanding this path;
- Contextualize meanings and symbols that exist in the space;
- Establish the timeline as a form of register;
- Establish, in a complementary and illustrative form, the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of CIEJA-CL;
- Involve students in related extraclass activities;

Then they started to pull on “the thread of memory.” They started by interviewing teachers, employees and community leaders who have been at the institution longest. Considering the impressive volume of information contained in those reports, the two educators set four main axes as guides for the sorting process: 1) the history of the structuring of CIEJA as a program; 2) theoretical framework for values; 3) symbols in the construction of the physical space; 4) permanent activities and

1. *Liberdade* (Freedom) is the third group in the first cycle of literacy classes, after *Acolhimento* (Welcoming) and *Confiança* (Trust). This is where the students come up with their reading and writing strategies.

prominent events. They then set one month aside to spin the collective thread and then transfer it to the wall designated for a mural.

After lengthy discussions with teachers and long-standing employees, including *Dona Eda*, to decide what would be included in the list of events, as well as lots of hands-on work with the students, the timeline was finally ready. It was presented on 10 May 2018, amid much festivity, celebrated with the song that two of the hosts had put together:

<i>Memories are made in history,</i>	<i>From the dreams of many came forth</i>
<i>Reports on what is known.</i>	<i>what is now a sea.</i>
<i>From facts come forth the lives</i>	<i>Reflecting upon history, it grew,</i>
<i>of woman and men</i>	<i>and made itself navigable.</i>
<i>a new daybreak.</i>	

(“Popular season,” by Maria de Jesus S. Matos and Madalena Monteiro)

Today, one year on, the mural is still there, decorating our dining hall, with its historical milestones marked over buttons-year along a zigzag curve, around the name of the school, painted in earthy colors patterns that invoke Native Brazilian and African art forms. There you can find new discoveries, partners, accomplishments, challenges, each and every one inviting to unfold the great stories that are the cultural sap of CIEJA-CL. The last events to be registered on the timeline are the creation of the timeline itself, and the celebration of two decades of school life.

The importance of this action goes well beyond its visible fruit. During the process, the school community was made to see the importance of documenting the school’s history, thus understanding, in practice, that collective remembering is vital and fulfilling. The implementers themselves were transformed by the experience, on deepening their perception that CIEJA-CL has only become what it now is thanks to the struggle and solidarity of many people, and the constant interweaving of principles and postures that underlie the strength of its community. Without

realizing it, Karen and Paola became key educators in preserving the spirit and the values of the CIEJA-CL.

The personal transformation experienced by both joint authors of the Timeline has brought forth a dynamism that is recurrent in our school: all teachers are encouraged to take up a posture for active creation. To acclimatize those who have just been introduced to the CIEJA-CL culture (whether teachers or employees), every year, in the week set aside for planning at the start of each year, we present a flashback of school activities, showing videos and explaining what happened before. We make it quite clear that here we offer thousands of possibilities for action, and that our collectivity is not only open to ideas and projects, but that this is actually necessary, and that it is each person's responsibility to take on a role as creator-teacher.

Sometimes this invitation can be a bit daunting, especially those people who come from schools where obedience and imitation are celebrated, rather than being bold and creative. For these people, understandably, it is not easy to pluck up the courage to create something. On the other hand, it is also important for CIEJA-CL that anyone joining the community should understand the scope of the freedom cultivated here, as the paths of action and expression as opened require engagement, commitment, and a lot of work. Therefore, we try to show new collaborators that no one here is alone or acts alone; that the group is always present to provide support via solidarity. For this reason, colleagues who are already in the school unit dedicate whole days to present everything to those people arriving: committees, spaces, people...

This acclimatization is not limited to the annual planning period, but is continued through daily activities, with a review each week. Since 2001 – as shown by the Timeline – every Friday is reserved for Group Qualifications. On this day, there are various activities fully dedicated to appraisal and planning, at rounds for coexistence and discussion, involving teachers, coordinators, managers and employees. These Fridays are sacred within the culture of CIEJA-CL, as they mark one of the main differences compared with traditional schools, where management staff rarely listen to teachers, who in turn can spend years without getting to know their colleagues.

The Friday meetings are also essential to orient the educators when taking on creation in freedom, as this can sometimes bring instability. One of the school's teachers, Alexandre Amorim, used to say: "For me, one thing I find wonderful within the CIEJA unit is that, every year, I don't know what is going to happen. Nothing is the same, there is always something new." And we believe that yes, indeed, nothing should be the same because otherwise the teacher settles in a comfort zone and may spend decades always giving the same lessons. Here this is not possible, there is no way of getting into a rut, as there is always the appearance of a new challenge which calls people to attempt new ideas and new actions. If this instability also brings a risk of confusion, dispersion and disarticulation, this risk is mitigated by fundamental core values of respect, inclusivity and responsibility towards the collective.

The educator seeking space where he or she can practice full and liberating education, who made a personal choice of being more dedicated to society and doing things in a different way, can blossom at CIEJA-CL.

These possibilities of expansion attract new teachers, something we need so badly, since we never set a limit to the amount of students we admit. Thus, our community already includes some 1,500 students, of whom 230 are differently abled or have some kind of special needs. The challenges behind these figures are huge, but they encourage us to press on, testing solutions.

In the year that has elapsed since the inauguration of the Timeline, a lot has happened. Paola has joined the school's coordination team, together with teacher Cristina Fonseca de Sá, and then, a few months after the celebration of CIEJA-CL's twentieth anniversary, *Dona Eda* retired, passing the management job on to Diego Elias. She then started to traverse the country and the world, to help learning institutions and government institutions along the paths towards democratic and inclusive education.

In her travels *Dona Eda* tends to answer a classic question: how did it all start? As the Timeline clearly indicates, the first step was the opening of a helpdesk for people to discuss their doubts and concerns, and then the flexibilization of times. Moreover, this only happened because of the students.

Back when the school was still a Municipal Education Center for Adult Classes (CEMES), located at the back of a church building, there came a time when the students started to query the traditional teaching system based on booklets. It was unfair, yes indeed, as it privileged those students with good memories, while the others were sentenced to lag behind, more and more.

The first step is to want change, and not to keep whining. Maybe starting with the little things, other people may get involved and bigger changes will happen.

Paulo Freire says that we only learn through exchange. This is what those students did: they met to “exchange ideas” with the teachers, trying to clarify their doubts. Eda, then a pedagogical coordinator, received this request, together with a complaint typical of teachers: that as the channel for student service was opened, more and more time was being “stolen” from regular lessons, as the booklets of exercises gave rise to many doubts that would pile up. Eda realized that it was necessary to think outside the classroom. In reality, what the students were doing was querying the act of teaching for teaching’s sake, but breaking away from this vice within the system based on booklets was almost impossible.

We then went to the Department of Municipal Education to explain what was happening and express the need for a change. The people at the department listened to our queries and showed willingness to solve the problem with us. This led to the establishment of a very good team of specialists, with whom we stayed a year and a half, studying how this change could be brought about.

One coincidence that helped us with this first transformation was that, right at that time, the school had to relocate. Then, when we entered the new premises, the students said: “Do you really want to construct a school for us? If so, this school will be without desks, without teachers and without subjects. And the school will be open, so we can enter and leave whenever we wish. Now, do something!”

So that is what we did. Apart from replacing desks with tables – which does not mean anything, as the teacher can continue to give lecture-type classes –, we grouped the

students, not in fixed classes, but in groups based on what each one really needed to learn, based on what he or she already knows. The people of the department were saying: "This is very crazy. How shall we do it?" Our response was: "We'll look into this later, but we shall never stop trying."

So we tried, it worked, and we continued to try, one thing after another, always paying attention to the needs as expressed by the children and seeking solutions together.

If there is anything good in CIEJA-CL, it is the fact that we have no fear of making mistakes, and are always ready to accept, with sheer humbleness, that something did not work out. The Timeline also helped us to understand the importance of this attitude throughout our history. If something does not work, we simply go back and try again, and there is always the possibility that, at the next attempt, we can learn from our mistake. For this reason, every year we start by evaluating the previous year, to think about what we can do in the new year, discussing mistakes and their possible solutions.

It was also essential not to be afraid of laws or standards that could stop us from doing something. This is a kind of fear that often blocks our wish for change or justifies our passive stance. However, we understand that laws are more open than we think, and there are loopholes in interpretations that allow us to attempt innovative solutions. And when we have the security of justifying what we do, the employees that incarnate the law see that, at the very least, they are required to listen.

The first step is to want change, and not to keep whining. Maybe starting with the little things, other people may get involved and bigger changes will happen. The human being really has to create, to respond to problems that arise. On trying a solution, it is essential to embrace freedom and to dare and dare.

If we had let ourselves be taken over by fear, we would never have taken that first step.

Eda Luiz, of Italian descent, is 72 years young. She spent 52 of those years in state education and 20 at the CIEJA-CL. A graduate in Education with a specialism in Adult and Youth Education, and a pupil of Paulo Freire himself, she is a dreamer who thinks about libertarian and transformative education, spreading the idea that everyone can do more through education, regardless of one's age or level of schooling. E-mail: edaluiz@gmail.com.

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Karen Vanessa Nery Carreiro is a woman from the outskirts: a dreamer, a person brimming with curiosity, and in love with education. Karen has degrees in Planning, Implementation, and Management of Distance Learning, obtained at the Fluminense Federal University (UFF), and Languages (Portuguese/English) and Plastic Arts. She is now a teacher at state and municipal schools in São Paulo, a position she has held since 2007, and is working on projects that highlight the educand as being the leading character in his or her own history. Since 2016, she has been living the daily adventure of exploring the complexity of CIEJA Campo Limpo. E-mail: karennerycarreiro@gmail.com.

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The School of our Dreams

Leila Sarmento

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'Nossa Senhora do Carmo' school started life as a social project run by the sisters at the Carmel Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mother Teresa, in Bananeiras, state of Paraíba. On seeing that most farm hands in the surrounding areas were illiterate, the Carmelite nuns qualified a small group of friends – laypeople who went to the Carmelo to partake of its spirituality – to teach those people to read and write. Thus, in July 2005, in a farm hand's room, the school was established, initially aimed at the education of adults. Two years later, this school is expanded for the first time and then has its own premises, built on an adjoining plot of land, with funds obtained through partnerships and donations, where it also began to serve the children of the rural workers.

Right from the outset, the institution sought an education based on the ideas of Paulo Freire, a proposal constructed by and with the student, who was viewed as a biopsychosocial and spiritual being.

The dream was to turn the recently opened school into a new school, in the true sense of the word. Through dialogue that had been woven in many different ways, such as group readings, participation in events, exchange of experiences, collegiate discussions, and also through observing other institutions with alternative proposals for a different type of education, the school felt the need to change, to keep up with the evolution of the student, and also to make sense in the lives of all those who step on its ground. Thus, to better improve our educational proposal, we have sought other utopian and humanistic experiences, both near and far, including the Escola da Ponte ("Bridge School"), in Portugal, and of Summerhill, in England; the experiences of Anton Makarenko, in Russia; Célestin Freinet, in France; Maria Montessori, in Italy; and Helena Antipoff and Paulo Freire, here in Brazil, just as many others who we have come into contact with during our path have done.

During this evaluation process, we were very disheartened to see our school with classrooms full of desks in rows, with the students always staring at a teacher in front of them, a teacher who was dictating standards and patterns of behavior, prioritizing certain types of knowledge that are, for the most part, far from the reality of the students, and using learning evaluation methods that excludes rather than qualifies.

The year 2015 was a watershed moment for all of us. Indeed, after ten years of existence our school reached new heights. We decided to start the scholastic year without the normal division into years, with all the students integrated and interacting in their different age brackets, without formal classrooms, and also without lesson plans as designed in advance by the teacher or teaching centralized on the blackboard. The classrooms thus morphed into premises for collective learning, used by the students according to their availability and needs; the teachers became tutors and mediators of projects; the students were challenged to be independent and exercise their freedom to say what they wanted to learn, how, and when.

The development of this new methodology led us to a constant process of pedagogical evaluation. Our feeling is that the more freedom present in the school, the more the school demands, from every one of us, a continuous process of evaluation and planning. Often we feel that our greatest effort is to break away from the way in which we have traditionally been educated, and to make sure that the new practice of ours is not permeated with old customs and habits. Or, to put it another way, not to use “new patches on old trousers.”

We also see to what extent the physical structure of the school, which was based on a traditional model, divided into years, immobilized us; and also, however much we tried to overcome the past structure, we were still inside it and always ended up being taken over by its logic; and that the first structures to be broken were the internal ones, our concepts ingrained over years of teaching.

To work out, this construction could not be only ours, the educators. We started to meet at school assemblies with the participation of students, the management and the parents, so that together we could think about how we would like our school to be, from its physical structure, over to its methodology, experiences and values.

We started 2016 with this aim: of all sitting down to construct the project of the School of Our Dreams. However, this year kicked off amid a maelstrom of changes, not only in the pedagogical project itself, but also in the very history of the school. We were called over to Carmelo, and there the sisters informed us that it would be

impossible for them to continue as the sponsoring institution. After so many years dedicated to the project, suddenly we saw ourselves faced with a very difficult situation. After all, our own lives were also there, and we well knew about the importance that the work developed until then would have for all those involved. With this bad news, there were only two options open to us: either we let the social project peter out, or we would pluck up the courage to continue with the project ourselves. So we convened in a general assembly to jointly reach a decision.

For us, the school is more than just a job: it has become our very life, our house, our home. The life that throbs inside the school cannot be defined in words, and only by hugging its ground can we really feel its value, its grandeur, its life.

At that time, the importance of the school also extended beyond its immediate community. Because of all the work carried out up until that point, and all the effort and determination that went into building education where the heart of the human being was the first step, the school had been recognized by the Brazilian Ministry for Education and Culture (MEC) as a reference in Innovation and Creativity in Basic Education. We were also going to be part of the Changemaker Schools network, duly certified by Ashoka and Alana Institute, along with seventeen other Brazilian institutions – now twenty – to have this certification. We were the first institution to represent the state of Paraíba in this success.

In order to continue with the Project, we have set up a non-profit organization known as the Monte Carmelo Cooperative for Social Development (COODESC), with the aim of taking responsibility for management, but without any changes in the initial proposal or in the ideals that have always been the pillars of the school. Despite losing most of the donations from benefactors, we have managed to keep the two partnerships (with the city hall and with the state) that are responsible for the payroll and payment to human resources. The other maintenance expenses are met through campaigns, raffles, clothing sales, cash collection drives, and donations from individuals. Recently, we established a new partnership with a fruit distributor, who started to make donations of food for the daily school meals.

The easiest way to have ensured the school's financial success would probably have been that of simple conversion of the school into a private institution, but this would have meant detachment from our aim, disfiguring the school. In this way, we would rather continue to fight to offer a change-maker education, *free of charge*, for the less affluent segments of the population.

Our feeling is that the more freedom present in the school, the more the school demands, from every one of us, a continuous process of evaluation and planning

Determined to keep the project alive, we resumed our work of thinking about the school of our dreams. We started with the physical premises. Gathered together in the schoolyard, we split up into small groups that were then given the task of drawing the school they had dreamt about and then share it with everybody. For this, we started out from a group discussion around some key issues: 1) What are our spaces like? - rooms, Director's Office, coordination, secretary's office, bathrooms, play area, cafeteria, park, kitchen, gardens... 2) Is there something you would like to add or change? What? 3) How would you imagine this plot of land beside the school, that we intend to occupy? 4) What would you do on the site to improve our school? Then everyone would draw the school of their dreams.

At the end, we bring all the wishes together in one single drawing, a sketch of the architectural plan of the school of our dreams. In the children's drawings, a wide range of desires showed up, including a swimming pool, a playroom, a painted wall, a trampoline, a ball pool, a park and a skating rink, as well as larger and more colorful rooms, a multipurpose sports court, a dancing room equipped with mirror, a theatre and a cinema; more trees, swings and slides; a larger cafeteria with bigger tables, and a greater space to be dedicated for the Feast of St. John¹. And a tree-house.

1. The "Festa de São João" is a celebration that takes place throughout Brazil in June 23, in honor of the saint, which forms part of the festival called "Festas Juninas", along with the feasts of St. Anthony (June 13) and St. Peter (June 29). Usually, the celebrations include traditional music, dance, food, games, fireworks and bonfires.

The desires would emerge and gain shape in the drawings, and everyone would then want to present them. Thus, these were completed and took on new shapes. On the other hand, the older students said:

At the school of our dreams, we wanted to have a laboratory to carry out experiments; a square with benches where we can chat; a swimming pool where we can have swimming lessons; an outpatient medical treatment room, so when we get injured we can go there; a covered sports court to carry out several different activities, including our evaluation circle, swings, and a relaxation room for us to relax.

At the school of our dreams, we would like to remove the railings from the school's windows and have cupboards in the bathrooms, where we can keep our things.

At the school of our dreams, we would like to have a music room with instruments to learn how to sing and how to play an instrument; a color printer; a locker in the boys' bathroom; a multipurpose court for sports and activities; a leisure area; and a swimming pool.

Things were no different in the case of educators and support personnel. In groups, the participants discussed and then drew the school of their dreams; after this, these dreams were shared with the whole of the school community:

In this school, we want to find a large schoolyard, somewhere where we can talk and hug each other. Another important detail is that we do not want walls either; we would like classrooms without walls; without the walls separating one class from another. We also want more plants in the garden: colorful ones. In addition, we would like a dialogue room, a space where we could stop whenever we did not feel well. We want a sports court with stands, preferably covered, and also swings, more trees to have shade, and also the placing of some tables below them, a laboratory. So this would be our school: a spacious school, without any walls or doors in spaces; with free rooms, a square, trees, open spaces, an area for leisure activities, a games room, workshop space, and a dialogue room.

The parents also made a point of expressing themselves. Gathered in groups, they draw the school of their dreams, which they wanted for their children:

In the school of our dreams, we want to keep the toys painted, and have a covered gymnasium, a swimming pool, an Artesian well, the installation of boundary walls, a special space dedicated to music, and similar spaces for handicrafts and dance. We also want to replant the orchard. In all this, we can see that we have dreams in the short, medium and long terms. In other words, among all these suggestions, there are dreams that we can already start working on tomorrow, others next week, and other dreams which we have plan carefully. Finally, there are some dreams that we can only implement in a more distant future.

Not even management was left out. We sat down and draw the school of our dreams, and then share it with the other members. In this school,

we want to preserve our garden better. The activities of the Management and the Secretary's Office are OK. Like the teachers, we would like to break the walls of the rooms and form larger rooms in the process. We also consider the opening of a door on the side of the school, bordering on this site at the side, where we are considering the construction of new things. However, first, we need to put a separating surface, but we do not want a wall and have therefore considered planting clockvine hedges, which flower year-round, a covered court



for our activities (not only physical activities, but also those of a cultural ilk, like our Feast of St. John party, which would be very cramped if carried out within the school. We also thought of thatched huts as study environments, with lots of trees, a lake for fish raising, and a children's playground. We have not thought of a swimming pool, but the fact is that we must think of a well before we consider a swimming pool.

At the end of the whole process, actions for the short, medium, and long-term were established. The actions designated as short-term were: the construction of a hedge as a boundary for the site where the school of our dreams shall be built; the painting of the current school; the installation of an artesian well; the reestablishment of the vegetable garden; the planting of trees on the site, and the demolition of the internal walls that divide the rooms, so as to form larger rooms. In the medium-term, we plan to prepare campaigns to construct spaces for workshops and kiosks (learning spaces) of the new school; a skating rink; space for small children; a cafeteria and a playground. In the long-term, the plans are to construct the swimming pool.

After this first stage, of redesigning the physical structure, is completed, we proceed with the assemblies in order to review the whole of the pedagogical proposal. In this phase, we evaluate the School and Class Councils; General Assemblies; the School Collegiate Board; and the Students' and Parents' Committees, as well as plans for learning, tutorship services, peer reviews, and the evaluation of the day. The moments cast aside for prayer and relaxation, and the workshops, were also submitted to the evaluation process. At the end, we evaluated the pedagogical study circles, the formation (spiritual and psychological) and socialization activities held on Fridays, as well as our continuous and ongoing evaluation process, based on the motto: "I congratulate, criticize and propose."

Everything was evaluated in order to decide what was working satisfactorily and what needed to be improved. Within the scope of what had to be improved, we also considered what could be done, when it would be done, and who would be responsible for the improvements.

In the appraisal of the instruments for management and participation, we considered several different proposals, such as: greater representation of parents on the School Board; exhibition, on a notice board, of decisions taken by the board; and the idea that student committees – where the pupils get together in groups to develop decisive actions (culture, events, sports, literary festivals, young inventors, news...) – could extend to younger students. We also saw the importance of parents' school to improve the dialogue between parents and their offspring.

Looking at practices has led us to the conclusion that transdisciplinarity is still a major challenge to us as educators, who are used to our former practices that placed us exclusively as specialists in our respective fields of knowledge. We realize that the need to integrate the student's curiosity regarding to the objects of the research, with the respective content of the national core curriculum, using a transdisciplinary approach, require from us continuous qualification, the sharing of knowledge, and mutual help between the faculty and the pedagogical staff.

At the end of this process, we have obtained a broad evaluation that has allowed us to plan actions towards improvement of the points not considered satisfactory. This has also led us to look at our own values. Parents, tutees, tutors and the management team were invited to point to those values they deemed most important, and the answers offered us an ethical overview of the school of our dreams. Prevailing values were respect, solidarity, responsibility, trust, friendship, happiness, liberty and gratuitousness.

There was also space to reflect on the school's configuration: what face we would it to have, beyond its physical appearance? Would this be a school centered on the act of reading and writing, in preparing the students for the labor market, teaching them about competitiveness and individualism? Or do we really want a school with other experiences and values?

The whole of the school community once again stated their opinions about these issues, and each of the groups mentioned, as part of their desires and wishes, the decision to seek a different form of education. The parents said that they wanted

the school to also offer workshops in sewing, cooking and handicrafts; the students said they would like the school to be more fun, and that one day would be set aside exclusively for workshops – in circus, cinema and *capoeira*, for example. The educators suggested that there could be more time and more opportunities for gatherings, integration, leisure and self-knowledge.

Last but not least, we feel it would be important to think about the profile of the student, the educator, the manager, the staff and the parents in this school of our dreams. Every member of the school community was invited to express his or her wishes with regard to self and others, merging self-criticism and expectations. For example, the parents said that they wanted to have children who were more studious and more responsible, admitting that they themselves should be more dedicated and more understanding. In contrast, the students said they would like their parents to be less stressed and more fun, more present and loving; that they could listen to their children more, and adopt dialogue as a substitute for punishment and reprimands; on the other hand, they also admitted that they should be more responsible, more studious, and show greater solidarity. In all the answers, one thing that prevailed was the wish to have a more humane community, based on respect, on listening to others, and to caring for other people, in a common effort with a view to constant improvement.

At the end of this whole process, we now have a complete project for a school created based on everyone's thoughts. A school where life throbs, dynamically and amorously shared, where everyone feels happy. Now we have the challenge of constructing it.

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5. DIALOGUES WITH PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



The 'Confisco' Network for Peace: Weaving a Creative Experience within the Territory

Maria Luiza Viana, Rosane Corgosinho and Sandra Vicente

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This article¹ reports an experience in which there is an articulation of education, popular organization, and intersectoral government policies to re-signify a territory. The experience in question, the 'Confisco' Network for Peace, was originally set up with the participation of two institutions from the municipal school system of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil - 'Anne Frank' and 'Prof. Alice Nacif' schools - along with social organizations and government bodies, in order to tackle urgent demands made by the community in the Confisco neighborhood.

This network brings together both representatives from civil society as well as state institutions active within the community, in order to discuss and plan actions to prevent violence and to promote a culture of peace. This is based on a perspective that places education at the heart of the relationship between the government and society; drawing on the belief that school communities have an immense potential to transform the area in which they are located.

To better understand the meaning and the scope of this experience, it is worth delving into the history of the territory in question. Confisco, a neighborhood on the border between the municipalities of Belo Horizonte and Contagem, both in Minas Gerais, grew out of a housing project originally built in the late 1980s. The site on which the project was constructed was part of the old Confisco farm, which gave its name both to the project and the neighborhood, and which was taken over by the state government and given, in 1988, to members of social movements fighting for housing. The government's initial idea was to donate plots of land and building materials, so that people could construct their houses through joint collaborative effort (*mutirão*). However, such construction did not take place, and the settlers, unable to build houses, were forced to live in canvas tents, and cope with situations such as a lack of food and water, power cuts, rainfall, the collapse of huts. In addition, the large number of families who arrived, much more than expected, combined with poorly defined criteria for the distribution of lots, generated tension and conflicts

1. It was written in dialogue with the 'Confisco' Network for Peace itself, and thus contains some contributions made by its partners, listed at the end of the text.

between the people occupying the land and the government institutions from Minas Gerais state, and from Contagem and Belo Horizonte city halls.

In this context, it became vital to rally these people, who soon mobilized into organizations in order to demand the government provide them with other basic rights apart from housing, including better urban infrastructure, health services, educational services and public transport, among others.

As time went by, many of those demands were met. One such was the opening of the Anne Frank Municipal School, inaugurated in 1991. Placed in the very heart of the complex, this school soon became the only public institution available in the area, becoming by default a meeting point for residents, especially for representatives of many of these associations, as well as serving other uses by the community.

Meanwhile, the community faced a serious problem that affected the land right in front of the school: the expansion of a big hole, caused by erosion, which threatened to swallow up many houses. As a result, the school, associations, and residents came together to request that Belo Horizonte City Hall establish a park on this location. After intense popular mobilization, and with the funding from the Participative Budget², the 'Confisco' Municipal Park was opened on this site in 1996.

With an area of over 7 acres, the park is home to three springs that supply water to Pampulha lake, as well as important plant cover, with trees characteristic of the Brazilian *cerrado* (like savanna) region. The structure includes a football field, multipurpose sports courts, a leisure area, and a public square. In the immediate surroundings, in addition to the 'Anne Frank' school, there are also: the 'Confisco' Health Center, the 'Confisco' Social Assistance Reference Center (CRAS); the Municipal Parks and Zoo-Botanical Foundation, the 'Pampulha' Cultural Center, and the Prof. Alice Nacif Municipal School. Many of these government buildings

2. A governmental mechanism to enable popular participation in the distribution of city resources, implemented by Belo Horizonte City Hall in 1993.

are also projects which have been initiated by the participatory mobilization and activism of this community.

Park and School: experiences, tension and re-signifying the territory

Since its opening, Anne Frank Municipal School's pedagogical activities have been linked to the 'Confisco' Park. One could even say that the school and the park have grown together, connected by many different social impact actions that were developed on site, closely linked to the community and to other partners, who began collaborating over time: projects to preserve forests and streams, together with environmental education workshops; production of videos about the history of the neighborhood; art exhibitions and other cultural and sports events, as well as percussion and football lessons as part of the Integrated School Program³.

However, after park became consolidated as a public area, the presence of educators and students started to be threatened in their own spaces. The lack of maintenance of the area brought new problems, including increased drug consumption and trafficking, which in turn led to a rise in violence. In 2013, episodes involving firearms started to jeopardize the safety of the students as well as passersby and users.

It is also worth stressing that these were not one-off occurrences, as in recent decades violence has increased across the whole of the Confisco neighborhood, as well as in almost all Brazil's larger cities.

Realizing the seriousness of the problem, the managers of the Anne Frank school faced a challenge: how to deal pacifically with these conflicts that seriously endangered school activities, especially those taking place in the park? Seeking to find new ways to overcome these problems and improve the coexistence between people using the area, in August 2013 a meeting was held. This meeting was organized by representatives from Anne Frank Municipal School, with the participation of

3. Belo Horizonte City Hall's integrated education program, which proposes that school curricula include offsite educational activities, in parks, squares, and other public spaces in the municipality.

the Alice Nacif Municipal School, community leaders, and sectors of the municipal Education and Public Security departments of Belo Horizonte. Also in attendance were representatives from the Municipal Parks Foundation, the Regional Education Department of Pampulha, 'Confisco' Health Center and CRAS; Pampulha Cultural Center; the School Patrol of Municipal Guard; the Minas Gerais state Military Police, and the Human Rights Commission of the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB). At that time, a list was drawn up with the problems faced by the schools and by the community, regarding to the park, such as insufficient lighting at night, vandalism of equipment, and the degradation of the public fountains.

After a while, other partners joined the movement, including 'Verena Project' NGO, Dom Bosco House, the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) and the Lagoinha Baptist Church. This resulted in the establishment of a work group to plan and execute integrated actions to prevent violence, mediate conflicts, and promote environmental education in the park and in the community.

Acting in a network: connecting actions

One of the results of this process was an integrated action taking place between the schools and the Minas Gerais state Military Police. The dialogue between the two parties gradually developed, based initially on the common goal of preventing violence in the park and its immediate surroundings. What resulted was an increased understanding, within the community, that local security agents can and should be allies, working in defense and respect of civil rights.

This partnership gave rise to the creation of a percussion workshop and also the Police and Youth group. The latter's main goal was to give visibility, participation and voice to the children and teenagers in Confisco, while, at the same time, re-signifying Police action from a preventive rather than a repressive perspective. In 2017, this workshop morphed into a percussion group (*bloco*) which became part of the official Carnival program in Belo Horizonte.

Another good example of joint action is the June Feasts. Initially held on Anne Frank School's premises, it was subsequently relocated to the park and christened *Arraiá do*

Confisco pela Paz (“‘Confisco’ for Peace Festival”). This initiative encourages the participation of schools and families, who are shown the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. The program includes traditional dances and music, a performance from ‘Pampulha’ Cultural Center’s Gypsy Dance Troupe, as well as the Police and Youth percussion group and other bands or groups from the region. During the festivities, the square is decorated and stands are set up selling products made by local businesspeople, including foodstuffs, handicrafts, clothes, etc. Noteworthy additions to the stalls include one set up by Year 9 students from Anne Frank School selling alcohol-free fruit cocktails, to raise funds for school activities, and another, the so-called Social Stand, which provides guidance about prevention of alcoholism for the general population, in partnership with Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and the ‘Confisco’ Health Center. The organization of the event is completely voluntary, and also encourages the involvement of substance abusers who live in the park, who are invited to take part and help with decoration and cleaning of the venue.



The ‘Confisco’ for Peace Festival is yet another initiative that testifies to the vast potential of work conducted in a network to promote new uses for locations and strengthen the feeling of belonging among users. This project involves many different partners, each of which contributes their own expertise - whether in the areas of health, education, culture, leisure, landscaping or maintenance.

Apart from this annual event, other collaborative initiatives were developed on a more regular basis, to improve coexistence between the different people and groups

connected with the park. One of these is a weekly community meal cooked offered by volunteers to drug addicts from the area. This activity aims to encourage empathy and solidarity for these people – some of whom are members of students' or former students' families – on the part of locals and the school community, as opposed to the repressive approach and the social exclusion addicts often face. These actions also involve the religious institutions who partner with the network, such as Dom Bosco House and Lagoinha Baptist Church, which have supported this empathic approach, offering support and guidance.

Social transformation does not occur as if by magic, and in many cases, we do not even know when and where such changes can materialize. However, if we pay close attention, we can see it very close to us.

Many other diverse partnerships have been developed between Anne Frank School and CRAS. These include some projects coordinated by professor Moacir Fagundes, such as *Feminicídio e Ditadura Não* ("Say No to Femicide and Dictatorship"), which deals with violence against women and women empowerment, and the photographic production *Confisco pelo Confisco* ("Confisco' by 'Confisco'", in partnership with the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), exploring the history and the daily reality of the neighborhood of Confisco. Produced by the students themselves, both these projects led to an exhibition that was held in the public square, at CRAS, on the UFMG campus, and elsewhere in the city.

Another Project, carried out in 2016 under the guidance of this same professor and with the collaboration of the community, was the student production of a comic strip, establishing a connection between *The Diary of Anne Frank* and the story of the Confisco neighborhood. The project transformed the women who had played a major role in the fight for housing into the protagonists of a comic strip, aiming to provoke reflections on the identity of the residents, and the students' feeling of belonging, as well as the active role of these agents in the process of the construction of knowledge.

All these initiatives, carried out jointly, were the base for what, from 2017 onwards, has become known as the 'Confisco' Network for Peace. Systemizing their dynamics through monthly meetings, it was established as a constant movement of exchange,

sharing of knowledge and a collaborative response driven by the demands of the schools and the community with regard to local issues. This involvement, the participation and the integration of members shaped the development of the network and its purpose. Moacir Fagundes suggests that it can be compared to a fishing net, as it has neither beginning or an end, nor a hierarchical organization; but rather it grows horizontally and can be defined by a process of interweaving, and a connection between knots. One such “knots” is the Verena Project, an NGO that provides services for children and teenagers of two schools, during the second shift. The Verena Project contributes with discussions in order to defend the rights set out in the Statute of the Child and the Teenager (ECA), and works side by side with the Pampulha Cultural Center and CRAS to promote actions for health and attention to families. Another group worth commenting on is the Parks and Gardens Foundation, which operates with the Public Works and the Environment departments of Belo Horizonte City Hall to look after the infrastructure of the ‘Confisco’ Park, and in collaboration with members of the network to propose actions to promote healthy use of the location by the community.

One thing is certain: we cannot change alone, but rather by interactions, exchanges and also through the opportunities that arise on a daily basis, or when something touches us.

Another essential “knot” within this woven fabric is the Confisco collective, represented by the community leader Graça Ferreira. Active in the struggles and achievements of people living in the neighborhood since the housing movements of the 1980s, Graça now acts as the spokesperson for the community, articulating its demands and discussing the issues with the group. As well as representing the Network in this regard, she also works as a volunteer in the recovery and preservation of courts and changing rooms, always seeking to integrate the residents and effectively execute government actions in the park and in the neighborhood.

Thus, the network is expanding in lines, knots and interconnections, according to the rhythms of each agent, each institution, and each government sector. This is not just a case of each person taking on his or her role, but also that of bringing people together, working towards common good.



Neither the government sectors, nor communities, have ready-made answers and immediate solutions for the problems presented to the network, since solutions are constructed through dialogue, in collaboration and also with respect to the individual rhythm of each member.

Conclusion

The risk of losing basic rights, such as the entitlement to use public spaces, freedom of movement, the freedom and integrity of its students and of the community as a whole, has led the schools in the immediate surroundings to rediscover ways to creatively integrate education, political action, and the interests of local society. They join forces, bring people together, bring together different sections of the municipality, of the state, of the nation, and also social, civil and religious organizations, thereby reaffirming a power that extends beyond the history of struggles of this community, in order to work with collective interests in a participatory manner.

Paraphrasing Professor Boaventura Sousa Santos, it is necessary to *democratize democracy*, reinventing social emancipation as an alternative to the hegemonic, authoritarian and dominant forms of thinking, especially within the political context of contemporary Brazilian society. It is also necessary to put forward new strategies, so that individuals, groups and communities can feel supported in their demands and struggles to defend their rights. We must create conditions that allow for the meeting of several actors who can work in partnership, seeking opportunities to enact change. However, social transformation does not occur as if by magic, and in

many cases, we do not even know when and where such changes can materialize. However, if we pay close attention, we can see it very close to us. It does not necessarily depend on large ventures, but rather takes place at a local level, sometimes in ways that are very subtle or hardly noticeable. However, one thing is certain: we cannot change alone, but rather by interactions, exchanges and also through the opportunities that arise on a daily basis, or when something touches us. At Confisco, we can identify such transformation when we see children, youngsters and adults working towards common good within the neighborhood, when they write about themselves and read about others, or when take care of a park or of a spring. When the community takes possession of their public square as an effective space for learning, for exercise many skills in art, sports, and citizenship. That is we can see that there is transformation: when we already have many stories to tell.

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'Confisco' Network for Peace

Anne Frank Municipal School

Municipal Parks and Zoobotanical Foundation

'Confisco' Health Center

Municipal Guard – Municipal Public Security Dept.

Minas Gerais Military Police – 37th Battalion / 1st Company

Popular Reference Center (CERPOP)

Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG)

'Lagoinha' Baptist Church

Prof. Alice Nacif Municipal School

Social Assistance and Reference Center (CRAS)

'Pampulha' Cultural Center

DIREP – 'Pampulha' Regional Education Office

Community Associations

Verena Project

Dom Bosco House

The Wind and the Ship of Creatives: Importance and Risks of BNCC

Cesar Callegari

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Sailors often say that the best wind is not the wind that comes from astern, from behind, and pushes the boat. They say that the best wind is the crosswind, which cuts across the sail, filling it with power, and making the boat ply its way forward with speed and firmness. In their opinion, it is not even that important to consider where the wind takes them. What matters most is the fullness of letting themselves be crossed by flows of air and sea, and the amazing discoveries that this movement can bring.

This is what creative knowledge looks like: it becomes a full awareness of meaning and power not when we keep it to ourselves, but rather when it crosses through us, when the information is an element that inspires us and makes us think, producing meaning, contaminating, affecting, and generating movement.

Good teachers are like navigators. They know that we learn when we let ourselves be taken away by the elements, when we allow ourselves to be surprised, and when we create and then meditate on what we have created. Imagine situations that lead your students to experience the creative process. In addition, good teachers normally invent strategies that lead to discovery, even of theories and concepts that are more established, so that they appear to be something new each time they are presented.

This renewed discovery for the teacher is the original creation process for the student. Sharing the blooming of knowledge brings a bond of complicity that should be characteristic of relationships within the school. This is a kind of inquisitive complicity in face of the unknown and the unfathomable, which turns the learning process into something meaningful and dynamic: a crossing.

Some of us, who have been active participants in the drawing up of the new Brazilian National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC), have always sustained this viewpoint. Imagine the BNCC as a kind of “breath of possibilities” for the critical and constructive process, for teachers, their students, and their schools. Something that, just like the wind, may pass through them and give them inspiration for the discoveries of knowledge. For this reason, throughout the approved text, we always insist on saying that a Core is not a curriculum. Indeed, it is not a unified curriculum, or even a minimum group of subjects. As such, it must never be regarded as a ‘ready-made recipe’ or as a mandatory model.

Since its inception, and up until it was included in the National Education Law of 2014, the Core has always been regarded as a statement of the rights and the goals of the learning process and of the school development of young children and Brazilian adults, and hence also regarded as an expression of duties of the state and of society at large with regard to education. In other words, it is a base that favors equity, with positive effects upon the construction of school curricula, upon the qualification of teachers, the production of learning materials, evaluations, and the very articulation of a national education system.

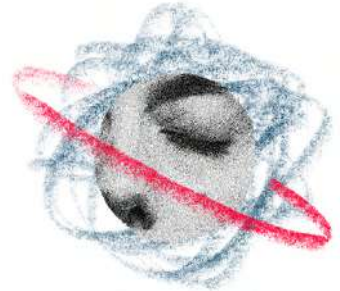
In short, the BNCC was originally conceived to help to overcome the historical difficulties faced by Brazilian education, including the lack of clearer and more objective inputs, so that educators and schools could design a curricular project that would put their full creative, innovative and enchanting potential into action, all of which is extremely necessary to encourage and ensure students' learning.

It is well known that many education professionals resent the lack of sufficient references with which to carry out their activities. Acting in a dispersed manner and under poor working conditions, they often see themselves as isolated within their classrooms and, quite justifiably in fact, not as participants in a group pedagogical project. They do not find ways of overcoming the shortcomings of their qualifications and are not able to take advantage of all the possibilities offered by the textbooks made available to them; in addition, they are unaware of, or do not know, how to deal with the results of the evaluations. Therefore, without enough wind and without suitable sails they can use to navigate, they end up doing what they can and what they know, which may be heroic, but which is not always what is necessary.

This needs to change. Students have basic rights to learning, and many of these rights are specifically mentioned in the BNCC. These rights invoke our obligation to provide what is necessary, and not just what is possible. By explicitly stating references in the form of inputs for creative and authorial processes, the Core could be a stimulus for deeper knowledge on the part of the educators, and for their empowerment as professionals, thus opening up a real possibility of tackling the current educational problems that are rife in Brazil.

At the end of 2017, the BNCC for Primary and Early Childhood Education was approved by the Brazilian National Education Council, thus becoming a national standard that would be mandatorily followed by state-run and private schools throughout the country. Many of the schools have already started their review of their proposed curricula. The new Core is already guiding the preparation of tenders for purchase of textbooks, and tests for evaluation on a large scale, such as the *Prova Brasil*, are already being prepared using the BNCC as a reference benchmark.

The BNCC for secondary education was only approved at the end of 2018, containing many problems. It was strongly criticized by several different segments from within Brazilian educational community, who considered it somewhat reductionist, excluding, incomplete, and also unable to help to overcome the serious problems faced at this level of basic education. Its defects and shortcomings are serious. For example, there is too much emphasis given largely to Mathematics and Portuguese Language, at the detriment of other subjects. It's no secret to anyone that these subjects are indeed important, but they are not the only ones. The fact is that the construction of critical and creative thought requires an ability to put things into context, with an articulated knowledge of all areas and their components. Despite these problems, Brazil now has its BNCC, from Early Childhood Education up to Secondary School.



However, regarding the Core itself, major challenges loom before us. We already perceive serious problems arising from its very implementation. Many of those who are currently working to put the terms of the Core into practice are forgetting one important aspect: the active participation of the teaching staff, and the effective engagement of the schools. Without these elements, the creative process imagined at the genesis of the BNCC could be lost, in which case the Core could morph into a kind of “strait-jacket,” that single curriculum that we have always battled against, enforced by the system, and which could suffocate the diversity and wealth of our educational reality. It frightens to perceive, here and there, the excessive and abusive use of the expression “alignment with the Core” signify a school’s submission to one single universal model for a school curriculum. The “inspiring wind” thus becomes a “destructive

thunderstorm” which destroys identities and singularities. This must not be allowed to happen, and educators must show a strong reaction against any initiative to implement alignment and imposed models, thereby usurping authorial power.

One must insist on the view that the exercising of the creative process is inherent to a high-quality teaching-learning process. It is also important to defend the spaces occupied by autonomy, while keeping at bay any type of authoritarian centralization, shallow and merely utilitarian, of education. One must show resistance – an active kind of resistance which includes the task of presenting and defending those curriculum proposals and pedagogical projects that are an expression of collaborative thinking and the own choices made by the educators in the exercise of their autonomy.

Creative knowledge becomes a full awareness of meaning and power not when we keep it to ourselves, but rather when it crosses through us.

We know it is far from easy. The educational doing in this day and age requires much more than the storage and transmission of information. Modern times need teachers and schools to have the capacity to imagine and to develop curriculum proposals that overcome the usual disciplinary fragmentation, towards an articulated view, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary thinking. In addition, these new times require educators to have the courage and the willingness to actively participate in political and social processes on different planes, especially when these bring concrete consequences to the educational system and to pedagogical actions. This is the struggle that is now necessary to defend an education that traverses all of us – teachers, students and their families – and that inspires all of us to build a democratic and global society that is humanist, plural, developed, sustainable and socially fair.

In the words of João Cabral de Melo Neto, “there’s a lot of difference between struggling with your hands and holding your hands back.”

Antonio Cesar Russi Callegari is a sociologist, professor, and educational consultant. He is President of the Brazilian Applied Sociology Institute (IBSA). He was also a member of the National Education Council, where he presided over the commission set up to prepare the Brazilian National Common Core Curriculum. He also served as a Secretary for Basic Education at the Brazilian Ministry for Education and Culture (MEC) and Education Secretary of the Municipality of São Paulo, among other posts held. He is the author of several works about education, science and culture. E-mail: cesarcallegari@uol.com.br.



Creativity does not match with plastered environments! And what about you, educator? What have you done so that your school environment may add value to freedom and differences?



[Click here](#) and see the position taken up by Rodolfo Fiorucci, the head of the Federal Institute of Paraná, 'Jacarezinho' Campus, with regard to the role of the school manager.



This book is the result of a common effort of male and female authors from every region in Brazil and from a city in the United States.

We believe that many people also cultivate and nurture experiences in the field of education with the changemaker skills – empathy, teamwork, changemaking and creative problem-solving.

If that is your case, we would like you to be part of our community!

Please access the link below and share an educational experience with a focus on creativity. As we see it, creativity is the ability to express oneself by means of different languages and the creation of new solutions to problems identified in different realities and scenarios. For this, it is important to give priority to active learning, and to value authorship and autonomy of the students.

After the appreciation of your report by the Changemaker Schools team, it could reach thousands of people and education communities through our social media – [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to thank everyone who has been, or who is, part of the Changemaker Schools Program Brazil, from its inception until now, and the Ashoka, Alana and 2PRO Comunicação teams.

To the Editorial Committee, representing the network of Changemaker Schools.

For their collaboration, inspiration, thoughts, and shared stories, the Changemaker Schools would like to thank all the educators, students, Government authorities, researchers, Ashoka social developers, and the various professionals who have taken part in this publication:

Abdalaziz de Moura, Amanda Leite Almeida, Ana Paula Alcântara, Antonio Cesar Russi Callegari, Carlos Rodrigues Brandão, Carolina Seixas, Catarina Bessell, David José de Andrade Silva, Denise Antunes, Diego Elias Santana Duarte, Eda Luiz, Elivan Andrade, Eneida Lipai, Enzo Nicolau, Fernanda Peixoto Miranda, Fernando Sergio Leão Castilho, Gabriel Maia Salgado, Graça Marillo Totaro, Íris Vitória Santos Souza, Karen Vanessa Nery Carreiro, Laura Leal, Leila Rocha Sarmiento Coelho, Levindo Diniz Carvalho, Luana Maciel Fonseca, Luciana Bittencourt Fevorini, Luciana Pires, Lucianny Thaís Freire Matias, Luiza Esteves, Manoel Andrade Neto, Maria Amélia Marcondes Cupertino, Maria Estela Nepomuceno dos Santos, Maria Jilvani dos Santos Silva, Maria Luiza Dias Viana, Mariana Reis, Mariana Santino, Pablo Martins Carneiro, Paola Fonseca Russano, Paola Salmona Ricci, Patricia Limaverde Nascimento, Priscila Dias Carlos, Renata Tavares de Brito Falleti, Rita Junqueira de Camargo, Robson Max de Oliveira Souza, Rodrigo Hübner Mendes, Rosane de Magalhães Lopes Corgosinho, Rosângela Magda de Oliveira Souza, Sandra Mara de Oliveira Vicente, Sílvia Reichmann, Simone Kubric Lederman, Sofia Reis, Susan Harris MacKay, Tairine Matzenbacher, Taís Brasil Russo, Vitória Oliveira Moreira, William Nunes, Wilma Dutra Lino, Zilene Maia Trovão.





This is a digital book comprising sixteen articles and five unreleased videos about creativity as one of the core changemaker skills that are essential for overcoming the challenges presented by education and society.

