

## Reform and change in education: towards a reculturizing debate in the 21st century

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### First and second generation reforms in the 20<sup>th</sup> century

The evolution of schooling throughout the twentieth century, has taken place politically in a context of international intervention with similar parameters and policies from one country to another (Zufiaurre, Belletich, 2010 b). This has led to the field of educational reform offering similar remedies in order to tackle different situations and standpoints. This has resulted in fluctuating processes in the reformers' workload that may be justified in terms of equality, social justice, treatment of diversity, educational compensation – or more succinctly, equity and quality or quality and modernization. The context lends itself, therefore, to confusion in the use of language, in the organization of practices, in the *doing*, in the *wanting to do*, and in the *allowing to do* in education, while education becomes an instrument of change and manipulation, enabling states to play at marketing that which supports an image of themselves that may not be realistic when the economy, politics, consumer habits and life itself become internationalized.

In relation to the problem of proposing to do something and then not carrying out changes in education – which has been a problem throughout the twentieth century, Ulf P. Lundgren (1982) proposed a differentiation between *first* and *second generation* educational reforms. The first generation reforms would follow a parallel course with the development of industrial society, attempting to change the responsibilities of schools due to a certain political concern to justify innovation. This would be a response to a faith in the democratization of culture, the spread of education, the rationality of educational change and the development of good practice.

These reforms fitted into the context of post-war consensus, from 1940 onwards (Jones, 1983). They arose in response to changes in population structure: an increasing number of students, the development of urban phenomenology, changes in personal relationships and, in the labor market, demands for more and better

educational and professional qualifications. But these reforms were also sustained by commitments in favor of democratic education – as opposed to fascism – and political commitments towards social change. They aspired, in this way, to pass on the authority over school systems away from the field of politics and into the territory of *practice*, which paralleled educational debate in favor of schools that were motivating, open to new ideas and exciting in terms of personal development, while geared towards horizons which would lead the way in educational practice: for example *Emancipatory Action Research* (Kemmis, McTaggart, 1988), *Participatory Action Research* (Fals Borda, 1997), *Curriculum Development* (Stenhouse, 1975), and the *open pedagogies* proposed by P. Freire (1971, 1990).

After this first generation of *reforms*, and in the middle of a period of economic crisis, events developed toward *second generation reforms*. These reforms were based on different concerns from the 1970s onwards, with a clear shift toward political control of – and political use of – proposals for change. The power customarily exercised by administrators, technicians and experts, now became important, but it was to be combined with proposals for a presumed integration of schools into society, for rules governing options for school support as well as for teacher training; with attention paid to calls for special education as a right for all people, and also, the idea of setting limits and redirecting the established distribution of personal resources. The way forward was to plan the lessons, the groups, the materials, etc. to regulate the active participation of students, while supporting a culture of evaluation, and to adjust the organization of school work to the forecasts of educational administration.

During this *second generation of educational reforms*, support was given to features such as integration, decentralization, participation and educational dialogue, while establishing approaches towards content area methodologies that minimize the demands of curricular integration. Gradually, the reforms moved towards models of competency-based curriculum organization (mostly instrumental, rather than complex training of students). This meant that reformist discourses and practices did not fit easily with these cyclical regulations which were supposed to produce democratic and egalitarian effects, and prevailing ideologies and practices continued to hold in some school systems that were subject to the pressures of qualifications, control and delegation of autonomy.

These reforms have brought with them difficulties in terms of innovation and collaborative work because they required a parallel intensification and extensification of the teaching workload (Hargreaves, 2000) (Apple, 1986, 1989)

and favored the development of authoritarian and efficient styles of leadership and management. Market policies will make it easier to give the appearance of action under the guise of order, while the rhetoric in favor of school autonomy obscures the selection and control of education spending. The proposals of educational progressivism, described in his time by J. Dewey (1916), as well as the *new school* options that reflected moments of educational openness during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Pellejero, Zufiaurre, 2010), (Zufiaurre, Rivas, Santos Guerra, 2011) are now long gone, as are the efforts made in favor of equity, equality and compensation.

## **A context of change for the development of education in Spain**

It is in this period of the development of educational changes – in which the reforms were tackled with education as the focus of change (Jones, K., 1983) and in which reforms were based on free-market policies derived from an economic crisis as well as a crisis of sovereign states under the pressures of globalization (Zufiaurre, B., 2002; Zufiaurre, Rivas, Santos Guerra, 2011) – that, in Spain, beginning in 1970 with an initial political and educational transition under Franco, various different Education Acts were enacted: the LGE (1970), the L.O.G.S.E. (1990), the L.O.C.E. (2002) and the L.O.E. (2006) to which we should add other Acts that were more organizational in nature: the LODE (1984), and L.O.P.E.G.C.E. (1995), (Zufiaurre, 2007b; Zufiaurre, 1994). However, there were other political reforms during this period of regulatory fervor that, with the passage of time, have proven to be somewhat delusionary: the Reformed Programs (1981), the Experimental Reform Programs and various proposals for educational renewal (from 1983-84) along with numerous decrees and ministerial orders governing development in education under the premise of integration, compensation, active teacher training, collaborative projects, community development options, etc.,

The situation in Spain, as these laws, rules and proposals were put into practice, was in response to developments in education that had been consolidated on an international scale. The proposals for change, in this sense, were implemented after other countries had done so, while in a short period of time there have been *four laws governing comprehensive changes to the system in 36 years*. The most progressive proposals correspond to a climate in which there was confidence in the independent work of teachers. The proposals influenced by free-market rules tend towards vocational-professional options and efficiency. However, these trends arrived belatedly rather than at the appropriate time and the different laws were at

odds with the social, economic and political climate of the moment. In the Spanish context, there was a repeated scenario in which certain reforms (more or less progressive) that may have been justifiable under certain political situations were superimposed on other situations as the political pendulum swung back the other way and thus ended up being incongruous in their definition, in what they claimed to do, and in their practical implications.

The LGE, being as it was as a reform of the 1970s, was a product of the political era of Franco. It may appear to be progressive, but came very late at this stage of economic development in Spain. The LOGSE, typical of reforms of the 1990s, derived from socialism. It relies on a clearly progressive rhetoric regarding education, but at the international level it has more in common with the ideas of consensus and confidence in the work of independent teachers from the 1960s and 1970s. It was also too late in coming, and its proposed changes to the *constructivist* procedures in the organization of teaching and teacher assignments, disregarded the idea – then in vogue in the field of linguistics – of social constructivism (Terhart, 2003, 1999). Thus, the ubiquitous discourse of the LOGSE, did not fit with the times of efficiency-oriented economic, political and social development. Neither did it fit in with what – in practice – teachers were able to do when faced with yet another new set of tasks and proposals unrelated to and unattainable in the classroom: education projects, curriculum development, teacher planning, etc. Meanwhile, teacher know-how remained under-valued and badly-evaluated and a job well done went unrewarded (Zufiaurre, 2007b), which is typical of bureaucratic systems resistant to change (Rizvi, Kemmis, 1983).

The LOCE (2002), which was more conservative in nature, never really got going. It intended to establish scarcely compatible parallels between *quality* and *effort* and sidelined measures promoting the hard-won universal right to quality education, while supporting a certain amount of school choice and privatization of services. The LOE, a socialist reform in 2006, was organized on a new pairing: *equity* and *quality*, which was difficult to define, and even more so in times of economic crisis. However, to achieve these aims, the LOE neglects to develop these ideas in real terms of the know-how and ability of current teaching staff, of the families involved, of education authorities – regulated by a series of alternating governments – insufficiently dynamic to be able to face such changes. The LOE regulates, in this sense, certain areas of competences – understood as a new panacea to mediate in the organization of instrumental knowledge modes – which are ill-equipped to mobilize the know-how of students in pursuit of their answers (Zufiaurre, Albertin,

2010).

The development of four different laws in 36 years is further complicated by an intermingling of religious, political and doctrinal interference as well as a certain amount of mimicry of corporate values. This leads to an outline of a school education in which there is no place to reflect upon either the practice or the realities of defending these or other rules, or facts and policies. In this great tumult of *trying to change without really meaning to*, the bulldozing of those responsible for putting the reforms into practice – the teachers – was characterized by the symptom of “teacher burnout” – the result of conscientious work – which, to make matters worse is often confused with absenteeism in teachers with low levels of commitment and those who are seen as unwilling to accept any change. In the agenda of educational change in Spain, what is missing is how to assess the effort of learning and the willingness to improve practice (Zufiaurre, 2007b), because a commitment to looking at the best way to organize a high-quality government service has never been in place, whereas regulations and guidelines of an administrative/organizational nature have been favored. That is, there is no chance to open up ways to allow people to do things or to innovate in education, except in those schools and school boards that are committed to change.

The reality of the proposals for reorganizing education and schools that has resulted from the application of different policy areas or fields of action (education laws and their corresponding deployment), has thus become controversial, ever-changing and deceptive (Zufiaurre, B., 1994, 2007b). From this point on, any interpretations to be made will relate different interpretations, according to the mirror in which one wants to be reflected, or the color of the tinted spectacles one is looking through. The claims made for the various laws, might attract expectations that may be utopian or simply disproportionate but which, in any case, will be somewhat far from the reality of the facts that accompany the development of regulations that swing like a pendulum between contradictory administrations. Everyone – regardless of whether they have sufficient criteria to do so – has an opinion on education in Spain and how it is supposed to function, not to mention matters such as assessment or coherence. This is why oversights and errors in education end up provoking a great deal of intrusive meddling and uncalled-for advice that is totally out of place.

The various proposed reforms in education developed since 1970 have various positive and not so positive aspects. The claims made in early draft documents justifying the reforms, or in political speeches supporting them, may themselves be

more or less convincing. But real change in education in Spain has not come and even today remains far off. The “education pact” in place in recent months was and is necessary because school education works best without sterile debates on religion in schools, citizenship education, or whether there should be more hours for instrumental subjects. However, while this pact is in place, there is no room for innovative projects or the appropriate staff to run them.

The *education pact* should have been agreed years ago, in 1984 as a pact appropriate to a process of transition in education and politics that, in the end, never happened. It would have been relevant when the LODE was being negotiated by evidently inexperienced progressive politicians. At that time, the right to public education was recognized, which in itself is neither good nor bad, but which should have been discussed under certain conditions. It should have excluded, for example, sectors that do not defend quality public education as already defined in the 19th century (Zufiaurre, Hamilton, 2011) – a definition that refers not so much to a state school system, with public employees, but a public service available to everyone – without exception – aimed at making the most out of each and every context. Such a covenant can be fulfilled through educational institutions run by the state, by municipal councils, by private patronage and by the private sector, but only under conditions of no exclusion and no school selectivity.

## **Key points in analyzing the many assumptions in school education**

Any action taken in education is and should be comprehensive. It concerns and affects everyone: education authorities, teachers, technicians and intermediate services, families, students, social groups, etc. Thus, if change is to produce a positive effect, then it must not simply be a step towards a hoped-for modernization, with no clear direction – or worse still, with ever-changing directions – while innovation remains neglected. Because if that is the case, social improvement through education will remain conspicuous by its absence, except for some superficial aspects of appearance, such as the incorporation of technology. Since 1970, in Spain, we have seen the passage of an era of modernization in education aimed at expanding compulsory education as well as post-compulsory secondary education and non-compulsory infant education. Adjusting the system to international standards – or making major or minor adjustments to variables of equality, integration, quality, efficiency, equity, etc – has been more controversial and in this there have been steps forward, but also some steps backwards.

From the academic literature of the times and its reflection in the media, it is evident that the most-often debated issues in school education can be summed up as follows:

- the role of (the Catholic) religion in schools
- the inclusion in public education of organizations with private interests and the defense, at the same time, of a network of private schools that do not seek to offer a public education service
- demands for more focus on one subject or another, according to which corporate sector is demanding it (more mathematics, more language, more English, etc.)
- equating educational change to increased educational funding without producing lists of requirements or proposals justifying further funding (compare, for example, handing out free textbooks with putting all school material on the Web, as is done in Canada, for example)
- increased wage claims made through the union corporatism of the day, that is, without counter-proposals in terms of school improvement or change
- undervaluing proposals for changes to be considered before opening up debate on “Education for Citizenship” as a small step, while the way towards “Social and Environmental Studies” has yet to be started (Zufiaurre, 2008)
- demands for the right to be educated in Castilian due to false, vote-catching arguments that do not even explain if indeed this has been put into any doubt, nor by whom.

All this is a poor result when what is in question is the process of school education opening the way for the formation of a progressive citizen.

Summing up the way forward towards an education pact that can open up ways to reform obligatory secondary education (which inherited at its conception what could be interpreted as a mistaken offensive against secondary school teachers, but also a reflection of a corporate need to defend certain interests that did not offer alternatives for improving education for everyone and in better conditions, Zufiaurre, 2007b) still poses a challenge. Secondary education, despite misuse by academicians, is a period of schooling in which knowledge should be pleasing, not something to be stuffed into young people’s minds in an unfocused, learn-by-rote way. On the other hand, despite the fact that there is a proposed introduction of assessment systems in fifth/sixth year at primary school, and third/fourth year of the secondary school, it should not be forgotten that assessment has traditionally been the big absentee throughout the history of education in Spain. Exams have

merely served to judge and classify pupils, and also to find justification for the opportune workings of governments that congratulate themselves using biased classification mechanisms of little value in terms of genuine assessment. The results of the PISA reports are eloquent in this regard. As a mere diagnosis that they are of the state of the situation from which improvements can be made, they are interpreted as showing how some regions function better than others. In reality, since they are continuously detecting mediocre results for a particular educational objective – because students are accustomed to memorizing and do not know how to answer or even understand what is being asked of them – it should be interpreted in terms of the fact that something is going wrong.

In a global context of education, the way forward is not so much to educate and train students for the labor market, but to give them the values for global citizenship, which is to teach them how to play with knowledge/information in a knowledge/information society, while contributing to developing their skills in knowing how to be, learning to find out and taking initiative, etc. In a secular Europe (c.f. previous republican schooling that liberated schools from the pre-scientific stage (Zufiaurre, Hamilton, 2011), we need to prepare a responsible citizenship that is open, diverse and at the same time plural. Schooling must therefore assume a social, democratic and cosmopolitan function. And in this context – leaving aside the confusion created by entrenched or reformulated discourses about the state as a service in the public interest, or about the private sector with all its peculiarities, or about bureaucratized schools or intentionally corporate educational goals – what needs to be done is to redefine what a public education service actually represents today.

The challenges of education today are those of a mixed multicultural society obliging us to change the organization and the ways and means of teaching and learning. These ways and means – in response to demands for inclusivity and preparation for global citizenship – require a reorganization of the know-how, values and attitudes related to knowledge about life and for life. But there is also a need to develop transversal competencies and skills of interest to all types of students whatever their origin (Zufiaurre, Albertin, 2010), based on democratic principles, in order to prepare citizens who are conscientious in terms of coexistence and professionally and emotionally committed to equality, integration, equity and inclusion.

In periods of confused neoliberal discourses and practices, with neoconservatives harking back to yesteryear, education is a consumer product and, although it is also

a social benefit that may or may not solve social problems, it should never help create more social problems. If children and young people are encouraged to get everything easily, it is music to their ears, because it means they are the best, or can be the best, or be the best prepared. This encourages bad social and personal habits and discourages school integration. In schools, it is difficult to question or re-educate against bad habits such as these, whose origins are in society and family. With the initial position poorly conceived, finding solutions for pre-existing deficiencies is difficult. Socializing students in the context of their own lives, not in other idealized, or unjustly penalized contexts, leads to unadapted individuals, when what should be addressed through education is how to stimulate more self-worth, in the sense of being more of a person. Not *having more*, but *being better*.

Aggression and bullying, for example, are indicative of social problems rather than problems in school. They are the fruit and consequence of deficiencies that may show up in schools and to which schools can provide certain answers, but for which the real answer lies in society. Marginalization and racism are also attitudes that affect schools, but education and schools cannot provide the answer to all these social evils and deficiencies. Teachers need to adjust classroom content, not simply give format to recipes of stratified knowledge (i.e., the photocopy culture in secondary and elementary schools, or the activities culture – with worksheets – in infant and primary school teaching), because creating schooling with certain expectations for the future means organizing school knowledge within reality and in the context of the reality of the students in their pursuit of knowledge, of areas of coexistence and of learning, in a context of cooperative modes of inquiry.

## **Reform. But how to bring about change? Readings in education**

Making and proposing reforms in education has been easy throughout the twentieth century. Believing in them and knowing how to adjust them to the real situation has been somewhat more difficult. But considering serious innovations is yet more complicated. In the meantime, when carrying out change in the tasks and activities of school and education, it is not unusual to be faced with the logic of resistance that is mobilized in a complex world which, in terms of consumption and of technological and scientific advances is already undergoing rapid change. Adjusting education to the new global times must be based on openness to diversity, to diversification, equity, multi-skills, knowing how to be and where to be, learning to share, getting the know-how and learning to create and collaborate in a situation “beyond the theory of reproduction” (Kemmis, 1990), or learning to be, to co-exist,

be together, to set out and do things together (Delors, J, 1996).

The PISA reports collect rankings of simple and stratified categorizations which may convey a state of reality but which should not be read out of context, because this only increases the confusion when trying to carry out reform in education. For example, the report that refers to the year 2003 (OECD, 2004) reports that in Spain is ranked rather low in relation to its European counterparts. In order to analyze this, however, the report referred to partial aspects such as, for example, that 25.6% of students do not finish compulsory secondary education, compared to 20% in Europe. These reports simply relate an analysis of the situation: for example, lack of diversification measures, increased enrollment of immigrants, decreased spending on education (4.4 % of GDP in 2003 compared to 4.9% ten years earlier), reduced motivation in teachers and so on. Conclusions may be drawn from such analysis from which proposals for change could then be developed. But the options for improvement are not clear. And so it is that, as usual, in the analysis and interpretation of this and other reports, it is customary to ignore the global context: How much has education improved in Spain? Did it improve or not? What does this mean in terms of increasing student enrollment rates, of increased school populations, of services, of global and partial results, of better training? What does this mean in terms of students being more integrated, more open, more active, more creative, with more democratic sentiments, more capable of collaborating and working as a team, able and competent to live and mature?, etc.

Reading these reports puts into perspective the misleading ideas that can be taken from comparing situations. Take, for example: the high scores in the Nordic countries, especially Finland. Put simplistically, it appears that these countries are better in mathematics, writing, science, foreign languages and the integration of technologies. But it is not so clear why the system works better. School participation is greater, but on what is this based? The teachers feel able to build on the future because they have confidence in it. Investment in education is, in terms of GDP, several points higher than it is Spain. But, unfortunately, the whys and wherefores are left out.

Education and social services are more integrated in Nordic countries such as Finland, Sweden, Norway, but also in another context, Canada, Australia, New Zealand. They are countries with clear performance standards and guidelines. In these countries, there is no place for the fatuous debates on education that go on in Spain. They do have, however, qualifications and standards which depend on alternating political movements. The idea and practice of good service governs the

workings of educational and social services. The budgets for education are the best available. The collaboration between all stakeholders – central, county, municipal administration; teachers, families, students and social groups – is sufficiently evident. Cooperation and collective work in schools is a fact. Monitoring and supervision of the students is carried out meticulously. They address the problems of cultural integration of minorities, introducing language with mediating references to the mother tongue, followed up by strengthening the language of the host country. With similar thoroughness, activities and discovery are exploited with all the available technological, social and environmental material. The same can be said for second and third language learning, working with clear methodologies, the monitoring of new teachers, responsible school leadership and real commitments in teaching practice, among others.

The schools of these countries are models that are to be approached globally. They do not represent ideals for reference, to be simply copied or emulated. Similarly, neither should we emulate the education policies of countries like Japan, Korea, Hong Kong or countries like Taiwan or Singapore. The educational policies of these countries are supported by a culture of hard work that provides social compensation through an education that is highly-valued by families, but they are also supported by privatization and depend on segregation. In these countries, the size of class groups is higher than it is by European standards. There are more hours of class time, discipline is strict, computer technology is fully incorporated and, in order to overcome the claustrophobic overcrowding, many schools are built with large playgrounds or terraces to which, after a few hours of classes, at midmorning and mid-afternoon, the children can go out and do exercises and dance accompanied by music. After a few moments of stretching, they return to their classrooms and tasks. The teachers are in constant communication with each other, because they must produce results collectively, and school directives require it to be so. There is also a great deal of communication between classrooms and exchanges and joint activities are established. Do we have schools in Spain with enough space for this type of expansion between classes, or an adequate organization of schools to provide multi-purpose classrooms and multiple services in order to convert schools into group workspaces? Do school directors actually lead, or do they simply comply with administrative orders? Can teachers in staff meetings make decisions about content?

Within the parameters of the European agenda, meeting new demands regarding qualifications, quality and flexibility is a new challenge for Spain and its different

regions. But this is only done, or should only be done, from a realistic standpoint that takes into account the short, medium and long term. This also means it needs to take into account the organization and planning of schools and education; school know-how; coordination of staff, resources and materials; collaboration between institutions; legislation governing schools and education; school times; the sense of duty, of being willing and able to work within a plurality of models; diversification and flexibility. Furthermore, we must keep in mind that the desire to improve education originates in the professionalism of the teachers who must be respected, not semi-professionalized (Apple, 1989).

The understanding of reality in education is multifaceted, but can and should be distilled from multiple truths, which are and will be those that refer to unbiased reality. The realities that correspond to other contexts are to be taken into consideration, not to be emulated, copied or made into sermons unrelated to the reality of practice and application in one area or another. The fruits and results in education are noticed. They can only be compared for purposes of optimization. They may be, perhaps, the best that can be achieved in each context, but not necessarily better compared to others, as is typically deduced from previously established rankings. It is clear that the idea of external comparability (where A is better or worse than B) is overwhelming education, while filling it with false expectations. But such expectations do not bring improvements in the rankings that can be deduced from PISA reports, or others. Any improvement in education comes from teachers' professional expertise, stemming from their own reality, from which point we can seriously consider the education of future generations.

## **A look at the organization of school education**

In times when education was directed towards a minority (rather than the masses), proposals for changes in education were based on particular views on what "good society" consisted of and on the role of education in the existence and persistence of these views. Thus, in the early twentieth century, education was all about preserving the rights of a privileged minority, while elementary schools were places of repressive discipline and social control. The trends of industrialization lent support to economic expansion and the expansion of education, to the tune of "equal opportunity" and "personal development." To ensure this, it was important to reform education in order to eliminate class privilege and school elitism which meant giving consideration to a more enlightened and humane conception of education and schools, to the dignity of students and their development in a more

democratic society. And this justified the resulting investment and expansion in education in terms of the theory of human capital.

By the 1960s, however, the optimism of liberal reformers had vanished, (K. Jones, 1983; W. Feinberg, 1998; S. Bowles and H. Gintis, 1979). The efforts of the reformers were reduced to expanding the idea of equality and introducing some progressive notions in education, while schools continued to transmit values of docility, passivity and obedience. The evident failure of the liberal reformist ideology when it came to implementing suitable working practices led to the rejection of these reform options in the second half of the twentieth century, because of inadequate implementation strategies, institutional inertia and many other practical obstacles, but also because of the unsuitability of liberal educational ideology which was somewhat over-reaching at the time (B. Simon; 1985, W. Feinberg, 1998; K. Jones, 1983). The assumption that education is an ideologically neutral instrument that can be used to achieve the desired social change makes no sense when the reality lends support to the leap to conservative ideologies that give more importance to *quality* and preparing students for jobs.

In modern industrial societies, education is a powerful ideological tool which reproduces a social order that does not result in greater equality and personal development. Indeed, it inhibits change and prepares the kind of people that the modern industrial economic system requires. However, rejecting the ways in which the ideology operates as a barrier to change, carrying out reforms cannot be seen as an enlightened, but not very successful attempt to pursue liberal ideals using processes of social and economic reproduction processes. In the words of S. Bowles, and H. Gintis, (1979), schools must serve three primary objectives. The first, "*socialization*", means schools should equip individuals with the knowledge and skills required to fill the roles of social, economic and productive adulthood. Second, the "*egalitarian function*", which should serve to bridge the gap between rich and poor and must therefore ensure greater *equality of opportunities*. And third, "*personal development*", meaning schools should promote and foster moral, social and intellectual development.

The role of schools is economic, not educational. That is, they are intended to provide the type of workers required by society (Bowles and Gintis, *ibid.*) But this does not simply mean ensuring that students possess language and mathematical skills, but that they possess certain personal qualities related to productivity: the work ethic, docility, obedience etc., which are a sign of the hierarchical and stratified structure of social relations that facilitate the transition towards the world

of work. This affinity between school and economic structures supports a corresponding affinity between the system of social relationships that the economy depends upon and the system of social relationships that operates in schools. In this sense, the way in which schools are organized into a hierarchy – the use of competition, the status of students, the deficiencies in counseling and supervision and decision-making processes – must be seen from the point of view of how it corresponds to the organization and procedures of employment in modern industrial society: in other words, the school-as-factory. Liberal theories of education give value to “equal opportunity” and to “personal development”. But what is the role that education should play in the reproduction of society? And what are the democratic values that constitute the liberal conscience of modern democratic societies? And what is the relationship between democratic values and education? (Feinberg, 1998).

## **New architectures of working practices for change in education**

Educational change is a sociopolitical process in which individuals, classes, schools, and local, regional and national interests interact (Fullan 1991). It is therefore important to take on board the values, goals and consequences associated with change and assess their implications. Change in itself is not necessarily progress (Fullan 1991: 6-7). Consequently, many decisions regarding the type of innovations introduced into schools end up looking rather strange to teachers. Little thought seems to have been given to them; they seem to be unconnected to educational purposes. For example, it may be maintained that the students will be the beneficiaries of policy changes, but nevertheless, the change is presented as achieving certain results, such as improved abilities or attitudes, or a process whose definition does not even include the participants. According to Fullan (1991: 20), the *belief* that some reforms can awaken in people is not a determining criterion, because the validity of a reform is not manifest, but something that emerges from participation and the educational purpose with which it is implemented. Attempts at reform fail because most curriculum innovations are considered with academic and cognitive goals in mind (which, although easier to implement, are more elitist), rather than personal and social development goals.

While innovation based on materials or resources may be visible and easy to observe (c.f. changes in teaching styles and practices with the use of new materials), changing the principles involved is somewhat more difficult because it takes on the world of educational values and objectives. The result is that specific

educational processes and practices are decontextualized and rebuilt as new structures. Meanwhile, educational theorizing and practice are located in separate compartments on the basis of the division of labor and role differentiation inherent in the structure of contemporary schooling. Theorizing from practice, or rationalizing from “practice architectures” (Kemmis, Grootenboer, 2008), means giving meaning to practice or to what is done. And in this context, the theories that are put into practice acquire historical, social and material meaning and sense, which would also find support in a framework of the “theories of contestation and change” (Kemmis, 1990) – going beyond the “theory of reproduction” (Kemmis, 1988) – as well as in proposals of educational development based on Research/Action (Kemmis, McTaggart, 1988) and the Research/Cooperative Action (Fals Borda, 1997).

In the world of practice, we should differentiate meta-practices (for example, *educational legislation and administration* at the planning level; the *organization of what is being taught* in terms of how they are taught and learnt, or the framework of relations in curriculum development; the *training of teachers* and their responsibilities; *educational research and assessment* or the limits to which one can go (Kemmis, Grootenboer, 2008, 37-62). These meta-practices determine the content and conduct of other derived practices that revolve around them, and in this respect, influence other possible practices. They inform them or enable them, compel practical situations to occur, or take place before they occur, when certain conditions are met. In this context, the skills or virtues of good educators do not come naturally. They are shaped in the environment, becoming the product of circumstance, education, experience, a certain disposition. They are the product of actions that are products of other practices. The *architectures* are built this way by the people involved: external agents, institutions, teachers and students, regulators of school programs, planners, textbook authors, people who are responsible at different levels for what is said, done and referenced, because between them all, they mark out the units of work and relationships in the development of one practice or another.

Through our **sayings** or participation – the communicative dimension as a means to understanding a degree of cultural discourse (language and speech) – we speak languages and use shared code that allows us to understand ourselves, understand others and the world. As individuals, we form part of a number of shared practices and activities in which our individual lives are given shape by what we do: **doings** – the productive dimension (the physical and natural world), which refers to the skills

and abilities that fit into a material area of the economy. But we're also members of groups: families, neighborhoods, professional bodies and so on, that form the development of our identity and influence the area of roles in and of relationships with others by means of who we include and exclude as individuals through **relatings** – the dimension of social connections (life systems) that links and relates what is done in a social and political context which, in itself relates participation and membership in the world of relationships (Kemmis, 2009: 463-474).

The **sayings**, **doings** and **relatings**, take shape in this way through language, work, and power, while at the level of knowledge and individual identity, they reference understanding self-understanding, abilities and skills, solidarity and values. This is the way they will give shape to how things are and mark the possibilities offered in the general setting of education. Clarifying the area and functionality of how practices are organized at these different levels, among all the parties involved, will in this regard lay the foundation for change in education through a better understanding of the reality, and thus make the reculturization of education easier.

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