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Educational practices to transform and connect schools and communities

Prácticas educativas para transformar y conectar escuelas y comunidades



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Abstract

The current social and educational challenges force us to rethink the role of educational institutions and digital technologies in the 21st century, which requires a deeper understanding of learning activities in schools. In this article we analyze bottom-up initiatives for educational transformation implemented in public lower secondary schools from Norway, Chile and Spain that involved 230 students and 14 teachers. Three ethnographic case studies were carried out, using individual interviews, focus groups, participant observations and document analysis in six schools. The main goal was to deeply understand how bottom-up school initiatives, with a comprehensive use of digital technologies, are contributing to generate connected practices and to involve teachers, learners and communities in the discussion about what kind of society they want in their future. The results of the analysis indicate that fostering a transformative agency in secondary schools has the potential of engaging students in the exploration of contemporary social issues and that digital connectedness can contribute to connect schools with youth life trajectories and communities. This study on transformative agency and digital connectedness reveals a new path for educational transformation that may interest everybody who, in one way or another, are involved in education systems all around the world.

Resumen

Los desafíos sociales y educativos que enfrentamos en la actualidad nos obligan a repensar cuál es el rol de las instituciones educativas y de las tecnologías digitales en el siglo XXI, lo cual requiere una comprensión más profunda de las actividades de aprendizaje de las escuelas. En este artículo analizamos iniciativas para la transformación educativa implementadas en centros de secundaria públicos de Noruega, Chile y España que involucraron a 230 alumnos y 14 profesores. Se llevaron a cabo tres estudios de caso etnográficos a partir de entrevistas, grupos de discusión, observaciones participantes y análisis documental en seis centros. El objetivo principal fue comprender en profundidad cómo estas iniciativas contribuyen a generar prácticas conectadas y a involucrar al profesorado, el estudiantado y las comunidades en la discusión sobre el tipo de sociedad en la que quieren vivir en un futuro. Los resultados del análisis indican que el fomento de una agencia transformadora en los centros de secundaria tiene el potencial de involucrar al alumnado en el estudio de problemáticas sociales contemporáneas y que la conectividad digital puede contribuir a conectar las escuelas con las trayectorias de vida y las comunidades de los jóvenes. Este primer estudio sobre agencia transformadora y conectividad digital desvela una línea de transformación educativa que puede interesar a todos aquellos individuos que, de una forma u otra, están involucrados en los sistemas educativos de todo el mundo.

Keywords / Palabras clave

Transformation, agency, school, community, digital technologies, learning.
Transformación, agencia, escuela, comunidad, tecnologías digitales, aprendizaje.

1. Introduction

During the first two decades of the 21st century questions of educational provision and the role of schools in our societies have emerged as key issues of concern to deal with future educational challenges. Schools are defined as important institutions in our societies providing knowledge building among the younger generation and as mechanisms to develop engaged citizens for full participation in societies. However, educational researchers have increasingly raised critical questions about educational futures and how we understand the school of the future (Biesta, 2006; Claxton, 2008; Eynon, 2018; Giroux, 2020). Where are we going and how do we get there?

Technological developments have been explained as a lever for change in schools from a top-down perspective by some researchers and policy makers (Selwyn, 2016; Sancho-Gil et al., 2019). However, research shows that changing educational practices just by using technology in itself is difficult and naïve. Our approach towards educational futures for teachers and students is about ways of opening up schools as connected practices engaging students and teachers as learners in new ways. Technological resources and tools play a crucial role in developing ways of creating connectedness for learners (Ito et al., 2013).

Two key points highlighted in this article relate to bottom-up strategies and transformative agency. The empirical data presented is from three different projects in three different countries. There are both similarities and differences across these cases, but one basic similarity is the use of bottom-up strategies for creating new understandings of what learning activities are about, for whom, and in what ways. Something is always at stake when young people learn, for themselves and others, as ways of engaging in creating knowledge of importance for themselves and their communities (Buckingham, 2006). Our research questions are then: a) what are the main characteristics of bottom-up processes for creating engagement and knowledge construction among students? b) how is transformative agency defined as part of educational projects that connect schools and communities? and c) how is digital connectedness embedded?

1.1. Transformative agency and digital connectedness

The concept of “transformative agency” has been used within diverse fields of research for several decades. Within education it has been used on diverse levels of analysis – from individual to systemic and collective forms of change. As we argue in this article, we need to conceptually and empirically understand transformative processes beyond the school or educational institution itself, and how such institutions perceive students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders as ways of crossing boundaries of what education and learning in contemporary societies need to address.

The agency of learners, what some describe as «agentive selves» (Hull & Katz, 2006), refers to the «ownership» students experience of their own learning process, their involvement and identity formation as learners. In this sense, agency refers to the capacity to initiate goal-oriented action that implies autonomy, choice and engagement (Biesta & Tedder, 2007; Holland et al., 1998). Instead of understanding this as an individual ability to act on their environment in certain ways, some argue for using the term “relational agency” (Edwards & Mackenzie, 2006). They emphasize how students connect to relevant others as part of learning trajectories and across different settings. The success of a certain activity depends on the contribution from all in a group, thus creating relational agency (Bender & Peppler, 2019).

The term “transformative agency” has been highlighted within cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT). By using “developmental work research” and “change laboratory” methodologies Engeström (2016) and others have focused on mechanisms of transformation within systems and ways of engaging people within diverse settings. In line with Virkkunen (2006) we see the traditional way of approaching transformations within organizations as highly problematic not involving grass-roots level practitioners in authentic ways. Therefore, our approach is more oriented to grasp the complex practices that diverse stakeholders are involved in.

In line with our argumentation in this article we will refer to Stetsenko (2019: 2), who takes a more radical perspective on transformative agency situated within contemporary social tensions and challenges. She writes about “radical-transformative agency” and argues against the dominant contemporary approaches of relational agency, moving toward explicitly political and activist accounts of agency. Her argument is that there is a residue of passivity in all the main conceptions of development and agency and that to overcome it, we need to reconstruct the basic premises on human development. “It is critical to consider how we are not merely ‘in’ the world but are ourselves *the* world because we are directly implicated in its dynamics as its co-creators”.

Another scholar with an activist approach to educational transformation is Lipman (2011: 167), who argues that if we want to imagine new ways of living together, as a new social imaginary, we need to create spaces

in schools where students “learn to integrate their social realities and examine the root causes of the many crises facing their communities, explore solutions, build solidarities, and develop global perspectives”. Also, with the advent of mobile and social media, learning has taken on a distributed, location-based and self-directed character. Digital media reflect trends towards seeing learning as dynamic across space and time (Erstad et al., 2013) offering “new mobilities” – a new digital connectedness (Chayko, 2014). In such contexts, communities of cultural and technological diversity represent different opportunities and barriers for participation (Sancho-Gil et al., 2019) as part of the dynamic process of co-constructing identity, interests and knowledge. How they give body and voice to their views can be seen as much in action as reflection (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017; Rajala et al., 2012).

«Authentic learning» has been mentioned as a key aspect of creating motivating learning situations for students (Herrington et al., 2014). Different learning settings in- and out-of-school have their opportunities and constraints when it comes to authentic learning; consequently, they provide different opportunities for agency (Thomas & Brown, 2011). Most studies that address authentic learning emphasize four criteria (Rule, 2006): students 1) investigate a real-life 2) open-ended problem, 3) motivated to «devise solutions that change people's action, beliefs, or attitudes» 4) as inquirers with the teacher as a mentor (Rule, 2006, p.2). Based on these conceptual explorations we now turn to the methodological section.

2. Material and methods

This article draws on data from three case studies carried out in public secondary schools from Oslo (Norway), Santiago de Chile (Chile) and Barcelona (Spain) in the framework of three different national projects. A common objective across the three case studies was to analyze bottom-up initiatives from schools to create meaningful situations that promote «authentic learning» among students and teachers, connect with their communities and address social issues and inequalities (Herrington et al., 2014). The initiatives involved a total of 9 schools, 14 teachers, and 230 students. For this article, we have selected one project per country, meaning that the sample was made up by 6 schools, 6 teachers and 81 students. The criteria to select the cases were the relevance and suitability to analyze bottom-up processes to foster transformative agency, considering the results of the national projects and the perspective of local experts in educational transformation.

Ethnography as logic of inquiry was used as an approach (Green et al., 2005; Yin, 2014), and similar research methods and strategies were used (Table 1). In total, 32 active interviews (Holstein & Gubrium, 2016) and 16 focus groups (Barbour, 2013) were collected with school management teams, teachers and students. In order to validate the instruments, the guidelines for the interviews were reviewed by peers who were experts in the field. The authors conducted participant observations (Shah, 2017) at each school and analyzed school documents that were relevant for the cases. Every interview was recorded and transcribed, and notes were taken during the participant observation. In order to maintain confidentiality, the names of schools and participants used in the article are fictitious.

Country	School	Data collected		
		Interviews	Focus Groups	Fieldnotes and photos from observations
Norway	West	6	4	✓
	East	6	4	✓
Chile	North	4	2	✓
	South	4	2	✓
Spain	Urban	6	2	✓
	Rural	6	2	✓

In terms of analysis, the total corpus of transcripts and field notes were coded according to the thematic areas addressed in the guideline and the emerging dimensions to create units of meaning that responded to the research objectives. The analysis was conducted by systematically reading the codes, patterns and themes,

searching for contrasts, paradoxes and irregularities (Denzin, 2003). Afterwards, the codes were grouped and regrouped until they made sense and the narrative structure of each case study was created.

In the following section, the findings from each case study are presented by the following structure: 1) Planning for bottom-up strategies; 2) Transformative practices; 3) Embedded digital technologies; 4) Negotiating outcomes.

3. Results

In this section we present the main results of the case studies carried out in Norway, Chile and Spain. The selection of three countries with considerably different social, education and economic systems allow us to consider how these characteristics may influence the schools' initiatives for educational transformation. Therefore, we begin by shortly identifying some of the main similarities and differences between countries. The economic development model, the educational policy and the social fabric itself are dimensions that modulate educational contexts and practices (Ávalos & Bellei, 2019), which is especially evident in these three countries. In terms of public education, in Norway there are hardly any private schools, while in Chile only 37% of elementary, lower secondary, and upper secondary students attend public schools. In Spain and Chile charter schools play an important role, while not in Norway. Another relevant difference between the three education systems is the degree of autonomy provided by the education system and the curriculum to school leaders and teachers. The curriculum gives a high degree of autonomy for teachers to define their own practices in Norway (Imsen & Volckmar, 2013) and high degree of autonomy, but also of accountability in Spain (Bolívar-Botía & Bolívar-Ruano, 2011), while in Chile schools do not have legal autonomy to carry out their own administrative management and design their educational projects (Ávalos & Bellei, 2019). Pointing at the differences between the three systems is essential to frame the possibilities and challenges encountered by schools that try to promote educational transformation in each country. For this reason, the results are separated by country, and then, a crossed-country analysis is presented in the discussion.

3.1. Case 1: Oslo

The project from Norway involved two lower secondary schools, one in the Eastern part of Oslo and the other in the Western suburbs. Both schools had long experiences of project work as the main school activity all year round (Rasmussen, 2005). At each school, a group of students took part in the project during a two-week period at the beginning of the school year (20 students in one school and 40 students in the other). The school in the Western suburbs had students from families with a high socio-economic background. At the school in the Eastern inner-city part of Oslo the students came from many different cultural backgrounds with about 65% of the students from minority language-speaking families.

The teachers at the school in the Western suburbs initiated the project idea. They brought some headlines from national and local newspapers reporting on results from a research study showing huge differences in the life expectancy age between people living in the East and West of Oslo. This shocked the students and was an important stimulus for their motivation for developing a larger project involving a school from a totally different socio-economic community in the same city. The teachers took contact with a school in the Eastern inner-city part of Oslo and asked if they were interested in collaborating on a project about prejudice of the Other and differences in living conditions. Collectively they decided to make a website as a newspaper for each school based on information they collected by searching online, going into their community to interview people and stakeholders in the municipality, and organizing a trip to visit the other school with a group of students from each school.

The students collected a lot of information from public sources about living conditions in different communities. They also made visual representations to support their ideas about difference, like putting together two photos (Figure 1) taken from each of the communities on how people live:

Figure 1. Illustration from the online newspaper in the West, showing a villa in the West versus an apartment building in the East. Found online

Villa Vs Blokk



The elements that really engaged the students in a transformative way were both interviews they did with some stakeholders in the community and the visit to the other school. In this way they engaged on a personal level. None of the students had ever crossed the line in the center of Oslo dividing East from West. Each group documented their travel across town with a video camera. They interviewed students, took photos and wrote about their personal impressions. In their descriptions they described similarities and differences about how people dressed and talked, about the community and the schools.

The students used different digital tools to collaborate and create an online newspaper. They used a collaborative online platform called Classfrontier, and they created questions they sent to each other using this platform and social media. They looked up online information using their laptops or smartphones. The visits were documented by using their phones to make a video film and photos to use in their production. For the online newspapers they used different software tools and visual effects.

One interesting event happened when a group of students from the school in the West, all girls, had travelled across town to meet and interview students at the school in the East. Some boys at the school in the east lied to the girls from the West about access to drugs at the school and violence in the neighborhood and the girls accepted what they were told as true. Teachers took this event as an issue for discussion in both student groups as an interesting example of prejudices they held about each other.

In several respects the activities the students were involved in were experienced as authentic learning. The framing of the project was based on facts about living conditions and life expectancy age. They found other information, visited people in their own community, and visited students that represented the Other. They gained more insight about prejudices, but tensions about differences were still there when the project ended. The students from the school in the East expressed this in the interviews at the end of the project:

Student 1: "I believe that, one cannot do anything about prejudice really. They are there anyway. It does not help. Everybody knows that not everyone is like that. At the same time, there is a reason why we have them. I do not think you can stop or anything. They probably think different, but people here also think different. I do not think the same as him" (Boy, school East)

"Why is martial arts so popular at (the school in the East)? Maybe it is just a necessity for them since there are many gangs there, and to be able to fight, and maybe you get respect".

"50cent, 2pac and Snoop Dog. These are just a few of the artists that are much hotter in the East than in the West. Maybe it has to do that they feel they live in the 'slum' of Oslo? Do they feel that the tuff rap-environment fits their everyday life?" (Extracts from online newspaper school West after visit).

The students were engaged in the project on a personal level, drawing on experiences from outside the school, yet reworking these experiences within a school context. In negotiating meaning making about differences and similarities between the two communities in Oslo, they started reflecting on their own lives, about how they appeared to others, and how the material conditions of their lives determined life-opportunities. The use of personal stories set against collected material facilitated this process of «placing» the self within larger narratives, thereby enabling all involved to contrast schooled learning with other community-based kinds of learning and personal development.

3.2. Case 2: Santiago de Chile

The case from Chile was implemented in the framework of an initiative carried out in two public secondary schools that are situated in one of the poorest and most marginal areas of Santiago city. A group of students from each school took part in this initiative for five months (from May to October), with 35 students from one school and 37 students from the other. The activity involved the creation of 7 working groups comprised of 10-12 students from both schools. Each group was formed with a similar number of foreign and local students. The promoters were two History teachers from these schools, who raised the need to improve the relationships between local and foreign students because in previous years there had been problems of coexistence between them. They decided to implement projects so the students could inquire into the main problems of their neighborhoods and propose ways to address them, by playing a mentoring role throughout the process. Concerning the transformative practices, this project focused on poverty and social inclusion of the neighborhoods where the two involved schools were located. In the initial sessions of the project, the students discussed which differentiating and common aspects existed within the students that composed the group. The first topic proposed by the students was racism and xenophobia at school. Foreign students (mostly Haitians) expressed their discomfort with receiving offensive and xenophobic comments during their stay at school. As a teacher expressed: «Foreign students made us see that they were going to participate in a project with the same classmates who offended them or did not speak to them throughout the year» (Chilean teacher, school North). In the dialogue between local and foreign students, they debated if these comments were justified and if they were a reproduction of broader social prejudices. This discussion posed a challenge: intercultural coexistence between students had to be resolved before starting the project with their communities. The second topic addressed was poverty and social inclusion among the population living in the surrounding areas of the schools. This theme was relevant because it was a common phenomenon that connected them beyond their country of origin. Students began to debate and identify issues and characteristics that could help them understand the reasons behind poverty in this district and their social problems (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Students working in one of the schools and in a nearby park. Photographs were taken by the participants



Note. "For a better Chile. - AFP (Private Pension Fund Administrators) + Salary. Best Education".

Regarding the embedded digital technologies, a significant number of students from both schools lack a technological device for their personal use. Usually those who have access to technological devices are able to access the internet only with Wi-Fi connection. Despite this reality, digital technologies played an important role in the development of the project, as they allowed students to organize among themselves and coordinate meetings and interviews with the community. "Mobile devices were used by students mainly to visually and digitally record a large part of the practices and actions carried out in the project" (Chilean teacher, school A).

The students produced a digital report with images and videos of a large part of their experiences. This document developed two main dimensions: a historical perspective of the neighborhood and its main current problems and proposals to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood.

Students and teachers actively participated in the negotiation and management of the project from the beginning. The main needs and priorities to be developed were decided collectively. For example, definitions of xenophobia and racism were firstly exposed, generating a debate that led to a common definition of both terms. They also concluded that prejudices had no connection with reality, valuing the contributions made by the migrant population to the economic and cultural development of Chile. The development of the project provided students with opportunities to improve their relationships and allowed them to see beyond their differences of origin or the neighborhood where they lived. They concluded that they shared a set of common social challenges and problems related with their personal development and the situation of their communities. Teachers and representatives of both schools were satisfied with the development of the project and the way in which this group of students led their own learning process, connecting their personal lives and worries to think about the improvement of their quality of life and of the population as a whole. However, teachers expressed doubts about the sustainability of the links generated by the students outside the project.

“Prejudices about the migrant population are generated and reinforced in the students' families and friends. Furthermore, the foreign population tends to relate to itself. So, if there is no general inclusive attitude in society, all these initiatives will probably come to nothing” (Chilean teacher, school B).

In spite of this difficulty, the management team planned to continue with the initiative in the next years, expanding it to other courses and educational levels.

3.3. Case 3: Barcelona

The case from Spain was part of an initiative from five secondary schools and the University of Barcelona to engage 10 teachers and 97 students from five secondary schools to design and implement projects that connected with students' lives and worries. The specific project presented in this article was carried out for eight months (from October to May) and involved two teachers and nine students from two lower secondary schools, one located in the city and the one in a semi-rural area of Barcelona. Both schools had experience in promoting project-based learning and they wanted to challenge their educational practices to connect the school curriculum with students' lives. The project started when five students from the urban school proposed as a topic of interest «preventing gender violence». They created a digital poster to find students from other schools of the network with the same interest, with the message:

“Gender violence is a scourge in our society that unfortunately is very present and is not always seen. If you want to be part of the group, make visible the reality of gender violence and propose measures to prevent these behavior patterns, we count on you” (Students, Urban school).

Four students and one teacher from the semi-rural school got involved in this project and they met in a face-to-face meeting at the University of Barcelona, where they agreed to publish together an online magazine to prevent gender violence.

In terms of transformative practices, students had an opportunity to decide what they wanted to study, and the processes through which they could discuss a contemporary social issue such as gender violence. Since the students were already interested in gender issues and they already participated in activist actions out of school, their objective was to create awareness about gender violence and create measures to prevent it.

They met face-to-face in the urban school on the International Women's Day to participate in the activities organized by this school. There they started the magazine and made interviews to students, teachers and experts in gender from an organization called Active Network of Youth for Equality, that was collaborating with both schools. They also made an audiovisual report of the activities organized during Women's Day.

This project encouraged the learners' agency through practices oriented to fulfilling a common goal that required a big amount of autonomy, engagement and involvement with the community, connecting with their previous experiences and knowledge on gender violence. For example, they created a feminist dictionary with concepts that some of them already knew, such as “social construct”, “masculine privilege” or “gender roles”, analyzed discriminatory scenes from Disney movies and organized a photo contest among students to represent gender violence from their perspectives as young people (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Winner photographs of the contest. Drawings have been created to ensure anonymity



Note. Image 1) "I was not born a woman to die for being one"; Image 2) "I can't anymore".

Students were at the center of the educational process, but the mentoring role of teachers was fundamental. At the same time, they found tensions because some students were more engaged than others. The teachers did not know how to get their involvement without using the logic of getting good marks, because these kinds of projects require motivation, not to get a good mark but to engage with the group, learn from others, explore real-life problems and propose solutions based on a shared process of inquiry.

Digital technologies were central in every stage of the project, allowing students and teachers from schools located in different regions to communicate, conduct interviews, organize a photo contest and publish a magazine together. Nevertheless, digital technologies were embedded in these transformative practices because in both schools they already used them to connect with other institutions and contribute to activism by creating digital products such as videos or digital magazines. Therefore, creative and transformative uses of digital technologies were already embedded in the educational culture of the schools.

The most powerful outcome of the project was that it favored learning practices that connected with social issues. This was expressed in an interview with the teacher when he talked about the importance of addressing gender violence and inequality transversally in schools and not only one day a year or through one single project. He referred to a student who had reported a case of symbolic violence, after being involved in many school activities where she had learned to identify it. "If the student had not received the message from her school and family that she had to report this, she would have never done it" (Teacher, urban school). In this interview, the teacher pointed out one of the cores of transformative agency: social issues such as gender violence go much beyond school, but addressing them is of major importance if we want to build a more equal society. A similar reflection was done by one student in an interview at the end of the project:

"I think that doing these kinds of projects is important because people have not integrated what gender violence is. They don't know what feminism is. Doing these projects allow you to collaborate with this issue, to move from one perspective to another, to understand why women are fighting for this. I have seen very narrow-minded people in our high school, but also guys who have moved and became feminist. I think that this is a good contribution to make people open their eyes, because you are transforming a little bit what the result will be when we get older" (Student, urban school).

Teachers and students' voices point at the potential of these educational practices to generate awareness and empowerment, and to think about the kind of society they want in their future.

4. Discussion and conclusion

Analyzing educational projects that encourage transformation of public secondary schools in different countries is really relevant, in a historical moment when we are discussing what educational systems in contemporary and global societies need to address.

Going back to our initial research questions, the presentation above has shown that bottom-up processes for creating engagement and building knowledge with students are very much dependent on how participants define the initiation and origin of the projects, their thematic focus and activities. The starting point in the three cases was the intention of some teachers to encourage students to connect the school curriculum with their lives and with contemporary social issues. All of these initiatives promoted teachers and students to make

decisions collectively, activating learning processes that opened spaces for creating new frames of interpretation and meaning-making (Lipman, 2011; Mezirow, 2012).

In terms of transformative agency, the main element that engaged students, teachers and communities in a transformative way was that the projects started from shared concerns about social issues that affected them (Stetsenko, 2019). They collectively studied what was behind these issues, by writing their own stories, interviewing members of their communities and stakeholders, and visiting schools and districts where they had never been before. The potential of these processes of inquiry is that they provide opportunities for authentic learning, studying real world situations and exploring questions such as: how are we reproducing social prejudices? How is gender discrimination reproduced through media? Or, what causes poverty and xenophobia? The projects represent different community orientation of educational learning processes involving stakeholders to understand these situations better (Rule, 2006).

Another characteristic of the projects was that they generated connections between young people's life trajectories and broad social issues. The students reflected about how they can be active actors in consolidating the society they are part of, reproducing or standing against stereotypes, discrimination or violence. However, generating this transformative relational agency (Edwards & Mackenzie, 2006) required a lot of involvement and contribution from the actors involved. Due to this requirement, it is complex to think about the possibility of expanding this type of initiative to the whole school or to an entire education system. Also, as shown in the three cases presented, and in other studies about transformative agency in countries such as Zambia (Bajaj, 2009) or Finland (Kajamaa & Kumpulainen, 2019), projects like these create tensions in different levels and between different actors that teachers and students need to face. This is a complexity, but at the same time it expands learning practices that are usually present in schools.

Regarding the third research question, digital technologies played a crucial role in terms of connectedness. The students used technologies to communicate and collaborate with other students and stakeholders, share questions, look up information, document their processes of inquiry, conduct interviews and edit a newspaper and a magazine. Mobile phones facilitated some of these processes, although the lack of digital devices and connectivity in the case of Chile also limited their possibilities. The way digital connectedness was embedded in the projects was related with the way it was integrated in each school culture. So, when teachers and students are used to integrating digital technologies in their projects to contact with other institutions, creating digital content and sharing it online, it can be easier for them to think about possibilities to go beyond the classroom context (Kajamaa & Kumpulainen, 2019).

In the case of Oslo, it was especially interesting that publishing their results online involved a discussion related to the digital age, ethics and awareness of what can be the consequences of divulging a piece of information. In the cases of Santiago de Chile and Barcelona, producing digital content and sharing it online had an activist and transformative potential for their communities (Miño-Puigcercós et al., 2019).

At the same time, a shared limitation was that social inequalities, gender violence and xenophobia are structural phenomenon that go much beyond schools. Therefore, creating spaces for transformation in schools cannot be an isolated task. If a more inclusive attitude is not present in a society as a whole, these initiatives can be just isolated events. At the same time, these projects could be significant spaces where students have the opportunity to think about the kind of society they create for their own future.

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