

Introduction

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In the last four decades, a number of important and contextual cultural, political, economic, juridical, social and ethical elements have combined in complex ways and have generated a growing and unprecedented trend in ethnographic research *of* and *about* childhood and youth. This trend has been part of a global movement of affirmation of the rights of children and youths, which found expression in social research through debates around issues such as the problem of the scarce acknowledgement of minors as social actors with agency, the difficulty to distinguish childhood and youth as a multiple and diverse complexity, the minimization of analytical categories such as age and generation, and the underestimation of these new generations as active subjects in the processes of social production and reproduction, among others. Strategies to counteract the ways children and youths have been silenced multiplied in social research through different disciplines and paradigms that often coincided in regarding them as active subjects in the processes of socialization, discovering they can teach “things” to adults. In Latin America, in particular, there has been a significant amount of ethnographic research that has incorporated children and youths in order to understand educational processes, and an increasing consensus on the idea that ethnography is particularly adequate to integrate them, as it offers possibilities of participation and collaboration in the processes of production of knowledge.

Around the main topic of this issue we have gathered results of ethnographic research in which researchers together with children and youths, in various contexts, produce knowledge on schools and interactions in classrooms, health, languages, childhood and youth. The seven articles featured analyze educational topics and problems, including the perspective of these sectors of the population.

Our readers will find here clues to understand the limits and possibilities of bilingual Wichi children in Argentina to participate and interact in school contexts (Unamuno), the ways in which school and class backgrounds provide access to material and symbolic assets to Yalalteco youths in their adaptation to Mexico City (Bertely), aspects of an educational and political participation experience for children and youths in the “Gestores de Paz” movement in Colombia (Bertoli), the classroom and “*el monte*” (the wilderness) turned into community educational spaces in a rural school in Argentina (Conde), the ludic production of children and youths in the streets faced with new urban dynamics in Portugal (Martins da Rosa, Martinho Ferreira and de Moraes Lima), the emergence of educational spaces in Mexico that do not follow the scheme of the so-called “not formal” and “informal” education (Arriaga Ornelas and Sánchez Ramos), and environmental education in Mexican classrooms (Lara Corro).

The authors of these articles strive to present relevant details of their research experiences and the strategies they created in order to produce de-centerings. Participating in and paying special attention to what children did and said in their environmental education classes helped the researcher understand that learning does not consist of the reproduction of school contents but is rather a process of collective co-construction that involves the work of many actors. Sharing everyday tasks in an institutional learning space such as the “homework club”, which is neither part of the school nor of the students’ homes, allowed the researchers to understand that interactions located in concrete contexts generate unique modes of agency both in the children and in the adults. Going to the “*monte*”, sharing classes and recesses with children and adults in Corrientes who spoke Guaraní and Spanish, opened up a path for the researcher to understand that knowledge about health is know-how acquired in different learning contexts, community spaces that recreate life in society. Reconstructing aspects and meanings of participation in classrooms from the perspective of Wichi children enabled the researcher to de-center the hegemonic view of these children as “quiet and shy” and discuss central aspects of bilingual schooling. Describing how a group of Yalalteco youths in Mexico City invent new traditions that allow them to function successfully within a globalized and transnational culture helped the researcher to de-center ways of understand ethnic strategies built by indigenous migrants to adapt to life in the city and the meanings they attach to their projects. Analyzing reflectively shared experiences with children and “gestores de paz” made it possible for a researcher to build evidence to show that, rather than a theoretical category, childhood is an experience lived by researchers that is actualized and produces adult-centered distortions. Likewise, describing a physical and communicative process with children helped an ethnographer in Portugal to learn a ball game played in a public space, acknowledging her not-knowing and thus the need to learn to decline her adult-centered position. And as the debate article proposes, the collaboration of children and youths in ethnographic educational research potentiates modes of de-centering needed by researchers and opens up opportunities to de-center themes that tend to pre-define what is researched and how it is researched in education.

This issue also features four educational research articles on diverse topics, as well as a review of a recently published book on a pedagogical proposal for physical education classes with a gender perspective. Elisondo and Piga present a qualitative phenomenological study on creativity conducted in a town in the province of Córdoba in Argentina that seeks to show perceptions that contribute to generate new views and perspectives on creativity and offer evidence on actions that promote the development of creative processes in educational contexts. De Alba Villaseñor describes the teaching of science in preschool education in a study of schools in Mexico, characterizing scientific modeling processes and showing the relevance of the use of metaphors as explanatory resources for learning about science and developing scientific thinking in preschool children. Díaz López and Osuna Lever present a qualitative study on

the perception of teachers about school dropout and their own practice in technological high schools in Baja California, Mexico. Through their sample, they characterize the teachers' profiles, identify variables related to schools and reconstruct the main factors linked to school dropout from the perspective of the teachers who participated in the study. Benavides Lara and Manzano Gutiérrez show how the research and evaluation of the curricula cannot be separated, by analyzing how the research rationale can help to apply thorough yet flexible strategies to design evaluations that are adequate for the realities, the practices, the institutions and the individuals involved. Finally, Ruay Garcés and Campos Palacios describe research work conducted to characterize the prevailing evaluative approach in two basic education centers in Chile, specifically the use of instruments to measure the four linguistic skills of communicative competence in English.

I would like to dedicate this issue to María Bertely-Busquets, whom I invited to participate as an author. With great humility she sent me her article, asking if it could be published. Her work was excellent. I only asked her to provide further details about the youths in her study. She did, and on January 1 2019 she sent it back to me. A month went by and María passed away. Sad news indeed! I did not have the chance to meet her. I got in touch with some of her closest colleagues and her husband, to whom I am grateful for having made it possible that this, her last article, could be published a year later. Let this introduction be a tribute and a remembrance of María, whose work we will continue to read and share, always learning something new from her.