

Curriculum in a Pandemic World: What will be the Future of Education?

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Contingency would be abolished. It was the dream of the perfect death, the Socratic death, the philosophical death: absolute self-coincidence at the point of disappearance. Autarchy. Autonomy. Authenticity. Autism. It was a delusion of control.

Memory Theatre, Simon Critchley

In this moment of pandemic, many of us ask ourselves what the future of Education, School and Curriculum will be. Will we return to face-to-face classes? Will we organize online and face-to-face curriculum activities in a hybrid model? Will online education be one of the biggest investments in the future?

I think we can say yes and no to these questions simultaneously. There are arguments and researches that support many of these conclusions. The most important thing, however, is to think about what we do today and what the contextual impacts of our theories and actions in the curriculum field are. It is not possible to predict the future, but we can try to modify the present.

As I have already written before, some aim, as Paul Auster in his excellent book *4321*, to identify different contextual realities that can be drawn from the current scenario. However, only literature, this fictive institution that extrapolates institutions and in principle allows saying everything or anything² (*tout dire*) by challenging and suspending the belief (Derrida, 1992, p. 36), could make us consider such multiplicity of curriculum and school or educational contexts.

Even so, I consider it increasingly important to reactivate the notions of Education, School and Curriculum as linked to radical contextualization. Following a point of convergence between Derrida and Rorty, I defend that there is not a reason *that could guarantee the possibility of a mode of argumentation that would transcend its particular conditions of enunciation* (Mouffe, 2009). Such a conclusion makes any decision over a curriculum at the time of this pandemic or at any other time as a result of a radical investment (Lopes, 2020). The radical investment, in the sense propagated by Laclau (2004), is not an *a priori*, not deterministic, not essentialist. The radical investment consists of the attempt to name and to represent the unrepresentable: nothing logically determines or pre-announces normative content, but nevertheless this content is enunciated, and we are invested in its constitution.



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With the idea of radical investment, the future is left to come. The focus is not on planning the future – of the Curriculum, Education, School, Life – as someone who intends to outline goals to be achieved, designing the future as a project. The important thing is to investigate today the challenges that allow us to bet on more creative possibilities, open to receiving the other, and to productions that can only be carried out contextually.

It is in this direction that the TCI articles are presented. Very different experiences in contexts also marked by difference.

Notes

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² As the translator of this book writes about these options, “say everything” has a sense of exhausting a totality and “say nothing” means to speak without constraints on what one may say. As discussed by Evando Nascimento (2018) in the commentary on the translation of this text into Portuguese, such as in “tout dire,” Derrida points out that literature proposes a form of liberation that calls into question the institutionality itself and is related to the notion of modern democracy: greater freedom and infinite possibility of relationships among subjects.

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