





**The Conditions of  
Teaching in critical contexts**

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## Introduction

This document forms part of a series of materials prepared to the interior of the Hemispheric Project “*Elaboración de políticas para la prevención del fracaso escolar*”, (“*Preparation of policies for the prevention of the school failure*”, subregion MERCOSUR

Each one of these texts have the purpose of contributing with reflections, conceptualizations and keys to understand the core problems that the region is going through. The relation between poverty and education, social and education unequalness, school bond and community, learning and teaching in critical situations.

The receivers of these materials are teachers of different levels and modalities of the education system that form part of the countries of the MERCOSUR.

The conceptual developments of each document are accompanied by activities and suggestions, with the purpose of widening and deepening the proposed subjects.

In the same way, this series of documents shall be available in the web page of the Project: <http://tq.educ.ar/fracasoescolar>

It is expected that these materials are shared among colleagues, in spaces of formation, reflection and training.





## Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	9
<hr/>	
PART I TEACH AT SCHOOO TODAY	11
<i>The Schools we inherited</i>	12
<i>The threats of the school systems: Of the homogenized mandate     o the premise of the respect for the diversity</i>	17
<i>Equality or equity in the horizon of the school?</i>	20
<hr/>	
PART II TEACHING IN CRITICAL CONTEXTS	23
<i>The “outside” and the “inside” of school.</i>	25
<i>Representations over the poverty in the task of teaching</i>	26
<i>An alliance that empowers the figure of the teacher</i>	27
<i>Teachers today against poverty</i>	28
<i>Poverty in the “genes”</i>	31
<i>The “risk” that poverty carries out.</i>	32
<i>The pedagogical operations present over the critical contexts</i>	33
<i>The formation of the teacher and its role</i>	37
<i>School teaching and extra school teachings</i>	40
<i>AS A CONCLUSION: CHALLENGES OF THE     TEACHING IN CRITICAL CONTEXTS</i>	43
<hr/>	
Notes	47
Bibliography	48



## Introduction

We all know by our own experience or by what we share with other colleagues, that teaching in contexts of poverty is a task harder and harder each time, sometimes more difficult to sustain, and if, before it, the resignation lives with the desperation, with the frustration, indifference and sometimes as a survival strategy.

However, we also know that nor the resignation nor the hopelessness can guide our occupation. Even more, to educate is a verb that cannot them include inside it because both deny the possibility of continue being an action. An action that, on the other hand, is not any action, since it plays the possibility that the history, the reproduction of the culture and the evolution of the human.

The most general question, in which we try to frame the searches, readings and the questionings that configure this writing, has to do with the proposals, conceptual tools and which positioning can be constructed, propose, offer from the field of the pedagogy in relation to the problematic of the learning and the poverty.

Now, the problem of the education in critical contexts it is not new: Has been in the agenda of the concerns in Latin America throughout all the XX century. However, in the last years, there comes to find an outstanding place in the debate and the reflection is developing in the territory of the pedagogy, in many of our countries.

The question that appears now is: *Which is the difference between our present and other historic moments?* Perhaps, at the beginning, the answer lies in the fact that the recent situation reflects a deepening of the social gap and throws countries like Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, inedited percentages with respect of the historic indexes regarding the historic indexes of poverty and indigence. Perhaps, the difference lies in that, besides, in which other historic moments, the representations about the meaning of poverty and more concretely, “being poor” are radically others. These representations are framed, in general terms, within the conception of the poverty.

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Understood as a state of material and cultural dispossession, but could be observed by their own means through the participation in the different spaces of integration that the society offers as a fabric structure, the syndicate, the town associations, the consumption of books, newspapers, and means of communication, and mainly, through the inclusion in the space of the school. In other words, until not long ago, the passage through the schools formed part of a promise of integration and social mobility, even from an excluding matrix.

Today, on the contrary, in the frame of new social conditions existing featured by the weaknesses of the national states guarantying of some social protections, the fall of the work of the wage earner, the labor flexibilization and the amazing unemployment indexes, the deep processes of pauperization, the loss of the symbolic efficiency of modern institutions as the family and the school, the absence of the promise of social promotion, others are the visions and representations that are constructed around the poverty, and others are ways in which this is formed in the texture of the social space, in general, and of the school in particular.

It is in this context in which we find the current debates in which a series of questions are posed, that are present every day in the school daily life. What is possible to be done by school against so much poverty? Is it perhaps that we are trying to respond what is submitted as urgent or need, and leave aside at least for a while that what is considered its role more specific as the transmission of culture? Or, on the contrary, against the deterioration of the life conditions of the children, is this about redoubling the challenge for the teaching and broadening, in this way, the alternatives and the possibilities of learning?

To think and explore such questions herein, at a first moment, we shall try to find out what is that had made that possible: How the school education and the poverty had been historically linked, to the point of reaching and being part of the same equation. On the other hand, revisiting the role that the task of teaching has in our societies, inside and outside the school systems, it proposes to retell its current role and submit the challenges to which it faces in the future.

**PART I****Teaching at school today**

To teach in complex, difficult, unfavorable and critical contexts.... These terms explain the different ways in which we name the current conditions in which we, as teachers, have to carry out, ahead of the transmission of a symbolic and cultural universe to the new generations. What do we talk about when we say that today the teachers are faced with the challenge of educating in critical contexts? Which are the contexts? How are they currently visualized? What is the complexity in our present? Where is its difficulty?

The complexity of this time lies in that, mainly, the dense complexity of multiple and varied transformations, social, political, natural and economic transformations that have undertaken private features in the different Latin American countries.

Thus, the current societies are faced with old and new problems that , of course, do not affect the same mood to all the countries and regions. These problems involve, among other matters, the deepening of the inequity in the distribution of the wealth, the weaknesses of the national states in the regulation of the social order , the reconfiguration of the hierarchies and relations of the power among the central countries and the peripheric, dramatical changes in the world of work that brought the dissolution of the social protections for a wide set of the population and with that, an increase in the great percentages of unemployed, the acuteness of the poverty and the gap between poor and wealthy ones. In other words, it is about the stress of the processes of social fragmentation that is evident in the provision of great sectors of the population to extreme situations of exclusion and social vulnerability.

In these conditions of social inequality, the subjects are faced before the urgency of organizing their lives on the day to day, in situations of deep uncertainty about what shall come. The future is submitted as a difficult time to project on. Then, some questionings over the frames of references that guided us were produced, together with

this, a loss of horizons that made us to face the challenge of constructing other references and senses.

In this scenario, the school has remained unaltered. On the contrary, the consequences and the effects of the transformations before mentioned deeply interrogate them. What is the role of schools in the transformation of the painful present we now live in? Which are its social roles in this turbulent and complex context? Which are the answers and the conceptions we have over the occupation of teaching in the present? Which are the tools that we, the teachers, have to teach in contexts of acute social gap between poor and wealthy people?

Let's begin to answer these questions by situating, in the first place, how is that school is part of the social landscape. We cannot forget that school is a relatively recent institution. It is installed as a compulsory space a little more than one hundred years ago, in a context of consolidation of the national states, that tried to alphabetize at the same time to make them visible in an heterogeneous population. The school authorized and consolidated, at the same time, a specific way of teaching, coherent with other institutions of the society that was able to be effective and replace previous forms of transmission of culture. Then, we shall be able to find out what is this specific form about, what is it that made sense to its expansion and universalization, what was the logic that operated and which are the transformations that it has been suffering in the last years.

### **The Schools we inherited**

The school as an **institution**, as a privileged space of transmission of the culture of the adult generations to the young ones, it was born in societies as ours, as part of the gesture to understand the equality of the subjects. Since our societies had a population base that had differences (Indians of different ethnics, immigrants, natives, gauchos), it was necessary for those who pretended to install a national order, that all of them would recognize as a way of

organization and in a unique law for all, with defined frontiers, language and common culture. The education systems were a tool to install and consolidate that order. As from the education, it was pretended to work out these differences, having them homogenized, in the search of equality.

The education systems emerged and were submitted as one of the moods in which modern states supplied that, that at that moment had an unequal distribution in society. The symbolic goods (reading, writing, mathematical operations, knowledge of social guidelines, etc.). At the same time, and in the same operation, the education systems tried to have those subjects to learn that what the society expected from them to the service of their members. School was in charge of producing *citizens*.

The search of the equality, during much time, had to do with the education system being **one for all**, to be the same in the territory of the Nation, that had a common curriculum, a unique teacher formation, a gradual and simultaneous structure, that in other places is ordered from the same parameters. In the duty to go to school, the inclusion was played to an homogeneous body and the construction of a civility with the same features for all. But also, the equality was imposed as from a unique and homogeneous grammar, that is to say, from the same configuration and the same method. The following image can be useful to illustrate this force: “A teacher for many students that are at the same level of learning, transmitting to all the same knowledge at the same time.

### Latin America Education Systems

*Adriana Puiggrós offers a Latin American landscape of the education systems in the book *Imaginación y crisis en la educación latinoamericana* (Aiqué, Buenos Aires, 1994), that may be useful to visualize the differences and similarities among the different countries:*

*“Taking into account its historic development, we can group the Latin American education systems in the following ones:*

- a) Those installed in the societies like Argentina and Uruguay, which Indian population is scarce (...) and that had a very important European Immigration. En ellos, la escolarización alcanzó una amplia cobertura de la población y las diferencias socioeconómicas fueron más fuertes que las culturales, y llegaron a construir “distensiones” de un espectro cultural-nacional, predominantemente moderno.
- b) Countries with a high index of Indian population, as in Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Guatemala, in which the school (...) only advanced between a sector of the population, leaving aside the great mass of miners and peasants, monolingual in native languages or that possesses Spanish as a second language.
- c) México, donde se desarrolló temprana-mente un sistema educativo complejo, constituido por escuelas y programas educativos culturales diversos, que creció al ritmo de la construcción de la hegemonía estatal.

d) Brasil, donde se constituyó el sistema tardíamente, recién en la década de 1930. Ha

e) It had had great difficulties to achieve a wide coverage, as a result of which it still keeps great force of the regional over the national.

f) Countries like Cuba and the Nicaragua sandinist, that produced a great education transformation significantly advancing in the integration of all the sectors of society to the modern education system. The sandinist defeat left without finishing a process that, in the case of Cuba, was based on the centralization of education, and culture, performing a new process of extension of first quality education to the set of the population, without leaving the reedition of the authoritative features of the modern education model.

#### To think among colleagues



We propose that with other colleagues, a look over the current situation of the education system is observed, considering the perspective contributed by the text of Adriana Puiggrós. How do you consider that the current situation shall have an incidence in the education system of your countries?

Always with the same method and necessarily accompanied with the same text. And this scene is repeated in other rooms of the class of the school, and in turn, in all and every one of the schools of the same territory. All of them at once, all are discussing the same subjects, on the same manner, with the same resources. (...) This is the atmosphere of modern pedagogy” (1)

This is how the school teaching was regulated at the beginning by a sole principle, pretending to offer from it, the same education for all. This that we have submitted herein, has had in each society that had taken it ahead, their own specificities, particular characteristics. In countries like Argentina, Uruguay and Chile, this is the **public school** that condensed the

willingness of the State of reaching all with the education. The century XX was the century in which the public school was developed and expanded to the point of involving almost the total of the population. However, few countries of Latin America share this feature. The remaining countries, with which we have shared the common feature of having depending companies, have different features because the education systems have had a much less scope in the set of the population, as Bolivia or Peru, or have been more diverse, less homogeneous, since they articulated with other education strategies of the population, as in the case of Mexico.



In a less or major degree, the Latin America countries also shared other features:

- The installation in the social imaginary, by decades and until not long ago, of the **social mobility linked to the access to the education**. To go to school meant, during many times, the possibility of thinking on a different future, for them or for their children, due to the fact that they were trained for work or because it allowed to obtain higher studies. The social mobility linked to education, that can be followed in the history of our parents or our grandparents, though it was linked to individual strategies, paid the chance of the education to withdraw inequalities linked to the access to symbolic or material goods.
- To sustain the idea that **citizenship built through the conquest of rights**, first civil rights, then political and finally social ones, in which education is located in the double game of being, at the same time, a right of the citizens and a duty of the State, highlighting the role of the State as provider and the citizen as plaintiff of something that corresponds to all in the same fashion.

However, we cannot forget that in our societies, as in the one of many



countries, in which these processes took place, although school teaching searched for the equality of the subjects. The society had and has an unequal basis before the property, by which equality, although it has been on the horizon, has never been a fact. Nor the education systems, nor the public health or other “supplies” of the State tried to dismantle this unequal basis.

On the other hand, equality was understood in key of homogenization, by which it prevailed in the school teaching, and in the social imagination, an unique model of the citizen, previously established

## KEYS TO APPROACH THIS SUBJECT



·Analyze the text considering the importance of immigration in the constitution of the Latin American states and the role of school in relation to the possibility of labor promotion.

·To interview a director in exercise and a student of the Teacher course and ask why they chose to be a teacher and what is their representation over the place of school in the construction of other possible futures. Please compare these answers with the text.

by the ones who imagined our countries, and at the same time a unique model of teachers and method to be followed. This did not impede that school and what was learnt in it, constituted a key for the insertion in the society, in the labor world and in the political life, that allowed many ancestors to dream about a different life to them and their descendants.

### Teachers of other times

*Rosa Justina del Río is born in Buenos Aires in 1883. She is the daughter of immigrant parents. In 1889 she enters into school. In 1896, through a scholarship granted by its good qualifications at the primary school, she attends the Escuela Normal located in the center of the City. In 1921, she assumes as Director. Please find below some paragraphs of the reading of Beatriz Sarlo about her history. When I finished sixth form, four of my brothers were already in primary school. My father wanted me to spend time in the workshop, because this was cheaper than an apprentice. In that way, I spent a whole year, washing dishes and preparing wood. Until a day that I told him: Would you like me to spend the rest of my life doing this work? I want to study to become a teacher and at school they told me that I can ask for a scholarship. (...) When I entered the Escuela Normal, a new world was opened. Some professors, male and female, were distinguished sirs, that talked very well and that recited poetries or told histories about which I had not the faintest idea. Egipcians, The Mesopotamia, the Renaissance. (...) Nowadays, at school we would find things that were never even dreamt of, that they were never dreamed to have existed. Nor my father, nor my mother talked with us of Europe, of the places to which they had come. For them, it was as if those places had ceased to exist. My mother never wanted to be treated as an Italian, that is why she forgot the language and to speak it as if she was born here. The, the world began for me in the classes of the Escuela Normal, learning what will later be taught as teacher and learning to teach it as a way fairly different than what it was told to me.*

Extraído de Sarlo, Beatriz (1998): *La máquina cultural. Maestras, traductores y vanguardistas*. Ariel, p.17 a 23.

## **The threats of the school systems: From the homogenized mandate to the premise of the respect for diversity**

Although many features above mentioned are present in our schools yet, the relations between the State and society have substantially changed in the last decades, and one of the spaces in which you can see some transformations and transferences is in the education system.

In the last 30 years, the impugnation and criticisms received by the education system were concentrated, among other issues, in its homogenization nature. The existence of a sole national curriculum, and of a burocratic structure that in a centralized way, should try to pretend to attend the demands of all the territory and may become a center of criticisms. On one hand, this structure was seen as a very powerful one. It operated in a verticalized way, in which the hierarchies and the principles of control and obedience did not allow the active registration of the actors. Provincial teachers, managers, and technical equipments did not manage autonomy margins nor participation margins. On the other hand, the sole curriculum for all the country left few spaces for the regional registrations, for the local and provincial culture, for the education projects to be articulated with the needs of the context in which they operated.



To solve these problems, the different countries of Latin America encouraged amendments of the education systems that began on principles of “decentralization” and “autonomy” and opened the debate over the homogenized nature of the school teaching. This debate not only took place in the sphere of the State policies but also

was configured through learning theories, conceptualizations over the subject of the education, debates over the ways of delimiting the culture and of regulating the school practices.

In the sphere of what happens in the link between teacher and student, the concern for the **difference** was introduced: For this reason the subject **carries out** (a familiar and social culture, a cultural registration), and for what the subject **is** (male, female, Indian, immigrant, poor, delinquent, etc.). How can these differences in the classroom be understood? Is it possible that an institution as the school, that has shown its establishing capacity, receives and lives with these differences? How, when and in which sense? Isn't the risk of diluting its establishing capacity run if it has to pay attention and give place to the subject?

The issue to the homogenization had its correlate in the appearance of different approaches that submitted the problem of the **diversity**, worried by the moods in which the proper features of the subjects in the education sphere need to have. The problem of diversity was also present, not only posed by the cultural, ethnical or genre differences that a group could have, but it was also present through the question by which the subjects **can** learn, by introducing concepts as the ones of **capacity, potentiality**, and those all approaches that are questioned by the individual features of the subjects that learn. This is how the concerns for the **diversity** of the subjects, that in some countries and regions, have to do with the mobilizations and demands of the cultural and ethnical minorities to be recognized. In others, it comes hand in hand with the problem of poverty, installing, many times, a strong suspicion over the fact that these differences mean different starting points that have to do with the fact of being "compensated" at the time of learning.

Now, to define education in terms of compensation means a transference around what was historically set in motion in this sphere. In other words, concerns more related to what is learnt and to the "capacity" of absorbing the education offer" are opened, from each subject as well as from the social group that it belongs to. This is how in the policies that look to "compensate", the calculations are present about what the other *can do* and what the other *needs to do* to be able to learn, transferring the problem of equality from the offer to the receptivity of the offer.

In this type of offer we considered the “place” in which this offer shall happen. The conditions of the life of the subjects, the access that they have to the material goods and symbolic goods, the affection contexts, the demands that they received from the labor market, etc., and this “place” **conditions the way of the offer.** In this way, the compensation of the unequalness and the diversity operate in the same way: They doubt of the idea that the education needs to be the same for all, and introduce the question of “adapting” the education to the conditions (social, psychological, biological ones) that are displayed in the sphere of learning. The consequence of the consideration of what the subject carries with him is a “differentiated” education offer by identity features or by conditions of life. Its opposite side can be an education for the poor, for the wealthy men, for women, for Indians, for immigrants, for the disabled or disqualified ones.

These transferences in the education field carry out direct consequences not only in the ways of understanding what is the education, but also in dimensioning which is its scope and which are its possibilities. What is put in stake, really, is the *size of the pedagogical operation*. The risk is that, on trying to “adapt” or “customize” the education to the context of reception, this may be shortened or reduced. How the consideration of the context of the subjects shortens the possibilities of education?

### Compensatory Policies Subjects, poverty and education

During the 90's, many Latin American countries were the headquarters of education amendments. In this frame, a reconfiguration of the role of the State was produced, that had specific consequences in the field of the education public policies. With it, major agreements were made over the fact that the agudization of the social and education unequalness constituted one of the most critical problems that education is going through in our countries. In this context, various efforts were made to give answers to this matter, finding in the implementation of the compensatory policies, a path in this direction.

If we look up the term in the dictionary, “compensate” means: To remedy, repair, re-establish, indemnify, compensate .... To observe what are the meanings of the term “compensate” may contribute with some hints to dimension the modifications of this change in the policies registered in the education field.

### PENSAR ENTRE COLEGAS



To consider the education policies in terms of compensation:

- Which are the differences and postulates that separate the universalist policies?
- In what measure are these policies questioning the institutional and social conditions produced by social unequalness and fragmentation?

Let's base on one example, as follows: The relation between education and the possibilities of labor insertion. If we establish a close relation between those terms, we run the risk of adapting the education, to have it successful, to the requirements of a region or a specific means. Historically, the pedagogical operation happened to be much wider than the one that contributes to a successful insertion in the labor market, and this widening allowed the opening of new horizons, up to that time, not imagined by the subjects. With the accessory we talked about of the labor *market*, the one that uses to demand not questioned competencies, and in which the offer and demand operate with full force. Another example: If we make the success to depend on the education of the conditions (socio-economic, ethnical, cultural, familiar, etc.) in which the subject is immersed, only the modification of these conditions, when they are not favorable, shall make it possible to have an educated subject. The risk at this point is to insist on the "intergenerational reproduction of poverty", beyond all education. The political dimension of all education and its capacity of instituting new futures is skipped when framing the "should be" of the education processes in calculations and determination principles, that are far away from contributing to an institution of a an equal society. *Is it that school teaching should abandon the possibility of offering other futures than the ones that the context shows as possible?*

### **Equality or equity in the horizon of the school?**

Another place in which the concerns are made evident by the social inequality is the one of the public policies, in which the strategies had and are being carried out to reduce or revert it. However, the concern for the inequality does not bring, necessarily, a search of equality. On the contrary, the term equality seems to be transferred, appearing the term equity with a lot of insistence. But, are we talking the same? Are these equivalent terms? Which are the differences that circumvent this term? Is it the same to procure equalitarian systems of education, for example, than installing in them principles of equality?

Commonly, it is said that a distribution is equitative, not when

it distributes to all in the same way, but when it gives to each one what corresponds, or what is needed. The dictionary states this in this way: “natural justice, opposite to positive laws”. The concept of equity names, at the same time, equality of opportunities and compensation of differences. The concern is centered, not only in offering the same opportunities to all, but also in caring or taking care for the conditions in which the subjects are positioned before this offer. Let’s see how this works in the interior of the education field.

On one side, there is the issue of offering opportunities. If we review what had been issued in relation to the search of homogenization is made from the education system, this was not made to offer opportunities, but to produce identities as profiles previously established. Instead, the position of offering the opportunities grants some responsibility to the subject of education, that, in the last point, shall be the one to take or skip the opportunity that education offers.

The document of the CEPAL “Equidad, ciudadanía y desarrollo”, formulated in the year 2000 constitutes a clear example of type of conceptualization. There, the following statement is posed:

*“Equity does not imply equality in the development, but in the opportunities that the environment offers to optimize it. The learning potentials are not homogeneous, even in a universe with sociocultural conditions in the origin and in the process. Equity means, thus, to give opportunities to all the students for the development of their potentials, and to achieve the best productive use and of personal achievement of these potentialities in the future” (2).*

#### KEYS TO CONSIDER THIS ISSUE



We propose to take in your countries some measures that have been taken in the last years, tending to mitigate the social unequalness in education: Which are the relations found in the concept of equity in the specific sense given to this term in the document of the CEPAL?

Which are the modifications produced in the pedagogical link and in the ways of thinking the

this

There you can observe the centrality that are acquired by the ideas of

**learning** and of **potential**, for what the search of equity is extended from what is offered by the education to what can be done by the subject with this offer. The replacement of the equality by the equity has deep consequences in the education field. We are far away from rejecting the need of a fairer and more equitable society in the distribution of the income and of the crucial role played by the life conditions in the possibilities of development of a subject or a social group. Our problem is the one of dimensioning the role of the own context of the subjects in the formulation, form and content of the education.



## PART II

### Teaching in critical contexts

As it was already stated, the societies in which we live have been experiencing deep transformations that affect the classic frames instituted for the education. But these are not changes that only affect the “outside” of the “context”: Also, other responses have been discussing and proposed from the public policies, from the pedagogy, from the theories of education.

It is for that, to situate the problem faced by teaching in contexts of poverty, we need to visualize the different layers in which poverty becomes a problem, and how this problem affects the difficulties of teaching.

We will begin by individualizing, for methodological effects, two groups of problems. The first one is related to the critical situation lived by a big percentage of children and the youth in our countries, and the possibilities of the school to modify that. The second group of problems has to do with school teaching per se, with the transformations that it has been suffering from the crisis of school as institution, grantor of collective senses. In the frame of this double problematic situation, wider in the place in which the problem of poverty is registered in the school education, that can be posed in one question: What is the role of school in the task of reverting the situation of unprotected childhood and youth?, and at the

same time its reverse: In what measures, the crisis of school influences in the difficulties that we face today to educate in social contexts of deep inequality and social fragmentation?



**Poverty, Indigence and Distribution of Income in the countries sub region MERCOSUR 1990-2002**

Countries sub region Mercosur	Line of Poverty		Line of Indigence		Participation in the Total Income				Coef. of GINI **
	Households	Pov.	Households	Pov.	40% poorer	30% following	20% following	10% wealthier	
<b>Argentina a)</b>									
1990	16.2	21.2	3.5	5.2	14.9	23.6	26.7	34.8	0.501
1997	13.1	17.8	3.3	4.8	14.9	22.3	27.1	35.8	0.53
1999	13.1	19.7	3.1	4.8	15.4	21.6	26.1	37	0.542
2002	31.6	41.5	12	18.6	13.4	19.3	25.3	42.1	0.59
<b>Bolivia</b>									
1989	48.9	52.6	21.9	23	12.1	22	27.9	38.2	0.538
1997	56.7	62.1	32.7	37.2	9.4	22	27.9	40.7	0.595
1999	54.7	60.6	32.5	36.4	9.2	24	29.6	37.2	0.586
2002	55.5	62.4	31.7	37.1	9.5	21.3	28.3	41	0.614
<b>Brazil</b>									
1990	41.4	48	18.3	23.4	9.5	18.6	28	43.9	0.627
1996	28.6	35.8	10.5	13.9	9.9	17.7	26.5	46	0.638
1999	29.9	37.5	9.6	12.9	10.1	17.3	25.5	47.1	0.64
2001	29.9	37.5	10	13.2	10.2	17.5	25.6	46.8	0.639
<b>Chile</b>									
1990	33.3	38.6	10.6	12.9	13.2	20.8	25.4	40.7	0.554
1996	19.7	23.2	4.9	5.7	13.1	20.5	26.2	40.2	0.553
2000	16.6	20.6	4.6	5.7	13.8	20.8	25.1	40.3	0.559
<b>Paraguay</b>									
1990 b)	36.8	43.2	10.4	13.1	18.6	25.7	26.9	28.9	0.545
1996 c)	39.6	46.3	13	16.3	16.7	24.6	25.3	33.4	0.552
1999	51.7	60.6	26	33.8	13.1	23	27.8	36.2	0.515
2001	52.0	61	26.5	33.2	12.9	23.5	26.4	37.3	0.515
<b>Uruguay d)</b>									
1990	11.8	17.9	2	3.4	20.1	24.6	24.1	31.2	0.492
1997	5.7	9.5	0.9	1.7	22	26.1	26.1	25.8	0.43
1999	5.6	9.4	0.9	1.8	21.6	25.5	25.9	27.0	0.44
2002	9.3	15.4	1.3	2.5	21.6	25.4	25.6	27.3	0.455

Source: CEPAL, Informe Panorama Social para América Latina, 2002-2003.

a) Great Buenos Aires

b) Metropolitan Area of Asuncion

c) Urban Area

d) Urban Area

\* The approach used to measure poverty consists in classifying as "poor" a person, if his income per capita of the household is lower to the value of the "line of poverty", or a minimum necessary amount to satisfy its essential needs of food and non food needs (education, transportation, etc). The poverty line is constructed as from the calculation of the cost of a determined basket of goods and services, using the method of the "cost of the needs". To build the line of indigence, only the necessary amount is considered to cover the basic food needs of the population. (For more details, please refer to the Panorama Social para América Latina CEPAL, 2002-2003).

\*\* The Gine coefficient is the indicator major used to measure the level of inequality in the distribution of income. This is based in the Lorenz Curve (Curva de Lorenz) that is a curve of frequency accumulated that compares empiric distribution of a variable (incomes of the population) with the even distribution (of equality). When the Curve of Lorenz is away from this line, major is the inequality. The coefficient is a summed measure that varies between 0 and 1. The equal value to 0 represents the maximum level of possible equity. In the countries with a more equitative distribution, Northern countries, the values are around 0,25 and 0,30. The average global coefficient of Gini is of 0.40 (Source: Programa MECOVI-Argentina).

## The “outside” and the “inside” of school.

Now, why today the idea that school is in crisis does not cease to persist? What crisis are we talking about? Some authors say that school is in crises as from the first world wide war. For others, the school comes into crises when it becomes massive. Others, on the contrary, acknowledging these readings, state that “crisis” is the situation that we live today, product of the mutations of the coordinates that structured school and that is this situation that we today cannot understand and approach. Other authors state that what is under question is the efficiency that the school had to produce a determined type of subject (the citizen), efficiency that was produced, at least in part, in the situation of school as a closed space, in which the frontiers between the school inside and the outside seemed to be clearly established.

Today, the outside penetrated the boundaries of school, in turn, this outside became to be perceived in the education land as having a bigger “weight”, bigger “influence” over the role of school in the education of the children and the young.

This matter of the weight of the inside and the outside in the role that the school have in our societies, has opened the doors to the question about which is the relation between the conditions of the life of the children and the youth and its possibilities of learning. This question did not form part of the education concerns at the beginning of the school systems, at least it was not made from the suppositions we formulate today around this matter.

The responses that currently appear to this question are multiple and, in some way, have effects in the daily practices linked to learning and the role of school. The claim of the number of teachers, facing the state of malnutrition or of abandonment with which the children live and the difficulties this conveys to make effective a learning that constitutes a clear example of the task of educating is perceived as an action that is found to be limited by this unfavorable context.

Thus, from certain perspectives, the conditions of learning are posed to be **defined** and **determined** by the social context, the broadest one,

that is to say, by the economic, cultural and political conditions that the country or a region is going through at a determined moment. Now, this way of thinking the relation between learning conditions and critical contexts can be submitted to question, if, even in the most hostile and difficult social scene, the school is seen as a space in which conditions of protection and caring for the children and the young are undertaken, also for the teachers and the families of these children. The question that arises is then, if the term *determination* is useful to think over this relation. We would like to think that the conditions of teaching are not given, nor are lineally and irrevocably determined from the exterior of schools, or by the social context of belonging of the students and to ask about the possibilities and alternatives that are opened if we thin on the role that the teachers have in the production of the teaching conditions.

### **Representations over poverty in the task of teaching**

Currently, teachers face the transformations of the education systems, encouraged by the States, with the contemporary debates over the social role of school and the learning theories, from the undefeated task of receiving children and young and offer the letters and the numbers, words, art, sciences, history, living with others. They are the ones who have to deal daily with that, from its action, to the question of what is the purpose of school and which is the role in the present, at the same time that they decide day to day, what and how to teach. They are also the ones that, through the changes of the contemporary society, as any other citizen, have to live with its task of inclusion in a society that excludes more and more each time.

In some way, the limits within which the teacher was socially positioned as such, has also changed. Today, the teachers have to fight, from different spheres, to sustain their legitimacy as workers of education and as holders of culture. They are also the ones that deal with new responses to the question

over what and how to teach, what can be learnt and under what conditions.

*An alliance that empowers the figure of the teacher*

How is it that the teacher comes to be such? How is it that the teacher comes to have the authority of the State, and from there, exert the role of teaching? Although the role of the teacher is previous to the consolidation of the States, as ours, the teachers come to have a key role in the education institutions, when they began to be sustained by the State, through the alliance that this establishes with the families. In the implied agreement entered into by the family and the State, by which the family delegates certain portion of education in an extra-familiar space, is when the acknowledgement of the authority and the legitimization of the State to educate, be in charge and take care of the citizens. The possibility of switching the guardianship of the children from the parents to the schools, comes from the principle that the family alone cannot offer the child all that it needs for the education. That the family cannot offer, can be offered by those who have specific know ledges, the teacher.

This is how the teacher role can be organized with a specific identity,

**Poverty and education at the cinema**



Here follow two cinematographic narrations that approach, from singular histories, different aspects of the relation between education and poverty. The first, Chilean, places the story in a specific political moment, and from there, it questions the answers of the school against the problem of poverty.

The other narration, French, can be useful to discuss how many of the problems present in our schools depend on the national context, and how many transcend it, and are part of the scene present in developed societies.

**MACHUCA**

(Andrés Woods, Chile, 2004)

Chile, 1973. Gonzalo Infante and Pedro Machuca are two children of eleven years living in Santiago. The first one in a well known town, and the second in a humble town, illegal, recently installed, some blocks away from the other. The lives of them mingle when in a Religious School a program of social integration is put into action. Two separate worlds by an invisible great barrier that some, in their quest for making their dreams come true in a time full of revolutionary hopes, want to pull down.



### **Everything begins today**

(Ca commence aujourd'hui, Bertrand Tavernier, Francia 1999)

Daniel is director of a Kindergarten in a region that knew the best of times, but is now devoured by unemployment. One afternoon, Mrs. Henry comes to pick up her daughter, Laetitia, but falls in the playground, completely drunk. Once recovered, she escapes ashamed, abandoning Laetitia and the little brother of her. Daniel has no other choice than getting involved and take care of the two children.

receiving a particular formation and comes to be the role of the State, not only because the payment is received from him, but also, because from the State, appeared the regulation of the pedagogical practices, the organization of the curriculum and the institutionalization of the spaces and times for the teaching.

Currently, this role has been so much affected, as the education system as a whole, with the addition that in the schools, the exclusion, poverty and turbulences of the current times are being felt in each pedagogical relation.

#### ***Today Teachers against poverty***

What is it that today teachers think and believe over the school and its possibilities of working in these contexts? What are the difficulties encountered in the daily work? What are the challenges that they pose? From which culture, is it necessary that a teacher teaches to impoverished sectors? Is it necessary a special pedagogical strategy? Is it possible to think over those conditions from other angles that enable us to construct, within our task of teachers, other conditions of learning for children and young? The relation between school and poverty have passed, in the last decades, to acquire other meanings, other responses, other questions. This relation is being reformulated: from the education policies, from the theoretical perspectives of the education, as well as these conceptions that the teachers have about them. Poverty and education has turned into a more complex relation, that demands to question about the conceptions and positions that have currently been sustaining around what the school can and cannot

face of the social fragmentation.

In this context, one of the questions is to think that the problem of today cannot be the quantities expansion of the education, but also to offer the conditions of the learning that contribute to decrease the high levels of repetition and desertion that are observed in the basic and media education. Said in other way, this is not about the access to the education system by a group that was left aside, but to offer an education symbolically enriched for all and to sustain the permanence in the system. This situation has given place to the hard dilemma “retention - quality”. There are times, that to retain at the expense of the detriment of the quality in the formation, or exclusion to guarantee acceptable levels of quality. To discuss this dilemma, makes teachers face a perverse tramp for which to pose alternatives to modify it has become to be difficult.

Major complexity is acquired when this dilemma pretends to be resolved through a "special education", “differentiated”, “focused” for children that live in contexts of poverty. From some perspectives, this matter pretends to be faced by offering an appropriate education to the features of the school population, determined by its life social conditions. An education that is thought to be of quality is posed, as long as it is adjusted to the measures of the children that receive it.

Today, the school is faced, on one side, before

#### Palabras de maestros

One of the features that installs a significant difference regarding the meanings that the tensions inside/outside, school/context had had, is the inversion of the predominance of one of the poles over the other.

During a long time, the outside was the pole that had to be separated, far away and even reconfigured by school, and effectively, it was considered that this technique had certain efficacy in its results. In the narrations of the teachers hereinbelow transcribed, the preeminence was observed in the outside. If there is a common element around which we can order these selected paragraphs, is the fact that it comes to show the “weight” (non penetrability, condensation) that what we called “social context of the students” has come to have in the visibility of the teachers regarding the scopes of the task of the school.

*“The issue of the theft and the plundering is a very complex subject, very complex because you want to show another reality, isn't it? Another option. And one is questioned, sometimes, until what point one can modify the social? If the social, finally, ends being the strongest, this social reality that they live finishes being the strongest than the one that the school can show that is another option of life, isn't it? Different. Every day we think over the same...”*

*“... I do not imagine all as this is going to save them, between inverted commas, because it is not going to save them. In many I see that good is an intention, they are there, on the edge. And others, that are younger, I see with more possibilities of ...continue being on their way. Perhaps some shall be found on the corner of the street, I do not know,*

*stealing a bike. It is more difficult because you say up to what point this is of use, what I am trying to do." And (the education) can save them, but I believe that sometimes the resentment and what they daily live, sometimes is not enough, because this is easier than so much sacrifice. "Why are we going to work all the month, that if I need a pair of snickers I steal them and I have it at the moment", they said .... "For what reason?" The other thing is easier, if not I have to be all days working, for what? I think that if this is learnt, it is strong. Depending on who, sometimes it is stronger what they have lived and what have marked them than what it is trying to be taught...."*

*"... Most of them have serious problems in learning. There are very few that you say, look at this child, that are the ones that may be the ones to continue studying, living another life, but there are many children that are already stealing, or using drugs or already a part of a group, the fam gang. It is very difficult to reconvert that." "And there are four hours against twenty that they are in another sphere, a great difference."*

(The words of teachers herein written belong to teachers of the city of Rosario, Argentina, interviewed in the frame of a thesis, "To educate the poor. Representations over poverty in the current pedagogical discourse", made by Evangelina Canciano).

#### PENSAR ENTRE COLEGAS



We invite you to discuss over the senses that these words transmit, and the subjects included. You can take into account: - The relation school-society; the relation teacher-student; the questions opened around teaching and learning.

a strong distortion of its limits, of its borders, as from the penetration, in this closed space, that turned it back to life, from a difficult outside, that comes to question its specificity and on the other hand, with the signs of a fragmentation and education polarization that fixes its differential frontiers, according to the social sectors that are being educated. To open a space to question the debate of the pedagogy about what is said and what is not said, what are the looks over the other "poor", results to be of essential importance to begin to de-naturalize some representations over poverty that contribute, on one side, to the establishing of differentiated circuits to the interior of the school education and on the other hand, to put into operation stigmatizations over the subjects that are not innocuous. Which are the conceptions sustained about poverty in the education sphere.





***Poverty in the “genes”***

Many times, at school, poverty is visualized as a non surmountable limit that is posed to the teacher and, thus, a determining situation of the possibilities of learning of the students. In this sense, it is conceived as a feature of the students that differentiates them, placing them in a situation of inferiority that demands specific pedagogical strategies. Mounted over suppositions of this nature, there are perspectives that conceive the children living in poverty conditions as “children in social risk” or “children with social or cultural deficit”. Poverty is then observed as a social and cultural brand that determines the identities of the subjects. Consequently, when we consider how poverty affects the daily work at schools, we quickly encounter the idea that there is an impossible limit of modification, not approachable for the education action, determined by the influence of some biological damaged caused by the situation of poverty.

The biological discourse has filled and configured great part of the education practices of the first decades of the public instruction system in the region. After a period of living together (with the advent of the critical perspectives in education) with the postures of

**Biologism in the Education System**

*The crossing of the biological discourse with pedagogy is not recent. From the first decades of the XX century, it was possible to find in the education field, many classifications of the children and the adolescents, prepared around the causal or lineal relations, between its “physical” characteristics and its school “performance”.*

*In 1910, the magazine of the Consejo Nacional de Educación de la Argentina published an article of the Dr. Hermosina de Olivera, in which it was clearly distinguished who were the delayed children and how these should have to be classified:*

- a) “the heterogeneous multitude that for its psychic and physical organization is unable of seizing the common methods of teaching;
- b) The stupid, silly, deaf and dumb, blind, and epileptics;
- c) The distracted ones, as the parents prefer to call, the delayed. They are not simply not normal, and are attacked of mental weaknesses by multiple and efimerous causes. They are particularly the sons of our labor work, with poor operation of the brain, product of a poor feeding. They disrupt the discipline, they uselessly have a place in the common classes, discourage the teacher and influence in their co-disciples.

(Puiggrós, Adriana (1990): *Sujetos, Disciplina y Curriculum en los orígenes del sistema educativo argentino*. Tomo I. Galerna. Buenos Aires. 134-135).

This classification deals with the construction of an idea of “normality” and “anormality” that may be traced throughout history of the school education practices in the countries of the region, and installs the question for its continuity of the looks and perceptions that we have today in relation to the children and adolescents that live in critical contexts.

Psychological and/or sociological order, currently appears in a scene characterized by the accelerated display of the conditions of poverty and social unequalness. The problem is that the biological justification of the “difficulties” of learning, “delays”, or “deficiencies” that the children of poverty sectors seems to show,

means the additional load of the implicit inferiority granted by a deficit of birth.

The return of a biological discourse in the land of education means something more than an explanation of the mode of approaching the causes, that on appearance should generate the difficulties of learning of the children of the poverty sectors. Many times, it means, the transmutation of the social differences in differences between natures, predetermined from birth already. It means the sustain of the supposition of an innate deficiency of the population that lives in poverty conditions.

***The “risk” that poverty carries out.***

On the other hand, in the frame of the relation between education and poverty, arises the notion of “risk”. This notion appears calling a group of subjects coming from poverty sectors, to whom it is considered, *previous to any pedagogical intervention*, and based on the risk factors that are constructed from the vulnerability of the social group for its socio-economic conditions of life, that the common education is insufficient or inappropriate.

In this sphere, the notion of the student (3) created by the school process losses consistency, the idea of the child who lives in conditions of poverty is ahead to it, he is mainly a child in “social risk”. This new condition ensures the design and justification of differentiated circuits, even inside the common school, where the circuit of poverty has a common denominator, the *scarcity* with which

nothing is done but to sustain it, on one hand, and interrupt the idea of the margin of indetermination existing between a subject and his future, present in the common education, on the other side. The investment is the following: It is determined before hand, how is the other, which are his features, that is to say, to which group does it belong, pursuant to what is indicated by the risk factors and from there, they are lately supposed which should be the “appropriate” modes of pedagogical intervention to its characteristics.

This way of thinking the relation between education and poverty places us, on one side, before the imaginary break that defended a “common” and “equal” education for all the children, and on the other hand, before the idea that the condition of poverty registers in the body of the subjects, marks that may turn to be irreversible.

### **The pedagogical operations present over the critical contexts**

The pedagogical perspectives based in the supposition of the fact the poverty determines the possibilities of learning of the students, place in the core of its worries, the idea that before the education of children of poverty sectors, the intent is to recur to “special strategies” that come to operate this failure, lack or defect, in order to reduce the distance between these children that have this “deficit” and the students that are placed on the other side of the line, in the place of “normality”.

What does this notion of deficit makes reference to? In the first place, the notion of deficit is defined as a negative distance in relation to an established parameter of normality. In fact, the deficit is registered as an absence, deficiency, inability, delay, inferiority. Criterias that previously define all education intervention, who is the other (a “deficiatiary” subject and in “social risk”) and what type of pedagogical approach “should” receive.

This form of interpretation of the relation between the education and the poverty operates from the criteria of normalization, and from a relation with the other that is set in the criteria of being the same. What does this mean? It means that

What is posed is that the children that live in conditions of poverty are always the “others”. It is the “other” that does not behave as “we”, that live another life, that have other codes, that requires special strategies.

This visualization of poverty implies the emergence of new ways of inclusion/exclusion in the measure that put into action a series of operations that come to validate the rupture of the common hint of the public education system, and to legitimize the fragmentation and stratification of the school system.

In that sense, the most radical questioning is addressed to those perspectives that insist on previously define, in advance, all education act, all relation with the other, who is the other, which are the features, as if this knowledge allows to operate in an effective way over the subject and its constitution.

Now, this previous definition does not come to intervene in the results of the pedagogical operation? To question and interrupt these conceptions is one of the ways to begin to think on the education in poverty contexts from another place. This is about questioning for the positioning undertaken before the other and its learning, but also by the multiple possibilities offered for the teaching to occur. And, in this sense, it is mandatory to question the deficitary looks over the children, to break with the chains of casual interpretation that they announce. Poverty, deficiencies, lacks. There, our forms of getting together are played, but also with the work they teach.

When we talk about children in social risk, of children in school risk, of schools located in risk areas, we often propose a series of ordered practices around the notion of “prevention” as long as the action in which we trust, can take us



great part of the solution, to problems that are visualized as proper problems of the subjects. To question this notion can contribute to show some of the effects produced in the education arena.

Robert Castel was one of the first theorist that early began to warn from the sociological thought that the strategies of social intervention were suffering some significant changes. This change had to do with what the French sociologist calls the transit of *danger to risk*. This transition means a new way of conceiving the subjects and the modes or strategies of social intervention. In the last three decades, a process of autonomization has been produced, of the notion of the risk regarding the danger, accompanied by a new mode of work. The new consists in the abandonment of the interventions of direct mode, that were in charge of the subject or the concrete person, and its replacement for the *construction of a flow of population as from the articulation of abstract factors, feasible of producing a risk*. In this sense, and as it is also stated by Castel, "to be suspicious, it is no longer necessary to show symptoms of danger or anomalies, it is enough to show some features that the responsible specialists of the definition of a preventive policy have instituted in "risk factors" (4). In fact, the operation that is put into action is the stating of differential categories of persons, thus, any difference that is objective as such and can give way to a *population profile*.

This form of supervision does not mean the closure to correct or detect the deviations of behavior, but only the objective of anticipating or impeding the emergency of a non desirable event (illness, anomaly, or deviated behavior), using for that the development of differential ways of treatment of population, that, more than segregating or reintegrating by corrective interventions, or therapeutically ones, try to assign different social destinies to the people regarding their capacity to undertake the demands of competitively and profitability. In other terms, what is being seen in nowadays societies is the emergency of new ways of control that do not respond the repression nor the assistance interventionism, but the differential allotment of a *previously constructed social destination*.

Thus, “the conception of the prevention that was satisfied with preventing the performance of a particular act seems archaic and home made, if compared with this that pretends to construct the objective conditions of appearance of danger to deduct the new modes of intervention from them” (5).

If, before, a supposedly dangerous person

was closed in advance, the strategies and processes of intervention centered in the notion of risk, go

beyond this: Pre-figurate, pre-establish differential circuits for the subjects pursuant to the definition of their abilities or inabilities. Finally, it is about the statement of social circuits, well defined, for the population profiles, previously established. As stated by Violeta Núñez, “... a step to the act is attributed (foreseen), thus resulting justified the preventive intervention over this person: it is not necessary to wait in order to intervene” (6).

Now, to prevent is to anticipate to what lies ahead, to what shall come. Thus, prevention is mutual to the idea of potential (in the sense of latent) in the sense that “the other can be potentially a delinquent, a child in risk, a dangerous subject”. From this logic, those who live in poverty conditions become subjects potentially delinquents, potentially dangerous, potentially “deserters” of the school system.

To think on an education positioned to avoid these risks imply, on one side, to re-locate the social place of education (now, to prevent the social order, more than to)





the culture and aims to guide or allot a differential mode of attention, even within the same education system.

institute it) and modify the sense of the pedagogical operation, reducing what is related to the fact of making operational, with the inclusion of a collective group, with the idea of equality.

If we can establish before hand who is the other, and what he shall be able or not able to do in the future, then, the education shall be related with those practices announcing forecasts. In this sense, the education becomes prevention, before transmission of

### The formation of the teacher and its role

At the time of thinking on the responses that the education system has to approach the questions submitted at the time of thinking on the answers that the education system has to approach the questions posed by the acuteness of poverty and the social differences, the *teacher formation or training* turns to be one of the key elements of this system over which, in the last instance, major interpellations are placed. How is the process of formation of the teachers? Are they “prepared” to educate in the difficult

contexts of poverty? What is the formation that the teachers should receive to work in so adverse social conditions? Is this about designing specific strategies of formation to educate in contexts of poverty? What problems and tensions are opened when this question is installed in the education imaginary?

With the intention of answering these questions, there have aroused



### To be a teacher

*What is to be a teacher? Although in the current times it is not difficult to locate the coordinates that define a teacher, particularly by its clear inclusion in the school system, we know that a teacher can go far beyond the frontiers of the school.*

*Below, we offer some definitions contributed by the Philosophy, as an invitation to think over the task that we carry out every day with our children.*

*"Obliged to find an adequate hole in this world, with your help, I believe I would be able to follow you".*

Frederic Nietzsche, *Schopenhauer teacher*.

*"There is no more privileged occupation. To awaken in other human beings, powers, dreams that are beyond ours, induce them the love for what we love, make our interior present, the future of them: This is a triple adventure, not similar to any other one. As it gets wider, the family made by our old students, is similar to the ramification, to the green of a trunk that gets old (I have students in the five continents). It is an undescrivable satisfaction to be the server, the mail of the essential, knowing perfectly well that very few can be creators of discoverers of first category. Even in a very humble level, the one of the teacher of a school, to teach, to teach well, is to be accessory to a transcending possibility. If he is awakened, this exasperating child of the last row*

numerous strategies of training and teacher formation in the last years, that are undertaken that the contexts of poverty imply a punctual formation, specific one. It is thus, for example, how this emergency of specializations is observed that are devoted to train teachers that work with students at risk, what points out an inflection point in the treatment of the adverse socio-economic conditions of the student.

What are the knowledge added/contributed with the problem of poverty in the teacher formation? Many times, this formalized strategies proposed to specialize teachers to educate the poor, offer a series of knowledge/subjects that show this "plus" that the social risk problem carries inside. This is how we encounter that these specializations issue subjects like: Differentiated, sociopathological, problem of family dysfunction, didactic of the Mathematics for poverty contexts, etc.

However, is poverty a feature to be considered at the time of teaching? What are the suppositions when a subject as Didactic of Mathematics is proposed for poverty contexts? Does the teaching of mathematics require different strategies and methods according to the social condition of the one who learns?



What is played is that to teach in contexts of poverty, teachers need a specific formation that grant them knowledge about what it the poor. Thus, is constructed the idea that the teacher formation as such, as it is designed, is not “enough” to approach the problem and some subjects are proposed that indicate the registration of poverty in the nature of the student, as long as some scientific knowledge are posed through which they pretend to describe the special features of the individualized social groups. The construction of a biological and psychological scheme is highlighted, as regards what is the other poor, of what it can and cannot do due to the social context of belonging.

These proposals of teaching formation install in an space of knowledge/power the relation between the context/possibility of learning as something natural, given and not modifiable, and far away from interrupting or questioning the repetition of expressions of common sense as for example: “...they are not capable”, “...I had her mother as a student .... hard, stiff, what can come from there?”, are constituted and justified from them.

Consequently, the insistence for a supposed specificity that the poverty brings to the education arena, also means a break regarding the equalitarian fiction over the fact that the school education is structured in the modern times. The education functioned as the one that could make with the other a different thing from what it was. What the education brings now is sustained as an equalitarian fiction, for which the future is shortened to that other poor. The exclusion that this inclusion carries out is to deny, for its belonging to a determined social sector, the access to the common culture, to the common system or simply to “other

*may perhaps write verses,  
perhaps the theorem that  
may make the centuries  
busy.”*

George Steiner. *Lecciones de los Maestros*, page  
173.

*“Teacher is the one that*  
**Opening**

**questions and**



□ What are the other definitions that you know of “being a teacher”? Do they contribute to the task of teaching from other dimensions than the habitual ones? Why?

world” or to what the education may bring.

Is it possible that the acknowledgement of poverty does not obstaculize the possibility that comes with it that teaching are authorizing others to know other worlds, to transform and to adapt to be different? The school as a place of transmission of the cultural heritage and the formation of new generations has the role of offering valuable tools that allow children and young people to understand the world, to analyze the social situations that day by day go through us and participate in interaction with the adult teachers in the construction of more inclusive paths of life.

It is then essential to bet for a school experience that recovers, for students as well as for teachers, a productive meeting with the knowledge through which new questions are authorized and new knowledges are collected. The teacher formation has to nurture by the approaches and contributions that look to problematize the education looks that tend to criminalize, blaming, discriminate, and stigmatize the subjects that live in conditions of poverty. In other words, this is about encouraging in the spaces of formation of the teachers, perspectives that make history of the education practices on the light of the cultural, social, political, and economical changes, following origins, mutations, and socio-political contexts. These contributions may allow to position in another way before this problem, as long as they would be placed in better conditions to reflect over its action and over the way in which they were visualized and give place to the subjects in its own space. Then, it would be possible that the school should be a space to discuss how the subjects that live in conditions of poverty have been defined

## **School teaching and extra school teachings**

The school was an institution that, throughout the XX century, was in charge of the transmission of culture in an almost hegemonic way, operating in an analogous logic to other institutions of the State, as the ones of health, the policy, linked to the treatment of the crime and transferring other



Strategies that socially worked, many times in pos of offering hte same alternative of education for all the subjects. Today, this hegemony is being transferred not only by the development, but also by the development of alternative ways of having access to the knowledge, linked to technology, for example, but also the State, in these times “absent”

strategies for the transformation of the gesture of an only willingness. Currently, the problem is not that the State has weakened or has disappeared, but that its shape has changed, where the responsibility for the rights of the set of citizens is not considered in the same terms as before.

In this sphere, the outside of school grows day by day. To face the contexts of poverty, there are national, provincial and municipal public policies that at the same time and in a differentiated way are addressed to the children from different looks, to strategies of learning as a way of social insertion, to combine social, labor and education insertion, to put into action in the treatment of young and children with the law of pedagogical strategies. The space is very wide and goes beyond the school, though in many cases it works with her, it adds to her or simply, supposes its presence.

Although the school has developed specific forms linked to the education in childhood and the young, the actions addressed to the community with education strategies go beyond school, each time more numerous, develop their own modes of transmission. It is thus how in the different Latin American countries it is possible to find that in the societies, outside the State, the initiatives of the NGO have been growing, of religious groups, local institutions and many organizations that display education alternatives to face the problem of poverty. It is also common in them to find the strong presence of the school. Sometimes, in an implicit way, the school pedagogic link is reproduced. Other times, it discusses with it and some alternatives are looked to

teach them not to respond, to the school frames. The truth is that the school teaching has been so big in the last century that its presence is observed in some way or other, any initiative that is developed addressed to the childhood and the young children.

In all of them, it is necessary to pay attention to the mood in which the education bond is put into action, the budgets with which the other is conceived, the horizons constructed for them and the possibilities of registering its own singularity.

All of these education strategies, school or not school, are part of the construction of the feelings towards the others, of the ways in which either social or individually, we see and we are faced before the rest of the societies, whether they show or not differences regarding the access to material goods, symbolic ones, differences of genre and/or ethnic. In the construction of this *reciprocity*, as named by the sociology R. Sennett, great part of the elimination of unequalness is played. The author indicates:

*"The radical igualitarians have sustained many times that if it was possible to equal the material conditions, the behavior of reciprocal respect should appear as 'natural' and spontaneously. This expectation is psychologically ingenious. Even when all the unfair unequalness are eliminated from society, it should continue being present, in the problem of how to prepare our worst and best impulses. I do not suggest to accept the unequalness or to accommodate to it, on the contrary, to sustain that in the social life, the same as in the art, the reciprocity requires expressive work. It is necessary to make it true, to execute it". (7)*

This combination of visibility and feeling of and towards the other, has a crucial importance in the education relations. From there it depends, in great measure, the perception of the other by itself, and their possibilities of taking the word as one more in the social construction. The questions over the teaching, beyond the school frames, lie at all times and place the problem of the place we give the other, of the possibilities that we grant not only as teachers, but as a whole society.

## **As a Conclusion: Challenges of Teaching in critical contexts**

*“What are the possibilities that school has today of preparing this group of significations that temperate, protects, saves and empowers through this way of access to culture, when reality is present with the virulence we know? What are the margins we have today, the adults that inhabited the schools of constituting in ‘those others that maintain some level of integrity’ to prepare a significant history that has what is taken as a reality, many times an irrational one, when also us have been vulnerated by the same circumstances?” (8)*

These questions, that insist, discourage, intranquilize us and at moments, seem to leave us disoriented, have come to constitute part of the coordinates that configure the task of teaching. In this sense, there are some questions that also challenge us, that make us think again, one and another time, in what consists this complex task that is educating, this action of "pass on" to the new generations, our world and the questions that we have been historically construction over it. In this scenario, part of the challenges consist in delimiting or tracing those *convictions* in which to anchor the horizons of our practices of teaching, and that in a way of "means of orientation" are constituted in frames of reference or "tools" that contribute to put under veil the looks we have over children and over the future that we offer in the daily task of teaching. Together with that, it is about working and installing in the institutions, debates over how to construct today, conditions of teaching based on equality, how to make school a place of debate of the injustices and social inequalities, why and from where reject the conformism and this sensation that nothing can be done.

If for teaching we understand this political act of submitting to

the new generations, the cultural heritage that empowers to appropriate the questionings of this world, and to prepare their own, our responsibility is put in action, mainly, in that symbolic gap, imaginary one, that each day we intend to open to give way to new experiences and the encounter of worlds up to the moment not known. This means the importance that it has for children to have teachers that each day receive them to teach how is the world and through which gesture it is possible to open new horizons for them. For sure, this does not mean to step, always, on a sure land. On the contrary, it surely means the difficult bet of the teacher, as a constitutive or inherent thing to all education bond, the possibility of doubting, having uncertainties, at times, pain and insecurities, as also questions without certain answers, towards the approaches and possibilities of the education relation. This means, in part, to undertake the enigmatic nature of the childhoods and adolescences, as long as radical novelty and the always opened possibility of the inauguration of a new beginning in history and to consider, from the starting point, the premise that all the men, as Ranciere states, have equal intelligence, but that (in education) does not always seem to pretend to try it, but to try to see what is possible to be done under this supposition that, on another part, there needs to maintain under at any circumstance, in order to convince the other about its own power.

In other words, it implies to sustain from an adult position that this is not about an adult position that this is not about to search tests about the capacities of learning of the subjects, but to know that it is in the multiplicity of the possibilities and alternatives that are offered where they can find a place an enriched education experience. To teach means, in this sense, to reject the moralizing understandings, dictaminating what is necessary to do and what is the school, and to work, instead, over the perplexity that is produced to perform it in the current education scene. In turn, it demands to sustain the reliance as a way of vital bond, between teachers and students, as an hypothesis over the future behavior of the other that involves the future. "The reliance is an initial and determining experience for the human being, speaking and wishful, for the simple and humble reason that he cannot choose. This means to respond to the trustworthiness of the child by granting reliance. The non ability of the child is the cause or the reason of its reliance; but

the offering that the adult makes by trusting in the child, is what allows to believe in its capacities.” (9).

The other complex question that we tried to approach, from different possible ways of entrance throughout this path is the following: How not acknowledge the deep effects produced in the subjects and the schools, the conditions of poverty and, in time, not acknowledge this position that paralyzes us or that can be a prey of the idea that nothing can be done until the social conditions are better?

In education contexts through the conditions of poverty, many times the teaching is conceived as an action that renders “assistance” and “contention”. However, we know that education, though related to the citizen, goes beyond this. To sustain in the field of education, a relation of casualty between subjects and social context of belonging, implies to consider that the subjects assume a passive and definite position in the interior of this, and that the context determines the subjects that are constituted in it. It cannot be denied that the social reality groups a significant place in the configuration of the subjectivities. However, this does not necessarily means to undertake the supposition that the subject is determined by the social conditions.

The challenge of all teaching, beyond and in all contexts, is to think and propose different ways to “connect in an intelligent and brave way, the care with the knowledge, the care with the teaching” (10). Thus, education has to be replaced and performed in the difficult tension between not showing compassion, pity for others, and at the same time, to reject all attitude of indifference. In other words, the question can be formulated in the following way: How can we construct an education relation based on the care for the other and the mutual respect? The answer cannot be avoided when talking about the care of the other, in the education field, we also speak about the "responsibility" of the adults before the future that we can help to project for the new generations. It can then be said, that our tasks is played in the complex tension between not leaving the children and the young, free to themselves and to their own resources, and not exerting over them the violence that should imply the pity, disrespect, compassion that

only sustains and deepens the inequality.

Education is the act of opening, offering a site for the one that comes to inhabit it, without being reduced to the logic of the normalization or to the one of the discourses of the diversity, in sum, without being reduced to what is expected. The work of the teacher is defined by the verb "teach" in the obstinate search of transmitting this cultural legacy of which we are heirs, conscious of the fact that what the children "expect" from the teachers is a sustained work in the symbolic wealth of the knowledges that area offered and in the belief in their future possibilities of singular growth and of participating in the production of a social order, fairer for all.



## Notes

- (1) This paragraph belongs to the book *Infancia y poder*, in which M. Narodowski dives in the sized and in the school discourses of a time.
- (2) CEPAL (p. 104).
- (3) Historically, the student was considered as the “child of young boy in social moratory passing by the supply institution of the knowledges that would make him achieve the autonomy demanded by the formation of a socially integrated subject” (Duschatzky S. y Birgin, A., 2001, p. 134).
- (4) This paragraph and the other ones that are quoted correspond to the article: “De la peligrosidad al riesgo”, published by R. Castel in the volumen *Materiales de Sociología crítica*, of the Piqueta, Madrid, 1986.
- (5) *Ibidem*, p. 232.
- (6) This quotation has been taken from the article of Violeta Núñez, *Infancia y menores: frente a la asignación social de los destinos* (pág. 95), in which the effects of the notion of “destiny” and the idea of “prevention” are approached in the education sphere.
- (7) This quotation corresponds to the page 69 of the wonderful book of its author *El respeto. Sobre la dignidad del hombre en un mundo de desigualdad*, in which a full reflection over the complexity of the formation of the feelings between men in our societies is offered.
- (8) These questionings belong to the article: *Contra el desamparo*, de Perla Zelmanovich, compiled in the book: *Enseñar hoy: una introducción a la educación en tiempos de crisis*, result of a series of meetings organized in the year 2002 by the Area de Educación y Sociedad de Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO/Argentina).
- (9) These references to the challenge for the reliance in education relations correspond to an interesting writing that, some years ago, has been made by Laurence Cornu, a French philosopher, in her participation in a seminar organized in Argentina.
- (10) This powerful question sometimes absent in our looks over the role of the caring for the other in the teaching, has been suggested by Estanislao Antelo in a brief and interesting article called: *¿Qué quiere usted de mí?*

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