





Primary Education schools and pedagogical renewal: Reviewing experiences

Centros de educación primaria y renovación pedagógica: revisión de experiencias

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Abstract

Objective: In this article we review the support of several representative Primary Education schools in Spain (2015-16) for a pedagogical renewal that move away from the traditional model. **Method:** The methodology focuses on the study of outstanding bibliography, interviews with significant members, observation of centres and analysis of the content of educational projects. **Results:** The centers selected for analysis show multiple common pedagogical aspects, such as the participation of the educational community, the promotion of creativity among the students, as well as curricular, methodological and organizational flexibility. **Discussion and Conclusion:** Despite the uniqueness of each project, all show multiple common pedagogical aspects. This is due to the direct influence of the Spanish pedagogical renewal developed throughout the 20th century which has shaped the current renewing map of which this article analyses specific examples.

Keywords: Primary education school, Spain education system, Pedagogical renewal, Alternative education, Educational innovation.

Resumen

Objetivo: A lo largo del artículo se revisa la experiencia de varios centros escolares de educación primaria representativos en España (curso 2015-2016) por apostar por una renovación pedagógica que los aleja del modelo de escuela tradicional. **Método:** La metodología utilizada ha sido el estudio de bibliografía destacada, entrevistas a miembros significativos, observaciones de centros y análisis de contenido de los proyectos educativos. **Resultados:** Los centros seleccionados para el análisis muestran múltiples aspectos pedagógicos comunes, como la participación de la comunidad educativa, el fomento de la creatividad en los alumnos y la flexibilidad curricular, metodológica y organizativa. **Discusión y conclusión:** Las coincidencias y aspectos comunes en los centros evaluados se deben a la influencia directa de la renovación pedagógica española desarrollada a lo largo del siglo XX que ha configurado el mapa renovador actual del que en este artículo se estudian ejemplos concretos.

Palabras clave: Escuela primaria, Sistema educativo español, Renovación pedagógica, Educación alternativa, Innovación educativa.

Introduction

After the progress made during the 19th century, the 20th century was decisive in shaping and consolidating the Spain Education System. In this way, almost all the quantitative severe problems of schooling that were being encountered in the second half of the 20th century were resolved. However, despite significant changes in today's educational policy, new problems of quantitative nature are emerging. In other words, since in developed countries the entire school-age population has guaranteed the right to education, 'it is now a matter of making sure that the teaching provided responds to the real needs of learners and the complexity of today's society' (Egido, 2002, p.220; *personal translation*). Given this situation, there is an urgent need to broaden, redefine and orient educational action in the school environment taking for that experiences that renew the pedagogical practice and move away from the traditional school model.

The concept of traditional school as a theoretical construct has continuously changed throughout history, being this a term with semantic and conceptual implications challenging to delimit if we consider its epistemological ambiguity. However, a historical study of this concept reveals relatively clear connotations about its theoretical and practical manifestations. If we focus on the contemporary history of education in Europe, its possible implications show some common pedagogical patterns: poor relationship of the school with the context, excessive use of the master class, didactic stagnation, verticality in the educational relationships, lack of participation of fathers/mothers, etc. In this work, the points that Frabboni (1998) establishes for its characterization are used: centralist, bureaucratic, hierarchical and separate structure from the social environment; teacher isolation and didactic centrality of the classroom; curriculum based on information and the transmission of a given, inaccurate and unilateral knowledge; syllabus and lesson preponderance with the teacher's absolute protagonism; great importance given to the handbook and the individual practice; and finally, a rigid schedule structure.

The goal of this work is to describe, from an open and synoptic perspective, several official Primary Education schools (students from 6 to 12 years of age) that are representative in current Spain because they consciously move away from the traditional school model characterized by Frabboni (1998) and value a vital part of the educational ideals that have accompanied the history of the Spain pedagogical renewal. The work is structured in the following way: first, a theoretical and historical conceptualization of the Spain educational renewal is carried out; second, the methodology used is specified; third, the schools are schematically described according to two categories: on the one hand, a brief historical contextualization is given and, on the other hand, according to the chief signs of pedagogical identity that confirm their distance from the traditional school model; finally, we reflect on the most relevant conclusions found.

The work has three initial fundamental limitations that outline the theoretical

boundaries of its nature and purpose: first, the large number of experiences that are not described; second, the limited information provided by each school (only the one that is consistent with the stated objective); finally, the limitations on the representativeness of the sample in terms of the diversity and heterogeneity of the field of study. In this sense, it needs to be clarified that it is not our intention to offer a panoramic view of a large number of schools, nor the most representative, but only the proposal of five relevant experiences –not homogeneous to each other– united by an extensive distance from the model of traditional school described by Frabboni (1998). Therefore, from a theoretical perspective, the main contribution of this research is to place value on and re-contextualize the history of the Spain pedagogical renewal in the light of several Primary Education schools during the academic year 2015-2016. This review of experiences updates and broad part of the information obtained in other works carried out by the authors individually or jointly, mainly from the following: Pericacho (2015 & 2016). We would like to thank all the schools for their absolute cooperation and willingness.

Pedagogical renewal: a history of teaching commitment and pedagogical innovation

From different pedagogical concerns and perspectives, throughout educational history, there have always been alternative school experiences that have shown a different view of the meaning of education (Mateu, 2011). Initiatives that have constituted a break with the rest of schools, delimiting a part of the theoretical and practical outline of the Spain pedagogical renewal. There is an extensive bibliography that theoretically bases all kinds of historical experiences and current critiques on the traditional model and, in general, on the pedagogical renewal. It is displayed in chronological order: Caivano and Carbonell (1979); Viñes (1983); Mata (1984); Doménech (1989,1992,1995 & 2003); Marín (1990); Viñao (1990, 2002 & 2007); Imbernón (1993); Martínez-Bonafé (1994 & 2003); Esteban (1996); Sáenz del Castillo (1999); Rodríguez (2003); Pozo (2004, 2007 & 2014); García (2005); Dávila (2005); Roig (2006); Feito and López (2008); Soler (2009); Feito (2009); Costa (2009); Groves (2009), Groves (2011), Contreras (2010); Moscoso (2011); Hernández (2011); Agulló and Payá (2012); Monés (2012); Rabadán and Hernández (2012); Pozo & Braster (2012); Pérez (2013); Delgado (2013); Pericacho (2015, 2016 & 2018); and finally, Jiménez and Bejarano (2016).

In recent Spain educational history (19th and 20th centuries), pedagogical renewal practices have been promoted by the most critical sectors of the scholarly community, representing an innovative, committed and transformative way of understanding school. This constitutes a constant historical process of generating new ideas and proposals for the improvement of education, being at the same time a tool for the revision of theory and the transformation of pedagogical praxis (Imbernón, 1993). It draws on an odd number of thinkers, schools, organized teachers' movements, practices and multiple initiatives aimed at overcoming the dominant pedagogical reality at any given time (Pericacho, 2016). A particular culture and educational attitude that has constituted (simplifying its pretensions)

the search for an integral school in its purposes, active in its methodology, democratic in its structures, with transforming potential and open to participation with the environment.

A fundamental part of this activity is reflected (before and now) in two primary points: firstly, the creation of different critical collectives of self-organized teachers; secondly, the emergence of several schools that criticize the traditional pedagogical model. Focusing on the second point (schools), the history of the Spain pedagogical renewal presents a large number of educational experiences that have generated the critical evolution of discourse and pedagogical praxis. However, their study reveals both the heterogeneity of theoretical approaches and the plurality of instructional practices. Thus, experiences such as the Institución Libre de Enseñanza (1876), the Escuelas del Ave María (1889), the Escuela Moderna (1901), the Grupo Escolar Cervantes (1918), the Instituto-Escuela (1918), Decroly School (1927), Grupo Escolar Milá y Fontanals (1931), Talitha School (1956), Estilo College (1959), Base School (1962), or finally, the Escuelas Thau (1963) and Ton i Guida (1963) prove this fact.

Methodology

The research methodology and approach are aligned with qualitative research, understood as a type of research 'that produces findings that are not reached through statistical procedures or other means of quantification' (Strauss & Corbin, 2002, p.11; *personal translation*), specifically within the ethnographic method. Ethnographic research characterizes a type of multimodal, interactive and locally-oriented approach, requiring the researcher's full immersion in everyday life. Of the different research tools offered by the ethnographic method and in accordance with the objectives, the main ones are the critical study of outstanding bibliography, open interviews with significant members of the schools (mainly from the school management team), observations participating in the classrooms (simultaneously with informal conversations), and finally, analysis of the content of the educational projects. A non-probabilistic type of sampling has been used for sample selection, namely intentional sampling (Latorre, Del Rincón & Arnal, 1996). Through this sampling, some Spain Primary Education schools have been selected between 2012-2013 and 2015-2016, which are public, private and publicly owned schools. They are representative schools according to the following characteristics: high degree of methodological renewal with full effect on the entire school, significance achieved in the groups linked to pedagogical renewal and different academic personalities related to their studies, influence on other experiences, these can be located in different databases and networks of experiences in the field, and solidity and continuity in the educational project.

Once a large sample of schools with the characteristics described above had been selected, the possibilities of access and work on them were subsequently analysed. Only those were selected where at least two observations could be made, and two interviews were conducted with significant people because of their background.

The entire observation process was carried out over four years, between the 2012-2013 and 2015-2016 academic years. The number of observations and their duration was determined based on the possibilities of the schools and the agreements reached by consensus. The length of each observation ranged between 1 and 5 hours. However, the average was around two hours. The observation places were the schools selected from the sample, specifically the classrooms of the three Primary Education stages. During these sessions, a secondary role was adopted, as an observer, but to help the teacher in the general routines of the class. This allowed us to get a first-hand knowledge of the processes that were being developed, but in the same way, maintaining an adequate analytical distance. From an ethnographic perspective, all kinds of notes were written down in a notebook. After the study of the records made, we proceeded to the subsequent grouping of the abundant information gathered, selecting only the relevant one to our objective.

The interviews were open, with an average duration of 30 to 50 minutes. Significant people (mainly from the school management team) were asked questions about the history of their school and the most relevant methodological aspects that questioned the traditional methodology. A total number of 31 interviews were conducted. The approach was open, allowing all kinds of information to emerge. This openness made it possible to show and contextualize the relevance of what was found. The content analysis lets us know the underlying pedagogical model in the different educational projects. Thus, patterns and meanings common to all of them were inferred, simplifying the sufficient information gathered. For this reason, the interviews situate us within an integral scenario, through which we collect concrete data, but above all references to the school ideology of each centre. This implied a very important task of dissection and interpretation for the extraction of general characteristics, which although it does not examine each of the experiences described, it does give information about the nature of each centre.

Results: experiences

These experiences are the consequence of the implementation of a school model based on a series of principles mentioned above. These are materialized through a type of school that is transformed as a result of two elements: methodology and organization. The experiences analysed below contemplate the nature of such change. It is a matter of transforming school reality and responding to the new demands of society, through the involvement of the entire educational community. On the ways of doing things, each one of them is examined according to the analysis of each specific experience.

The following five schools are described: CEP (Primary Education School) Amara Berri (Donosti-San Sebastian); Estudio School (Madrid); CEIP (Childhood and Primary Education School) Trabenco (Leganés, Madrid); CP (Public School) Vital Alsar (Santander); and

finally, CEIP Doctor Limon (Puertollano, Ciudad Real).

The following is a synoptic description of each of these schools' realities. The analysis process, based on observation and interviews, yielded a great amount of information that is presented in a conglomerate and summarized in order to offer the sample of an educational ideology and a comprehensive account.

CEP Amara Berri (San Sebastian, Basque Country)

‘If life is not segregated, neither is school’ (teachers from the Amara Berri School, currently working on educational training and advice on the Amara Berri system. Personal communication during the visit to the school, May 2012)

The public school Amara Berri is located in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, specifically in Donostia, San Sebastian. The school is the continuation of a project initiated in the early seventies by a group of teachers in a private school in Durango and Loli Anaut promoted what was known as the experience of the *Equipo de Durango*. Loli Anaut was born in Irún in 1939. From 1959 to 1979 she developed her work as a teacher in private schools, participated actively in pedagogical renewal movements generated from the 1970 Reform. From 1979 to 2000 she worked in public schools. She starts and finishes the Amara Berri project in Donostia: Globalization as a vital process within an open system, lately known as the Amara Berri System. ‘In 1979 I started working at Amara Berri, a school in the process of being created. From that same spirit of Durango, I wanted to start this project in the Early Childhood stage, because it was the one that I lacked to know directly, and I started, as always, giving classes in the classrooms.’ (Anaut, 2004, p.211). There, the main pedagogical bases were created: A school ‘where the community participates, the student body plays a leading role in its learning process, and the teaching faculty takes on another role.’ (Freire, 2012, p.72; *personal translation*).

Amara Berri gives her name to a pedagogical system that has crystallized into a vast network of 20 schools in the Basque Country that support and share a common educational ideology, generating a willingness to network. An open system characterized by research, experimentation and innovation, where the educational project and the organization are harmoniously linked to the structure and daily life of the school (Carbonell, 1995). Therefore, Amara Berri places each student as the axis of the project, conceiving each one of them as a global being (Educational Project of the school, date of consultation: 5 June 2014).

Methodologically, the textbook does not exhaust or centralize the students' work. Its curriculum is not developed around content units but through activities full of playful content, essential activities where the subjects are interrelated. It is what they call: social, stable and complementary contexts –contexts that constitute the basic structure of each cycle– (Pericacho, 2016). As Martin (2010) points out: ‘an organizational structure in

which contexts are stable and rotate periodically and systematically allows the students to deepen the body of knowledge that each context makes possible.’ (p.173; *personal translation*)

In 1990, Amara Berri was considered to be an Educational Innovation Centre of the Department of Education of the Basque Government. In this way, two functions that the school had been implementing until that date were recognized: Research and pedagogical renewal, as well as all kinds of actions related to the permanent training of teachers.

Estudio School (Madrid)

Estudio School (1940) is a private school that covers all the stages of education from childhood to secondary education. It is located in Jimena Menendez Pidal St. (Madrid). It was born in a turbulent period in the recent history of post-war Spain. It continued the pedagogical ideas and working methods of the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (1876-1936) and the *Instituto-Escuela* from Madrid (1918-1936). Some of his former teachers had been associated with the laboratories of the *Junta para Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas* (1907-1939) and had been teachers of the *Instituto-Escuela*. The *Junta para Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas* (JAE) is a predecessor of the *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas* (CSIC). He contributed significantly to the pedagogical regeneration of Spain, thanks to the creation of different research centres and a fruitful scholarships programme to study abroad. The school was founded and run by three women: Angeles Gasset, Jimena Menendez Pidal and Carmen García del Diestro (Pericacho, 2015).

The pedagogical renewal of this school is a bit historical, that is to say, at the moment in which Estudio was founded was a difficult historical moment. These three women (who were utterly enlightened), collected everything that the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* had, in some way, materialized in the *Instituto Escuela* and continued with these ideas at a very difficult time in Spain both from a social and political perspective, that is, to educate children and not to ‘do education’, I think, superficially. I believe that is the magic of this school, which conveys an interest in culture. (Extract from an interview with a teacher at Estudio School and representative of the 3rd, 4th and 5th grade Primary Education section, held on 21 January 2013.).

The school starts from a plural perspective of coexistence and integral formation of the person. Its daily life manifests the intention of generating curiosity for the natural and social context and fostering a high sense of tolerance and respect towards others. Consequently, some of the leading signs of identity that define the school are as follows: learning impregnated with an ethical sense; the inclusion of external activities that stimulate creativity (a vital part of the student's training is considered the knowledge achieved outside the classroom and especially excursions and visits); great importance given to physical education; work through annual core themes; the absence of textbooks as a single material for work; the use of notebooks and work files; the importance of music lessons and manual work is given great importance throughout the school years;

and finally, continuous evaluation, in which attitudes are valued (not just contents), each teacher makes a report for the students' evaluation (Pericacho, 2015).

I believe that the real renewal is trying to make sure that everything children learn makes sense. If it does not make sense... The contents right now in the century in which we live have no weight; I think they have a minimal weight. We provide the children with tools, instruments, illusion, meaning... I believe that this is our job if we do not succeed... I hope we will always reach. (Extract from an interview with a teacher at Estudio School and representative of the 3rd, 4th and 5th grade Primary Education section, carried out during a visit to the school on 21 January 2013).

CEIP Trabenco (Leganes, Madrid)

CEIP Trabenco is a public school located in the Community of Madrid, specifically in the city of Leganes. It was founded in 1972 in the lower reaches of a housing cooperative, following its agreement with the Spain Ministry of Education, responding to the increase in the area's population and the lack of public schools to provide schooling for children. The aim was to develop an open and dynamic educational model in which the school would be a participative and active community, with students, teachers and families as the main characters (Pericacho, 2015). As the school's principal points out: 'Trabenco has an organizational structure that allows direct participation where families and teachers –at different levels of responsibility– share and take responsibility for the project.' *personal translation*) (Extract from an interview with the Principal of CEIP Trabenco, conducted during a visit to the school, April 2013).

This school is a notable point of reference in the Community of Madrid for all types of groups involved in pedagogical renewal processes. Its objectives are oriented to the achievement of an integral formation of students, a constant professional development of educators and the socio-cultural development of the context in which it is found. Some of the main features that characterize its pedagogical ideology are summarized through the following points: expression and creativity, freedom of opinion and constructive debate dominate the dynamics of the school, search for a critical subject with the possibility of analysing and acting in its environment, work in values education on a daily basis, valuing cultural diversity, learning through research and democratic and participatory management of the school by all members of the educational community (source: Own elaboration based on observations, interviews and the school's website).

In conclusion, Trabenco is a school that is concerned and busy both in consolidating a comprehensive and meaningful education for students and in creating educational processes that are synergistic with the family and socio-cultural context. Its long history has allowed a large number of teaching collectives linked to pedagogical renewal movements, researchers, individual teachers and educational institutions to learn about their experience, generating an inspiring collective pedagogical imaginary and the creation of initiatives in the original contexts. As Feito and Soler (2011) state: it is an innovative

and enterprising school where, far from working with prefabricated curricular materials, 'the intellectual concerns –which are infinite– of boys and girls are the starting point.' (2011, p.156; personal translation):

Trabenco has been making itself a little bit through the people that were here, always in this line of investigation, research-action, then... We learn from Freinet, Freire... Significant references... There are those who have also gained a lot from Summerhill... It is extensive. (Extract from an interview with a Trabenco's teacher, conducted during a visit to the school, April 2013).

C. P. Vital Alsar (Santander, Cantabria)

The Vital Alsar School project dates back to 2010. It is the result of a notable demand from families and teachers with Cantabrian educational institutions for the achievement of a public school where another type of education is developed. Some of the first things that are evident in this school are the participatory, emotional and affective character of the whole school community, as its Principal says: 'Our school advocates above all for an education focused on the emotional and affective' (Extract from an interview with the Principal of Vital Alsar School, held on January 15, 2016). Its pedagogical and methodological principles are based on respect and trust; mutual learning; respect for different learning paces and styles; free choice of the intellectual path of the learner; respect for freedom of expression of feelings and emotions; and finally, the inclusion of minorities.

As for the curriculum, due to its public and official nature, it follows the curricular guidelines established by the Department of Education of the Government of Cantabria. However, its organization probably represents the main novelty concerning the homogeneity of the public system. The class schedule identifies the corresponding curricular subjects through 'pseudonyms', so it is observed that 'barrio' (neighbourhood) corresponds to Mathematics, 'editorial' (editorial) to Language, and 'tierra' (earth) to Natural Science. These subjects take physical form through their spaces, which correspond to a particular subject or activity. So it has the 'editorial' classroom, the 'barrio' classroom, the classroom and the outer space (garden) of 'tierra', the space for 'isla' (island) or a kind of multi-purpose room, and the 'taller de expresión artística' (art-expression workshop).

Students pass through all these spaces approximately four times a week, organized by cycles. These are the ones who change classrooms according to the 'corresponding subject matter', and not according to the way of rotating matter in the group-class space developed by the conventional model. As for the times, these are assumed in a very flexible way. The hours are not separated by a bell that indicates the end of one activity and the beginning of another, and sometimes breaks are usually spaces for the continuation of tasks if these have not been completed and the student who works on them decides so.

Looking at the most relevant methodological strategies, their proposal for linguistic and communicative work is of interest, for which they have developed a magazine in which each student makes different contributions with the aim of producing periodical issues with relevant news from the municipality, petitions or social denunciations that each student determines autonomously. Another of the most significant methodological strategies is the 'travel agency' activity. This takes place in the 'barrio' (mathematics) space, and through it, the students design real trips to be made (themselves or other people from the school: teachers, fathers, mothers...). By planning travel itineraries, making hotel reservations or providing food for an excursion, the cognitive scaffolding is set in motion in a comprehensive, real and active way. Equally significant regarding methodology is the school market (a market with real products), orchard work, physical-chemical experiments, or finally, the use of Montessori material for the development of mathematics.

In short, it is a unique school and a benchmark in pedagogical renewal and alternative education for the autonomous community of Cantabria, as well as for other Spanish regions, as evidenced by the enormous demand for places by families from different geographical areas. As the school's Principal points out: 'families from the whole Cantabrian community come to the school and even from outside, we have families from Castellón, Asturias, León (...) who have settled in Santander to enroll their children in school' (Extract from an interview with the Principal of Vital Alsar School, held on January 15, 2016).

CEIP Doctor Limon (Puertollano, Ciudad Real, Castilla-La Mancha)

Doctor Limón Public School –located in Puertollano– has been marked by social exclusion for more than thirty years, in a context considered as a social ghetto, physically disintegrated from the urban nucleus of the city and excluded its community from the vital dynamics of the city and its inhabitants. However, the entrance of the new century marks the beginning of a series of high innovative measures that the school has been planning since then. Thus, this school is currently one of the most active in educational innovation on the official and public education map of Castilla-La Mancha. Several measures in the methodological and curricular field, which reach their maximum potential in organizational matters, confirm this assertion. Two are particularly noteworthy for their significance and relevance:

First of all, a reorganization of groups is carried out for the work of the instrumental areas. This new organization implies an arrangement of students according to the different curricular levels, breaking the general disposition by age. The first two sessions of the day are therefore used to develop mathematical and linguistic skills. As the groupings generated exceeded the number of courses and tutors, the specialists occupy, during these sessions, teaching-learning tasks related to these areas. As the Academic Head

says: 'the early morning hours are much more productive, and we take advantage of them to work on language and mathematics, which are of great importance in this educational context' (*personal translation*) (Extract from an interview with the School's Head of Studies, held on 29 April 2013).

Secondly, they carry out what the school calls the *Comisión de Aliados*. It stems from the need to bring all sectors of the community together to achieve two primary objectives: firstly, to reduce the level of school absenteeism, by promoting the value of school in families, and secondly, to stop the conflict in the school. A committee is created in which all the social sectors of the neighbourhood are represented: families, neighbours' association representing the town council, gypsy association, parish and school. One of the first functions that this group set up was the 'alarm clock commission.' It consisted in informing family by family and each day of the time children had to wake up to attend school. Another function of this commission is to manage conflicts between families and act as a mediator between them, to organize extracurricular activities for students and families, as well as to serve as a visible body of any school and/or community issue that may arise at any time and within the scope of students' families, as pointed out by the Head of Studies: 'this commission of allies has a fundamental function, which is to gather forces, to provide all the demands of the school and the neighbourhood with the support of the community' (*personal translation*) (Extract from an interview with the School's Academic Head, held on 29 April 2013).

In short, it is an innovative and social educational project that has contributed to reduce the level of school absenteeism by almost 20% and to increase the levels of curricular competence among students in the neighbourhood. This also means that many families, due to the closeness and knowledge of a project in which they have participated in previous years, begin to become more actively involved in the school with the consequent improvement of school-community relations and the development of their children.

Discussion and conclusions

This work has shown some of the Primary Education experiences that, within the framework of formal education in Spain, mark educational trajectories that move them away from the traditional methodology described by Frabboni (1998) and walk along the path of pedagogical renewal. They are understood in this way because everyone implements differently both effective methodologies and new realities of technical-vocational, educational, critical, playful, artistic and cultural formation. In the same way that they develop inclusion, promote conscious, active and coherent as well as meaningful learning, and define themselves as cooperative and supportive schools to encourage a climate of trust and personal security that favours the development and education of students (Menchen, 2013).

These are projects that have undoubtedly known and been able to achieve official recognition, both in the public and private contexts, and that has managed to articulate an educational response understood as more coherent with real life and therefore more useful for the correct formation of the human being. They have also been accompanied and even promoted by the family context and the community environment that has configured them as right promoters, vertebrators and energizers of the social life of all families.

Apparently, if the Spain pedagogical renewal has changed over time, because the country's social structures have changed throughout the 20th century, the different tendencies among the projects analysed in this article are also noticeable. Thus, just as the pedagogical renewal of the early 20th century, in which the development of the graduate school, for example, marked the path of the Spain educational renewal (Poza, 2007), cannot be equated with that of the current 21st century in which more heterogeneous and diversified classroom structures and curricula (Gil, Gil & Vera, 2011) can be established. Therefore, neither relations nor excessively general principles can be compared. However, a series of standard characteristics and shared elements can be inferred among these projects: community participation and the assumption of its vital importance for school improvement, special appreciation of cultural diversity, curricular and organizational flexibility, the use of diverse techniques and materials that de-politicize the use of textbooks and the master class, critical reading of reality, and finally, the development of creativity. These are some of the leading conventional features that define these projects, which ultimately seek the path of respect for the interests and needs of their students and, consequently, a real integral development.

We also see, and perhaps here lies the real common axis of all these projects, the structural renewal they promote, which gives them the label of 'renewing schools' *per se* and not just innovators. It is about the axiological plane, the personality of each school, all assumed as projects for change that also put in the collective commitment to the sustainable transformation of its structures one of its chief merits. Without a doubt, these are schools projects from which all the teachers, organized and committed to the process, are erected as real precursors of the process through creativity, solidarity and radicalism, that is, from the root of the problems (Rogero, 1999) for the common purpose they propose.

It should be borne in mind that some of these schools and others that move away from the traditional school model have generated all kinds of criticism in part of the educational community. The main ones revolve around the academic performance of students, the construction of 'pedagogical islands,' the scarce heterogeneity of students, and finally, the possible future difficulties of students when they move to other schools with a more traditional methodology. In this sense, the limitations of our work, as explained in the introduction, are highlighted, since it has only been attempted to describe part of the

educational proposal of some representative schools because they are far removed from the traditional school model with a high degree of pedagogical renewal. To answer these questions that remain unaddressed in the article, essential and recent works such as those of Roman (2008), Murillo and Krichesky (2012), Muijs, Kyriakides, Werf, Creemers, Timperley and Earl (2014), Hopkins, Harris, Stoll and Mackay (2014), Martínez-Garrido (2015); Murillo, Hernández-Castilla and Martínez-Garrido (2016) provide valuable information.

In short, the Spain pedagogical renewal is undergoing a transparent process of growth and notable upward evolution. Firstly, due to the diffusion of these new ways of doing pedagogy, promoted in present-day Spain from the social movement '15-M' (Carbonell, 2015). Secondly, and as a consequence of the foregoing, because as it is evident, this is not merely a pedagogical movement, but rather an elaborate and pragmatic critique of the current traditional systems, in a state of protracted crisis, due to the inadequacy of their educational structures to the existing realities that mark a pulse to which the conventional pedagogical model does not adapt and which requires people, projects and actions that promote a coherent, critical, meaningful, sustainable and effective integral development of the students.

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