

From clay to clouds: investigating and writing in the history of education

The Dossier *From Clay to Clouds: Investigating and Writing in the History of Education* is the result of the 16th edition of the Maranhão Meeting on the History of Education (EMHE) and the 5th International Colloquium on the History of the Book, Reading, and Libraries (CIHLILEB), which took place in June 2025. These events, organized annually by the Center for Studies and Documentation in the History of Education and Reading Practices (NEDHEL/UFMA), have featured the collaboration of leading researchers in the field of Brazilian and foreign history of education (United States of America, Italy, and Argentina) in these editions, whether in conducting the opening, intermediate, and closing conferences or in the three roundtables of each event.

The 5th edition of CIHLILEB, whose central theme was "*From clay to clouds: reading, books, and libraries*," addressed digital tools to facilitate the instruction of teaching reading and writing; the discussion focused on digital books and virtual libraries as places of memory and highlighted digital reading and readers in relation to different rituals, times, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as the diverse representations and appropriations within these digital environments, despite the coldness of current practices in this platform society and/or as a result of cybercultural practices that are mediated by digital mobile technologies connected to cyberspace, which are characterized by interactivity, collaboration, and sharing, as well as by authorship, remixing, and the active participation of subjects in the production and circulation of information and knowledge (Veloso; Bonilla, 2017), as well as in the re-signification of historical research and the mining of sources (Certeau, 1994).

At the 16th Maranhão Meeting on the History of Education, through the Postgraduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Maranhão, which had as its theme "Investigating and writing in the History of Education in the Digital Age," the discussion revolved around digital memory sites, taking into account their nature, operation, and function; regarding the (in)material source and the materiality of sources



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in use, and with respect to digital information and the production of meaning in the historiographical operation, considering mobile devices as digital technologies that integrate different languages and orbit multiple places of memory; technologies that favor the creation of new socio-technical forms of interaction and expand the possibilities for production, research, and sharing of content/results (Lucena, 2016). Discussion topics that allowed for reflection on school knowledge and practices in the History of Education; strengthening studies and research in this field within the Northeast Region, and especially in Maranhão; disseminating research and production in the History of Education in the State, as well as contributing to the exchange of experiences among researchers in the History of Education from Maranhão and other locations in the country and abroad.

In this framework, the presentations presented at the events appear here as academic works aimed at students, professors, researchers, and readers in general interested in the proposed themes.

Robert Darnton, in **Libraries as Time Machines**, warns us that these spaces are not only places of storage of books. These regions of remembering were time machines that allowed us to journey in our imagination and enter worlds we had lost. Partly through their architecture and partly through the writings themselves, they allow us to evoke the past and wander through it. The history of libraries takes us back to the ambition of gathering all books in one place, thus giving rise to the Library of Alexandria, although more recent studies show that the history of libraries dates back practically to the beginning of writing, and their trajectory points to a future marked by the increasing democratization of access to knowledge.

Samuel Luis Velázquez Castellanos, in "From Cracóvia of Paris to Global Cracóvia in the Digital Age: A Historical Perspective," reflects on the ongoing changes in new information and communication technologies from the perspective of digital memory sites and how they resonate in research and writing in the history of education. He examines how digital and digitized information can be accessed and filtered, investigating the (in)materiality of sources and to what extent processes within the realm of digital media resonate in the production of meaning in historiographical movement. Based on the theoretical and methodological assumptions of cultural history and bibliographic and documentary research, it concludes that different representations, appropriations, and practices are indicative of interactions and

interconnections in the digital scenario; however, the challenge imposed in the school environment, in academia, and in historical research, both for students and readers, as well as for teachers and researchers in the Global Cracóvia, when discussing the digitized and/or interactive digital textbook, is to combine technical competence with political and ethical competence.

In "Books and Reading in the Digital Age: Lights and Shadows," Marta Brunelli analyzes the transformations of books and reading routines in contemporary environments, remarking on the effect of such shifts on education and cognitive processes. After a brief reconstruction of the evolution of the book as a cultural object and the role of libraries as guardians of collective memory and access to knowledge, the focus shifts to the present, marked by a growing dematerialization of knowledge. This study analyzes the growing difficulties in teaching and learning reading and writing, paying special attention to specific learning disorders such as dyslexia and dysgraphia, and proposes to stimulate debate on how pedagogy can accompany and guide these changes, promoting a conscious, accessible, and inclusive reading education capable of facing present challenges without renouncing the richness of the cultural and bibliographic heritage of the past.

André Luiz Paulilo, in "The Culture of School Services and its Practices: Sources for the Study of the (Im)material Heritage of Education," aims to understand the process of forming a service culture in public schools, starting from the hypothesis that the articulation of auxiliary school institutions in the educational reforms of the 1920s and 1930s did in fact alter the social purposes of the school. This text discusses some practices aimed at childcare and habit formation, taking as a perspective the expansion of teaching work in consolidating a representation of school geared towards social purposes, and attempts to understand how auxiliary school activities have made assistance, care, and extraordinary teaching activities a cultural heritage of public schools in the country.

Carlota Boto, in "The History of Education in Times of Paradigm Shift: New Ways of Thinking and Old Ways of Looking," touches on digital information and the growth of meaning in historiographical work. She examines the approaches by which educational research has taken place on the internet, researching into the impasses and obstacles that are created when confronting and investigating on-screen research with printed documentation and bibliography. The text examines the paths of the past,

indicating some other periods of inflection that gave rise to technical innovations and produced transformations in literate and public behaviors; strategies of academic investigation and new ways of researching, which transform or alter procedures, rituals, and practices inscribed in the historiographical operation.

Diana Rocha Silva, in "Between Notes: Historical Research and Information Representation," positions the context of notes and physical description as a bibliographic item that serves as a strategic information resource for professionals who deal with historical facts and events. She provides appropriate resources to aid the librarian's work in the process of portraying collections of historical bibliographic heritage available in the digital age. She feedback on the opportunities/omissions in the description of the process of information aspects, especially in the topic of notes on the tangible components of the document. The author notes that most of the items represented and circulated digitally lack a description more compatible with the demands and needs of historians, including information about the target audience and the nature of the documentation, suggesting a change in the approach of information professionals regarding the detailing of the resource.

Lia Machado Fiuza Fialho and Lidiane da Silva Pereira, in "Immaterial Sources in the History of Women Educators Based on Productions from the PEMO Group," discuss the (in)material historical sources for recording and preserving the history and memory of women teachers who contributed to the educational formation of society and who were not properly valued. Based on the theoretical assumptions of the New Cultural History and from the analysis of academic productions (theses and dissertations) of the Educational Practices, Memories, and Oralities group (UECE), they identify the sources that supported biographical research with educators carried out between 2020 and 2024, as well as the way in which they were treated for the (re)writing of historical narratives in the field of the history of education. They conclude that the character of the source emerges from the dialogical problematization between researcher and object and that the growing complexity of the concepts of sources and subjects of history allowed new perspectives to be brought to the writing of the biographies of educators.

Henrique Boralho, in *Versura: a proposal for digital writing and reading*, addresses textual production through a blog whose title is based on Giorgio Agamben's concept of *Versura du Enjabement*, which is understood as the unfolding of the word;

a dissonance that finds a double meaning through the suspension of the linearity of the verse that only poetry achieves, a unique moment in which poetry is distinguished from prose. The author, working within an extension project for high school students in the city of Alcantara, run by the Federal Institute of Maranhão, and based on 364 posts and 137,000 views, addresses text production in the simultaneity of two logics that point to a digital culture that mobilizes reading and writing strategies based on intertextuality and trans literacy, stimulating interactive digital expression and communication.

In "*The Production of Knowledge in the History of Education and Ethics in Research*," Sônia Maria da Silva Araújo addresses the ethical implications of knowledge production in the field of the history of education, using tools available on the global network system (web). Based on Certeau's (1982) concept of historiographical operation, this work reflects on the historian's role in the context of the internet and brings to the debate the discussions promoted by the Brazilian Association of Postgraduate Studies in Education (ANPEd) on ethics in research, establishing connections with the writing of the history of education. It concludes that thinking about historiographical culture today requires recognizing the place that technological development occupies both in relation to the collection of sources and the methodological procedures in the construction of history in order to understand the subjectivities and alterities that constitute it.

Cesar Augusto Castro, in "A cartography of the Castilho method in the Maranhão press (1851 - 1920) based on the Brazilian digital newspaper archive," maps the use of the Castilho Method in Maranhão, based on news articles about it from 1851 to 1920, identifies Maranhão periodicals that contain related records, and describes the strategies used for their location. The method, descriptive and exploratory in nature, involves the following procedures: a) Bibliographic examination and study of works linked to the method and its significance for research in the history of education; b) Mapping of state and national digital newspaper archives; c) Systematic search for newspapers and other periodicals that mentioned the Castilho technique in Maranhão in these collections; d) Description of the news included in the publications, among others. It concludes with the retrieval of 22 news articles about the Castilho Method, published in 10 periodicals from Maranhão, which demonstrate a sequence of publications indicative of a flow of opinions involving the reading and writing method,

making the analysis of digital occurrences relevant for research and writing in the History of Education.

In "*Under the Protection of Written Culture: Notes for a Future History in Latin America*," Andreia Marta Brito argues that the practices of this culture are transforming in an accelerated time, marked by algorithms, while the full conquest of the world of written culture is not yet consolidated, remaining a persistent problem in the region. This study analyzes the contemporary landscape of respect through a survey of qualitative and quantitative information, from the theoretical perspective of cultural history. It also explores the boundaries of collective responsibility in research and educational development in order to identify potential contributions that encourage the maintenance of the critical and creative power of written culture in just social contexts in Latin America.

In "*The Historiographical Practice in Digital Environments*," Adriana Maria Paulo da Silva articulates the historical emergence of the digital age, taking into account its historicity, considering the coexistence with digital objects (digital books, digital libraries, digital databases, etc.), and from which has arisen the formation of a new type of subjectivity, informed by new forms of communication, historical knowledge, and the circulation of information. This text discusses the new challenges for academic and institutional work in digital environments, focusing on the Brazilian case. It concludes that, as important as the full mastery of the tools and procedures necessary for conducting and validating research in digital environments is, so is the ethical commitment and care of researchers towards research participants.

Luhilda Ribeiro Silveira and Juliana Aparecida Gulka, in "*Scientific Journals, Networks, Flows, and Metrics: Reflections and Implications for the Field of Education*," reflect on the transformations that have been redefining the production, circulation, validation, and construction of scientific knowledge within the context of the informational paradigm. They start from the premise that technological innovation, articulated with systems of academic measurement and evaluation, reorganizes scientific communication and confers centrality to journals not only as recording supports but also as structuring elements of this ecosystem. They discuss the consolidation of journals and their integration into global networks of knowledge circulation, as well as the role of these publications in building academic reputation and in the mechanisms for legitimizing scientific production, considering the dynamics of

metrics and systems for evaluating intellectual production in light of CAPES guidelines for evaluating postgraduate studies. They conclude that the set of processes that orbit between limits, tensions, and effects on editorial practices and academic trajectories directly impacts the forms of organization of scientific communication and the social and institutional conditions for the recognition of the knowledge produced.

Thus, we invite undergraduate and graduate students, teachers from basic and higher education, researchers in the history of education and other areas, and readers in general to delve into the dossier *From Clay to Clouds: Investigating and Writing in the History of Education*, which points to new problems, new methodological paths, and new objects of investigation, even if it refers to old objects reinterpreted in new analytical perspectives.

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