
Led by a Franco-Brazilian team of scholars in the humanities, social sciences, arts and literatures, this joint research project is developing a digital platform for Transatlantic Cultural History to be published in four languages. In a series of essays exploring cultural relations between Europe, Africa, and the Americas, it presents a connected history of the Atlantic space since the 18th century, highlighting the cultural dynamics of the Atlantic region and its crucial role in the contemporary process of globalization.

Education

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☐ North America - South America - Caribbean - Europe - Africa

☐ The Atlantic Space Within Globalization - The Consolidation of Mass Cultures - The Steam Atlantic - Atlantic Revolutions and Colonialism

Beginning in the 18th century, the field of education has been characterized by intense transatlantic exchanges. The circulation of ideas, methods and scholarly knowledge is enabled by travelers, teachers, students, and countless printed materials, that result in rich and complex processes of cultural transfer and adaptation.

This section endeavors to bring to light the diversity of elements encapsulated by the term "education" in a transatlantic perspective. The articles touch on educational policies and institutions, currents and movements whose focus is education, pedagogical science and the content of teaching, as well as the material framework of delivery. The picture would not be complete without paying attention to the agents: teachers, pedagogues, targeted audiences, national and international bureaucrats, experts, etc.



Pupils from Ontario School for the Deaf (now the Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf) in Belleville, Ontario, between 1936 and 1939

Source : [Wikimedia](#)

Historiography

If historiography has long privileged the national framework in treating the topic of education, it has, along with other fields of cultural history, undertaken a "transnational turn." Earlier even, since the history of education had already adopted an international perspective in the 1970s, resulting in the publication in France of *Histoire mondiale de l'éducation* (1980), under Gaston Mialaret and Jean Vial's direction. Still, this work remained anchored in a logic of juxtaposition of national or regional studies. At the same moment the *International Standing Conference for the History of Education*

(1978) was created to promote international research and cooperation in the history of education. This institution, which today brings together associations from both sides of the Atlantic (as well as from Japan and Australia), organizes an annual conference.

The subject of circulation and transfer in education appears today in numerous works whose authors express from the outset the necessity to break free from, or at least rethink, the national framework. Nonetheless, it should be noticed that, for the moment, there is little research adopting the transatlantic framework. There are either regional perspectives, particularly on Europe and Latin America, or works examining international settings. *Transatlantic Cultures* therefore invites researchers to enlarge their framework and their analytical focus.

Moreover, it is important to be attentive to the dynamics of resistance, as well as redefinitions, and hybridizations that these circulations produce in the field of education—all of which presupposes the interlocking of local, national, regional and international frames of reference.



Student teachers practice teaching kindergarten at the Toronto Normal School, Canada (c. 1898)

Source : [Wikimedia](#)

Space: The Transatlantic Framework

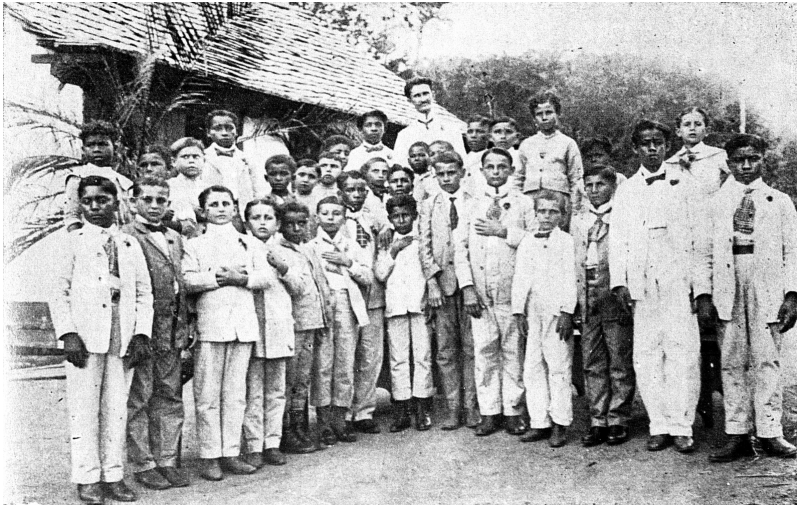
There are several levels to the challenge posed by the adoption of the transatlantic space as a framework and analytical perspective.

First, there is the need to evaluate the extent to which some circulations that are international in theory, really exist only in the transatlantic space, or take on a unique light within that space. We are thinking here especially of the policies and actions of international institutions and organizations (The International League for New Education, the International Bureau of Education, the Permanent International Studies Conference...); or of the colonial question, since the territories of the British, French, German or Italian empires overlap with the transatlantic framework.

This leads to a second problem. Some of the circulations that take place in contemporary education are strongly and almost essentially tied to the context of colonization (for Africa and part of the Caribbean), or that of a colonial heritage (for most of North and South America). In writing a history of transatlantic exchanges and transfers on the subject of education, one risks writing—as in other areas—a history of colonial education, or of colonial education policies, and the long-term consequences of these policies. This aspect is unavoidable for Africa. In North or Latin America, while the inherited models of colonization remain important, other circulations are at work in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The third challenge is to maintain focus on the diversity that exists within each region that makes up this transatlantic space, all the while avoiding a result that would

produce a simple list of case studies. Every State would perhaps deserve its own dedicated section, so important is the diversity of cultural transfer at play in education, and so numerous and varied are the borrowings and re-adaptations at work overall in the period running from the end of the 18th century to the beginning of the 21st. The objective, which is sometimes difficult to attain, is to conjugate uniqueness, mechanisms of adaptation and general trends.



"Group of students of the School of Fundão", Exhibition on State Affairs at the fourth level from 1909 to 1912

Source : [Wikimedia](#)

Chronology

If this section ambitions to cover all the periods treated in the project, it is necessary to acknowledge, for the moment, the predominance of the 19th century as well as the 1920s and 1930s, in the entries. This fact is not simply a result of the editors' areas of study, it also corresponds to the current state of the art, which is itself a reflection of historical dynamics.

The 19th century sees, in effect, the emergence and affirmation of nation states on both sides of the Atlantic and, by correlation, of the progressive elaboration of educational systems able to participate in the creation and consolidation of the nation, whether in the postcolonial context of the American states, or that of European imperialisms. If the process comes from imperatives and considerations operating in the framework of national borders, it is simultaneously the source and result of intense circulations that go beyond those borders, according to the logical analysis of Anne-Marie Thiesse and summarized by the formula: "There is nothing more international than the creation of national identities."¹ The period between the two world wars, for its part, has attracted the attention of scholars who seek to identify and analyze phenomena of circulation and transfer as markers of the rise of a new internationalist regime, especially for education.

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1. Anne-Marie Thiesse, *La création des identités nationales* (Paris: Seuil, 2001 [1999]), 11.

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[See on Zotero](#)

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