

PEDAGOGICAL RENEWAL TODAY: MISCELLANEA

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Stemming from the research “The Fourth Impulse of Pedagogical Renewal in Spain”, this article addresses three key issues: firstly, and as a terminological exercise, it differentiates three concepts that are too often treated interchangeably. These are: reform, renewal and innovation. Secondly, some of the defining aspects that, in our view, characterise centres of pedagogical renewal are presented. Thirdly, some of the peculiarities of pedagogical renewal today (what we agree to call the “third impulse of pedagogical renewal”) are presented. The article closes with some conclusions which, apart from highlighting the main aspects of the article, place topics on the table for further debate.

Keywords – Pedagogical renewal, Educational reform, Educational transformation, Alternative education, Renewal centres.

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1. Presentation: Objectives of the Article and Methodological Framework

The aim of this article, which stems from the research project “El cuarto impulso de Renovación Pedagógica en España” (The Fourth Impulse of Pedagogical Renewal in Spain), is to offer a general, critical and interdisciplinary view of pedagogical renewal today. To do so, we begin by paying attention to a terminological question to clarify the ambiguities that frequently arise in the use of related concepts such as renewal, innovation and reform. Secondly, we focus on the basic characteristics of pedagogical renewal. In this section, our purpose is to explain precisely some of the substantial aspects inherent to this type of school. The third objective is to address some of the characteristics of pedagogical renewal at present, which we identify as the “third impulse”. Although temporally starting at the beginning of the second millennium, the “third impulse” gains momentum from 2010 onwards. The article closes by presenting some conclusions, while at the same time placing topics on the table to encourage criticism and debate.

The construction of this article, which is largely theoretical, is based on the bibliographical review used to construct the theoretical framework of the aforementioned research. In addition, it integrates the debate that took place among the members of the research team following two training seminars: one with experts in pedagogical renewal and the other with teaching professionals from renewal centres. In these

seminars, the people invited debated about texts which, in the form of a presentation, had been previously drafted by members of the research team.

On the other hand, the sporadic information that illustrates some of the sections of the article comes from the fieldwork conducted within the framework of the research project “The Fourth Impulse of Pedagogical Renewal in Spain”. For this purpose, several interviews were carried out with teachers, students and families; focus groups with teachers and families; and systematic observations of seven pre-schools and primary schools practising renewal in various autonomous communities in Spain: four in Catalonia, one in the País Valencià, one in Andalusia and one in Madrid. Of these, five were state schools and two were private schools which until recently operated outside the system.

2. Introduction

Schools today, in general terms, are being called into question. While society has undergone – and is undergoing – profound and structural changes that affect all spheres and dimensions, schools – as institutions – do not seem to have changed so much. The teaching and learning methods, the architecture of the school space, the construction of personal relationships between teachers and students, the organisation of knowledge into subjects, the teaching of the arts, etc. are aspects that have changed little over the last few decades, despite what the laws say or what certain pedagogical discourses propose. To paraphrase Carbonell (2008), we have a 19th-century school for a 21st-century society.

This diagnosis of the school panorama is not an isolated thesis but one shared by leading voices in the scientific community. Authors such as Novoa (2009), Viñao (2002) and Tyack and Cuban (2001) exemplify it when they state that the “school grammar and culture” entrenched in most schools are, in many respects, outdated.

This portrayal, which is too forceful for some and excessively lenient for others, is undoubtedly a partial one because in Spain there are many teachers in public and also in privately funded schools who, discreetly or anonymously and in silence, have spearheaded and implemented projects and practices which, although isolated, correspond to “another education” (Feito, 2006; García, 2017). Moreover, for some time now, we have had examples of schools that have been concerned and are still concerned with substantially modifying the foundations of their educational project, joining the group of schools considered to be pedagogical renewal centres (PR centres from now on).

2.1. Terminological Aspects: Reform, Renewal and Innovation Are Not the Same Thing.

Discussing pedagogical renewal (PR) today is a complex subject because teachers, on the one hand, and academics, on the other, have used – or even abused – the term with a certain ambiguity. In fact, we can see that, historically, there has been confusion between educational reform, innovation and pedagogical renewal, concepts that all refer to educational change (Feu-Gelis & Torrent-Font, 2019).

Reform refers to legislative, administrative and legal changes (Costa-Rico, 2011) driven by administrations and governments that prescribe modifications from the political-institutional level. It is a change, therefore, that is driven from the top down. Renewal, on the other hand, arises from within the educational community, driving change from the bottom up, so that teachers, families and students are the protagonists of the transformation process.

The theoretical approach to models of educational change with which we are familiar has, for the moment, emphasized the distinction between reform, innovation and renewal. It is essential to conceptualise what renewal means, in a complementary way to what is usually identified as educational innovation. Although these are concepts that are sometimes used interchangeably since they share certain elements (such as the need to improve the quality of learning or the desire to incorporate different approaches to the conventional school model), it should be pointed out that, for certain social scientists, they do not refer to exactly the same thing.

In the international context, Françoise Cros, head of the Innovation et Recherche project at the INRP in France, in her book *L'innovation scolaire* (Cros, 2001), presented the results of the analysis of more than three hundred definitions of innovation from the period 1960-2000. Her contributions are suggestive for delimiting the polysemic meaning of the concept and its use in the field of education. According to her, the difference between reform and innovation lies in the origin of the change and is a difference at the institutional level: the educational authorities or the grassroots. The difference between renewal and innovation lies in the objectives pursued: transformation or transgression. The difference between experimentation and innovation stems from the process itself: scientific method or adventure. Finally, the difference between revolution and innovation is detected in the degree of transgression: radicality in rupture or visibility. Coinciding with other pedagogues in our territory (Sancho-Gil, Carbonell i Sebarroja, Hernández, Tort-Bardolet, Sánchez-Cortés & Simó-Gil, 1993), Cros (2001) also situates the incorporation of innovation in pedagogical discourses from the second half of the 1960s and highlights the multidimensionality and complexity of the concept of innovation, which must also be applied to the concept of pedagogical renewal (Soler, 2009).

Pericacho-Gómez (2015) states that “renewal aims to replace or change the model, while innovation only indicates a certain alteration or simply points to the partial introduction of new developments” (Pericacho-Gómez, 2015: page 64). In other words, innovation invites us to address some issues of the current pedagogical model while renewal pursues a profound change that goes beyond the dynamics experienced in the classroom. In other words, renewal, as a vigorous concept, can be understood as something that is part of a social movement and, for this very reason, can question the values and the background of the current model, albeit from the educational standpoint. We could affirm, after concluding the research that has motivated this article, that the essence of renewal has to do with a critical outlook that brings itself into ever sharper focus to change the school model, but without limiting itself strictly and solely to the educational realm.

Before describing how the different educational aspects are implemented in the PR schools, we subscribe to the words of Pericacho-Gómez (2015) when he states that the renewal is committed to “a school that is more active in its methodology, comprehensive in its purposes, democratic in its structures and open in relation to the environment” (Pericacho-Gómez, 2015: page 322). At the core of the renewal proposal is the criticism of a school model –which we will identify as the conventional model–, the main characteristics of which are: the presence of a rigid organisational structure, the absolute protagonism of the teacher, the exclusive use of the textbook as a resource and at the same time a method of learning, useless memory-based education, hierarchical roles, class space as the main learning space, valuing results to the detriment of processes, and little or no student participation.

2.2. Key Aspects of a Renewal Centre

In the renewal school, activity, understood as student action and participation, is one of the basic nuclei of learning. We want to insist that it is not only about performing learning tasks, but that activity is understood as a general functioning present in all areas of the school. Thus, activity guides the educational perspective and, as stated by some of the most prominent figures of the renewal movement of the 1960s in Catalonia (Canals, Codina, Cots, Darder, Mata & Roig, 2001), active pedagogy gives meaning to the learning processes developed by students. Knowledge is not something that is taken for granted or transmitted, in a more or less attractive way, as a package of information, but rather it is something that is arrived at in relation to the world, to others and to oneself (Charlot, 2007). A process in which the teacher's responsibility is centred on “mobilising all that is necessary for the subject to enter the world and be sustained in it, appropriate the questions that have constituted human culture, incorporate the knowledge elaborated by humankind in response to these questions and to subvert them with their own answers” (Meirieu, 1998: page 70).

The teaching role in PR centres changes significantly with respect to the conventional model. The teacher accompanies the learning process, giving the students the leading role, while at the same time questioning, suggesting, expanding and proposing new questions about what the students are investigating. However, the teacher avoids giving closed or definitive answers. In approach to learning, a balance is maintained between process and results, while adapting the work methodology to the group and to each of the learners.

Certainly, PR brings to the table an approach open to creativity, flexibility and revision of the methods used with the aim of adjusting learning to the specific characteristics and needs of each student and each group. Or, in other words, it proposes learning situated in and related to the environment. This fact allows, on the one hand, to incorporate diversity – in a deep and broad sense – in the classroom, even if it entails dealing with certain difficulties and assuming a high degree of complexity when preparing activities, materials, etc. On the other hand, it promotes and values the plurality of strategies and ways of learning. The richness and creativity of this open and flexible approach allow us to affirm that innovative methodologies are not and cannot be homogeneous and unique. However, this does not mean that within the current renewal paradigm there are no pedagogies with a defined method that guides educational action.

For this reason, we distinguish between those renewal pedagogies with a specific method or “brand” name (such as Montessori, Waldorf, Decroly or Freinet pedagogy), and those with no specific method. This pluralism, although it may seem contradictory to some people, is characteristic of renewal. The strength of the renewal approaches belonging to the first group mentioned lies in their ability to be realised and in their solidity. Those belonging to the second group find their power in the fact that they do not ascribe to any pre-established pedagogy and in fact support creativity, experimentation and research into new ways of doing things, thus creating a very varied and unique pedagogical amalgam. In this case, we are talking about methodological eclecticism as the richness and power of approaches that go beyond the unique and immovable formulas –belonging to the conventional model–, as stated by Carbonell (2003). The pedagogical approaches belonging to both groups contain common elements in their starting point, but it must be said, especially after having analysed seven PR centres, that the solidity of these approaches differs substantially. A clear example can be found in their use of ICT: all the centres analysed had a critical view of ICT in the sense that, unlike many conventional schools, they did succumb to the uncritical incorporation of information and communication technologies imposed to a large extent by “trends”, but it is true that not all PR centres introduce them at the same time or for the same tasks.

In the preceding lines we discussed methodologies and we pointed out a change in the role of the teacher in a pedagogical approach based on the activity of the student, the true protagonist of learning. This protagonism is not limited exclusively to the academic sphere, that is, to the way subjects are approached. The student also takes on a leading role in relation to the organisation and running of the school, taking responsibility for day-to-day tasks and decision-making in general. There is trust in the critical capacity of the student and it is understood that the commitment to democratic education involves effectively exercising deliberation and decision-making within the school. This is a key aspect of the paradigm shift that the renewal represents in comparison with the conventional school model. The student takes ownership of the school and feels a part of it while participating in a community where they have a voice and where their opinions and arguments are taken into account. And on the basis of the creation and recreation of the community, the integration of diversity is made possible, the capacity for reasoning is strengthened, the pleasure of knowledge is fostered and more horizontal and respectful educational relationships are built. The commitment to democracy and real participation, and the creation of a solid, meaningful educational community are the central pillars of what we mean by pedagogical renewal.

Regarding the question of democracy and participation, although in principle practically all centres (PR centres as well as conventional ones) put it into practice, not all do so in the same way or with the same intensity (Gutmann, 1999). Broadly speaking, and assuming the possibility of presenting an excessively simple categorisation, we differentiate between the practice of “radical” democracy – as understood by Cortina (1993), Giroux (2005) or Amsler (2015) – and “soft” democracy and participation. Both democracies differ, among other aspects, in the concretion of “governance”, “inhabitation”, “otherness” and “ethos” (Feu-Gelis, Simó-Gil, Serra-Salamé & Canimas-Brugué, 2016). Regarding this issue, we can say that the majority of renewal centres are inclined towards a more radical democracy than a soft one and, in any case, all the PR centres studied in our research are quite close to the radical democracy modality, at least concerning how they work on the dimensions of governance or ethos. Regarding the first dimension, all the centres analysed have a wide range of formal and non-formal structures for participation. Of particular note is the importance given to assemblies, and the great responsibility pupils

have in these assemblies: preparation, moderation, minute-taking, and responsibility for the decisions taken. As far as ethos is concerned, in all the centres included in our study, there is the presence of progressive values embodied in the roles played by the educational community as a whole, as well as in all the daily practices, etc. However, the other dimensions, habitance and otherness, although they are considered in all the centres that have been part of our study, their scope and concretion vary significantly.

The ability to build “authentic” educational communities, i.e. with meaning, in which students, families, professionals and volunteers, etc. participate in a real, active, meaningful way, is another key element to consider an educational centre as being a renewal centre. As with the last two dimensions of democracy mentioned above, inhabitation and otherness, the process of building and objectifying the community varies according to the type of centre studied. Thus, we have renewal centres forged around “complete” and “open” communities in the sense that they are centres that are permeable to “external” agents and collaborative with the social fabric of the neighbourhood. They are centres in which the community (especially families, but also entities, associations and individuals, etc.) frequently enter the school and play an active role in it. However, on the other hand, we have centres in which, despite having a richer and more complex community structure than conventional centres, the practical expression of the community is more limited. A paradigmatic case of what we are talking about can be found in a PR centre founded in the midst of the third impulse (2017), aligned with the principles of free pedagogy, private but not “elitist” (in the sense that the aim of the centre is not to train the elite) and which until recently has functioned as an association of teachers. We could define this centre as a school with a strong sense of community within its walls (as teachers and students are equally responsible for the social life of the school) but it is a weak community beyond its walls (relationship with the families) due to the need for the pedagogical team to protect itself from certain intrusions which, had they taken place, in their opinion they could have weakened the project. In light of this consideration, although the families play a central role in the festivities and celebrations and in the cleaning and maintenance tasks, the same cannot be said for governance or decision-making.

Another aspect that deserves to be analysed in the context of PR is the curriculum. As pointed out by Contreras (2010: page 548), “curricular thinking is dependent on a school model” and is its most evident symptom. The proposal for renewal does not fit in with a curriculum model that prioritises administrative reasons, order and results over the needs, concerns and interests of the educational community and, in particular, its students. It is, therefore, necessary to consider a different way of understanding the curriculum, one that makes room for the student and takes into account the community as a whole, that takes into account the different paces of learning, that opens up to the environment instead of closing itself off from the outside world and that guarantees that the school is a place of life and not a bureaucratic routine. In short, we are referring to giving space to the educational *kairos*, to making room for the right moments for learning (Contreras, 2010) and to opening up the closed spaces that classrooms become. This way, by modifying –also– the architecture and the school timetables, the commitment to renewal can be fulfilled.

From the cases studied, we have observed different curricular approaches, all of them alternatives to those of conventional centres. In general, a globalising curricular strategy prevails (implemented through different formulas and levels) and a competency-based curriculum is very much in evidence. Even so, two of the seven schools analysed opt for a more radical approach in the sense that in many of the areas, there is no pre-determined curriculum which is deployed gradually, supposedly being adapted to the age of the students. In these centres, the children choose individually or collectively what they want to work on at any given moment.

As far as the space-curriculum binomial is concerned, in all the centres studied the learning space goes beyond the classroom and in some of them there is hardly any distinction between the indoor space (classrooms and specific learning rooms) and the outdoor space (garden and playground). This particularity tends to deinstitutionalise the educational work of the centre in terms of control and power, as the aim is for children to learn freely, autonomously and without always being under the watchful eye of adults.

Not surprisingly, evaluation is another of the major differences between renewal and conventional schools. In the PRCs studied, in accordance with the general principles of renewal education, emphasis is

placed on the evaluation of processes and competencies, and students are given an important role insofar as they are asked to evaluate themselves. Even so, there are substantial particularities depending on the type of school: the two non-elitist private renewal centres, for example, completely dispense with grades and report cards. Student evaluation assessment is conducted by means of informative meetings with families. Of all the state schools in the sample, although they are all in line with what was mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph, in one, the rural school, evaluation is conducted by the students themselves under the supervision of the accompanying teacher, and the families can give their opinion.

2.3. The Third Impulse of Pedagogical Renewal

The current process of PR is complex because, among other reasons, it incorporates centres that have initiated the process of renewal at different historical moments. At present, there is a coexistence of renewal centres that are heirs to the process initiated during the second half of the last century, alongside others that have joined the renewal approaches during the early years of the new millennium. We can see that, over the last decade or so, a new renewal movement has been growing strongly. This current movement corresponds to a third impulse in addition to the previous ones of the 20th century: a first impulse that developed during the first third of the century and was fully consolidated during the Second Spanish Republic; and a second one that, in the 1960s and 1970s, was structured around active schools that formed part of an alternative pedagogical response to the Francoist model. This second impulse continued during the 1980s and 1990s with a strong presence of public centres.

Throughout these three impulses, there have been continuities and discontinuities, convergences and divergences that have not always been sufficiently noted. In this article, and for reasons of space, we are going to point out two discontinuities.

The first is of a pedagogical nature: while the second renewal impulse was largely influenced by the first and there was a clear interest in recovering emblematic figures, postulates and proposals that originated during the first third of the century (we refer to the purposes of the Active School, the New School with all its variants); the third impulse is characterised by largely ignoring the previous referents and is built on new pedagogical precepts such as free pedagogy, living pedagogy or even systemic pedagogy. This later impulse also incorporates in its theoretical corpus aspects related to neuroscience, a growing discipline in the last decade, and issues concerning emotional education, among others.

A second discontinuity relates to the issue of training: while during the first and second impulses, initial and ongoing training played an important role, in the third impulse, these have become somewhat blurred – at least in the forms they had taken in the previous renewal stages. A few examples from the educational historiography of the first two periods suffice to confirm this thesis: the “Conversaciones Pedagógicas” organised by teachers themselves in Girona in 1903, the creation of the Escola d’Estiu in 1914, the pedagogical trips promoted by the Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios, the pedagogical work of the Escuela Superior del Magisterio in Madrid, the Plan profesional and the Escola Normal de la Generalitat de Catalunya during the time of the Republic, the creation of the Escola de Mestres Rosa Sensat in 1965, the teaching work of the groups and movements of pedagogical renewal such as, apart from the one we have just mentioned, Acción Educativa, Consejo Educativo, Adarra, the Colectivo Escuela Abierta de Getafe, or Aula Libre which, as Lacruz states, is one of the most relevant manifestations of the educational renewal movement in the Aragonese context (Lacruz, 2016). We could extend these examples by mentioning other initiatives and going through each one of them to measure their impact. Due to the length of the article, we cannot do so. However, we would like to point out a couple of limitations in the form of criticism: on the one hand, we have the impression that, as the administration has institutionalised and bureaucratised ongoing teacher training, it has been called into question in the sense that it has become “technified” and depoliticised; and, on the other hand, as far as initial training is concerned – especially since the end of the second millennium – it is not wrong to say that, in general, it has lost the potential for renewal that some university centres had.

In any case, looking at the current impulse for renewal, it is obvious that the centres that began their process of change during the transition (or the early years of democracy) experienced substantially different political and social conditions from those of today. These conditions determine the proposals that emerged in the light of renewal because the renewal centres belonging to the third impulse have been forged in a framework in which, from the outset, there was no room for utopias or large collective projects. Consequently, it is to some extent logical that they should have a different kind of social and political commitment, and in some cases none at all. However, since a fundamental aspect of renewal has to do with a social-political vision of education, how do current renewal projects approach this dimension of their proposal? One answer lies in the redefinition of the concept of the political as an exercise of permanent reappropriation (Domínguez, 2011), so that the political dimension of education would point towards the recovery by the educational community of the possibility of deciding, choosing and defining which pedagogical model to follow. This question gives us clues to interpret the differences between the renewal of the 1960s and more clearly the 1970s – and the struggle for a public, democratic school – and the current renewal.

At present, we see that some (few) renewal projects are linked to alternative movements that maintain a strong critique of state institutions and shy away from the struggle for a different public education system. We could say that some of them deliberately remain outside the administration, although they do so in a precarious manner and with a great effort to temporarily sustain the project (in the research project sponsored by this article, two of the seven centres analysed belong to this typology). Evidently, in other cases, the relationship with the administration follows other patterns, as some of the renewing centres are within the public school system (in our research, five schools are in this situation) or seek recognition within the state system.

Today, as in the past, we are witnessing the proliferation of a phenomenon with multiple options and trends that defy categorisation. Moreover, we observe how the historical coordinates of renewal are being rewritten with new terms and nuances in the meanings (Soler, 2009). But then, what are the renewal pedagogies of the present moment? Once again, we are faced with a notable complexity because, as we have shown in the first approach, the mosaic of pedagogical renewal is made up of multiple and different proposals.

In any case, it does seem appropriate to highlight three hot topics in the theoretical debate that constitute key issues for the understanding of PR today. The first, of a pedagogical nature, concerns the possibility of whether or not a pedagogy as such emerges from postmodern discourse. According to Trilla and Ayuste (2005), a postmodern pedagogy is a pedagogical discourse without centre or summit, without foundation or commitment. It follows that in the postmodern framework, there is no normative dimension sufficient to define a pedagogy as a general theory of education. In contrast to this thesis, other voices affirm that “postmodern pedagogy is precisely one which assumes relativism or post-foundationalism as a guide for pedagogical action” (Laudo, 2011: page 55). In other words, pedagogy opens up to the possibility of a plurality of meanings.

This theoretical debate has direct consequences for our approach to renewal. The first option implies that current renewal can only find references in the past, that of modernity, where the real pedagogical answers to the challenges of education today are to be found. The second, on the other hand, opens up a world of possibilities in which taking a stand will be an indispensable challenge to be faced in the coming years.

The second issue on which we wish to focus our attention has to do with the historical dimension of renewal. We believe that it is essential to take into account the continuities and discontinuities that exist in the PR between the current period and the previous one. As we have pointed out throughout this article, change occurs in a given specific context and, therefore, speaks of the historical process that has occurred previously. Currently, and from the approach taken by the authors of this article, some incomprehensible gaps can be glimpsed in relation to the referents of the renewal movement of the past in the centres founded at the beginning of the millennium. These centres seem to overlook a past full of proposals, reflections and projects, and seek outside our renewing trajectory for “soft” and imprecise referents in which to find answers.

Finally, we need to address a highly significant issue if we look into the future of PR: the sustainability of the projects. In this respect, we need to make a preliminary remark: while the issue of the sustainability of “innovative” educational projects, the analysis of the elements that promote and make lasting “change”, etc. are issues that have been quite extensively researched (more so in primary education than in secondary education (Murillo & Kirchesky, 2012; Bolívar, 2012; Fullan, 2002, etc.), the same cannot be said about the determinants and factors of sustainability of PR centres in this third phase. Considering, then, the explanations referring to the sustainability of change processes in general, the following key elements stand out: the need for a shared vision of the project, commitment to the process of change, the creation of spaces for participation and involvement; to dedicate time, to have material, human and economic resources, to create a professional learning culture, for the centre to have the capacity to self-evaluate and to be able to carry out a formative evaluation; to involve the agents participating in the project, etc. However, the research that has given rise to this article points to other factors such as institutional support and flexibility, streamlining of bureaucratic processes, updating of the regulations governing school buildings and sensitivity to the requirements demanded of small schools, initiation of private projects without this entailing a curtailment of their autonomy (necessary to constitute a renewal centre), work-life balance (especially when teaching professionals are in the child-rearing stage), greater social acceptance of renewal centres and more presence in the media, initial training that favours a renewing teaching practice, etc.

3. Conclusions

Part of this article has been devoted to clarifying the differences between change, innovation, reform and pedagogical renewal. After this, we have presented some defining aspects of what we understand by “PR centre”, illustrating them through the case studies of seven centres studied within the framework of “the fourth impulse” research. We have also emphasised the variety of current renewing projects and we have outlined some of the characteristics of contemporary renewal, which we agree to identify with the name of the “third impulse”.

This description has enabled us, on the one hand, to point out continuities and discontinuities with respect to previous periods of renewal and, on the other, to highlight some of the debates that are currently taking place in the educational sphere, as similarities and differences can be observed between the approaches of the centres studied. In this respect, the first significant element that we would like to highlight is the reflection that is taking place in the PR centres on the widespread emergence of ICT, which is not the case in the majority of conventional centres. In contrast to certain merely adaptive innovation in centres that have allowed themselves to be dazzled by digital technology, the centres studied demonstrate a critical use of the new technologies acknowledging their implications in terms of integral development and access to information. Thus, the position of PR resists the technological onslaught, giving rise to grounded knowledge, personal encounters and the construction of a common ethos, which is fundamental for quality education in today’s neoliberal times.

Another relevant issue concerns the democratisation of the educational institution. Although it is widely present in educational discourses, the data obtained indicate that the meaning and practice of democracy at all levels should be explored in greater depth, taking into account the current depoliticised or post-political context, which leads to a disorientation of the teaching task, giving rise to the imposition of individualism, competitiveness and adaptability as educational goals. It is worth mentioning that one of the differences between renewal and neo-liberal innovation is its commitment to a fairer, more egalitarian and free society, which implies developing profoundly democratic school grammars.

Finally, we would like to address another of the issues present in the current educational debate and which is part of the history of renewal. This is the issue of the curriculum and the transmission function of education. From our point of view and in general terms, renewing schools are characterised by giving the student a leading role rather than structuring the school grammar around the teacher alone. This means organising the daily dynamics in such a way that students have the opportunity to express their interests and ask questions that lead to the learning of specific topics, thus rooting learning in the concerns and

curiosity of the learners. However, this does not mean renouncing the transmission of certain contents, but that, critically reviewed by the teachers, they are incorporated into the learning process at the right time and in a meaningful and relevant way for the students. We feel it is important to point out this issue since, on the one hand, aseptic neo-liberal innovation seems to abandon this question, placing the emphasis exclusively on the methodological issue and developing a merely competency-based grammar that responds to a large extent to the need to train adaptable and uncritical individuals. On the other hand, there are voices critical of the renewal which, in the name of excellence and the need to transmit culture, omit the criticism of the school function as a disciplinary and culturally homogenising institution, which has historically led to the undervaluing of certain knowledge, cultures, histories and languages. On the contrary, the renewal that we defend here is based on an integral conception of education, that is, on the harmonious development of all the dimensions of the individual that is linked to building a community, where the values of solidarity, respect, justice and equity prevail; and where culture is understood as the condition of possibility from which to transform reality, in a world that seems to have forgotten its historical dimension in the face of the siren songs of the *new digital era*. Taking up this challenge is what pedagogical renewal has historically done; we will have to see to what extent the current impulse is capable of shaping an emancipatory school for the 21st century.

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