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The Discovery and Potential of *Home* as a Learning Space

: Reconsidering Educational Practice Records for Home Economics of Elementary School

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This thesis aims to orient and reflect on classroom experience records noted by the author, on excessive expectations in school education based on the activeness principle that impacts the freedom of “life” of a child. It clarifies the *Home*'s potential as a learning space, and how one marked by passivity can guarantee children's freedom of life.

The “activeness principle” as used in this paper implies “proactive learning,” a phrase frequently used in recent years. It emphasizes activeness and molding independence, and is underscored by characteristics such as freedom of will and independent and proactive action. A school is expected to promote personal growth in children. However, the current educational landscape, deeply influenced by this principle, has obscured children's vulnerable voices.

Have schools created an educational space that can respond to children's vulnerable voices? The topics in this thesis are rooted in this very question, which causes heartache for classroom teachers when facing children.

With this objective and topics in mind, we use a research method called “reexamination” implementation, whereby we orient ourselves and reflect on the documented records of children's classroom experiences. We present this thesis across five chapters.

In Chapter 1, we examine the meaning of ambiguity and education as encompassed by the term, “space and experience.” Space and experience take on an ambiguous physiognomy dependent on the state of the participating subject. Educational system in schools rank functional, calculated space and experience as supreme and promote an activeness complementary to the learning space, while alienating passiveness. Meanwhile, a lived-in (utilized) space and experience where children take active part inevitably appears when education is characterized by mediated action, which is governed by things, events, and people. This is because, similar to infant play, it is possible to create one's own lived-in space and experience through a “transition to others,” even when within a supplied, calculated space. In this, we witnessed the potential of the *Home* as a learning space.

In Chapter 2, we examine the possibility of joining educational work and the concept of *Home*. In particular, we enter a critical discussion from a political perspective in which *Home* is affiliated with home economics, a subject of reexamination. From there, we present the need to focus on the phases of different people's lives when considering the *Home* as a political concept. Rooted in the children's voices, we examined the characteristics of the *Home* that appear within a learning space. That is, we

discuss that the class and its characteristics of mediated action (by things, events, people), generate the 3C elements (care, concern, connection). In a space (= *home*) ripe in these elements, children are guaranteed the relief and freedom to live, creating a space where they can live freely.

In Chapter 3, we reexamine case studies from '93, '97, and 2000 to evaluate how the *Home* appears as a learning space. From each case study, we extracted the following: the value of the passive experience; the conditions created by the 3C elements (elements generated by mediated action such as things, events, and people); the possibility to encounter the 'otherness' common in the type of *Home* (learning space) that breeds passive experience.

Further, the conditions of education in the 1990s appeared markedly in vulnerable voices. It became clear that, in a school environment inclined to the activeness principle, a child's classroom experience went through a large transformation. One factor leading to this inclination is the common understanding that education derives its origins in "ability." We thus recognize a new task that there is a necessity for another interpretation, that education is work that fosters life.

In Chapter 4, we examined the feasibility of education as work that fosters life via interviews that discussed class experiences. The interviews were with two graduates, one from 25 years ago and another 23 years ago, and former school nurses working closely with children. What became apparent was the asymmetrical relational structure between teaching/learning, the teachers' unconscious and forceful representation of otherness. Despite this, children have been rolling back this calculated space set up by teachers, and instead creating a space for themselves where they can live freely. We argue that the appearance of this trend equates with the establishment of *Home* as a learning space, and that it may become a space of "freedom implementation" where children are guaranteed living freely.

In Chapter 5, we conducted an interview survey with two practitioners: a practitioner who run a science club for adults and another practitioner who run a Montessori school. We examined the current state of their learning space as a place to practice freedom, as well as the feasibility of school education to foster this. Consequently, we discuss that the key to the creation of the *Home* as a learning space lies in the teachers' role of the supporters and mediators as an organic intellectual who reinvigorate, within the class, mediated action such as things, events, and people. We conclude that in the future, it will be pertinent for educators to assume such a role by amassing teaching experience.