

**INTERNATIONAL
HANDBOOK OF
PROGRESSIVE
EDUCATION**

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INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK OF PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

**MUSTAFA YUNUS ERYAMAN
& BERTRAM C. BRUCE, *EDITORS***



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The Rural-Urban Paradox IN Primary Schools

140 Years of Progressive Education
in Spain

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ABSTRACT

This chapter elaborates on the roots and evolution of progressive education in Spain since the advent of the *Escuela Nueva* movement (the Spanish name given to progressive education) in 1876. One hundred and forty years after its creation, many of its seminal ideas still remain active. In this work, we illustrate its current effects by means of two case studies on the integration of information and communication technologies in rural schools. The whole text is driven by a paradox underscoring that we urban education professionals are going back to rural schools with the aim of finding out the keys for teachers' professional development in the 21st century.

INTRODUCTION

The roots of progressive education (PE) in Spain can be framed within the educational and philosophical movement promoted by la *Institución libre de Enseñanza* (ILE) in the 19th century. ILE was founded in 1876 by Francisco Giner de los Ríos and a number of university professors who were fired from universities and imprisoned for defending their professional freedom against the dogmatic recommendations of the establishment. As an open university and a center for second

chances in learning, ILE promoted several educational initiatives for the sake of literacy, such as *Las Misiones Pedagógicas* (Educational Missions; Tapia, 2007), a name given to 70 trips taken by urban teachers for literacy purposes in rural areas of Spain, during the Spanish Second Republic (April 1931–July 1939).

Their aim was to empower people in rural areas by bringing different ways of culture and entertainment through the most advanced media artefacts at the time. This project was born to balance the existing educational inequalities between rural and urban areas in Spain. Therefore, socially committed urban teachers, literate in the use of media (i.e., projectors, radio, gramophones, etc.) were in charge of helping and training rural teachers in the implementation of innovative pedagogies.

Paradoxically, 75 years after the first *Misión Pedagógica*, we urban education professionals are now going back to rural schools to find some of the keys for teachers' professional development in the 21st century.

In this chapter, we provide a number of clues to illuminate the aforementioned paradox based on the historical roots of progressive education in Spain. In Sections 2 and 3, we discuss some innovative educational projects regarding PE ideals that have taken place in the country between 1875 and the present time. Section 4 is devoted to deepening in two different innovative experiences that are currently taking place in rural schools regarding the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) for the betterment of learning. These particular experiences show evidence of the paradox driving the article. We conclude in Section 5 with the main findings from the studies that help us understand the future of PE in 21st century teachers' professional development.

ORIGINS OF PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION IN SPAIN

In 2006, Spain inaugurated a documentary to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the birth of *Las Misiones Pedagógicas* (Educational Missions; Tapia, 2007). The film was driven by a set of interviews with old teachers who had participated in any of the 70 Educational Missions that took place in Spain between 1931 and the beginning of the civil war in July 1936. These teachers recount the stories of their journeys to small and remote villages in the poorest areas of the Spanish countryside.

Even though there was an exodus from rural areas to big cities in the early thirties of the past century, most of the Spanish population was still concentrated around small villages (40%; Goerlich, Mas, Azagra, & Chorén, 2006), far from the incipient progress affecting early-20th-century Spanish cities. For the first time, thanks to these missions, Spaniards from rural areas were able to have access to public libraries, watch movies, participate in theatre plays, listen to classical music, or gain access to art and literature (see Figure 1). These missions, whose main

objective was the dissemination of cultural access among adults from rural areas, represented a far-reaching attempt at social and cultural regeneration, and they were taken to several of Spain's most depressed rural areas.



Fig. 1. Music class in Navarrenisca (Ávila). July 13–18, 1932.

They constituted a project developed under the *Museo Pedagógico Nacional* and deeply inspired by the philosophy of *La Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (ILE), which followed the principles of the progressive education (*Escuela Nueva*) international movement (PE/EN). This ambitious project highlights a real example of the impact that PE ideas had in Spain in the 20th century (see Figure 2).

ILE, the promoter of the missions, defined itself as an institution alien to any interest and religious spirit, philosophical school, and political party, proclaiming only the principle of freedom and the inviolability of science. Nevertheless, during its first years, ILE was the recipient of the leading European scientific and philosophical movements derived from the 18th-century Enlightenment, such as German Krausism. A few years after its creation, the revolutionary ideas of ILE, in addition to the ones coming from the progressive education international movement, had a deep impact on the educational policies adopted by the Second Republic Spanish government (1931–1939).

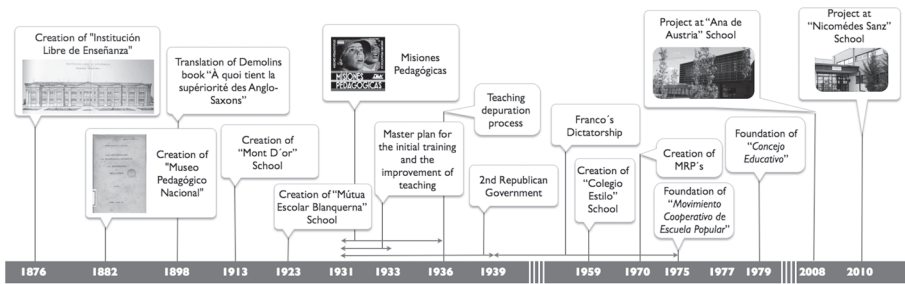


Fig. 2. Progressive education in Spain, a timeline.

ILE was a main agent in the emergence of progressive education in Spain. Del Pozo Andrés (2004) stated in her chronicle of the progressive education movement in Spain that even though ILE members were a little reluctant to admire the first schools following PE in Great Britain, they soon published articles in their journals with this regard. (In 1897, a paper was published on the *George Junior Republic*, and another one in 1898 related to John Dewey's theory and his experimental school at the University of Chicago.)

In addition to the recognition initially given to progressive education by *La Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, a number of factors also influenced its evolution and development in our country. After the translation into Spanish in 1898 of Demolin's book *À quoi tient la supériorité des Anglo-Saxons?*—just a year after its publication in France—describing the very first progressive education schools of Abbotsholme and Bedales, a reaction took place among the socially influential. Paradoxically, two different groups with almost opposite political thinking both assumed the principles of PE. On the one hand, right-wing conservative middle classes from Catalonia, a rich region in the North East of the country, understood this new educational movement as the best way to legitimize and build their own Catalonian national identity (Del Pozo Andrés, 2004), as a claim for Catalonia's independence. On the other, public teacher minorities, most of them enrolled in leftist and anarchist parties, also understood PE as a chance to change the country's monarchy into a democratic republic by educating children in a progressive way. This last group understood PE in a more intellectual and reflective manner than the more pragmatic view of the Catalonian one. Nevertheless, the latter group took advantage of the educational reforming spirit of the Republican government, helping in the development of the so-called *Escuelas de ensayo y reforma* [Innovative schools for the experimentation of new learning methods]. These schools were created by Lorenzo Luzuriaga, a professor who translated Dewey's work into Spanish and who was also the founder in 1922 of *Revista de Pedagogía*, the journal that most contributed to the dissemination of PE in Spain.

The two groups started several innovative educational initiatives all over the country. The Catalonians created the unique Spanish school that was a member of the *International Bureau of Progressive Education Schools*, the *Mont d'Or*. It was an exclusive school that reproduced the educational model of British boarding schools such as Abbotsholme and Bedales, as well as the emerging active teaching methods in the United States. The *Mont d'Or* has also tested Decroly's and Montessori's systems since 1913 (Del Pozo Andrés, 2004). In Catalonia, *La Mutua escolar Blanquerna* was also created in 1923, a school funded by a cooperative of parents eager to have an innovative school for their children. To make it happen, they hired a number of educationists deeply engaged in the PE movement, with the aim of generating a unified school—from preschool to college—following Montessori's method (Masabeu i Tierno, 1989). The school experienced a fast growth in its early years, becoming a touchstone in Barcelona, until it was closed in 1939 after the advent of Franco's dictatorship.

Along the way, the movement of public teachers from other regions of the country, mainly from the capital city of Madrid, also started projects according to PE principles. These projects were created under the official protection and funding of the government of the Second Republic (1931–1939). Of special interest were the creation of the “*Cervantes*,” *Príncipe de Asturias*, and *Alfonso XIII* schools in Madrid. Even though the three were publicly funded, the Ministry of Public Instruction gave them special treatment by allowing them to experiment with new and active teaching and learning methods. These schools adopted the basics of progressive education: *respect for diversity, the development of critical and socially engaged intelligence, emphasis on “hands-on” projects, abolition of punishment, etc. . . .* The model of these schools was soon implemented in several other cities such as Zaragoza, Valencia, Ibiza, and Málaga. Even though there was official support for these innovations, the real agents of the educational reform were the teachers involved in each of the projects.

Soul, Maria, Soul! is what Bartolomé del Cossío, the founder of ILE, used to tell María Sánchez Arbós, a schoolteacher, when talking about what the educational reform in Spain needed at that time. The Republican government not only wanted to build new and better schools, they were also looking to give the school system a soul, one based on the intense training of new teachers. “Every single action to help the betterment of our schooling system will be sterile if we cannot train independent teachers to become the soul of every small rural school” (“*Las Maestras de la Republica*,” n.d.).

The government realized this situation and started to give relevance to its initial training. For instance, during the first 2 years of the Second Republic (1931–1933), the Ministry of Public Instruction developed the *Plan de Formación y Perfeccionamiento del Magisterio* [Master Plan for the Initial Training and the Improvement of Teaching] (Eced, 1988; see Figure 2). This was an ambitious

policy to overcome the poor training teachers were having at that time in the use of active pedagogies. In addition to this plan, the government also put in practice a second initiative based on a number of workshops and courses on the main PE methods, destined for rural schoolteachers. Dolores Medio (1993), a rural teacher at the time, described in detail one of these workshops she attended in her book *Diario de Una Maestra* [Diary of a Teacher]. She mentioned that it was the very first time she heard about the Dalton and Winnetka Plans and Cousinet methods¹ as well as her immediate desire to start putting these methods into practice in her school.

As has been described so far, progressive education had a huge impact on the Spanish schooling system between 1898 and 1939. Nonetheless, the country has never been recognized as a place where PE ideas were born and developed. In 1939, after a bloody civil war, Major General Franco established a 40-year dictatorship that eliminated any sign of the progressive education initiatives accomplished in the previous 50 years, thus contributing to Spanish educational isolation.

MIDDLE SEVENTIES AND CURRENT MOVEMENT

During the 36 years (1939–1975) of Franco’s dictatorial regime (see Figure 2), very few innovative educational projects were developed in the country. Teachers were forced to follow conservative teaching principles. In November of 1936, Franco’s unlawful government established under a decree what it called *Depuración del Magisterio* [teaching deputation process]. It was a witch hunt in which teachers who didn’t follow the regime’s rules in education were judged, imprisoned, and even executed (Crespo Redondo, Sáinz Casado, & Pérez Manrique, 1987). In this risky and paralyzing atmosphere, only a few examples of teaching innovation can be found in the literature. Probably one of the most significant was the opening of *Colegio Estilo* in Madrid, in 1959, by Josefina Aldecoa. In her book *Historia de Una Maestra* [story of a female teacher] (Rodríguez Aldecoa, 1996), she elaborated on the creation of this school under such adverse conditions, following PE ideas. She wrote:

I wouldn’t have known how to define politics. At that time I believed in culture, in justice and education. I loved my duties as a teacher and I dedicated most of my time to it in a committed manner; all about that was politics. We had to bring to our schools the ideas sustaining the Republic; Liberty, autonomy and solidarity. (p. 67)

It was not until the seventies when groups of enterprising teachers, tired of the regime’s restrictions, started the *Movimientos de Renovación Pedagógica* [Movements of Pedagogic Renovation] (MRP). These groups emerged as a revival of progressive education ideas that had been tried before in the country. Initially, they

created summer schools for teachers to get trained in teaching methods alternative to the ones advocated by Franco (e.g., Freinet, Milani, Freire, and Neill). Rogero (2010) defined them as

autonomous and self-organized groups of teachers of diverse educational stages, born to give answer to teachers' needs of permanent training and to work for a model of public School, able to respond to the urgency of making real the civil right to education of all human beings. (p. 141)

These groups rely on Freinet's understanding of teacher education (Clanché, Debarieux, & Testanière, 1994), which considers teachers as the power horse of the schooling system renovation. Moreover, MRPs have currently assumed, with other social groups, the commitment to society transformation by means of education. As mentioned in Rogero's definition, their main objective is to claim the sense of education as a public service that has to be warranted by governments, and the school as a place where culture is created (Llorente Cortés, 2003).

Nowadays, there are a number of active MRPs working in Spain, such as the *Movimiento Cooperativo de Escuela Popular* created in 1977 and *Concejo Educativo* created in 1979 (see Figure 2). Both of them are not just single groups but a confederation of groups working all over the country. In addition, there are several other initiatives of greater or lesser size that, though not exactly MRPs, share the common roots of progressive education. For instance, there are currently more than 100 schools working as "Learning Communities" (Sánchez Aroca, 1999), following a dialogic learning approach (Flecha, 2000), where learning occurs as a result of horizontal dialogues. Previous projects and initiatives can be understood as the ground for the two experiences we describe in Section 4.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES IN RURAL SCHOOLS IN SPAIN

We have elaborated so far on the way education professionals, trained in the ILE and progressive education methods, used to visit rural areas with the aim of developing literacy campaigns among the rural population and schoolteachers. This happened both during *Misiones Pedagógicas* and the movements of pedagogic renovation in the middle seventies. However, according to the paradox posed at the beginning of this chapter, we educators are currently the ones seeking inspiration in rural schools and not the other way around.

An initial explanation can be found in the huge amount of governmental resources given to rural schools in the middle and late 1990s to shorten the digital divide still existing at that time between rural and urban areas (Plan Avanza, 2006). This positive discrimination included the connection of every rural school

to the Internet and the setup of virtual learning environments to connect every rural school with each other. This situation, in addition to the special characteristics of rural schools (e.g, one-room schools, low student-teacher ratio, one or two teachers per school, young teachers, etc.), helped inspire multiple pedagogical innovations.

Other social agents such as trade unions, parents associations, and the movements of pedagogic renovation facilitated the creation of rural school networks able to collaborate in the implementation of active teaching and learning methods as well as professional development courses.

The two experiences we present in this section illustrate how rural schools have been permeable enough to integrate a number of innovations and technological novelties to overcome the weaker starting point of these schools compared to urban ones (as was the case in the early 20th century). It is also an attempt to illustrate the current implications of progressive education principles in Spain, and, finally, a way to deepen the paradox driving this article. Both experiences have strong connections with what Warner Read (2014) related in his study regarding what it means to be a progressive educator in the 21st century (i.e., self-managed schools, emphasis on practical knowledge and hands-on projects, problem-based and collaborative learning, etc.).

Research Project at Ana de Austria School

In 2008 we started a 3-year research project in *Ana de Austria* public school. The school is situated in a rural area close to Valladolid (Spain), the capital city of the Autonomous Region of *Castilla-León*. It presents a number of peculiarities in comparison with other schools (rural and urban) in the region, since it got an accreditation in 2010 for its excellence in the use of information and communication technologies (ICT). Hence, the school has the infrastructure and technological resources to support innovations, including smart boards, tablet computers, educational software, virtual learning environments, etc. Their current lucky strike comes as a result of the effort put forth by the school board in the last 10 years. Specifically, it is worth noticing the role assumed by the school principal, an active member of the *Concejo Educativo* movement of pedagogic renovation in our region, as well as a committed individual with the educational development of the community in which the school is located, Cigales.

Nowadays, the school is a good example of an institution deeply integrated in its community with a teaching staff eager to promote contextualized student-centered active learning methods. The school system relies on John Dewey's "School as Social Center" experiment, initiated in Chicago in 1896. The *Ana de Austria* school stands for learning in the community, with the community, and for the community. Furthermore, the school also functions as a community of practice

(Lave & Wenger, 1991), which has been built in the last few years through the following:

- The school has a stable annual teacher-training plan, democratically agreed, in which teachers are trained in a myriad of issues in accordance with their contextual and individual needs (i.e., methods and strategies of teaching and learning such as project-based learning, collaborative learning, inquiry-based learning, classroom-based assessment techniques, etc.). The school also promotes the discovery and the curricular integration of cutting-edge Web 2.0 tools and technologies such as augmented reality, e-portfolios, blogs, wikis, social networks, podcasts, etc.
- Each year, the school is involved in several educational projects that are designed around a single central issue (i.e., the science year, knowing Roald Dahl, etc.). Teachers in K3–12 grades are asked to design and put into practice several hands-on projects. Furthermore, teachers in early childhood education are encouraged to design project-based learning activities following students' interests (Freinet, 1993). This innovation works so well that the school is trying to implement this initiative in all grades.
- Schoolteachers regularly develop events with the aim of empowering the rural community around the school. They usually ask for participation during the enactment of the activities. An example of this is the annual activity called "Cigales Read" in which children and families are together for the reading of different excerpts of books in the main square of the village. This project can be understood as a progressive approach to literacy (Cambourne & Turbill, 2014) since it constitutes a practice that contributes to making schools more effective agencies of democratic societies.

These special characteristics of the school led us to start an in-depth study to better understand the current practical implications of PE. In this regard, we focused on the specific way teachers put in practice active methods while designing and orchestrating technology-mediated activities in their classrooms. To do so, we developed a 3-year (2008–2011) case study (Stake, 2005).

The research process helped us to identify a catalogue of routines as an attempt to particularize teachers' pedagogical innovations and also as a way of transferring their practical knowledge to other schools and communities of teachers (Prieto, Villagr a-Sobrino, Jorr n-Abell n, Mart nez-Mon s, & Dimitriadis, 2011). In addition, the catalogue can also be understood as a practical tool for the training of teachers in student-centered teaching methods that are inquiry driven and organized around problem solving and investigation.

An additional finding of the study was the proposal of a method to represent and analyze teacher orchestration (Jorr n-Abell n, Villagr a-Sobrino, & Garc a-Sastre, 2014). The method not only shows the complexity technology-enhanced

designs have but also the enactment and flow of the routines. The representation pays special attention to the social dimensions in which activities occurred (i.e., whole-class activity, individual work, or small-group work) and the routines that were associated with each phase of the activity for the students and for the teacher.

Both the method for the representation of the orchestration teachers perform and the proposed catalogue of routines constitute illustrative practices that are aligned with current implications of progressive education in teachers' professional development in rural schools. All of them understand teachers as the basis for progress and innovation, encouraging their training and the acknowledgement of their central role.

More information regarding the research process developed can be consulted in Jorrín-Abellán and associates (2014).

Family Engagement and Self-Managed Training Programme: Two Experiences at Nicómedes Sanz Rural School

Nicómedes Sanz primary school (K3–12) is located in the village of *Santovenia de Pisuerga* (Autonomous Region of Castilla-León, Valladolid, Spain). The school has 300 students and 29 teachers. The school's comprehensive education plan emphasizes the promotion of inclusive and democratic education as well as students' critical, creative, and flexible communicative competencies.

To address these goals, the school principal has been leading the participation of the school in a number of projects, as shown in the following excerpt taken from an interview with Daniel, one of its teachers:

The environmental week is an important school project where we organize physical activities with the aim of learning from the rural environment. I have never seen this in other schools where I've been working. This project is driven by the school principal who is a very active person. (Mantilla, personal communication, 2014)

Most of the projects developed at the school, such as "Environmental Week," were aimed at promoting active learning within the rural community in which the school is embedded. The main ones can be summarized thusly:

1. **Hands-on projects:** To foster a critical and responsive use of environmental resources, as well as sustainable consumption, several hands-on projects are conducted in the school. For instance, students are involved in various workshops and after-school activities. Thus, during the environmental week, students are engaged in sessions to learn how to recycle as well as to construct stuff with recycled materials to be shown afterwards in a rural market. Furthermore, at the beginning of the year, the school

board approves a plan to organize field trips during the year (e.g., to theater plays, museums, urban markets, to the nearby pine forest, etc.). Moreover, the school has a vegetable patch where students are encouraged to take care of plants and vegetables. In addition, and deeply related to the patch, the school celebrates the “week of the healthy breakfast,” where teachers, together with staff at the school cafeteria, are responsible for providing information about the benefits of having a good school breakfast based on local healthy products as well as promoting alternative breakfast delivery models.

On a different level, the school is also carrying out some hands-on projects to improve audio-visual literacy and the integration of ICT within school curricula. The involvement of the educational community in these initiatives is crucial. Despite the existing governmental programs to provide schools with ICT infrastructures, some rural schools are still affected by the digital divide in comparison with urban ones.

2. **Nicomédes Sanz school of parents:** It is known that the involvement of schools of parents in students’ learning can improve the students’ behavior, attendance, and achievement (Taylor & Machida, 1994). In this particular school, it works as the catalyzer of a myriad of educative innovations. The school of parents at *Nicomédes Sanz* provides families with different talks on self-chosen issues aimed at supporting their function (e.g., how to deal with traumatic issues in childhood, how to help children with their studies, homework, etc.). Moreover, it has become a center for defending public education. This way, the members of the organization are developing strategies to facilitate the access to education of every child. An example of this is the educational campaign called Re-Read, an initiative to create a repository of second-hand books to guarantee every child access to educational resources.
3. **Self-managed training programme:** In Spain, the Centers of Teacher Training and Educative Innovation (CFIE in Spanish) are responsible for providing continuous training to teachers in primary, middle, and high schools. However, the current economic crisis affecting the country has limited their possibilities. Presently, the regional educational administrations are not responding to all the training requests made by the schools, as can be derived from the following excerpt

CFIEs are the centers responsible for in-service teacher training, but in the last years those institutions have less and less money to provide experts to the school. For instance, in the past, the school board asked the administration for training in key competences and they sent us an expert to carry out the workshop. Right now, this is not possible. Thus, the school community is choosing which persons are more capable to give training to their partners. (Mantilla, 2014)

Hence, *Nicómedes Sanz* school has decided to develop its own self-managed yearly teacher-training programme in which teachers can get training according to their needs, as shown in the following extract:

In public education, if you know how to do something, it is usually to share it with other teachers ... That is the reason why I'm involved in training my colleagues on how to use blogs. Other teachers in my school are responsible of providing training in different issues such as the didactical use of mass media, or the use of the digital blackboards etc. (Mantilla, 2014)

It is worth noting the impact of some of the actions promoted within the self-managed training programme. This is the case of the one related to the integration of edublogs in the school. It was carried out by the aforementioned Daniel Mantilla, a first-grade teacher for the last 2 years. The project is achieving a deep impact in the school since it is helping innovative teaching practices as well as prompting families to take a more active role.

Daniel has been providing training in the didactical integration of Web 2.0 tools since his arrival at the school in 2009. He considers edublogs as a motivational tool for students and also as a mechanism for reflection in teachers practice. He underscores the great potential blogs have to arouse learning in settings beyond the walls of the classrooms.

Thanks to the support given to Daniel's initiative, the use of edublogs has been extended in the school. Currently, each K3–5 course has its own blog. The same happens in K6–12 courses in which teachers are using blogs on a daily basis. Moreover, the teachers are working on the design of new teaching and learning strategies incorporating blogs (see Figure 3).

I see it pretty clear. For me the challenge now is to leave the textbook. I would like to use them only as a reference. It would be fine for me if the school buys one or two sets of books for each cycle. It could be an opportunity for us to check among what different publishers offer. Then we would be able to use and enrich the activities that best fit our demands. This way, students could access to educational materials more adapted to their real needs. This is the challenge for me. I see the blog as the core of my teaching process. (Mantilla, 2014)



<http://elbloguimetro.blogspot.com.es/>

<http://nicokids.blogspot.com.es>

Fig. 3. Examples of edublogs in Nicómedes Sanz school (primary education edublog on the left and early-childhood education edublog on the right).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have illustrated the historical evolution of progressive education in Spain between 1875 and today. On this trip, initial work accomplished by the Institución Libre de Enseñanza was crucial for the evolution of innovative educational methods in our country. In between ILE's founding (1876) and the current time, several schools have been following PE ideals, such as *Mont d'Or*, *La Mutua escolar Blanquerna Cervantes*, *Príncipe de Asturias*, and *Alfonso XIII* schools in the middle thirties and the *Colegio Estilo* in the sixties. We have also discussed the role played by the movements of pedagogic renovation since their foundation in the seventies.

Besides these few examples of the work accomplished by Spanish educators in the last two centuries, we can now say that they sowed the seeds for projects such as the ones presented in section 4. Both experiences have a number of connections with PE ideals:

1. The two schools are deeply engaged with their communities. Projects such as Cigales Read at Ana de Austria school, in which the community share and discuss book excerpts in the main square of the village, or the school of parents launched at *Nicómedes Sanz*, constitute a rich set of experiences that promote critical transformative dialogues in the villages of Cigales and Santovenia de Pisuerga. They also highlight the involvement of families and rural communities in children's education.
2. Both schools are characterized by an active staff eager to promote innovations in daily school life. Projects such as "The Year of Science" and "Knowing Roald Dahl" at Ana de Austria and the vegetable patch at *Nicómedes Sanz* underscore teachers' engagement in students' preparation.
3. Active learning methods such as project-based learning, class debates, and real-life simulations are the cornerstone of teachers' practice in both cases.
4. It is worth noting that teachers in the two schools have promoted self-managed professional development plans that are out of the regular institutionally supported initiatives. This autonomy is deeply aligned with progressive education principles.
5. Finally, in both schools, there is a crucial leader figure trained under the influence of PE ideals. That is the case of the Ana de Austria school principal, and Daniel, the teacher that put into practice the use of blogs at *Nicómedes Sanz*. They can be seen, in some way, as the engine fueling the innovations taking place in their contexts. As Bartolomé del Cossío would have said, they are the soul of the small revolutions in their schools.

These two experiences show that even though progressive education has had a long tradition in Spain, it needs to be continually recreated in new situations. As

researchers, we have had to return to rural areas to find schools promoting reflective communities of practice (Lave et al., 1991) that bring back Sprague Mitchell's (1931) ideas on the importance of teacher education as a key to educational reform and innovation. This chapter is an example of the different places where innovative practices can be found and a stimulus to keep on searching for new paths for 21st-century progressive education.

NOTE

1. Dalton and Winnetka Plans were educational models created by Helen Parkhurst and Carleton Washburne in 1914 and 1919 respectively. They were inspired by a myriad of educational thinkers coming from Progressive Education movement (e.g. John Dewey, Roger Cousinet, María Montessori, etc.). The underlying ideas behind these plans were to achieve a balance between child talents and the needs of the community. Thus, the plans tried to promote student's social skills and self-reliance as well as the attempt to expand educational focus to creative activities and emotional and social development. The plans were widely imitated and led to shifts in curriculum focus across the United States.

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