

**EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION AND SCHOOL
ENGAGEMENT. PERSPECTIVES AND ACTIONS IN
FOUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BUENOS AIRES CITY**

**Session: Social inequalities and secondary education:
Theories, methods and research findings, Second ISA Forum
of Sociology “Justicia Social y Democratización”**

Buenos Aires, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas (UBA)
1 al 4 de Agosto de 2012

Valeria Dabenigno, Rosario Austral, Silvina Larripa y Silvana Tissera

Gerencia Operativa de Investigación y Estadística
Dirección General de Evaluación de la Calidad Educativa
Ministerio de Educación • Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires

**INCLUSIÓN EDUCATIVA E
INVOLUCRAMIENTO ESCOLAR.
Perspectivas y acciones en cuatro
escuelas estatales de la Ciudad de
Buenos Aires**

**EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION
AND SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT.
Perspectives and actions in four public
schools of Buenos Aires City**

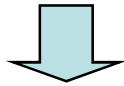
**Valeria Dabenigno, Silvina Larripa, Rosario Austral and Silvana Tissera
Equipo de Nivel Medio - GOlyE – DGECE – ME - GCBA**

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Buenos Aires, Argentina -1 al 4 de agosto de 2012*

Session: Social inequalities and secondary education: Theories, methods and research findings

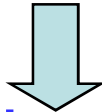
Context

In Argentina: recent process of expansion in secondary education (National Education Law, 2006).



In Buenos Aires: compulsory secondary education since 2002 but stability of net enrollment ratio (89%) during last decade.

Incorporation of new social groups to secondary school posed new challenges.



Inequal chances of them to develop “ideal” trajectories: persisting academic failure and dropping out.

In Buenos Aires City (2010):
Grade repetition rate: 16,0%
Dropout rate: 7,3%
Over-age rate (older students): 48,0%

Research focus and design

Focus

To explore:

- students' and schools' perspectives on inclusion,
- student engagement,
- schools' actions to improve levels of attendance and to promote school engagement

Design

- The study was carried out during 2010 by a research department (GOlyE) of the Ministry of Education of Buenos Aires City.
- Fieldwork in four schools: 2 ordinary and 2 technical schools.

Schools selection criteria:

- social vulnerable population
 - high level of older-students (over-age)
 - high retention rates
 - varied initiatives and practices that facilitate student schooling.
- Interviews with teachers, headteachers, pastoral assistants, supervisors, students.

Theoretical Approach

SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT (SE):

refers to the student bonding with school and is conceived as an antidote of student alienation and dropping out .

Multifaceted nature of SE: consider “the fusion of behavior, emotion, and cognition under the idea of engagement” (Fredricks, Blumenfeld y Paris, 2004: 61).

This paper consider two dimensions of SE:

- **Emotional engagement: emotions linked to school experiences, including sense of belonging and positive or negative reactions to other school actors and school itself.**
- **Cognitive engagement: investment in learning. “Thoughtfulness and willingness to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex ideas and master difficult skills” (60) and develop academic tasks.**

We include: students perspectives on “valued” school tasks and good learning practices.

SCHOOL'S PERSPECTIVES, ACTIONS AND STRATEGIES

➤ For teachers and headteachers, their students have the right to be educated (and they have to guarantee equity of opportunities for them to learn and advance at secondary school).

➤ They have “realistic” and “situated” perspectives about their students.



Recognition of the different living conditions that can affect their schooling : motherhood/fatherhood, home and labour duties, food needs, housing conditions, daily violence, etc.

➤ Schools deployed wide range of actions to deal with them.

➤ Shared institutional aims between 3 schools: improve retention, coexistence (promote good school) and academic performance.

➤ Institutional strategies:

- networking with other institutions
- academic and regulatory flexibility
- core of committed teachers

EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

- Students conceive school as a “good place”.
- Gradual construction: turning points at the middle of the secondary career.
- Teaching practices and staff-students relations based on trust and mutual respect.
- Teachers have to be able to “gain trust” and respect from the students.

¿HOW?

→ worrying about obstacles that intercept schooling and trying to solve what is within his grasp,

→ talking honestly with them,

→ by following up of students’ attendance and academic performance

→ by expressing interest in their future plans, or

→ by opening up alternative spaces to get pedagogic support.

- Finally, institutions with:
 - pastoral assistants,
 - recreational activities
 - Team work
 - Projects to solve conflicts between peers......facilitates emotional engagement of their students

COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT

is facilitated when:

1) ... teachers deploy different pedagogic strategies to help their learning (teacher as a mediator)

or teachers forge trusting relationships with students (link between emotional and cognitive SE).

2) learning tasks are attractive to them.

Students feel they learn better when they:

- Could assume active roles in their own learning (becoming teachers);**
- Could learn outside the classroom (laboratories, workshops, museums, internships, etc.);**
- Could face activities that promote intellectual autonomy,**
- Could solve challenging problems,**
- Could debate and voice their perspectives;**
- Could link “theory” with “practice”.**