In 1857, delegates from 25 countries met in Vienna for the third International Statistical Congress. All but one delegate – Mr. Effendi from the Ottoman Empire – came from Europe; many of them were from German-speaking countries. Their purpose was to delineate general templates capable of giving statistical representation to the diverse states of a wide range of subjects (including education and schools) in different countries. The local organizing committee, while preparing the official working document for the commission on education, found some difficulties in dealing with schools and their specifics. They discarded teaching methods from the proposed template because these varied across countries to such a degree that it would render their codification and comparison impossible.\(^1\) The inner life of schools beyond official regulations certainly presented insurmountable difficulties for the statistics experts trying to classify situations in a valid and reliable way. Yet two elements related to the extremely varied teaching settings found their place in the templates used to evaluate individual elementary schools: the number of classes and sections, and the question whether “teachers used the help of advanced pupils following the method of mutual instruction.”\(^2\) In the plenary session of the congress, the delegates apparently found these proposals both meaningful and realistic; they accepted the whole template.

Elementary schooling became a mass institution throughout Western Europe in the 19th century. Even those countries that were not so successful at expanding elementary schooling saw themselves as late adopters of a trend that they deemed to be unavoidable. At the same time, the ascendancy of the nation as the imaginary foundation of societies and states and the subsequent insistence on idiosyncrasy and national differences defined education and its institutions as being not completely transferrable from one nation to another. Documenting education in the meta-language of modern statistics was by no means generally accepted. Education was not purely ‘material’ in its nature, and could not be

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2. Ibid., 433.
treated in the same way as natural resources or commerce. As the delegate presenting the template on education asked in his introductory remarks: “is a statistic on education possible at all?”3 ‘Yes’ was the expected answer. And this statistical work, making it possible to speak about education in a very general way beyond national particularities, even reached the realm of daily life in schools.

The question of which languages and which concepts enabled the description of instruction and daily life in schools remained nonetheless challenging. Particularly teaching and instruction proved to be elusive objects of general and international valid scrutiny. Regional and national governments faced this problem as well, although from a different point of view. If statisticians assembled at a congress in Vienna thought first and foremost about producing a certain type of knowledge about education, administrators and officials stronger associated the availability of this knowledge to an increasing intervention in the ‘black box’ of teaching. If schooling should become an inclusive experience for all members of society, as it increasingly did, the question of teaching itself and not only the mere provision of schools and teachers had to became a recurrent subject of systematic consideration and intervention. In other words, teaching, and not merely schooling, had to become an object of government.4

One promising factor for developing a language capable of recording the varied realities of elementary schools was the consideration of the organizational side of teaching to the detriment of its more interaction-related aspects. For many observers in the 19th century, the question of teaching and its organization became one of the most crucial problems in the development of mass schooling. Nothing less than the systematization of interactions in all classrooms was credited as being the key for effective educational results. Yet interactions themselves were difficult to measure and to regulate. Actors dealing with the reform of schooling were aware of the importance and difficulty of this task in the shaping of modern school systems. They repeatedly differentiated between existent ‘old and miserable’ – unsystematic – and ‘new’ methods and schools that had to be imposed.5 The process of transforming teaching scenarios and teaching organization into systematized conditions of instruction certainly was difficult and full of backlashes. Yet at the end of the 19th century, educational administrators in

3 Ibid., 429.
5 “Division des élèves in classes ou sections,” *Journal d’instituteurs* 1 (1843): 89.
many countries around the world could look back to older times and consider their mission accomplished.\footnote{David Tyack, \textit{The One Best System. A History of American Urban Education} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).}

This conflict-ridden and difficult transformation of old modes of instruction into new, acceptable ones could be interpreted as the transition towards a systematization of classroom interactions. Only systematization could bring about the constant attention of children and the uninterrupted work of all students in the classrooms.\footnote{These were strong concerns in the early disputes against individualizing instruction: James van Horn Melton, \textit{Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).} Systematization was intended to overcome one of the most pervading features of elementary teaching throughout Europe: individual tutoring and individual teaching in classrooms. This individual system of teaching – as reformers from the 19th century labelled it\footnote{“The Monitorial System,” \textit{The Educational Magazine}, n.s., 1 (1838): 62; Laureano Figuerola, \textit{Manual completo de enseñanza simultánea, mutua y mixta} (Madrid: Imprenta de D. Antonio Reyes, 1841).} – was not parental tutoring at home, but a replication of the techniques of individualized teaching and instruction characteristic of home schooling, but in institutional settings. For this reason it was often labelled “collective individual instruction.” It consisted of a simple interaction – mostly a series of questions and answers – between one instructor and a learner. Regardless of its predominance in elementary schools across Europe and its predictable presence in the United States,\footnote{See the etching at the beginning of Daniel Claus, \textit{A Primer for the Use of Mohawk Children} (London: Printed by C. Buckton, 1786).} it has been rarely addressed as a subject of historical research in education, probably because it is a seldom-documented form of instruction. We do not know much of its variations across different countries and institutional settings.\footnote{About the “collective individual instruction”, see Carlo Jenzer, \textit{Die Schulkasse. Eine historisch-systematische Untersuchung} (Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang, 1991), 29–84.} It was a type of interaction that has only rarely become the object of reflection and theorization. Indeed, prescriptions for Socratic dialogue existed, as well as indications about catechizing and conversation. Collective individual instruction entailed more than this. Put into practice in a classroom situation, this mode of instruction could not take into account what other students did in the time the teacher instructed one particular student. The collective setting was here the crucial point, and it became a source of discontent regarding the shaping of elementary teaching: How
could children learn alone if schoolteachers directed their attention to only one student? What did students do in the time they were not being examined by the teacher? Critics observed that children often learned something only when they were in direct contact with their teacher, and in fact many of them were fully inactive most of the time, or they played rather than they were supposed to be learning: “As so large a portion of time and labor was spent in setting up tasks, and the master’s attention was much occupied with individuals, little useful supervision was exercised over the rest, who, being left largely to their own devices, trifled, played tricks and underhand games, were ever on the watch for opportunities of mischief, and in a word wasted much valuable time.” A considerable majority of elementary schools lacked organizational designs that could guarantee the simultaneous activity of all children. Whereas universities had systematic forms for imparting knowledge that included organizational and interactional aspects – lectio, disputatio, repetitio – and grammar schools increasingly implemented forms of grouping students in classes that became more refined in the course of time, rural and urban elementary schools throughout Europe still practiced time-wasting forms of instruction.

Collective individual instruction’s survival over centuries resulted from its high compatibility with the setting of schooling in early modern Europe. School attendance was irregular, mostly seasonal, and it thus followed that programs and routines for teaching and learning took individuals and not groups as their points of reference. This happened independently of official regulations defining teaching and the organization of classrooms based on groups and classes. Furthermore, the limited availability of textbooks and their form, which frequently did not organize lessons and contents for different grades or classes, reinforced this tendency. Taking the individual advancement of learning as the pivotal factor in shaping teaching was not the same thing as modern and reflective forms of individualization of teaching. Early modern individualization in

14 Jenzer, Die Schulkasse, 30–5.
15 Kirk, Unterrichtstheorie in Bilddokumenten, 429.
school contexts did not mean that overall organizational designs existed. In early modern times, critics already argued that this pattern of teaching was unnatural and not rational; Johann Amos Comenius was probably the most outspoken among them. His work on didactics consistently theorized the need, nature and consequences of collective teaching and he presented an alternative to the dominant teaching practices in elementary schools.\footnote{16} But collective individual instruction lost its legitimacy in the eyes of enlightened reformers only in the second half of the 18th century.\footnote{17} They mainly questioned the time wasted due to individual instruction and the fact that no effective supervision of the whole group was possible.

These repeatedly formulated critiques motivated numerous reforms of elementary teaching – particularly in Austria,\footnote{18} Switzerland,\footnote{19} the Netherlands\footnote{20} and many German states.\footnote{21} The reforms included the introduction of group teaching,
indications about the classification of children, and more precise curricula. Scattered evidence calls into doubt the lasting effect of these efforts to regulate teaching. Moreover, the largest European countries were far from initiating comprehensive reforms in school teaching. The tepid pace of change towards a more moralizing and productive form of teaching meant that the transformation of the older individualizing techniques remained a task during the whole 19th century. The long process of transforming old teaching scenarios into modern, age-graded classes was probably the most significant transformation of teaching techniques in 19th century. Only after systematizing and organizing the teaching of big groups of students were further considerations about the pedagogical value of instructional interactions realistic projects. At first, this transformation included European and North American countries, then it became an inescapable pattern for shaping elementary teaching around the world.

The crucial difference between old forms of teaching and the new ones was epitomized in the existence of a proper system of interactions, absent in the individualized mode. The moments of idleness or uncontrolled behaviour, a central feature of the old instruction, was reduced to a minimum in modern group teaching. A systematization of interactions guaranteed that children did not remain unobserved any longer and this became a pivotal element in avoiding wasting instructional time. The result of this transformation – group teaching in rationalized and controlled settings – has been recognized as a social system with its own characteristics. Yet the task of systematizing interactions was by no means simple. From the viewpoint of social systems theory, interactions constitute the simplest type of social systems, a system functioning through the basic difference present/absent. Interaction demands a type of bodily co-presence – even if through electronic media. In this sense, Niklas Luhmann emphasized that interactions concern both “the physical and the mental abilities.” Of course, the collective individual instruction also complied with this criterion. Teachers and children were co-present and even those children who were not supervised or examined by the teacher may have paid attention from time to time to the instructional sequence or to examination focused on another schoolmate. Yet modern teaching as system of interactions does not leave this possibility to

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chance or to the mood and inclination of the individuals. It rather makes the attempt to solve this problem by achieving a type of ‘steadiness of the transient’ (Verstetigung des Flüchtigen). This operation takes the form of an increased systematization of interactions that makes the otherwise improbable collective attention of all participants more likely. A systematization of interactions in classroom teaching guarantees a constant integration of all participants not only through their body presence, but also through the schematization of possible interactions. This control over interactions is only possible because individual bodies are identifiable and located even in crowded classrooms. The visibility of the bodies in the classroom constitutes the basis for the “perception of being perceived”, ideally leading to constant attention during teaching.

The systematization of interactions intended the interruption of inconstant pupil attention, the redirection of pupils’ gazes and the emergence of a central dramaturgy of instructional sequences. ‘Systematizing’ means multiplying and concentrating interactions. For this purpose, teaching as a system of interactions required a series of coercive operations that were not possible in the old system of individualized instruction. The rod – until early modern times the symbol for teachers in the images representing them – may have played a role in the task of coercing children. Enlightened reformers deemed the overly intensive use of the rod counterproductive, and not only because of humanitarian reasons: If punishing becomes the most intensive task of teachers, the central task of teaching would eventually not take place at all. Instead, coercive measures for the systematization of interaction resulted from general reflections and principles that, as a program of governing children’s behaviour in schools, should remain non-arbitrary and non-contingent and should counteract the personal and changing moods of teachers.

As a consequence of these requirements, a type of interaction emerged in the classroom that was rather infrequent in other social settings. Teachers

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collectively addressing a crowd of children taught in a different way than in the simple individual instruction and constituted a new type of teaching activity only comparable with collective address in lectures, churches, or theatres. This innovation in elementary instructional communication presented difficulties related to the very nature of interaction. The ephemeral nature of interactions counteracted their required systematization. Interactions may often be rather random, erratic and impermanent; they are strongly situation-sensitive. In this sense, the very consistent, recurrent and stable operation of a system of interactions is strongly limited by central characteristics of its components. In this respect, Luhmann considered classroom teaching a “particular symbiosis of interaction and organization.” This meant that organization and not simple interactions ensured the systematization of interactions: “Instructional interaction takes a form that requires decisions that cannot be made in the situation of teaching. In other words: abandoned to its own moods and changing caprices, only dependent upon its own history (…), instructional interaction would fluctuate too strongly and could probably develop further in a type of social meeting.”

For this reason, teaching should not only be situation-sensitive. In order to reach the required level of systematization, instruction should not only be determined by didactical operations; teaching has to result from pre-didactical conditions. These conditions – above all the visibility of behaviour, the production of collective attention and the creation of an audience – are highly dependent on organizational measures. The distribution of bodies in the classroom, the control of their activities, the planning of time units and the composition of all the different participants through synchronization are some of the operations that organize teaching and give interactions a recurrent and rhythmized shape. On the basis of these mechanisms, an audience emerges with a definite role. In this sense, teaching can be differentiated on two levels: teaching as interaction and teaching as organization.

26 Luhmann, Soziale Systeme, 562–3.
Luhmann mentioned one crucial organizational (non-didactical) measure related to the shaping of modern teaching: the initial homogenisation of the school attendants through imposition of a certain age as the beginning of school compulsion. Yet in fact he related this development to the organization of schooling as such and not to the more limited realm of organization of teaching. Curricula, the definition of a set school time, and the localization of schoolrooms are also central operations for organizing schooling. The concept of organization of teaching is the focus of many of the contributions to this volume, which addresses not only the effect of organization on schools, but also the immediate context of the scene of teaching. Furthermore, the volume points at the inner dynamics of teaching situations and the arrangements and grouping within the classrooms. Since the final stage in the transformation of the organization of teaching – age-graded classrooms – was not a generally accepted proposal during almost the whole 19th century, other forms of organizing interactions in elementary schools played a major role in managing the chronic heterogeneity in age and achievement of the schoolchildren. The question of organizing interactions definitely gained importance as school attendance grew considerably, partly a result of laws introducing school compulsion. These models of organization focused on the disposition of bodies and objects, the definition of routines and schemes of interaction within the classroom. They sought to uniformly regulate teaching settings.

A new field of entangling organization and interaction emerged, in which a proper policy of teaching settings operated. This policy intended to intervene in the rather unsupervised field of instructional interactions through organizational designs and, in so doing, to bring about systematized interactions. Rules and regulations for the grouping of the students in classes and sections, the contents of the lessons and the dynamics of communication were aimed at multiplying and ordering interactions. A systematic approach to organization equalled the regulation of central pre-didactic conditions of teaching. Officials, inspectors and administrators advanced this program in a setting in which the reality of elementary classrooms – crowded, insufficiently staffed, ill-equipped – was everything but encouraging and, at the same time, the expectations about the purposes and efficacy of teaching rose significantly. Although the organization of schools had been a consistent object of regulation prior to the 19th century – at least in the very active German states – these regulations did not directly affect teaching. At the end of the 18th century, the governing of teaching itself became

a stronger priority and the uniformity of interactions increasingly became a specific purpose of governing schools.\textsuperscript{30}

In the 19th century, the definition of preferences in the field of the organization of teaching became a pivotal element of policies towards teaching. These policies often included the preference for certain methods of instruction in specific subjects as well. Yet in the context of liberal forces gradually gaining the political upper hand, a frequent compromise was to govern the organization of teaching while simultaneously leaving the selection of specific methods of instruction to the judgement of teachers. Yet the freedom of teaching that was suggested in the realm of methods complemented the more general regulation of classrooms, which was in turn associated with the organizational definition of crucial pre-didactical conditions of teaching. Teachers may have been free at the level of the methods of teaching, but their choices at the level of the organizational systems of teaching were very limited – if they existed at all. The purpose of building a proper system of interactions was beyond discussion.\textsuperscript{31}

Although educationalists and inspectors sometimes portrayed the old individualization of teaching as a system – and they often called it ‘individual system’ – they simultaneously denied that collective individual instruction could be considered a system at all: “The individual mode consists of the absence of all type of assembling: to pass from one student to the next, to give a lesson successively to each individual may be a perfect mode if you have only three or four children. Nonetheless, it is necessary that they are sufficiently talented so that they do not need the excitement resulting from the collective action of an entire class (…)”.\textsuperscript{32} For inspectors and administrators, this form of individual instruction had to disappear from schools, as a French author of a manual of teaching put it: “The individual method is so universally condemned that it is pointless to


\textsuperscript{32} Paul Rousselot, \textit{Pédagogia à l’usage de l’enseignement primaire} (Paris: Librairie Ch. Delagrave, 1890), 326.
consider it.” Of course, the direct contact between teacher and students was still highly regarded among educationalists. For the Uruguayan José Pedro Varela (1845–1879), one of the most outstanding reformers of primary education in Latin America at that time, the individualization of instruction was the only type of interaction “capable to, so to speak, posse the soul of the child (…)”. Yet, even portrayed as a system, the individualization of teaching was generally rejected for school teaching, with two exceptions. First, when some teachers themselves became authors and wrote about organizational and didactic proposals, they not only gave the individualization of instruction the status of a system, but they furthermore legitimated it as an additional option for the organization of elementary classrooms. A second exception is one rather unexpected outcome of the present volume: in the Portuguese-speaking countries – see the contributions on Portugal and Brazil – combinations of individualized instruction and other forms of organization were admissible, and even positive comments on individualization can be found. This stands in sharp contrast to the inspectors and administrators in France and Spain, for instance, who sharply rejected individualization. Even if the pace of change was particularly tepid, negative views had immediate consequences at the level of general regulations, as in the educational laws for primary schools in France (1833) and Spain (1838) that explicitly banned individual instruction.

Three main alternatives – with an important number of variations – were in the discussion throughout Europe, the Americas and other parts of the world in the 19th century: the simultaneous system, the mutual system and diverse mixed systems. The simultaneous system – as a system with explicit rules – was in operation in some schools, particularly those of some Catholic teaching orders or in

34 José Pedro Varela, La educación del pueblo (Montevideo: Tipografía de La Democracia, 1874), 320.
35 Felipe Antonio Macías, Escala ortológica o verdadero Catón metódico para uso de las escuelas: curso primero de lectura práctica, llana, afectiva y poética: ordenado en secciones y lecciones, igualmente adaptables al sistema de enseñanza individual, que al de la simultánea mutua y mixta (Vitoria: Tip. de Guinea Hermanos, 1848).
German-speaking countries. It consisted – as a Chilean manual of pedagogy simply put it – “in teaching many individuals as if they were only one person. The teacher instructs all students simultaneously and all answer to the teacher simultaneously. He imparts the same lesson, the same explication, to the group of students. From time to time, if suitable, the teacher must pose questions to some of them individually.”

Notwithstanding that its definition is so simple and its form is so recognizable as a direct forerunner of dominant class teaching in graded schools, its historiography is still not particularly extensive.

Even if this bears strong resemblances with graded schools, there was a decisive difference between early forms of simultaneous instruction and teaching in age-graded classrooms: age was seldom the only or main criterion for the forming of classes and sections. For a very long time, levels of achievement also played a major role in how children were grouped in the classroom. The introduction of graded schools in many urban school systems in the United States after 1840 certainly was a breakthrough for the search for a general design to organize schools and teaching. It also received attention from European and South American countries, among others. But even in the United States, the problem of the “organization of an ungraded school” remained crucial and showed that age grading could set a new standard rather than bring about a whole new reality at the level of organization of teaching. For these reasons, in many other countries age grading remained a rather secondary criterion for grouping. An English manual for school management, also published in the United States, clearly stated the pre-eminence of other criteria for classifying children and organizing elementary schools:

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39 Emilio Jofré, Pedagojia elemental (Santiago: Imprenta de la República de J. Nuñez, 1882), 40.
42 For instance: Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, Las escuelas: base de la prosperidad i de la república en los Estados Unidos (Nueva York, 1866).
“Hence age and length of time in school are not the ground on which a school should be classified; yet progress should be commensurate with these conditions, so far that, as children approach the period when they leave school for labour, they ought to have made an average progress (…) Classification is grouping according to resemblances and the real ones in school are ability and attainment.”

Nonetheless, the legitimacy of simultaneous instruction could eventually lend credence to the introduction of graded classes. This was definitely the case after 1870, when pedagogical manuals in Western Europe increasingly dismissed any forms of children's collaboration in classrooms and instead exclusively emphasized instruction imparted by a trained adult teacher. At the end of the 19th century, exclusive simultaneous instruction was increasingly deemed the “only system generally considered as being of truly pedagogical character”, as the Mexican educationalist Lorenzo Pavía put it.

The increasing significance and legitimacy of simultaneous instruction in the 19th century was second only to the rapid popularization of the mutual system of teaching. Also known as monitorial, Lancasterian, or Madras system, its unprecedented transcontinental spread has been repeatedly depicted, and it also attracted much attention at that time. In the words of an Swiss-Italian priest,

46 Lorenzo Pavia, Estudios generales de educación e instrucción (Mexico: Imprenta de Eduardo Dublán, 1903), 36. This was certainly the tendency in France as well: Jean-Michel Chapoulie, “L’organisation de l’enseignement primaire de la IIIe république: ses origines provinciales et parisiennes, 1850–1880,” Histoire de l’éducation, no. 105 (2005).
“the fundamental principle of the system of mutual teaching consists of three aspects; these are the division of the pupils in many classes, the selection of one or more students of the same school to instruct each class and, finally, the simultaneous work of all classes in the same schoolroom at the same time, making gradually progress, no matter the number of pupils.”

In the mutual system, the organization of interactions resulted from the systematic use of children as instructors of their schoolmates. This was certainly an old technique in many European and non-European educational traditions. Yet the level of systematization of this organizing principle in the proposals coming from England at the beginning of the 19th century was unrivalled.

The thorough organization of teaching may have led to exaggerated expectations about its efficacy. When Danish authorities presented their reasons for strongly supporting the spread of the mutual system of teaching, they listed: “economy of materials, rapid progress, satisfaction in the schools (of teachers and pupils), advancements in morals, sound preparation for knowledge other than elementary, relief for teachers.” In addition, the use of instructors, also called monitors, took on a rather progressive meaning in some contexts, as a symbol of the virtues of merit or even as an allegory of republican political orders in some countries. A ‘monitorial moment’ marked the curricular and pedagogical discussions in many countries in the 1820s and 1830s and strongly challenged the other possibilities for organizing crowded schools. Yet the system

51 I owed the term ‘monitorial moment’ to Bruce Curtis, Ruling by Schooling Quebec: Conques to Liberal Governmentality. An Historical Sociology (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).
attracted strong criticism from the very beginning. Anglican\textsuperscript{52} and Catholic\textsuperscript{53} critics distrusted the dissident and liberal networks of the system’s supporters. A transnational discourse against the mutual system developed as well.\textsuperscript{54} Even more pedagogical opposition erupted in German-speaking countries.\textsuperscript{55} Nonetheless, mutual teaching remained the most promising design for the organization of teaching in many nations and, although increasingly discredited, it managed to survive well into the last quarter of the 19th century in some (rather peripheral) countries.

The last option for organizing interactions in elementary classrooms and overcoming the inherited individualized pattern of instruction was of later origin. Both promising systems of teaching – simultaneous and mutual – showed many different flaws that were somewhat complementary in their nature. Whereas mutual instruction was considered to be of lower educational value than teaching by an adult, simultaneous instruction could not manage to put to work and supervise big groups of mixed-age and mixed-ability students. The mixed system of organization was defined “as combination of the simultaneous and mutual systems, taking from each of them those advantageous and good aspects and excluding as far as possible their disadvantages.” It often combined – in the formulations of a manual for training teachers from the Philippines – “the better direct intervention of the teacher on the students from the simultaneous system

\textsuperscript{52} Sarah Trimmer, \textit{A Comparative View of Education Promulgated by Mr. Joseph Lancaster, in His Tracts Concerning the Instruction of the Children of the Labouring Part of the Community; and of the System of Christian Education Founded by our Pious Forfathers for the Initiation of the Young Members of the Established Church in the Principles of the Reformed Religion} (London: Rivington, 1805).

\textsuperscript{53} Johann Michael Leonhard, \textit{Beantwortung der Frage: Sind Bell-Lancaster’sche Schulen in den k. k. österreichischen Staaten anwendbar und Bedürfniß?} (Vienna: Doll, 1820).


and the detailed classification, the order and discipline, partly delegated to young instructors, from the mutual system (…).”

Although in some cases the combination of individual methods and simultaneous instruction was also approved, the main arrangement of the mixed systems of instruction entailed simultaneous and mutual instruction in different degrees. A good case in point was the English system of pupil-teachers that allowed the combination of salient features of both systems:

“Nearly all schools are worked upon the pupil-teacher system, which allows monitors to perform such work as they can efficiently do, but employs pupil-teachers, as apprentices under the head teacher, to perform the ordinary work of the school, thereby allowing the master more time to give to those points by which he may raise the intelligence and progress of the school, to attend to collective teaching, etc.”

The variations in these combinations were abundant, but it is possible to offer a preliminary sketch of the three main patterns of the mixed systems in many countries. The first one differentiated between two different types of teaching actions: direct instruction and repetitions/exercises. Whereas the former activity was deemed more demanding and could only be responsibly conducted by adult teachers, different types of monitors and helpers may have directed the latter. A further type of mixed systems differentiated primary instruction between a more elementary learning of basic skills – with significant collaboration of monitors – and in a more elaborated learning, which required adult leadership and direct oversight. Closely related to this, the third arrangement worked with a more curricular differentiation between subjects considered to be more mechanical and suited to mutual instruction – like spelling – and subjects that never should be in charge of monitors or helpers, like religious instruction.

56 Escuela Normal de Manila, *Elementos de pedagogía para uso de los maestros de instrucción primaria de las Islas Filipinas* (Manila: Tipo-Litografía de Chofré y Cía., 1890), 69–70.
58 For instance: Carl Christoph Gottlieb Zerrenner, *Die wechselseitige Schuleinrichtung nach ihrem inneren und äußeren Werthe mit Beziehung auf des Seminar-Directors Dr. Diesterweg Urtheil über dieselbe* (Magdeburg: W. Heinrichshofen, 1837).
59 Valentín de Zabala y Argote, *Nuevo sistema general de organización de escuelas, ó sea sistema universal de enseñanza* (Zaragoza: Establecimiento tipográfico de Calisto Ariño, 1866).
On the whole, mixed systems of teaching have not received the scholarly attention graded schools and mutual instruction have attracted. In part, this historiographical imbalance may result from the difficulty of sharply differentiating mixed systems as orderly attempts of governing and regulating teaching from a myriad of eclectic and rather situation-sensitive combinations practiced by local teachers. But even within the level of educational policies towards the organization of teaching, actions may not have been so conclusive and unambiguous as asserted. For instance, in the recommendations the Argentinian federal government sent to primary schools to the heads of the provincial school systems in 1873, a strong commitment to graded schools as the ideal form of organizing teaching was apparent. A good deal of these recommendations – architectural sketches, the training of teachers, the staffing off schools, the equipment of classrooms – explicitly took age-grading as the main criterion for grouping. But at the same time, terms alluding to previous organizational patterns, particularly that of monitors in addition to teachers and assistant teachers, repeatedly emerged in the document, showing that transformations at the level of organizing primary instruction were rarely straightforward. Whether this constellation may be labelled as a “mixed system” is a central problem that is not very easy to assess.

The main coordinates in the discussions about systems of organizing elementary schools may have varied across countries; yet the alternatives briefly described above provided a common language for speaking about the form of teaching that could even become the basis for an international discussion on the specifics of teaching. It is in this sense that the contributions of this volume may be national or local in their contexts of reference, but they are constitutive efforts to delineate an international analysis of the production of homogeneity and variation at the level of teaching. Following theories and narratives focused on the emergence of a “world system”, a “world society”, or a “world polity”, among others, studies on the global spread of education have unveiled a whole world of interconnectedness, model building, imitation, and translation that not only affects the structuring of modern educational systems, the emergence of state educational governance and even curricular aspects of schooling, but

61 Only partially an exception: de Gabriel, “Escolarización.”
62 Circular de la Comisión Nacional de Escuelas à los Directores de la Educación Común (Buenos Aires: Imprenta de la Sociedad anónima, 1873), 84. For similar problems of definition in the case of Bolivia, see Santiago Vaca Guzmán, Sistema de enseñanza mutua simultanea en forma de reglamento para el rejimen interior de las escuelas de instrucccion primaria elemental de la República Boliviana (Oruro, 1857).
also basic instructional characteristics. Convergence and entanglements may be attributed to the efficacy of legitimate myths about society and progress, to imitation stemming from inequality and power relations, or to simple imposition through colonialism and economic influence. No matter which leading forces may have been at the base of this development: The emergence of the modern classroom, including the pattern of a homogeneous age group under the guidance of an adult teacher, has been repeatedly mentioned among the salient features of a purported global model of modern schooling. Yet scholars of educational history have somewhat neglected the transnational analysis of the emergence of this dominant form of organizing teaching, particularly in the challenging field of mass schooling.


All European and (Northern and Southern) American states as well as their colonial and dependent ‘extensions’ faced similar classroom management problems during and after the 19th century. This common ground led to a discussion about reform models and to an intensified mutual observation of the respective developments. The present volume unites analyses of national and local developments in the history of organizing modern teaching for the masses, particularly at the elementary and primary level. The outcome of this process is well known: age groups became the main criterion for the definition of “classes”, and classes became the basic unit for the organization of big schools. Since then, these features have been part of the so-called grammar of schooling. The term grammar of schooling is used to describe all the structures and rules that determine the organisation of knowledge, the distribution of power and functions, the curricula as well as the organisation of time and place whenever classroom or school-related interaction takes place.65 Researchers in comparative educational studies claim that this grammar of schooling has become universal at its core and that cultures of classroom management only differ in minor details concerning classroom instruction. The contributions of this volume should advance analyses of the dynamics, varieties and effects of one crucial element of the grammar of schooling, namely the classroom organisation and its management, during the 19th century – that is, before this grammar of schooling became hegemonic.66

The contributions deal not only with different contexts; they also address particular systems of teaching and emphasize different facets of imposing organizational patterns on the interactions in elementary classrooms. They differ in focus and in the range of sources considered. Yet all of them rest upon archival sources or summarize findings from scholarship using archival documents. It is one of the most difficult issues in researching the history of teaching, and particularly the history of elementary teaching, that printed sources are both rarely available and conventional in their data. The transformation of elementary teaching into a proper system of interactions took place in a very conflicted manner, and this


determined the often-conventional character of many documents on teaching. Not least in view of this conflictive character, the volume presents the transformation as a series of struggles. Classroom struggle refers to the ambiguous and conflicting processes like the emergence of legitimacy of experts, the policing of schoolteachers, the difficult settings in which ambitious drafts for reform circulated as well as the competing patterns of organization being discussed. Not all these aspects are the objects of the analyses in the same degree of intensity.

In a first section, “struggling with political and economic contexts”, three contributions deal with different determinants and contexts of reforming elementary teaching. Niels Reeh and Jesper Eckhardt Larsen (Copenhagen/Kristiansand) show how the changing significance of social and political actors led to changing interpretations of the imported mutual system of education in Denmark. These reinterpretations were somewhat surprising and could lead to a reversal of the system’s evaluation. Andrés Baeza (Santiago de Chile/Bristol) emphasizes the economic difficulties of the young Chilean republican state struggling with disadvantageous financial situations during the introduction of the mutual system. Putting the questions of ‘penury’ in the spotlight, he provides an explanation for the poor results in the diffusion of this pattern of organization that does not only address political instability. Frank Simon, Christian Vreugde and Marc Depaepe (Ghent/Brussels/Leuven) stress two different settings in analysing the difficulties the mutual system faced in Belgium. First, the urban context in the city of Brussels and the multitude of actors in the field of schooling are given a central role in the analysis. Second, the major political controversies of the time – including Catholics and liberals – come into play together with a plea for a stronger contextualization of the history of teaching.

In a second section, “struggling for a rationalized pattern of teaching”, three contributions deal with the challenge of producing and imposing central differentiations and crucial rules in the practices of teaching. All three pieces give attention to the mutual system of education as well. Marciliane Soares Inácio, Carla Simone Chamon and Luciano Mendes de Faria Filho (Belo Horizonte), using the concept of school culture from the French historiography of education, present traces of the materials and objects included in elementary schools of the state of Minas Gerais – at that time the most populate federal state in Brazil – and describe the efforts of the school policies in imposing the new, rationalized patterns of teaching. Esbjörn Larsson (Uppsala) depicts the adoption of the mutual system and its changes in Sweden as an effort to rationalize practices. The main purpose of mutual teaching – rapidly extending elementary mass schooling – was both secondary (taking into account the high levels of literacy achieved
without general school attendance) and pointless for the sole reason that Sweden had no “masses” to be schooled. His interpretation points to the rationalization of practices as a possible explanation for the introduction of the system in that country. Eugenia Roldán Vera (Mexico City) shows the changes in the rationality of teaching in a famous school in 19th century Mexico City: the primary school of the Compañía Lancasteriana. Established as a model school for the new mutual teaching, it became the main display of the work of group of notable citizens of the city organized in the Compañía. Both the school and the Compañía survived the eventful and conflict-ridden history of the country. In her piece, Roldán Vera shows the consistency of the organization of teaching practiced in the schools and discusses it following the concept of a “monitorial grammar of schooling.”

Finally, a third section, “struggling with competing systems of teaching”, departs from the exclusive consideration of the diffusion, adaptations, and significance of the mutual system, covering the simultaneous existence of and conflict between different designs for the organization of teaching. Gianfranco Biandini (Florence) examines the transition to a system of interaction in the different states that formed Italy in the 1860s. His overview considers the multitude of options and situations in those states and emphasizes the changes as the replacement of the old figure of a tutor through the new figure of a teacher. In his piece on the border territories of Schleswig and Holstein in the northern part of the German states, Marcelo Caruso (Berlin) shows how the import of the mutual system of teaching, forced by the Danish crown, met considerable resistance in these German duchies and how officials dealt with the tradition of simultaneous instruction that had prevailed until then. Drawing on extensive inspection data from 1875, Carlos Manique da Silva (Lisbon) offers a unique picture of the state of the organization of teaching in all Portuguese primary schools of that time. He shows the persistence of the individual system of teaching and the varying acceptance of the alternatives. In addition, he also provides data about some specific combinations of different systems of teaching. The disputes over the right form of school organization in Spanish cities in the middle of the 19th century and the emergence of mixed patterns of organization as a compromise are the central themes in Marcelo Caruso’s and Till Eble’s (Berlin) piece. They depict these disputes as part of a struggle over competing groups of teaching experts with their own proposals for the organization of elementary classrooms.

In a postscript based on attentive reading of all pieces of this volume, Melissa Vick (James Cook University, Townsville/Australia) gives some theoretical and historiographical insights for further research in the field of the history of teaching settings and teaching practices. With her background in the history of
nineteenth century schooling and teacher education, she suggests a series of perspectives for further developing the historiography of teaching. Of course, the volume does not address the whole range of questions and processes related to the crucial transition to teaching as a system of interactions. Particularly, the early adoption of graded schools in urban school systems in the United States – following ground-breaking work by David Tyack, Larry Cuban and David Hogan – still has to be assessed within the broader international picture. Furthermore, developments in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe are absent. Whether scholarship on these subjects in the respective languages exists is difficult to assess. This would be a painstaking but acutely necessary endeavour for a transnational analysis of the histories told in this book.

**Literature**


