

Editorial

Cultural Psychology of Education

Giuseppina **MARSICO**^{1,2}  0000-0002-8683-2814

Maria Virgínia Machado **DAZZANI**²  0000-0001-5303-3576

Education is a purposeful intervention into the development of young human beings within the wider context of informal guidance of children towards adulthood. In any society where formal schooling exists, it is an institutionalized version of the intermediation into the ordinary collective-cultural organization of human development. In terms of Natural-Cultural relationship, formal schooling belongs to the realm of cultivation (Valsiner, 2014).

These couple of sentences above are already sufficient to justify the urgency to redefine educational psychology by taking a cultural focus. This special issue provides the main assets of a new framework called Cultural Psychology of Education to think about the human beings educated in their culturally organized environments.

We are here before one of the crucial issues in education that is the universalities and particularities of the educational enterprise.

Indeed the Cultural Psychology of Education tries to address both the universal perspectives and the cultural diversity of the educational interventions. In doing so and in line with the contemporary Cultural Psychology of Semiotic Dynamic (Valsiner, 2014, 2021) we assume, as our point of departure, the notion of culture as the principal organizer of the human-context relationship. According to Gurler (2015, p. 459): "Culture is not an independent, dependent, or index variable, but a process label that refers to the systemic organization of various psychological phenomena in a socio-historical context".

How it is possible that what is local could be of use for a generalized discourse on the psychological functioning? The answer is that what is locally specific is always an instance of a socio-cultural order (Stam & Ellis, 2015). This apparently simple answer has enormous theoretical and methodological consequences. Culture is a mediator that regulates the person-world interaction. In this vein, all the cultural settings are universally the same even if the mediational resources may significantly differ from one to another. Wertsch (2007) defined the explicit and implicit cultural mediation that operate in the education context. The explicit cultural mediation works in the formal teaching-learning process while the implicit mediation is present in those everyday life situations outside the school system where individuals are simply engaged in activities in which is not immediately evident what is being mediated or for what purposes. Yet, in those situations

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

¹ Universidade de Salerno, Dipartimento di Scienze Umane, Filosofiche e della Formazione. Via Giovanni Paolo II, 134, 8408 Fisciano, SA, Italia. Correspondence to: G. MARSICO. E-mail: <pina.marsico@gmail.com>.

² Universidade Federal da Bahia, Instituto de Psicologia, Curso de Psicologia. Salvador, BA, Brasil.

Support: This special issue was supported by Capes PRINT and CNPq (Project Universal).

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

How to cite this article

Marsico, G., & Dazzani, M. Z. (2022). Cultural Psychology of Education. *Estudos de Psicologia* (Campinas), 39, e220003. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-0275202239220003e>



some crucial elements of our identities and culturally approved conducts are mediated. The focus on becoming a person and a member of society through education is, thus, an important topic that runs through this special issue.

Education and Culture: a tensioned but needed dialogue

Education has been provocatively defined by Valsiner (2008) as a “benevolent violence” at the individual and collective level. Ideally education means to provide the better condition for the person and the community. Yet, any educational intervention always has an inherently tensioned component in it because if on one hand it is meant to provide the conditions for going beyond the given information, cultivating possibilities and new possible worlds (Bruner, 1996), on the other hand, it challenges collective and personal ways of living by imposing what is considered the best educational and cultural practice in a specific time and space.

We adhere to the idea that education is not beneficial nor damaging itself, but it is an interesting arena to investigate the conundrum of psychological functioning and the developmental processes within a particular sociocultural environment (Coppola et al., 2015; Marsico et al., 2015).

In this framework, the Cultural Psychology of Education focuses on the “ontogenetic” conceptualization of education by promoting an idea of education as localized on liminality between what is already acquired and what is going to come (Marsico, 2017, 2018). Education is the outer frontier of human development and the horizon of future advancement in the psychological trajectory. This ontogenetic focus in education is in direct opposition to the rampant ontological conception of education that has been supported by the neoliberalistic approach all over the world (Szulevicz et al., 2016) which is mainly interested in the certification, standardization, and homogenization of the educational products and less interest in the developmental aspect implies in the teaching-learning process as well as in the informal educational settings.

This special issue intends to contribute to the discussion about education from a cultural standpoint by promoting the reflection upon relevant psycho-social processes, value systems, practices, and ideologies at work in the educational settings. This polyphony of perspectives produces a tensioned dialogue (Hviid & Märtsin, 2019) that is considered the central topic to be investigated from the Cultural Psychology of Education perspective.

This special issue will provide the readers with a refreshing intellectual journey that includes contributions from Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Italy, and China to illuminate the construction of culturally responsive education and the educational cultivation of personal lives.

References

- Bruner, J. S. (1996). *The culture of education*. Harvard University Press.
- Coppola, C., Mollo, M., & Pacelli, T. (2015). The development of logical tools through socially constructed and culturally situated activities. In G. Marsico, M. V. Dazzani, M. Ristum, & A. C. Bastos (Eds.), *Educational contexts and borders through a cultural lens*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-18765-5>.
- Gurler, A. (2015). The “&” has emerged. Seeking “culture” and “psychology” for Culture & Psychology. *Culture & Psychology*, 21(4), 455-468. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X15615800>
- Hviid, P., & Märtsin, M. (2019). *Culture in Education and Education in Culture: tensioned dialogues and creative constructions* (Cultural Psychology of Education Book 10). Springer.
- Marsico, G. (2017). Jerome S. Bruner: manifesto for the future of Education. *Journal for the Study of Education and Development*, 40(4), 754-781. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02103702.2017.1367597>.
- Marsico, G. (2018). The challenges of the Schooling from Cultural Psychology of Education. *Integrative Psychological and Behavioural Sciences*, 52(3), 474-489. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12124-018-9454-6>.

- Marsico, G., Dazzani, V., Ristum, M., & Bastos, A. C. (2015). *Educational contexts and borders through a cultural lens: looking inside* (Cultural Psychology of Education 1). Springer.
- Stam, H. J., & Ellis, B. D. (2015). Cultural dope and “psychological dope”: the ethnomethodological attitude and cultural psychology. *Culture & Psychology*, 21(4), 469-476. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X15615810>
- Szulevicz, T., May Eckerdal, R., Marsico, G., & Valsiner, J. (2016). When disruptive behaviour meets outcome-based education. *Psihologija*, 49(4), 447-468. <https://doi.org/10.2298/PSI1604447S>
- Valsiner, J. (2008). Open intransitivity circles in development and education: pathway to synthesis. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 23(131), 131-147. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03172741>.
- Valsiner, J. (2014). *An Invitation to Cultural Psychology*. Sage.
- Valsiner, J. (2021). *General Human Psychology*. Springer.
- Wertsch, J. V. (2007). Mediation. In H. Daniels, M. Cole, & J. V. Wertsch (Eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Vygotsky* (pp. 178-192). Cambridge University Press.