

Making the Additive Non-Additive amidst School and Family in the Community: Avenues for Dialogicality in Irreversible Time

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This conclusion pushes further analyzes the editorial's emphasis on the educational agents to make the discontinuous (school-family discontinuity) continuous (school-family continuity). It entails reinforcing the boundary between school and family in the community through creating blockings preventing boundary-crossing. I deepen the analysis of this process by resorting to how authors in this Special Issue respond to such blockings. To go with many authors' emphasis on school-family-community dialogicality while situating space (these systems) in irreversible time, I also propose some tracks for a model of school-family dialogicality in irreversible time.

In the editorial (Boulanger, 2019a), I tried to BRIDGE the concepts of systemic continuity and discontinuity—as boundary dynamics—with their epistemological foundations (additivity and non-additivity). I started by referring to authors', educators' and political agents' tendency to *make the systemic discontinuity continuous*. Considering that the basic thinking process—that of knowing—is common to scientists and laypeople (Hegel, 1874) and that human, social, and education sciences are mainly grounded in common sense, thanks to the researchers being themselves anchored in society (Valsiner, 2012), I can make a parallel between this tendency and *researchers making the non-additive additive*. While humans—be it scientists or laypeople—*have humans* in a constant state of **movement** in front of them, they tend to reify, thereby replacing this movement with a static replica. The latter gives a false impression of grasping a moving human while they are now facing a stationary object. This happens through social representations (Boulanger, 2019b) that comes from science and goes back to science in a circular and, for many considerations, homeostatic fashion (Boulanger & Christensen, 2018). How is it possible to overcome such a tendency? Based on the authors' contributions in this Special Issue, I suggest some tracks with regard to educators for overcoming reification. The latter implies resorting to stereotypes as part of social representations BLOCKING educators' relationship with students and parents. Then I'll propose some track for a model of dialogicality in irreversible time.

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OVERCOMING BLOCKINGS

Remember that Fecho and Lysaker (2019) suggest “find[ing] ways to support a struggling student through dialogical means [...] *before* resorting to drastic labeling and reassignment” (the emphasis is mine). For this to happen “the school should think creatively as to how *former* teachers, a school nurse, classroom aides, secretaries, and other school personnel could contribute to such a conversation” (Fecho and Lysaker, 2019, the emphasis is mine). These authors thus propose that reflexivity could happen *beforehand*, as if people were trying to prevent social reflexes from happening by resorting to past experiences. Prevention is a first way to respond to what I call a blocking (Boulanger, 2019). I propose a second option: blocking could be used as an *asset for* distancing dynamics—people using these blockings in order to overcome these very blockings (Boulanger, 2019*b*) through “address[ing] areas of incompatibility” (Arcidiacono, 2019). It pertains to resilience.

As a third option, Molina (2019) conceptualizes *distance and proximity as two complementary aspects* (based on a non-additive conception of discontinuity): “[d]ialogue between distance and proximity enables intersubjective sharing as it allows the self to distance from the other and then approach it in newness. It is sympathy that comes with proximity, which is needed to articulate with distance and hence constructing empathy.” Inclusiveness (non-additive conception of systemic continuity) through proximity could be a condition for, and be conditioned by, distancing ourselves from the immediate context without being excluded from it. Parental engagement in schooling does not lead to assimilation when parents benefit from a margin of freedom through distancing. In this condition, distancing *does not mean exclusion but inclusion*.

As a fourth option, Arcidiacono (2019) suggests that “*instead of* categorization process [...] teachers could gain insight on how to better meet the needs of their students” (the emphasis is mine) by recognizing families’ informal practices. The using of the expression “instead of” suggests taking an alternative (developmental path).

A fifth option comes from Nakagawa (2019) who suggests parents take a *detour* from informal spaces in the community in order “to develop a persuasive internal discourse [...] [and] to take on other roles” to ‘go back’ to school in a more constructive way. This *detour* entails creating proximity through distance (Molina, 2019). This is related to taking an alternative (developmental) path (Arcidiacono, 2019).

Situated between these ways (the aforementioned options) of fighting stereotypes, habits, and reification—PREVENTING (BEFOREHAND); acting in a RESILIENT way through overcoming “stress” by using it; INCLUSIVE DISTANCE; and searching for an ALTERNATIVE or DETOUR—Rajala (2019) suggests to PRODUCTIVELY DEVIATE

from the main task or way of understanding. From this perspective that recognizes tension (discontinuity), “[o]ppositional interactions are a form of deviation and account[...] for student initiatives that questioned or were in opposition to the teacher or some aspects of the pedagogical activity [...] by creating a space for collective negotiation of meaning” (Rajala, 2019). This entails the *expansion* of activity. Opposition entails overcoming the blockings (second option)² through *inclusivity* (third option) while taking another path (reaching for an *alternative* or *detour*; fourth option) that also *prevents* reification from occurring or being acted upon (first option). This requires an ‘expansive form of transfer’ implying a dynamic tension between *proximity and distance* (fifth option). In this way Rajala’s (2019) approach (sixth option) is a creative synthesis of the other options.

Also referring to expansion, by bringing forth a dialogical approach through referencing mainly Bakhtin, Gomes (2019) proposes that actors and institutions must “evaluate the ability of the other to see beyond him/herself/itself”. By combining Rajala’s (2019) and Gomes’ (2019) propositions, I get a situation in which an expansive form of transfer enables the expansion of school in the community (and vice versa) and thereby the school actors get access to community actors’ point of view on educators (surplus of seeing).

This very act of looking at ourselves dialogically—using the community as an interface (Figure 3)—reconstructs and expands further the relationship between school and family. As “visitors” in community activities—such as festivals—educators, parents, and children expand the community as an interface. In a so-called partnership program, I analyzed *expansive networking*—constructing networks as a relational dimension of community—shaped by educators creating an alliance with organizations located in other countries. In the beginning, only organizations that were close (Molina’s (2019) reference to proximity) to school where INCLUDED in the “partnership” and then the network progressively extended to other countries in order to expand the spectrum of the collective activity (Boulanger & Larose, 2013). In this way, the community zone separating the school from the family—the hole in the Figure 3—expands.

While this analysis is partially pragmatic as far as it is based on activities as performed, actors can reach reality through imagination as a means of expanding their relation to reality (Boulanger, 2019b). In this Special Issue, Nakagawa (2019) as well as Fecho and Lysaker (2019) refer to the imagination. This entails a “new sense of one dialogic community promot[ing] authentic engagement” (Fecho and Lysaker, 2019) through figurative worlds enabling the construction of a persuasive internal discourse that ‘feeds back’ into ‘external’ engagement (Nakagawa, 2019). New forms of relating to the world are thereby created. This pertains to time and often happens out of transitions.

² Rajala (2019) presents an excerpt that “illustrates *obstacles* to the creation of a culture of productive deviations in a classroom” (the emphasis is mine) which are partly overcome. There are also other *blockings* from the teachers *preventing* this *resilience* from happening.

FROM REVERSIBLE TO IRREVERSIBLE TIME

How are transitions generally thought in the field of school, family, community partnership, and more generally in human and social sciences, including psychology? Transitions are spatialized like with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) and Epstein's (1987, 1995) model.

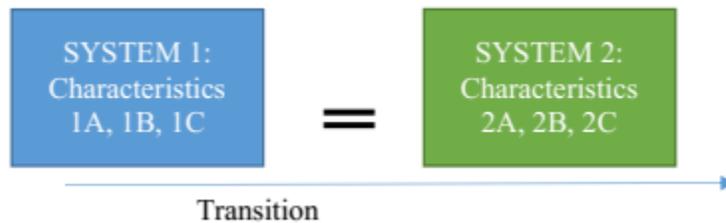


Figure 1. Reversible conception of transitions

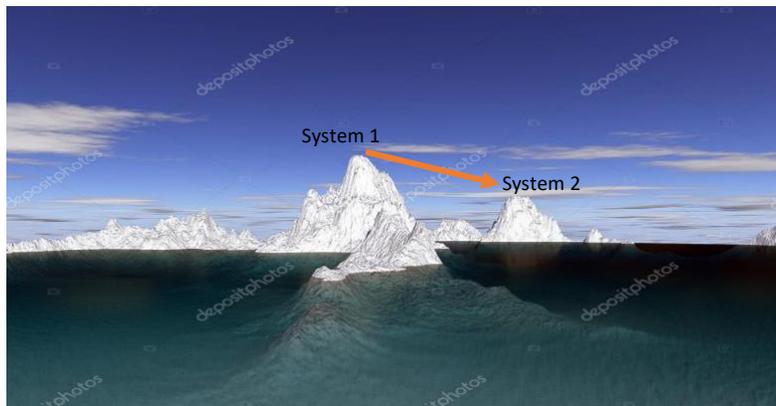


Figure 2. Spatialization of time

Researchers and educators generally begin by comparing the (spatial) characteristics of two systems. When these characteristics match, which indicates SPATIAL CONTINUITY, children's transition between system 1 and system 2 (Figure 1 and the top of the two icebergs in Figure 2) is considered as (spatially or reversibly) TEMPORALLY CONTINUED. This is the case with the transition between home and school. A school-like home that prepares for school by emulating its environmental conditions is considered as a condition for this REVERSIBLE TEMPORAL CONTINUITY. But time itself is overlooked. Moreover, researchers rarely have tools to tackle temporal discontinuity. Overemphasizing space over time keeps researchers and educators far away from the process aspect, in particular irreversible time that is the continuous flow of (internal) experience (the water in the Figure 2).

While the editorial in this Special Issue focuses on SPATIAL CONTINUITY and DISCONTINUITY, to a certain extent, researchers in this Special Issue pay attention to time. They refer to the importance of learning new things (Albert, 2019; Zazerra,

Pontecorvo, & Arcidiacono, 2019), of parents' and children's development (Nakagawa), and engagement as a process (Arcidiacono, 2019; Cattaruzza, Iannaccone, & Arcidiacono, 2019) of becoming (Matthiesen, 2019) that is oriented toward the unknown (Molina, 2019) and dialogical (Fecho and Lysaker, 2019; Gomes, 2019) as well as transformational in nature (Rajala, 2019). Time is also presented in terms of historicity—the history of the field of education in society (Chaudhary, 2019; Moreau, 2019). The process dimension entails a “conflict between a taken-for-granted figured world” (Nakagawa, 2019) and novelty, hence a tension between change and non-change. Time needs to be understood in terms of flow (irreversible), recognizing internal duration (the Self) as Bergson (1907) did while integrating the “collective irreversible time” as he secondarily did. Here, there is needed to delve into and articulate the Self's and the collective's flow of time. Dialogicality seems to be precisely that intermediate level between the Self and the collectivity (Hermans and Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Yet Bakhtin did spatialize time; this is the reason why he mentioned Goethe as the alternative that he, however, did not want to follow. Without delving into these complex philosophical and epistemological foundations of psychology, I suggest some basis for a model that could respond to these very challenges. Briefly, this is a *model of dialogical and (irreversible) temporal interaction between school and family in the community*.

TOWARD A MODEL OF DIALOGICAL AND IRREVERSIBLE TEMPORAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL AND FAMILY IN THE COMMUNITY

My asset for presenting my theoretical tracks is Roy and his colleagues' work (2014, 2015)³ –which I extend—in which Roy follows his own child's discursive activities—verbalization, word *emergence* and exchange—as they unfolds (time) in space to trace some discursive zones that are more or less invested.

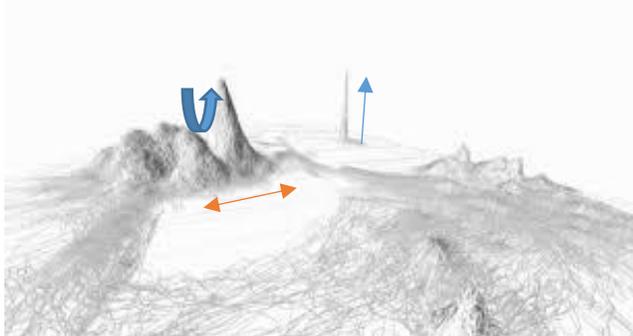


Figure 3. Dialogical spatiotemporal zones

Horizontally, what I propose to call a dialogical ecology (Figure 3) represents children's spatial movements across time. The vertical axis (blue arrow in the Figure 3) adds the word's utterance. Where the horizontal and vertical axis merge represents dialogical zones of greater or lesser density. Density may be related to

³ The reader can consult this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RE4ce4mexrU>

fullness (Boulanger, 2019c) or surplus of meaning (Gomes, 2019). The latter may happen when a lot is said while not a lot of activities are performed in this specific zone –this indicates verbalism which may be constructive (Boulanger, 2019c). In Roy and his colleagues' (2014, 2015) study, this is the case of the zone near the door where the child vocalizes a lot following parental transitions (arrival and departure). Too much may be said for the real dialogue to be sustained, for instance when the child continues speaking alone after the parents' departure. But this may signal a POTENTIAL for dialogue if the child's babysitter uses it as a catalyst. Here, the zone's fullness (vertically as expressing the density of word) may be a condition for "overcoming" its emptiness (horizontally as the flow of social interaction) by performing a variety and plurality of dialogical activities over time.

How does this apply to the interaction between school and family in the community? Compared with Figure 2 (the iceberg), school and family are not just fixed location—which entails a mechanistic metatheory (Pepper, 1942; Boulanger, 2019d)—waiting to be occupied. Schooling is an invested (with greater or lesser density) dialogical zone. Children may dialogically think (internal discourse) and speak (with others) about school at home or when going to school or returning home from school. After an exam, children and teenagers often speak a lot about it when returning home, thereby creating mental synthesis and further learning without noticing it. In this case schooling may happen more outside than inside school where children dream about venturing outside.

Here is an example in reference to McLaren's (1999) analysis of the intersection of school, family, and community rituals when children exit one setting and enter another one. In his analysis of children's states –pertaining to the theme street, student, sanctity and home—McLaren (1999) shows that "[t]he opening prayer is [...] the nodal point or hub of the entire sequence of instructional rituals" (p. 103). McLaren's (1999) analysis sheds light on teachers preventing the street and home zones from entering the school zone and being used as a context for school learning, while enabling prayer to structure both the instructional activities and the students' zones.

Yet, McLaren (1999) mentions some cases in which teachers act as *liminal servants*: "The liminal servant, as the name suggests, is able to bring dimensions of liminality to the classroom setting where obligations that go with one's social status and immediate role are held temporarily in abeyance. The liminal servant does not shy away from the ambiguity and opacity of experience" (p. 114). McLaren (1999) also highlights that "during relation class [...] students were encouraged to discuss events related to their own lives", without, however, explicitly allowing issues from home and street zones to spread in the school zone.

Like with the example of a child's babysitter, the teacher may act as a liminal agent catalyzing the tension between zone's fullness and emptiness across time. A child thinking about his/her parent near the door is like a student thinking about home

when the teacher talks; this indicates a dialogical potential that is overlooked. Both the child and the babysitter as well as the student and the teacher are creating monologue whose potential for dialogicality is kept loss in empty zone of interaction. What is lost is not only proximal interaction but also distal “connection” (dynamic continuity) between home, school, and community zones of greater or lesser (dialogical) density (the blue curvy arrow⁴ in Figure 3).

A teacher taking a picture of children’s activities outside during the break and using it in the class, and using the content of corridor conversation to frame classroom activities would use a real context (zone) and real dialogical *movement* to make learning an expanding experience (Rajala, 2019). Could researchers do the same through idiographic approaches by not only trying to understand the experiential flow that they are ‘facing’ but also enabling and expanding it?

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⁴ This arrow is emerging with the densification of zones. The movement (arrow) enables this densification that feeds back into this very movement.

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