

Cultural Studies and Transdisciplinarity in Education 3
Series Editors: Aaron Koh · Victoria Carrington

Encarna Rodríguez *Editor*

Pedagogies and Curriculums to (Re)imagine Public Education

Transnational Tales of Hope and
Resistance

 Springer

Cultural Studies and Transdisciplinarity in Education

Volume 3

Series Editors

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We live in a time where the complex nature and implications of social, political and cultural issues for individuals and groups is increasingly clear. While this may lead some to focus on smaller and smaller units of analysis in the hope that by understanding the parts we may begin to understand the whole, this book series is premised on the strongly held view that researchers, practitioners and policy makers interested in education will increasingly need to integrate knowledge gained from a range of disciplinary and theoretical sources in order to frame and address these complex issues. A transdisciplinary approach takes account the uncertainty of knowledge and the complexity of social and cultural issues relevant to education. It acknowledges that there will be unresolved tensions and that these should be seen as productive. With this in mind, the reflexive and critical nature of cultural studies and its focus on the processes and currents that construct our daily lives has made it a central point of reference for many working in the contemporary social sciences and education.

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Encarna Rodríguez
Editor

Pedagogies and Curriculums to (Re)imagine Public Education

Transnational Tales of Hope and Resistance

 Springer

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To my husband, John, a committed and loving Philadelphia public school teacher whose work reminds me everyday that the educational future of disenfranchised students depends on our ability to (re)claim the democratic promises of public education

[public] Schools embody the dreams we have for our children. All of them. These dreams must remain public property.

Deborah Meier, *The Power of Their Ideas*

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About the Editor

Encarna Rodríguez, PhD, is associate professor of education in the Department of Educational Leadership at Saint Joseph's University, Philadelphia, United States. She is the author of *Neoliberalismo, Educación y Género: Análisis Crítico de la Reforma Educativa Española* [neoliberalism, education and gender: A critical analysis of the Spanish education reform] (Madrid: La Piqueta). Her research on neoliberalism and education has been published in journals such as *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, *Revista de Educación*, or *Journal of Pedagogy*. Her research on internationalizing teacher education has been published in *Teacher Education Quarterly* and *Scholar-Practitioner Quarterly*.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Encarna Rodríguez

I have always believed in public education. I had no choice, really. Growing up in the poor and rural Spain of the 1960s, still under a fascist dictatorship, I soon realized that schooling was the gift of an entire generation of Spaniards that, like my parents, had entrusted education with their hopes for a better future for their children. I held this belief despite the feelings of emptiness and alienation that defined my own educational experience. As I fulfilled my parents' dreams and achieved the education never available to them, I also unknowingly became the silent recipient of a curriculum that effectively ignored the social and political histories of those around me and conveyed a body of knowledge that was hardly relevant to the mining community in which I lived. I continued believing in public schools even as I faced my first disappointment with the notion of education as a democratic political tool. As a young professional in the new democratic Spain of the 1980s, I enthusiastically embraced the new socialist education reform promising to prepare the new generation of Spaniards to reject the authoritarian propositions that sustained the former dictatorial regime and to educate active participants in the consolidation of the new democratic regime. With an emphasis on compulsory education until age 16 (formerly 14), this reform achieved important goals such as the inclusion of students with special needs in all public schools and universal access to kindergarten. Predictably, however, it also carried the disillusionments germane to those political processes that generate almost boundless expectations for social change and I learned that, despite the great commitment generated, the changes implemented by the reform still failed many of the students for whom school has traditionally been an unattractive, or perhaps more accurately, a cryptic proposition.

My belief in public education also survived the critical analyses of schooling I encountered when entering academia. As I tried to articulate my expectations for education in this milieu, I became keenly aware that any kind of democratic expectation for schools requires a high degree of tolerance to political, intellectual, and personal uncertainty. In the world of the "posts" (postmodernism, poststructuralism,

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postcolonialism et al.), I quickly learned, our views are never neutral or unproblematic, no matter how badly we want them to be. Rather, they always represent subject positions in which the view of the world we construct is inevitably linked to the relations of power that define who we are in relation to others (Giroux 1991; Rose 1996; Foucault 1991; Peters 1996; Silva 2001; Weedon 1987). Thus, those who inspired me to see education as a democratic project, also pushed me to see the many ways in which school reproduces inequality (Apple 2001; Anyon 2006; Gordon and Nocon 2008; Rogers 2006), and to understand the complexities of the identities public education generates (Perry et al. 2003; Tatum 1997; Valenzuela 1999; Willis 1981). They further inspired me to see curriculum as a discursive text that we need to decipher (Alba et al. 2000; Hendry 2011; Joseph 2011; Slattery 1995), to understand ourselves in relation to the larger historical context we occupy, and to interrogate the relations of power upon which we construct our view of the world (McIntyre 2000; Tabulawa 2003; Woo and Simmons 2008). These analyses warned me of the danger of charging schools with the democratic expectations societies are unwilling to fulfill. Paradoxically, they also strengthened my belief in public education as I understood that schools can be a precious social space in which to explore the tensions and possibilities involved in our necessarily imperfect but also full-of-promises democratic regimes. I willingly embraced uncertainty and subjectivity as rich soils for my personal search for more democratic conceptions of education and I eventually found intellectual solace in the understanding that advocating for public education was a delicate act of reclaiming schools as places for democratic dreams while unrelentingly denouncing the multiple and complex ways in which these institutions fail to achieve such dreams.

Should the tensions between school and democracy have been the main definers of my work and of my sense of advocacy, this book would have never been written. I would have kept laboring on the possibilities offered by this space and continued telling my students how important it is to keep our democratic imagination alive and to imagine a brighter future for all students. Increasingly, however, I understood that the difficulties in advancing more equitable forms of education no longer rested on the intrinsic challenges informing the very notion of education as a fundamental democratic endeavor but, rather, on addressing these challenges under new private visions of the public. Siding with the democratic traditions of education that conceptualize schools as government-sponsored public spaces working toward the public good (Cochran-Smith 1991; Dewey 1916/1997; Freire 1994), I have always taken for granted the *publicness* of public education and, consequently, the *publicness* of my own advocacy. I assumed, naively considering the current educational landscape, that the only possible referents of our democratic imagination were the notions of the public and the public good. I was willing to explore the multiple and complex ways in which these referents are imperfect and, many times, problematic. For all the uncertainties we face in education, the only undisputable assumption that remained with me was the public ground of my imagination. My encounter during the last decade with current educational policies that promote competition and privatization proved this assumption wrong and convinced me that we can no longer assume the *publicness* of public education or of our democratic imagination.

Furthermore, this encounter has convinced me that the logic of the market so enthusiastically embraced in current policies has quietly, but powerfully, redefined the notion of the public and the public good as private visions of education that render issues of democracy irrelevant or confine these issues to the realm of the individual.

This redefinition is evident in the increasing presence of private companies in education in highly industrialized countries such as the U.S., Britain or New Zealand and in the call of international organizations such as the World Bank to create partnerships with private schools in countries with less economic resources (Ball and Youdell 2009; Klees et al. 2012). The underlying premise of this increasing presence is that private interests are legitimate public actors that work for the good of the public. Less evident but very much in need of our attention are some of the devastating consequences of current private views in education. As the following three scenarios suggest, these views are characterized by a blatant disdain for the public as the main referent for public education and a complete disregard for the effects that their efforts to equate standardization and competition to quality and democratic education have on teachers, on our understanding of the role of the state in education, and how we imagine new ways of improving schools in low-income districts.

Scenario 1- It is April, 2013 and I am teaching a week-long, intense graduate course on curriculum to aspiring school administrators at a university in Santiago, Chile. As in the previous courses that I have taught at this institution as a part of a now 10-year long university partnership, the most recurring theme in class conversations is students' frustration with the Chile's emphasis on a standardized assessment system. The expectations of the national curriculum have been so extensive and so specific, and the consequences of the assessment process has impacted schools so deeply, they argued, that their leadership roles as school leaders have been reduced to produce good results in the national assessment system (SIMSE). While teaching the course, I notice, as I have done in similar courses in the past, that these laments are remarkably similar to the ones I hear from graduate students in the U.S.

Among these conversations this year, however, there is one specific incident narrated by one of the students that becomes particularly relevant to me as I struggle to understand the multiple spaces in which current visions of education embodying the logic of the market leave their harmful mark on educators. A young elementary school teacher imparted an emblematic classroom experience. As a fourth grade teacher of English as a foreign language in a government subsidized school serving predominantly low-income students, and as someone who believed that students' engagement with the subject area is critical to the learning process, this teacher purposefully used teaching methods that elicited students' participation and interaction. During a small group discussion in our seminar, she shared with us how her principal showed a strong dissatisfaction with these teaching methods. He reminded her that in order to achieve the expected results in the standardized national tests, she should align her teaching to the school's assessment goals by using direct instruction. Unwilling to completely change her teaching practices and wishing to remain open to utilizing the space of resistance teachers have in their classroom, she continued the use of participatory methodologies but she also implemented direct

instruction when the principal and/or other school administrators visited her class. She explained to her students that there would be different teaching activities in the classroom. Some would demand their quiet attention and individual work, and others would require them to be more interactive and participative. It was not too long before she realized that, the principal, unannounced and furtively, observed her through the classroom door. Of particular concern to her was the fact that her students had also started noticing this act of surveillance and began modifying their learning behaviors when detecting the principal's presence. Furthermore, her students, in unsolicited complicity, discretely signaled to her the presence of the principal. There were tears in her eyes as she shared this story. The cause of her sadness was not the methodological changes she was forced to implement or even the danger of losing her job (she had already decided she would look for a different school the following year). Rather, what caused her tears was the realization that by continuing to utilize the teaching methods she felt would be more beneficial to her students, she had also unintentionally taught her students to "lie" to the principal. Her testimony reflected her willingness to play according to the current logic of accountability and to engage in the methodological schizophrenia that would allow her to maintain her teaching practices. The ethical responsibility she felt for the spontaneous involvement of students in such schizophrenia, however, was something she could not endure.

Scenario 2- While teaching this course in Chile, I continued to follow, with dismay, the implementation of the new educational policies in Spain. Not surprisingly, given the strong conservative views of the government in place in 2013, and the country's deep economic recession, the newspapers' headlines reflected the all too familiar budgetary cuts and the prediction that the new academic year would start with less resources, fewer teachers, and a higher student/teacher ratio. Of particular interest to me was the rationale used to foster proposed changes such as the implementation of two new national assessment tests, one to be taken after completing middle-school and the other after finishing high-school, as a requirement to enter college, and the raising of the GPA required to qualify for university scholarships. The justification presented for these proposals was the need to create a culture of "individual effort" (*la cultura del esfuerzo*) that, according to the government, youth no longer have. Only students who demonstrate a strong personal drive for education, this rationale argued, should attend college and benefit from financial scholarships. The fallacy of this rationale is not lost on people like me who experienced this "new" culture of individual effort as a part of the everyday life of working-class families who counted on the efforts of their children to achieve the monetary help the government was trying to considerably reduce. Nonetheless, this fallacy worked as an enticing argument to move away from social equality and to promote more elitist positions that would secure the social advantage of those who have access to better education from birth. In the spirit of this reasoning, and despite the signs of discontent among many Spaniards, the government compellingly redefined success in education as a matter of individual effort. This redefinition renders administration, structural, and policy issues completely irrelevant. Furthermore, it effectively exonerates the responsibility of the state in this success by blaming students for all the failures.

Scenario 3- Returning from my trip to Chile to Philadelphia, the place I have been calling home for over a decade, I read about the draconian budget cuts for the next school year. I also read about the demand of the state of Pennsylvania that the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, the local teachers' union, relinquish benefits such as seniority in order for the Philadelphia district to receive state funds. Like most school districts in large urban areas in the U.S., Philadelphia serves mostly low-income students of color (55% African Americans, 19% Latinos, 14% Caucasians, 8% Asians/Pacific Islanders, 5% Multiracial and 0.18% Native Americans, according to the district's website on December, 2012). The recent history of the schools in the city has been shaped by two distinctive features, namely, the state-controlled management of the district and the large number of schools under the management of private organizations, particularly charter schools. In 2001, and after a confrontation with the former superintendent over his bold request for substantially increased state funds for schools, the state of Pennsylvania passed a law by which the city schools were to be controlled, both financially and educationally, by a committee of five people. Three of these members were to be nominated by the state and the other two by the city of Philadelphia. This School Reform Commission (SRC), as this group was named, soon decided that the best way to address the economic crisis in the district and to improve students' learning outcomes was to open the schools to private providers. This measure effectively made Philadelphia the leading city in the movement toward privatization. Indeed, by December 2012, according to the district's website, 84 of Philadelphia's 242 schools were charter schools.

Always justified by the need to address the fiscal "crisis" of the district, this trend continued through the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act. In more recent years and echoing the Obama administration's support for charter schools, this focus on privatization led to the opening of an increasing number of these schools. In December, 2012, for example, the School Reform Commission released and endorsed the fiscal study it had commissioned to the Boston Consulting Group. The results suggested massive closures of schools and management changes for low-performing schools. While this decision was implemented, the School Reform Commission continued to allocate larger amounts of money to charter providers and predicted that 40% of students in the city would attend charter schools by 2017. As I returned to Philadelphia, this budgetary crisis of unprecedented dimensions had taken full shape and the school district's superintendent announced the closing of 24 schools. He unveiled a budgetary plan for the year 2013–2014 that he himself described as "catastrophic" and that involved massive firing of teachers and school staff (3700 employees were laid off by August 2013). It further involved the prediction that in most schools the new academic year would start with fewer teachers, no counselors, no administrative assistants, no vice-principals, and no hallway aids. Of crucial interest to our reflection on how private interests have provided new referents to our educational imagination is the observation that, besides the work of local activist organizations, there has been no public uproar about the prospect of educating students in Philadelphia in schools that question not only the very notion of public education but, equally important, whether what they are offering could be considered "education" in the first place.

While thousands of miles apart and the product of very different historical forces, these three scenarios imply that the logic of the market informing current educational policies has not only privatized the affiliation of many public schools but has also changed the public referents that formerly grounded the notion of public education. Rizvi and Lingard (2010) warn us that current educational policies are neither homogenous nor do they apply in the same way in different political and historical contexts. These three cases, nonetheless, suggest that many countries are adopting private referents that make it increasingly difficult for teachers to claim legitimacy for methodologies that reject the tyranny of standardized measurement, that exonerate national governments for their responsibility of assuring the educational success of all students, and that offer disenfranchised students solutions based almost exclusively on financial considerations. Taken together, these scenarios suggest that our democratic commitment to education can reach only as far as private visions of education are willing to imagine.

Unfortunately, my increasing awareness of the multiple ways in which the *publicness* of public education has been redefined by private visions of teaching and assessment, and by policies that have imprisoned our democratic imagination within the logic of the market, was not matched by my ability to address this challenge in my professional life. Indeed, I despaired and wondered how I could continue advocating for public education when its contribution to democracy no longer has a clear referent to the public. I increasingly feared that by advocating for public education at a time this institution drinks, both conceptually and functionally from the private well, I was also unwillingly supporting a conception of education rooted outside of the public realm. Eventually, however, this fear led me back to Freire's (1994) understanding of hope and provided me with a renewed understanding of his mandate to never refrain from exercising our democratic imagination. Conceptualizing hope as an ontological need and as the engine to advance more equitable visions of the future, Freire reminded me that "[o]ne of the tasks of the progressive educators, through a serious, correct, political analysis, is to unveil opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles may be" (p. 3).

This book was written as a response to this mandate to hope by arguing for the need to reclaim the *publicness* of public education. More specifically, this text is intended as an invitation to contest private notions of education and to find new public grounds for our democratic imagination. This invitation is extended by presenting 11 public schools, most of them unknown in the educational literature, that have worked, or are still working with disenfranchised communities and that have *publicly* hoped for a better future for their students. The common denominator among all these schools is their pledge to find new pedagogical and curricular paths to pursue more opportunities for the students and communities they serve or have served in public spaces or with a public vocation. While the 11 schools share a deep commitment to empower students traditionally marginalized, and an understanding that public education is and will always be a complex task that requires our finest educational thoughts, each tells a unique story narrated in the specificity of the school's history and culture. For example, these schools have existed or currently exist in political and social contexts as different as: the current rapid moderniza-

tion and urbanization of Hong Kong, the indigenous movement in Bolivia prior to the 1952 national revolution, the search for a new democratic national identity in the Turkey of the 1940s, and the current economic consequences of neoliberal economic policies in Argentina. Located in different parts of the world across three continents, the schools also serve, or have served, a variety of social groups such as, multicultural communities in London and the U.S., rural working-class students in Italy, Navajo students on an Indigenous reservation in the U.S., and peasants in rural Mexico. The singularities of each school and the contexts in which they arise invite the reader to make each chapter in this book an exciting educational destination and an opportunity to learn more about the particular challenges and possibilities that shape each of the schools' dreams.

As edifying and important as each of these narratives is, this book aspires to be much more than a collection of educational stories. At a very basic level, this book wishes to intentionally challenge the current educational discourses' disdain for the notion of the public. By purposefully presenting these 11 public schools, this book openly contests these discourses' disregard for public schools as places of hope and explicitly reclaims these institutions as legitimate sites of democratic imagination. By presenting a detailed account of each of the schools' hopes and struggles, this text also intends to present an analysis of curriculum and pedagogy as an explicit reminder of the variety of ways in which schools can deliver their democratic commitment. To this end, this book wishes to be viewed as an antidote to current simplistic and homogenous market-based solutions that claim validity across all educational contexts. At a more general level, this book is an invitation to imagine a more hopeful future for public education, and specifically, for those easily forgotten in our dreams for a better society. At this level and paraphrasing the motto of the 2002 World Social Forum, this book is an invitation to believe that, "other ways of thinking about education are possible."

To define the conceptual parameters of this invitation to (re)imagine the public grounds of public education, there are a few clarifications this book would like to make from the outset. First, while this is a book of hope, there is nothing naïve about this call. Those of us who believe, like Freire (1993), that "one of the tasks that education can accomplish is to make our democratic process more consistent" (p. 123), know very well that there is no room for wishful thinking in this proposition. Hope is the indispensable tool to our democratic visions and, consequently, a political responsibility for all educators who share this vision. After all, as Wrigley (2003) states, "[t]he desire to improve education arises naturally from our engagement with the future" (p. 1). But this text is fully aware of the many and complex ways in which schools have recreated social inequality (Anyon 2006; Lipman 2011; Orfield et al. 2002–2003), have made identity a painful struggle for many disenfranchised students (Perry et al. 2003; Tatum 1997; Willis 1981), or have undermined the power of poor communities in education (Gordon and Nocon 2008; Rogers 2006; Valenzuela 1999). This book's call to (re)imagine public education by reflecting on the work of the schools it features, therefore, should not be understood in any way as an endorsement of the democratic shortcomings of public education or of the belief that public schools are naturally positioned to advance democracy. Rather, it

should be read as a call to rethink the future of public education in spite of and with an understanding of such shortcomings. In this regard, this call transcends these critiques of public education, not because they are not present but, more importantly, because we need to find hope beyond them. In this exercise, this text is inspired by Freire's (1994) ruling to make hope concrete and historical. It is further inspired by Giroux's (2004) notion of "educated hope" that links the language of critique and the language of possibilities by defining hope as the political tool that should "provide a link, however transient, provisional, and contextual, between vision and critique on the one hand, and engagement and transformation on the other" (p. 39).

Second, in the presentation of the schools in the upcoming chapters, the terms curriculum and pedagogy are intertwined and, at times, presented as interchangeable. There are two main reasons for this. First, new theoretical conceptions of curriculum have deeply challenged the fallacious dichotomy that defined curriculum as program of instruction and pedagogies as methodologies and have embraced a notion of curriculum as a discursive text and as a deliberative process that blurs the boundaries between these two concepts (Alba et al. 2000; Hendry 2011; Silva 2001; Slattery 1995). Second, the description of the schools is guided by the understanding of pedagogy as a political act (Beyer and Apple 1998; Freire 1993; Schultz 2008). Because each chapter describes its school's curriculum as it was/ is implemented, what Cuban (1993) calls "taught curriculum," in this text the term curriculum is understood as "pedagogies in action."

Third, this book makes no claim to be a comprehensive text of pedagogical innovation. Consequently, it assumes neither a higher pedagogical value for the schools it presents nor that these 11 schools are the only ones worthy of consideration. Rather, the schools included in *Pedagogies and Curriculums to (Re)imagine Public Education* intend to function as evocative examples of the many ways schools have tried, and still try, to empower socially marginalized communities in very different historical, social, and cultural contexts. To this end, the schools included in this text are presented as a tapestry of pedagogies of resistance and hope and as testimonies to the numerous ways in which public education has served and imagined more democratic visions of education.

The fourth important clarification is that, while inclusive in nature, this text is also fully aware of the important absences involved in the selection of the schools. The schools featured in the following chapters were included in the book because they were situated in one (or several) of the following sociocultural and educational dimensions: North/South, urban/rural, current/past, indigenous/non-indigenous, racially homogenous/racially diverse, top-down curriculum/school-based changes. Despite the text's efforts to provide an inclusive cultural and historical perspective, however, there are many educational contexts and histories that this book was unable to include. Geographically, the absences include schools from Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. Asia is, unwillingly, underrepresented with just one school. Also absent are schools working with populations that represent the geographies of dislocation characteristic of our global landscape such as schools working with Latino, Asian, and Muslim students in the U.S., schools teaching immigrant students with strong colonial histories in different countries in Europe, schools for females

in countries with unequal gender access to education, or schools around the world receiving both national and international students displaced by recent neoliberal policies. I appeal to the reader to regard such omissions as acknowledgment of the impossibility of including all the educational realities that deserve a place in books like this. I also appeal to the reader to see these omissions not as an attempt to silence the contexts and communities that have not been included, but as invitation to continue the conversation generated in this book with these communities.

Fifth, *Pedagogies and Curriculums to (Re)imagine Public Education* is neither a comparative nor a historical analysis of the schools presented in the text. While every chapter provides a historical and educational analysis of the contexts in which these schools were/are situated, the book does not attempt to engage in any historical or comparative analysis of the schools. To this end, the reader is urged to disregard any perceived historical sequence in the text. Likewise, the reader is advised not to construe the number of schools that are no longer in existence as an invitation to search in the past for answers to current educational challenges. As suggested above, schools were not selected for the historical questions they face(d), as important as these questions are, but for the range of insights they provide us to redraw the boundaries of our public imagination.

Lastly, it is important to clarify that this text does not entertain the progressive/alternative versus traditional education dichotomy that informs many analyses of educational change and curriculum inquiry (Hendry 2011; Weiler 2004). While this is a useful analytical dichotomy in many educational texts, the selection of the schools for this project was not based on how alternative, how progressive, or how radical they were/are. Rather, the schools featured in this text were chosen considering their potential to present different educational landscapes, and therefore, their potential to push our educational imagination.

Outline of Chapters

The call to (re)imagine public education by finding new public grounds for public schools will be developed in thirteen chapters. Chapter 2, *Reclaiming Schools as Public Sites for Democratic Imagination*, lays the theoretical framework for the book and attempts to present a discursive analysis of the current process of privatization endorsed by current educational policies. This chapter argues that this process has silently but efficiently privatized our educational imagination. Based on this argument, it offers the notion of public schools as *publicly imagined* as a useful tool to reclaim public schools as legitimate places to enact our democratic dreams and to conceptualize them as socially precious sites for collective visions. This notion, this chapter further argues, also allows us to reclaim curriculum and pedagogy as powerful educational instruments in pursuing these visions.

The following chapters narrate the stories of 11 different schools. All the narratives are followed by an “in conversation” section in which the author(s) articulates

some explicit connections between the school they present and the current task of (re)imagining public education.

In Chap. 3, *The Ayllu-school: Bolivia 1931–1940*, Rodríguez and Arispe chronicle the short-lived experience of the *Ayllu* School in the Warisata region in the Bolivian's highlands. Founded in 1931 by Elizardo Pérez, a teacher and intellectual searching for an indigenous community to house a pedagogical project he envisioned as a new model of indigenous education, and Avelino Siñani, an indigenous leader who persuaded other members of the community to believe in this project, the *Ayllu*-school was built by the Warisata's peasants and became an icon for indigenous education in the country that lasts until this day. Grounded on the indigenous traditions and social practices, the school became a critical part of the community's political organization. It also developed a pedagogy rooted in the indigenous' understanding of learning by working that pursued the self-sustainment and economic growth of the community.

Chapter 4 recounts the story of Rough Rock, the first contemporary American Indian community-controlled school. Established in 1966 in the heart of the Navajo Nation, Rough Rock was the first school to have an all-Navajo governing board and to teach in and through the Native language. The chapter discusses the school's early programs in culturally-based education and Navajo community control as well as its exemplary bilingual-bicultural initiative. It further discusses the importance of the school as a model of American Indian self-determination and how it paved the way for some of the most significant federal Indian education policies of the twentieth century. The chapter concluded by reflecting on the current situation at Rough Rock, its efforts to sustain and revitalize the Navajo language, and the larger lessons the Rough Rock experience teaches.

In Chap. 5, Moore describes the attempt of the English department at Brondesbury and Kilburn High School, a school in London, UK, to develop more linguistically and culturally inclusive forms of curricula and assessment for bidialectal students. Capitalizing on Basil Bernstein's understanding of competence approaches to curriculum, assessment and pedagogy that privileges the presence (as opposed to absences) of knowledge in students' forms of expressions, this chapter narrates the department's initiative to accommodate non-standard English speaking students in the formal examination systems in a way that valued these students' creativity and critical insights. This account is contextualized against the current central education policy in England, which, Moore suggests, promotes the return to traditional, and fundamentally exclusive, approaches to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

Chapter 6 narrates the story of Arthurdale, a school in a resettlement community for miners in West Virginia during the 1930s that was a landmark in bringing Deweyan ideals of progressive education to bear upon an impoverished community trying to revitalize the lives of the victims of economic collapse. The school's curriculum focused on ongoing life of the emerging community and offered a rich and humane education in which collective problem solving was the essence of democratic learning and life. This chapter describes the context in which this pedagogical experience originated and gathered the support of important political figures such as Eleanor Roosevelt, emphasizing the school's goals and democratic possibilities.

This chapter further analyzes the wider contradictions in community-centered progressive pedagogy which contributed to the closing down of the school only 2 years after its foundation.

In Chap. 7, Mendez documents the story of the Bachillariato IMPA, a middle school in Buenos Aires, Argentina, located in a worker-operated factory. Contextualized against the neoliberal policies that took many companies into bankruptcy and the movement of “recovered factories” that led to workers’ ownership of many of these companies, Mendez explains the foundation of this school as the product of a successful collaboration among the factory’s workers who saw the need for the school and provided a physical home for it, the movement of recovered factories that supported this initiative, and a university-based research organization that provided the teachers. The first of the many schools now operating in other recovered factories, the Bachillariato IMPA provides a middle school degree to both students in the neighborhood and workers in the factory attending the school. Paralleling the operating principles of the movement of recovered factories, one of the unique pedagogical features of this school is the centrality of the assembly as the chief decision-making body where teachers and students discuss and decide on all major educational issues.

Chapter 8 visits a single-room in Barbiana, a mountainous rural community in Italy in the 1950s. Widely known in Europe as an icon of class-based pedagogy, as Navas tells us, this school was founded and taught by Father Milani, a Catholic priest who was sent to this remote community as a penance for his left-wing ideology. Realizing the virtual lack of access to public schools of his parishioners and believing that Italian peasants needed education to gain access to the symbolic power of the ruling classes, Father Milani started a school that imparted all levels of formal education and provided students with a rich curriculum. As Navas further illustrates in this chapter, language was the prioritized subject and critical literacy was the school’s predominant pedagogical practice.

In Chap. 9 our travels take us to Cifteler, a town in the new Republic of Turkey in the 1930s and 1940s. Gokalp recounts how this school was the first of almost two dozen boarding schools known as the Village Institutes that existed for over a decade and that explicitly aimed at educating the mostly rural and illiterate populations of the country as the modernized citizens of the newly established republic. This goal, as Gokalp explains, was paved by many challenges, including the lack of teachers willing to live in rural areas and the need to change formal education to modernize the economic production in the villages. Like the subsequent Village Institutes, Cifteler responded to these challenges by implementing a pedagogy based on the notions of education for work, and learning by doing that integrated the school’s academic curriculum with the villages’ economic needs. Intentionally, this pedagogy provided many students with the professional training to become future teachers in other rural communities.

In Chap. 10, Poon and Lin chronicle the recent comprehensive restructuring in curriculum, learning materials, instructional practices, and assessment in HKRSS, a secondary school in a working-class community in Hong Kong. As described by Poon and Lin, these changes were undertaken by the school as a consequence of

its commitment to developing an inclusive curriculum to accommodate the needs of a large number of special education students. In the process of developing such curriculum, Poon and Lin recount how the school moved away from practices of teaching in isolation and embraced a philosophy of education based on sharing and collaboration among teachers in the areas of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment.

Chapter 11 takes us to an innovative pedagogical experience in a rural community in Mexico. Narrated by Rincón-Gallardo, this chapter illustrates the curriculum and pedagogies implemented in *Los Talleres*, a fictional school representing the over 350 small schools operated by the Post-primary Project between 1996 and 2003. Rincón-Gallardo, a member of the national leadership in this federal project for 4 years, describes the story of this school by highlighting one of the unique features of this federal program, namely, the promotion of independent learning through a tutorial relationship between the instructor and the learner.

In Chap. 12, Anand recounts the efforts of the English department at Montclair High School in New Jersey, U.S. This school located in an integrated community, both in terms of class and race, implemented a multicultural curriculum in the 1980s and 1990s. As narrated by this author, these school's efforts energized the department and the community's commitment to bring about racial justice through curriculum change and on a pedagogical project that placed multiculturalism at the center of teaching. These efforts further inspired other changes in the school such as the exploration of issue of power and culture by both teachers and students, the de-tracking of the ninth-grade school curriculum, and the offering of required course on multicultural literature in this grade.

Chapter 13 tells the story of *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* in Valencia, Spain. Founded by a group of parents in 1973 when Spain was still under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, the school was intentionally established as a cooperative to assure a democratic organization and to involve all the parents in the decision-making process. While it started as an early childhood education, today the school also offers elementary and secondary education. Pedagogically, the school was committed to the implementation of active pedagogies, to co-education, to learn from local culture, and to affirm as well as claim the identity of the local community and of *Valenciano*, the regional language, as the main language of instruction.

Chapter 14, *Public Schools as Publicly Imagined*, concludes this edited collection by reflecting on the schools presented in the previous 11 chapters and by arguing that the pedagogies and curriculums implemented in these schools offer us the possibility of finding new public grounds for our public imagination. More specifically, this chapter contends that these schools allow us to think of public schools as historically specific sites where collective visions become explicit pedagogical processes intending to improve not only the lives of those they serve but, equally important, the larger community that has anchored these students' identities and futures. To this end, the chapter considers these schools an illustration of the notion of public schools as *publicly imagined* as articulated in the introductory chapters, and argues for the need to (re)imagine public education along these lines.

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Chapter 2

Reclaiming Schools as Public Sites for Democratic Imagination

Encarna Rodríguez

Current Discourses of Education and the Privatization of the Educational Imagination

As someone who believes, like Meier (2002), that schools have the democratic responsibility of dreaming for a better future for *all* our students, I have been deeply troubled by the nature of current educational policies around the world. Ideologically, my chief concern has been the damage that these policies have inflicted on the very notion of the public by embracing, both enthusiastically and unproblematically, the logic of the market as the panacea for public education (Ball 2009; Broom 2011; Klenowski 2009). This concern finds additional justification when examining the political significance of the contemporary infatuation with market-based school reforms. As Rizvi and Lingard (2010) explain, the widespread adoption of this logic of the market is neither a phenomenon germane to education nor one neatly contained within the limits of national states. Rather, these authors suggest that the strong presence of the market in educational policies needs to be conceptualized as a part of the *global neoliberal imaginary* that has informed public policies around the world in the last two decades, an imaginary that promotes a vision of society grounded in individualism and competition and that consequently offers the principles of the market as the best solution for any governmental problem. These authors are quick to warn us that this imaginary does not affect all political or educational systems the same way and that public governmental systems always filter new policies through the national cultural and political traditions. Despite these national and local differences, however, these authors explain current educational policies around the world as sharing an undeniable reliance on the rationale of the market. In their estimation, “there is an unmistakable global trend toward a convergence in thinking about [neoliberal] educational values” (p. 72), values that they identify as

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the underlying principles for the widespread support for school privatization and for the adoption of education reforms that prioritize accountability and efficiency over democracy and equality. The forces spreading these neoliberal values, Rizvi and Lingard further explain, are not just national governments eager to espouse educational policies that promise efficient solutions to the pressing need to prepare young citizens to compete in a global economy. As they note, “[o]rganizations such as the OECD, the UE, APEC, UNESCO and the World Bank have become major sites for the organization of knowledge about education, and have created a cajoling discourse of ‘imperatives of the global economy’ for education” (p. 79).

Pedagogically, my main concern with these policies has been their lack of democratic imagination. A large body of educational literature has compellingly argued that educators and schools need to ground their educational commitment to democracy in an earnest awareness of the multiple and complex ways in which educational systems produce and reproduce social inequality (Anyon 2006; Biesta 2007; Gordon and Nocon 2008; Perry et al. 2003; Tabulawa 2003; Valenzuela 1999). Despite the soundness of this argument, however, current educational policies work with a surprisingly anachronistic pedagogical simplicity. Instead of advancing Dewey’s (1916/1997) understanding of the individual process of learning as a crucial democratic space that should also enrich society and should, therefore, work toward the common good (Broom 2011), for example, current educational policies have mostly ignored issues of curriculum and pedagogy (Nordtveit 2012; Rizvi and Lingard 2010). Broom (2011) explains that in the logic of these reforms and their emphasis on efficiency and the individual, “teaching is narrowed to individualistic and competitive market ideology, and encased in the value of consumption and competition” (p. 143). Not surprisingly, given this emphasis, current educational policies reject ideological and cultural specificity. Far from recognizing the relations of power involved in the process of schooling, the discourses that articulate these policies claim political neutrality. The principle of efficiency, these discourses reason, makes any practice that achieves this goal inherently good. Likewise, rather than embracing the call to contextualize teaching in the deep and respectful understanding of the local and cultural knowledges of the communities served by schools, the teaching practices embraced by these policies are increasingly homogenous and removed from any social context. In the logic of these reforms, achievement rests on motivating students and on teaching them to succeed in the assessment system so there is no need for cultural specificity.

By and in themselves, these ideological and pedagogical concerns are not new. As critical educators have successfully unveiled, public schools have articulated dominant conservative ideologies in many ways (Apple 2001; Cuban 2004; McIntyre 2000; Willis 1981). We also know that with the exception of a few historical moments or geographical pockets and despite the possibilities for social mobility they have offered, public schools have been particularly reluctant to become the democratic institution we wish(ed) for. When framed within the global neoliberal imaginary that requires schools to embrace and prioritize standardization and competition above issues of democracy and social equality (Rizvi and Lingard 2010),

however, these concerns appear as a powerful warning of the fragile status of the *publicness* of public education. When framed this way, these concerns no longer refer only to the well-known inherent difficulties for schools to realize their democratic potential but also to the damage that current policies are inflicting on our democratic imagination. Against the neoliberal landscape that worships the individual and that disdains the collective as the main referent for democracy, these concerns suggest that what is really at stake in these policies is not just the risk of weakening the relationship between education and democracy, as important as this is, but, more importantly, our own ability to *imagine* this relationship within the public referents that current policies are so efficiently erasing.

At a first glance, it may seem that the main challenge to exercise this kind of imagination may be explained by the rapidly increasing number of educational spaces that operate under the logic of the private. As schools are increasingly privatized and the involvement of the business sector considerably expands to school tasks that have been traditionally in the hands of educators such as learning outcomes' assessment or professional development, it is evident that public spaces in education, by whatever definition we apply to this term, have been greatly reduced (Fabricant and Fine 2013; Reid 2002; Watkins 2011). Likewise, schools and educators working in public schools are increasingly required to work *as* private institutions, that is to say, to embrace teaching and organizational practices rooted in the principles of the market rather than in democratic traditions of schooling (Ball and Youdell 2009; Hopmann 2008; Luke 2006; Meier and Wood 2004).

Taking a closer look, however, the challenge to exercise our democratic imagination seems to be mostly an ideological problem defined by the way current educational policies have bounded our imagination to the private. As public schools are increasingly asked to follow the logic of the market, as they are asked to subjugate pedagogy to efficiency, or as they are required to prioritize students' outcomes over the democratic processes that should lead to these outcomes, they are, in essence, being asked to abdicate the educational legacy that has anchored democratic visions in education and to dream within the limits of what private interests can offer. Likewise, current educational discourses are asking both educators and the public to relinquish any hopes for public schools to be agents of change and to entrust the social aspirations of schools to private visions of education. In imposing these demands, educational policies are requiring schools to reject the fundamental proposition that public education is to serve the public good and that "the nature and content of education ought to be—must be—decided by public conversation, not just by a collection of individual choices" (Covaleskie 2007, p. 32). The analysis of two current documentaries, *Waiting for "Superman"* (Guggenheim 2010) and *La Educación Prohibida* [prohibitive education] (Doin 2012), illustrate the power of these discourses and the consequent delegitimization of public schools as sites of democratic imagination.

Released in 2010 in the U.S. and directed by Davis Guggenheim, the first of these documentaries, *Waiting for "Superman,"* narrates the stories of five students, Anthony, Francisco, Bianca, Daisy, and Emily, as they anxiously await the response

to their application to charter schools. Four of these students are students of color, three of whom attend urban public schools and one who attends a Catholic school. The fifth student is White and attends a suburban school. As the film tells the stories of these young men and women, it also presents a diagnosis of the main maladies of public education in U.S. In the estimation of the movie and of the educational experts whom it features, the root of the troubles of public education is the poor quality of teachers. This assessment is presented through the testimony of experts such as Erik Hanushek, an educational policy analyst and Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institute of Stanford University who states that, “[i]f in fact we could just eliminate the bottom 6–10% of our teachers and replace them with an average teacher, we could bring the average U.S. student up to the level of Finland, which is at the top of the world today.” The documentary bases this assessment on two intimately linked arguments. The first targets the notoriously bureaucratic structure that characterizes public schools. It is this malfunctioning structure, the film contends, that keeps bad teachers in schools even when some schools, such as those depicted in the documentary to explain the notion of *dropout factories*, have dramatically failed students like the ones featured in the movie. The second argument presents teachers’ unions as the main obstacle to real change in schools. According to the movie, these organizations have highly profited from the schools’ bureaucratic systems and have stubbornly insisted on defending the tenure system that has kept *bad* teachers in schools. Consistent with this analysis, the film proposes to endorse schools free from bureaucracy and teachers’ unions, in this case charter schools, as the solution for public education. The film makes multiple references to this solution by presenting the testimony of multiple experts and leaders of private organizations and charter schools who see competition and efficiency as the central tenants of education. With the exception of Randi Weingarten, the president of The American Federation of Teachers, who appears only for a few minutes, the film makes no allusion to successful public schools nor does it make any attempt to include the voices of those educational experts who have long understood issues of teacher quality and school bureaucracy as fundamental elements in their advocacy for public education.

As persuasively as the argument in favor of charter schools is articulated throughout the movie, the most compelling call to endorse private visions of education comes through the emotional conundrum the audience experiences at the end of the film. In these last scenes, the film intentionally sustains the viewer’s loyalty to the hopes that the families of these five students have placed on charter schools by chronicling the public lottery process in which the numbers from a pool determine the accepted applications. As these students and their families enact their desires for more educational possibilities, and as they anxiously hold the number they expect to be called next, the audience is asked to anticipate the feelings of relief or consternation that these families would display while learning about their educational fates. This emotional alliance with the families is undoubtedly, one of the most successful ideological propositions of the movie. The emotions in these last minutes are so powerful that even the thought of imagining public schools as possible receivers of these children’s hopes seemed like an act of betrayal. If we *really care* about these families, this documentary implies, we *need to* believe in charter schools as

the best opportunity for these children and to let the magic of the private guide our educational aspirations. As Stern (2012) illustrates when reflecting on why his own students in a graduate educational policy class cried in these last scenes, the audience is asked to enter a “neoliberal Utopian space” (p. 394), a space free from the constraints of the social and from the messiness of education as a democratic endeavor. Ultimately, and as the title of the movie indicates, the audience is compelled to see the charter’s vision of education and the logic therein represented as the educational *Superman* that would secure the academic achievement of not only these five students but of the multitude of Anthonies, Franciscos, Daysys, Biancas and Emilies across the world.

Shortly after its release, many educational theorists raised numerous and important critiques to the analyses and solutions offered within this documentary (Ravitch 2010; Swalwell and Apple 2011). Ravitch (2010), for example, explains that the film conveniently leaves out crucial information such as the fact that students’ academic scores in non-unionized states are no higher than in unionized states. She also contends that the documentary ignores studies on charter schools such as the one conducted by the Center for Research on Educational Outcomes in 2009 documenting that only one out of five charter schools performed better than their public counterparts and that almost 40% of charter schools performed worse than public schools. Despite the significance of these critiques within the educational community familiar with education policy analysis, however, the movie has been positively received by the public at large and has been regarded as a bold and truthful account of education in the U.S. This warm reception by the public suggests that this text has also been an important symbolic medium to channel the social hopes for public education in U.S. away from public schools and closer to private visions of education. This message is hard to miss in the movie. By refusing to present public schools or educational theorists who have worked with the democratic traditions in education, the documentary could safely portray public schools as beyond hope. Once this fact was established, it could also safely present people like Bill Gates and other business-oriented educational leaders as the guarantors of our hopes. Portrayed as the only ones with enough determination and knowledge to assure these hopes, this movie identifies people like Bill Gates or founders of charter schools of the world as the real saviors of public education. This call to relinquish our hope for public schools and to entrust our democratic imagination to private visions of education is poignantly illustrated by the testimony of one these founders who states, “25 years ago there was no proof that something else worked. Well, now we know what works. We know that is just a lie that disadvantaged kids can’t learn. We know that if you apply the right accountability standards you can get fabulous results so, why would we do something else?”

The second documentary, *La Educación Prohibida* (Doin 2012), was released in Spanish in 2012 as an exclusive online documentary and was directed by German Doin, a young professional whose only claim to education is his interest to make schools a more interesting place. The bases of the film are a series of reflections of numerous educators in Latin America and Spain on the role of schools. As in the case of *Waiting for “Superman,”* the director explicitly states that this was not a film

against public schools. Also as in *Waiting for "Superman,"* any viewer familiar with the democratic traditions of education poignantly feels the pressure to surrender to the democratic imagination that only the private seems to be able to achieve. The main problem with schools, according to this film, is that they repress students' autonomy and initiative. The testimonies of the experts in the documentary, interestingly, most of them from private schools, leave no doubt that schools have been very authoritarian and damaging for students as individuals and have greatly curtailed their creative possibilities. The solution offered to this problem is the implementation of active and innovative methodologies that focus on the individual and that nurture their cognitive and emotional abilities.

Taken at face value, it is difficult to resist the persuasion of this argument and easy to understand the rapid popularity of this film in Spanish-speaking countries. After all, the education reforms in most of these countries are justified by the need to educate more democratic citizens who must be able to understand the dangerous connections between the state apparatus and authoritarianism (Silva 1998; Varela 2007). In terms of our educational hopes, however, the film clearly suggests that we look for the democratic possibilities of these methodologies in private schools. Those of us familiar with the ideological critique of child-centered pedagogies know that public schools are not a natural habitat to this autonomous and critical-minded individual (Carter 2010; Rodríguez 2011; Tabulawa 2003; Walkerdine 1984). Rather, as these critiques imply, child-centered pedagogies that dismiss the historicity and subjectivity of students, such as the ones presented in this documentary, promote a fictional idea of a universal and intrinsically democratic individual who seems to exist only in elitist private schools. The movie clearly channeled the viewer's imagination in this direction by filtering the argument for more democratic methodologies exclusively through private visions of education. In this case, the views of the private educational organizations that sponsored the film and which perspectives were represented in the testimonies of the people interviewed by the documentary makers prevent an appreciation of public schooling.

It would be unfair to think that these two documentaries were conceived with the explicit purpose of dismantling public education. In fact, both directors have strongly rejected such arguments when presented with them. When looking at these movies discursively, however, it becomes evident that these two texts skillfully articulate current educational discourses' invitation to ignore public schools as sites of educational imagination and to look for innovative school changes in other venues. Educationally, the grounds for this invitation are highly questionable. Public schooling, for all its shortcomings, has been indeed the home of some important democratic and socially responsible visions of education (Meier 2002; Sahlberg 2011; Apple and Beane 1995; Fielding and Moss 2011; Wrigley et al. 2012b). The positive reception of the two films, despite some of the critiques they received, suggests that they are powerful media texts that direct our attention away from the democratic potential of public schools. Of particular importance in this regard is the fact that this message to redirect our attention to private universes is sent from political sources traditionally opposed to the forces of privatization. The political right's advocacy for private solutions is hardly surprising. But these two documen-

taries come from directors who proclaim leftist political views. Davis Guggenheim, for example, is known for his political closeness with Al Gore, the democratic candidate in the U.S. 2000 presidential election. Guggenheim is also the Academy Award winner for *An Inconvenient Truth*, a documentary about climate change that intended to raise international awareness about this issue. Furthermore, he openly claims a leftist and pro-union stance. Yet, *Waiting for "Superman"* has unapologetically articulated the call for privately-managed schools as the saviors of public education in the U.S. around the unmistakable conservative principles of competition and privatization. Guggenheim's infatuation with privatization despite his political affiliation suggests that the danger of current educational discourses is the easiness with which it moves through the different phases of the political spectrum and the way in which it seems to *make sense* even for those in supposedly politically opposing camps. Without exonerating these two documentaries from their ideological complacency with conservative propositions, the next section examines the larger political context in which conservative views become so dangerously attractive, even to people who claim progressive political stands.

Mapping the Private Grounds of Public Education

Rizvi and Lingard (2010) contend that current educational policies' endorsement of privatization needs to be understood in the larger context of globalization and economic neoliberalism. Considering these larger contexts, these authors argue that privatization articulates new forms of public management germane to what has been defined as the move from government to governance that nations around the world have embraced when attempting to address the challenges of educating citizens for a global and fluid economy (Ball 2009b). When responding to these challenges, Rizvi and Lingard further explain, states started to perceive old public sector structures, including the hierarchical and bureaucratic nature of public schools, as obsolete and obstacles in pursuing economic changes. Consequently, most governments have attempted to replace these structures with new forms of public management borrowed from the business world that promised efficiency and higher accountability. The adoption of these practices, as explained by these authors, led to states effectively renouncing their central role in developing and implementing educational policies, calling for collaboration between the private and the public sector, and opening public educational spaces to private practices and private companies. The term *governance* has come to refer to this change in governments' modus operandi, and to the modes of government and governing that now involve new private actors in government and that call for private practices in the public sector (Ball 2009b).

As a public institution also moving from government to governance, education has also articulated new private visions of education in many areas of educational policy. Of particular importance for this analysis is the role of education in sustaining the "enterprise culture" that redefines social problems as cultural ones in neoliberal regimes. Alba et al. (2000) illustrate this process in countries such as Britain

and New Zealand in the 1990s. As they write, “[i]n the case of Britain, questions of national economic survival and competition in the world economy came increasingly to be seen under the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher and John Major as questions of cultural reconstruction” (pp. 37–38). These authors explain that the notion of an enterprise culture became a central proposition for all governmental practices in these countries. In this proposition, economic problems were no longer seen as the prerogative or responsibility of the state. Rather, the only way to promote economic growth, the logic of new public policies argued, was creating an enterprising culture in which citizens and organizations, including those in the public sector, worked together toward a stronger economy. The task of creating this culture, as Alba et al. further argue, necessarily required “remodeling institutions along commercial lines and encouraging the acquisition and use of enterprising qualities” (p. 38). Not surprisingly, education became a natural target to pursue such requirements as these. If the economy needed an enterprising culture, as Alba et al. document in the case of the educational debates taking place in New Zealand at that time, there was also a need for “reconstructing education so that it will deliver the necessary research, skills and attitudes required for New Zealand to compete in an increasingly competitive international economy” (p. 40).

Acknowledging the commonalities of this process of reconstruction but also recognizing the specificity of the local educational debates that articulated the move from government to governance in different countries, Rizvi and Lingard (2010) explain this new mandate for education to contribute to the enterprise culture by stating that, “around the world, education has become central to the production of the requisite human capital needed to achieve the maximum competitiveness within the global economy for individuals and nations alike” (p. 186). These authors further explain that in the context of the shift from government to governance, privatization increasingly appeared as the only way to ensure accountability and efficiency in the public sector so schools can produce and deliver the commensurate human capital.

Ball (2009a) and Ball and Youdell (2009) help us to further understand the implications of the move from government to governance in education and the resulting endorsement of privatization in schools by identifying important changes in current managerial practices that have changed the way we now expect schools to operate. These authors caution us that governments rarely propose, or adopt, national policies pursuing privatization as a consequence of perceived inaccuracies in the public system. Rather, these policies are usually implemented in the context of larger national goals such as stronger school accountability, school improvement, and school choice, for which consecution privatization appears as the most desirable tool.

This connection between privatization and national aspirations explains the different shapes that privatization takes in different political contexts. Ball and Youdell (2009) argue that in developing nations, for example, privatization is usually implemented through policies such as partnerships between private and public schools, improvement of school effectiveness, or the “establishment of education services in areas where education services have not previously existed” (p. 75). These authors identify the development of national curriculums in countries with no tradition or formal expertise in this area as a poignant example of the latter. In other countries,

particularly in UK and U.S., these authors explain, the practice of privatization permeates all areas of schools in pervasive and, many times, unrecognized ways. For Ball and Youdell, privatization in these countries involves both privatization *in* public education and the privatization *of* public education.

Privatization *in* education, what Ball and Youdell (2009) call *endogenous* privatization, can be defined as “the importing of ideas, techniques and practices from the private sector in order to make the public sector more like business and more business-like” (p. 74). The intent of these practices, or more accurately, of these technologies of education reform as they are referred to by these authors, is to produce a change in schools as public organizations. In the account of these authors, one of the consequences of these technologies has been the redefinition of the role of educators as managers. Referring specifically to the new role administrators play under the logic of privatization, Pongratz (2006) explains that, “[r]unning a school becomes a management task, with the aim of introducing new products and guiding internal restructuring” (p. 479). Within this logic, Pongratz further argues, “[t]he teacher disappears in a corresponding way, to reappear as a project leader or evaluation manager” (p. 479). Indeed, Pongratz argues that it is within the logic and the practices of privatization that sustain it that we have developed a different understanding of schools by which, “[i]ntensified competition among teachers and students is presented as ‘achievement equity’; the introduction of school fees becomes ‘cost-sharing’ and the plea for new structures of control turns into ‘cooperative autonomy’ (Bennhold 2002, p. 293)” (p. 479).

The privatization *of* public education, what Ball and Youdell (2009) name *exogenous* privatization, refers to the forms of privatization that “involve the opening up of public education services to private sector participation on a for-profit basis and using the private sector to design, manage or deliver aspects of public education” (p. 74). These authors identify these practices as a “fundamental feature of international education policy for the developing world” (p. 81) but argue that they have been insufficiently studied. To illustrate this notion of privatization, these authors further direct our attention to the numerous private companies that work at the national and international level in the delivery of educational services such as professional development, curriculum design, or student assessment.

This account of privatization as a new form of educational management is useful to assess the ubiquitous nature of this practice in all areas of education. To fully understand Guggenheim’s appeal to a narrative of public imagination grounded on the private, however, we need to make a brief incursion into the changing nature of the relationship between the state and the market that these new forms of private management have signified, and to the way in which the changes of this relationship redefined educational opportunity as a matter of personal benefit.

Some political theorists argue that the hegemonic nature of neoliberal policies that led to the pervasiveness of privatization are better explained as a part of a new neoliberal rationality of government that shifted the political burden of public policies from the state to the individual (Barry et al. 1996; Burchell 1993; Gordon 1991; Rose 1992 1996). Grounded in Foucault’s (1991) definition of *governmentality* as the changes in the underlying rationality for the practices of government, Gordon

(1991) explains the notion of political rationality as “a way or system of thinking about the nature of the practice of government (who can govern; what governing is; what or who is governed), capable of making some form of that activity thinkable and practicable both to its practitioners and to those upon whom it was practiced” (p. 3). For people like Burchell (1993), in the hegemonic narrative of neoliberalism this political rationality specifically involves renouncing forms of government based on the Keynesian welfare system of liberal regimes and adopting forms of government informed by the logic of the market. Neoliberal regimes, according to Foucault, no longer treat the market as an independent entity. Rather, they believe that the best way for the state to pursue economic growth is promoting the conditions that foster market growth and to require governmental organizations to mirror the practices of the market. In Burchell’s words, in neoliberalism, “[g]overnment must work *for* the game of market competition *as* a kind of enterprise itself [emphasis in the original]” (p. 275).

Rose (1992, 1996) argues that the establishment of an enterprising culture, which redefined the individual as an enterprising self, was chief among these conditions. To guarantee that the competitive and entrepreneurial game of the market is played to its best effect, neoliberalism proposes that all forms of individuals’ conduct adopt the same entrepreneurial rationality of the market. By following this proposal, Rose explains, the individual not only recreates market-based practices but, more importantly, becomes the fundamental pillar of this rationality. As this author further explains, individuals are also asked to take responsibility for themselves, to assume their life as a personal project for themselves-to become enterprising selves. In Rose’s words, in neoliberalism people are asked “to interpret its reality and destiny as matters of individual responsibility...to find meaning in existence by shaping its life through acts of choice” (p. 142).

This move from liberalism to neoliberalism as a way to understand the relationship between the state and the market was possible, following Foucauldian analyses, by employing new forms of governance that appeal to the subjectivity of the individual. Foucault (1988) terms such forms *technologies of the self* and defines them as those governmental practices and rationales that no longer submit individuals to certain forms of domination but that exercise power by eliciting the response of individuals to act freely and to be agents of power themselves. Burchell (1993) emphasizes the importance of these techniques by conceptualizing their articulation as the construction of a “relationship between government and governed which increasingly depends upon ways in which individuals are required to assume the status of being the subject of their lives, upon the ways in which they fashion themselves as certain kinds of subjects, upon the ways they practice their freedom” (p. 276). Rose (1992, 1996) provides a poignant example of this move from the social responsibility of state to the individual in the field of therapeutics. He argues that in fields such as psychology, for example, these new technologies of the self promote the notion of an autonomous being that is being governed by his/her own acts of choice in every aspect of personal life. As he illustrates by observing the dramatic growth of the literature on “self-help,” psychology increasingly relies on

people's understanding of health problems as individual problems that require self-management rather than state intervention.

Understanding this call for the individual to behave as an *enterprising self* (Rose 1992) is particularly useful when attempting to assess the implications of the new forms of school management mentioned above. From a Foucauldian perspective, these practices can be seen as part of the neoliberal political rationality that establishes a new relationship between the state and the individuals and which redefines social problems as cultural rather than political and which, therefore, presents them as easily solved by employing the principles of the market. Gordon (1991) illustrates this redefinition of social problems when explaining how, for example, the economic reality of mass unemployment experienced by some European states in the early 1990s was no longer seen as a state responsibility but as a solvable cultural problem. In the neoliberal rationality, mass unemployment does not require the state to establish particular programs or policies but, rather, to promote a cultural change for individuals requiring them to assume personal responsibility for preparing themselves for the new jobs, no matter how precarious or scarce.

Applying these conceptual lenses to current educational policies, the turn from government to governance (Ball 2009b) can now be understood as a part of the same neoliberal political rationality that shifted the responsibility from the state to the individual. The emerging, widespread view of school reform as a mostly technical problem that requires new forms of management informed by the logic of the market, for example, can now be identified as a neoliberal technology of the self that appeals to teachers, administrators, and other school constituencies to take upon themselves the responsibility of raising the quality of education while leaving the democratic role of the state unchallenged.

It is with this awareness of the shifting nature of government and of the power of the neoliberal narrative that positions the individual as the central tenant of public policy that we can now return to Davis Guggenheim's fascination with private visions of education. By embracing this dominant narrative, Guggenheim, as well as other educational and non-educational professionals who claim allegiance to public education but who seek solutions outside this realm, no longer expect the state to provide the kind of quality of education he assumes for the charter schools where the five students presented in *Waiting for "Superman"* are seeking admission. Indeed, he seems perfectly comfortable placing the responsibility for this quality of education on the children's parents' ability to make the best school selection for their kids. By releasing the state from its responsibility to secure public and democratic schooling for all its children and by implying that the only governmental obligation is to increase the number of charter schools families can choose from, Guggenheim pledges alliance to a neoliberal notion of the individual in which its strongest appeal is its rejection of any ties to the socio-historical contexts in which it functions (Burchell 1993; Rose 1992). Seduced by this notion of the individual as a *maximum rationalizer* (Peters 1996) that is always free to pursue his/her best interest because it is not constrained by the specificity of history or location because she/he is able to work with the principles of the market, Guggenheim unproblematically presents a proposal for educational equality that sees no need to address issues of

social equity and that, for the case of the five students featured in the movie, relies solely on the possibility of making a better choice in the educational market. To this extent, *Waiting for “Superman”* advances a vision of education in which educational equality becomes an individual matter that can be achieved when families function with the logic of the market and in which they are able to “choose” the best school for their children and that disregard the private nature of the market which sets in motion the choices for these parents in the first place. In advancing this vision, the documentary is endorsing the neoliberal rationality that shifts the emphasis of the conversation on education issues from the state to the individual by which education becomes “reconceptualised as a private good” (Broom 2011, p. 143).

Reclaiming the Public Grounds of Our Democratic Imagination

The analyses presented above suggest that our democratic imagination has been compromised in multiple and complex ways. The danger of privatization permeating educational spaces, according to these analyses, is not just private companies gaining control over areas of education such as funding, school management, and school services that should be of public jurisdiction. While we should be deeply concerned by the privatization of these spaces, and we should strongly oppose these actions, the real danger of privatization, in these analyses, is the potential to redefine the future of public education without the notion of the public good as its main referent. If taken seriously, this menace leads to assessing the task of reclaiming the public grounds of our imagination as a task that is both unavoidable and urgent. It also leads to raising the daunting but extremely important question of what it means to reclaim the public grounds of our imagination in the face of current educational discourses that redefine public education as a matter of individual benefit and that limit our understanding of educational equity as a problem whose exclusive solution resides in providing families with the option to choose a more desirable school for their children.

This book answers this question at a two different levels. At a fundamental level, it contends that the search for new public grounds in public education necessarily requires recommitting ourselves to the notion of the public good as the only legitimate referent for democratic education (Dewey 1916/1997; Freire 1993, 1994). For progressive educators unwilling to relinquish the democratic aspirations of public education, this process of recommitment entails becoming more astute in recognizing educational arguments and practices that quietly advance private visions of education as well as strongly rejecting any school proposition that prioritizes individual benefit over the common interest. At a more specific level, this book argues that reclaiming the public grounds of our public imagination requires the creation of new conceptual tools to assist us in this task. Such tools, this text contends, should be generated in full awareness of the increasingly debated relationship between the concept of the public good and its traditional political referents.

The dichotomy between the private and the public that inspired democratic views in education to function in public schools, for example, has become progressively porous and problematic. Referring to the presence of new forms of schooling currently existing under the umbrella of public schooling such as charter schools, Higgins and Abowitz (2011), state the permeability of this dichotomy by arguing that, “the simple equation of public schools and government-run schools has been broken” (p. 375). Abowitz’s (2000) defense of the public nature of programs such as vouchers or charter schools further exposes the porous nature of the relationship between the private and the public warning us with her arguments of the ideological risks embedded in the blurredness of this distinction. This author suggests that these programs may not signify a move toward the private as much as they may signify an emergent conception of public education that, while still demonstrating a public vocation, no longer associates itself with the state. Lamenting the dramatic increase of public funding toward private schools carried by recent educational policies in Australia, Reid (2002) further explains that neoliberal policies have changed our understanding of public education, effectively “blurring the historical division between public and private systems of education” (p. 571).

The notion of democracy that provides another important referent to the idea of the public good has also been heavily scrutinized. Exposing some of the ways in which the process of globalization weakens the decision-making power of individual states, for example, Burbules and Torres (2000) state that, “nothing less is at stake today than the survival of the democratic form of governance and the role of public education in that enterprise” (p. 23). Reid (2002) further contends that a view of democracy as bounded to the modern nation-state is no longer relevant to our global context. Referring to the neoliberal nature of educational policies in Australia, this author further argues that the critiques to these policies should not be directed toward the policies themselves as much as toward the notion of democracy that promotes them. In his words, “[c]urrent neo-liberal policy draws upon and sustains a contemporary ‘realist’ conception of democracy that assumes that democracy flourishes best in an individualistic society with a competitive market economy, minimal state intervention, a politically passive citizenry and an active elite political leadership (Carr and Harnett 1996). This view of democracy produces education policy that constructs education as a positional good and emphasizes individual freedom of choice at the expense of equity and broader collective social purposes of education” (p. 572).

Likewise, the very notion of the public good and its main political referent, the public, has also been deeply challenged. Broom (2011) contends that current neoliberal ideology “celebrates individualism and narrowly understands public goods as private goods” (p. 142). Reclaiming its democratic potential but documenting its loss of meaning, Boyles (2011) further laments that, “‘the public good’ has become so privatized as to have lost any significant comparative, differentiated, or substantive meaning” (p. 434). This author exposes some of the current and deep contradictions of this notion by stating that the public good, “is not public—at least not in a radically democratic sense that is critical of corporate or business influ-

ence over politics, public debate, and schooling. It also is not singular, as there are a number of publics and counterpublics, many of which have historically been left out of the ‘public’ debate about public schools” (pp. 434–435). Boyles recognizes this paradox and echoes Nancy Fraser’s critique of the notion of the public good as universal as well as her recommendation to think of the public sphere as a space where different “publics” can claim their interests and where marginalized groups can act as *counterpublics* in pursuit of the social benefits from which they have been traditionally excluded.

Acknowledging these murky territories and forewarned of the challenges to recommit ourselves to a notion that is in full motion and very vulnerable to current conservative views, this book offers the notion of public education as *publicly imagined* and as a specific tool to guide us in this process. In advancing this notion, this text contends that public schools should be considered as such not only because of their public “ownership, funding, access, control, and responsibility” (Covaleskie 2007, p. 38) but also, paraphrasing Meier (2002), because of their democratic responsibility to dream for a better future for *all* our children and to secure that these dreams be kept public property. This notion is offered both as tool for critique and as a tool to envision new educational possibilities.

As a tool for critique, demanding public schools to be publicly imagined can help us to sharpen our critique of policies, practices, and discourses that silently, but powerfully, redefine the private as a legitimate voice for the public. It can help us, for example, to expand the conversation on the dangers of privatization in education by arguing that what is most objectionable about this practice is not that it fails to serve the larger public but that, as Covaleskie (2007) reminds us, privatization always advances private conceptions of what the public good is. As an instrument for critique, the notion of publicly imagined education also reminds us that education as a public responsibility is housed in the present as much as in the future and that, consequently, we are as accountable for our current practices as we are for the realization of our dreams. In this regard, education as publicly imagined compels us to think that our most important educational challenge may not be fixing pressing problems such as preparing students for a global world but to make sure that in responding to these problems we construct the world we imagine both collectively and responsibly. As Giroux & Giroux (2006) understand this responsibility, “[p]ublic education is about more than just job preparation or even critical consciousness raising; it is also about imagining different futures and politics as a form of intervention in public life” (p. 29).

As a concept purposefully developed to reground our democratic imagination, the notion of public education as publicly imagined intends to serve as a tool to reclaim schools as sites of social agency, that is to say, as legitimate places of democratic imagination. Current educational policies tend to identify public schools’ educational troubles as a management problem and, consequently, they expect schools to passively and dutifully implement the educational practices that the private sector is more than happy to provide. Conceptualizing schools as publicly imagined, however, radically changes this perception and presents schools as places where profes-

sional educators labor to envision a brighter future for the students and the communities they serve. From this perspective, schools appear as places of collective visions, no matter how precarious and imperfect, by which educators both engage and attempt to transcend the historical specificities that define the need for these visions in the first place. This proposition seems particularly relevant for schools, like the ones presented in this book, that work with disenfranchised communities and undertake the social responsibility of making schooling a path for social empowerment. These schools, as well as the many others that walk this path everyday (Apple and Beane 1995; Meier 2002; Wrigley et al. 2012b) are vivid examples of education as collective ventures requiring the entire school to wrestle with the question of the role of school in providing disenfranchised students with a preferential seat in a more socially just world.

The proposition of thinking about schools as publicly imagined through collective visions subjected to the dictates of historical specificity is not submitted as the only necessary element to overcome the difficulties of recommitting ourselves to the notion of the public good at a time this idea seems to have lost its significance. This text contends, however, that this understanding of schools invites us to consider public schools as sites of agency where teachers are actively pursuing more democratic futures for those society has traditionally marginalized and as public spaces where we can contest those notions of the public that have excluded these groups in the first place. Paralleling Abowitz's (2000) claim to view charter schools as public by virtue of their ability to enact alternative public spaces for the groups they serve, this text argues that we think of public schools that have been publicly imagined, at least to a certain extent, as a *counterpublic*. This term, as conceptualized by Nancy Fraser (1997), critiques the notion of the public as a unified entity but, more importantly, it helps us to envision public spaces where conflicting interests are represented. As Wilson (2010) explains, in this work Fraser "highlight[s] the creation of alternative public spheres where marginalized groups can claim discursive space. She terms these alternative publics 'subaltern counterpublics,' spaces where 'members of subordinated groups invent and circulate counter-discourses'" (p. 648). Considering that public schools in disenfranchised communities are, to a large extent, advocating for a stronger presence of these communities in the public spaces, we can conceive of public schools that explicitly and publicly pursue this goal as *counterpublic* where alternative narratives could, and should, be constructed.

Conceptualizing schools as publicly imagined also allows us to reclaim the critical role that pedagogy and curriculum play in our democratic imagination disdained by current educational policies. Understanding schools as places with the social mandate to produce collective visions that search for a more equitable future for disenfranchised students necessarily involves identifying curriculum and pedagogy as precious educational tools to accomplish these visions. Within this understanding, both, pedagogy and curriculum, become action verbs by which schools tailor, in multiple and complex ways every day, their democratic imagination to the historical specificity of the students they educate. In this proposition, curriculum appears as a

living text that carries and enacts distinctive, although frequently not explicit, conceptions of knowledge, teaching, and learning, as well as notions of what it means to be an educated person in the context in which the learning takes place. Conceptualized as a tool for democratic imagination, this notion of curriculum should still be the subject of critical and post-critical analyses that remind us that any notion of curriculum will always be plagued with epistemological power struggles (Beyer and Apple 1998; Hendry 2011; Schiro 2008; Silva 2001; Slattery 1995). Embracing these analyses, this conceptualization of curriculum, nevertheless, suggests that the democratic potential of the school curriculum rests, very specifically, on making sure that the unraveling of these epistemological schemes and the laboring over how to make this process of discernment a viable path of education action contribute to advance the vision of education to which the school has committed itself. Likewise, this conceptualization also suggests that the merits of the school curriculum should be assessed not only in the present but also in relation to the educational spaces they open for the future.

Understanding schools as places of collective visions in search of more equitable educational propositions also necessarily means to reinstate the transformative power of pedagogy as a tool for hope (Freire 1994; Giroux and Giroux 2006; Wrigley et al. 2012b) and to unchain this notion from its mundane conception as methodology. As Wrigley et al. (2012a) contend, pedagogy is a much broader proposition than methodology and represents “the need for alignment between knowledge, curriculum, assessment, institutional mores and social contexts framed by the understandings about the nature of knowledge, of reality and human society, of human capacity for learning and growth and of aspirations for a better future” (p. 10). In this transformative role, pedagogy is informed by a critical reading and claim, as Giroux and Giroux (2006) assert that, “[critical] pedagogy is an ethical referent and a call to action for educators, parents, students, and others to reclaim public education as a democratic public sphere, a place where teaching is not reduced to learning how either to master tests or to acquire low level jobs skills, but a safe space where reason, understanding, dialogue, and critical engagement are available to all faculty and students” (p. 30).

This text offers this notion of public schools as publicly imagined through the narratives of 11 schools that taught or currently teach with an open commitment to a more socially just future and to the participation of their students in the construction of this future. Traveling to these schools is an invitation to vigorously contest educational discourses that see public schools as producers of measurable learning objectives rather than producers of visions with the public responsibility of assuring more democratic goals that advance such learning. This invitation is issued in the spirit of reclaiming the role of schools as agents of democratic imaginations. Equally importantly, it is issued in the belief that these travels around different geographical locations and across time would unveil new public grounds for public education that can assure that public schooling continues to be, above all, a public endeavor.

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Chapter 3

The *Ayllu*-school (Bolivia 1931–1940)

Encarna Rodríguez and Valentín Arispe Hinojosa

Bolivia is the South American country with the largest number of people with pre-Columbian roots. There are 36 native languages spoken in the country and, of the 8 million people recorded in the census of 2001, over 60% still identify themselves as indigenous (INE 2011). Unfortunately, the country also holds the highest poverty rate in the region and endures an economic and political system that has consistently excluded indigenous groups and the Andean tradition they represent. The 2005 election of Evo Morales, the first indigenous president in Bolivia and in Latin American, has deeply challenged this system. Despite the great significance of this election, however, the daily lives of most indigenous people in the country are still shaped by the harsh legacy of colonialism and the recent neoliberal policies that have submitted them to extreme poverty and systematic cultural and linguistic discrimination (Luykx 1999; Webber 2005).

Bolivia's pre-Columbian roots have been particularly significant in education. In this field, the country has achieved international recognition for the innovative pedagogical experiment developed in the 1930s in Warisata, an Aymara indigenous community in the Highlands. The history of the *Ayllu*-school, as this experience is referred to in the specialized literature, begins with the encounter of Elizardo Pérez, a teacher and intellectual searching for an indigenous community to house a pedagogical project he envisioned as a new model of indigenous education, and Avelino Siñani, an indigenous community leader who persuaded the members of Warisata to believe in this project (Pérez 1962; Revilla Orías 2011). This encounter forged a relationship between these two men that lasted for the rest of their lives. More importantly, it opened a space, both geographically and educationally, to create a vision of education that articulated the two intellectual narratives they represented (Luykx 1999). Both Siñani and Pérez believed that the ultimate goal of education

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was the liberation of indigenous people, but they travelled different roads toward this goal. Siñani and the other members of the community came to this encounter from the tradition of indigenous resistance that understood literacy as a crucial tool to defend their rights, particularly their land, and that placed education at the core of their demands for self-determination (Mamani 1992). Pérez, on the other hand, came to this encounter symbolizing the liberal narrative of modernization and technical progress and was convinced that schools should improve the living conditions for the community. Following this narrative, he believed that schools should contribute to the liberation of indigenous people by preparing skillful professionals who could contribute to the economic improvement and to the self-sustainment of the community (Pérez 1962).

The outcome of this encounter was the foundation of a school that offered three levels of education (elementary, vocational, and a training program for teachers) and that was housed in a two-story building that the Warisata community constructed with tireless efforts. The liberal government at the time endorsed Pérez's pedagogical project and contributed to this experience by paying teachers' salaries and by providing additional funding for the construction of the building (Brienen 2002). With this official endorsement, the *Ayllu*-school opened in August 1931 offering a curriculum based on the needs and hopes of the community and innovative programs as coeducation and bilingual education (Luykx 1999). This curriculum, fully controlled by the community, became the defining feature of this innovative educational experience that still constitutes a crucial referent for indigenous education in Bolivia and Latin America.

Bolivia in the 1930s: Searching for a Model of Indigenous Education

In the barely 10 years of its existence, the *Ayllu*-school grew considerably and achieved enormous popularity. The original school founded by Siñani and Pérez became the central school for a group of 37 other satellite schools in the Warisata region (Castellanos 2005). This group of schools constituted a *núcleo*, a term referring to an educational structure grounded on the Andean tradition of community interdependence according to which a centralized location, in this case Warisata, functioned as the main material and legal resource for the surrounding, and usually smaller, communities. Indigenous groups in other parts of the country quickly implemented the educational structure and pedagogical project of the *Ayllu*-school and created several small schools within their *núcleos*. By the time the Warisata school closed down in 1940, there were 18 other *núcleos* in the country (Castellanos 2005). Because of the long distance students had to walk to attend school, the community of Warisata also built a boarding school that housed 200 students (Pérez 1962). The school also graduated two classes of rural teachers from the teacher training program offered to students after completing the vocational level. In 1937, the popularity of the *Ayllu*-school led to the founding of the first school of education

in the country with the explicit goal of recruiting and preparing indigenous teachers to teach in indigenous communities (Revilla Orías 2011). Additionally, the school reached international recognition in the First Latin American Indigenous Congress celebrated in Mexico in 1940 when several resolutions on indigenous education based on this experience were enthusiastically adopted by this organization.

While a testimony to the pedagogical merits of the school, the significance of this rapid expansion and international recognition of the *Ayllu*-school needs to be contextualized within the debate on indigenous education that has shaped the history of schooling in Bolivia in the last two centuries. After its independence from Spain in 1825, the *criollos*, the descendants of Spaniards, seized Bolivia's political and economic power and indigenous groups remained marginalized and excluded (Webber 2005). Agricultural production, for example, was now in the hands of the *hacendados*, the owners of large areas of land who employed indigenous people but exploited them as laborers. Likewise, the production of the mines, an industry crucially important for the country, was controlled by the European descents who forced indigenous people to work in inhumane conditions. This powerful social group, now leading the new independent government, confronted the fact that Bolivia—a newly born country—was in dire need of technological progress and modernization. Not surprisingly, the pursuing of this goal provoked the question of the role played by indigenous people in the new nation, a question commonly referred to as the “Indian Problem” (Brienen 2002). In the Nineteenth Century, the belief in the natural inferiority of native people and in their inability to adapt themselves to the Western culture determined indigenous communities to be an obstacle to progress. This was particularly the case in the debates over agrarian reform. The *hacendados* believed that the modernization of the land should happen by implementing a capitalist model of agricultural production, something that was in open and forthright opposition to the indigenous views of the land as communal property. The policies of the 1800s, consequently, proposed the extermination of the indigenous communities and the expropriation of their agrarian properties (Baptista 1979).

By the end of the Nineteenth Century, though, these policies had moved from extermination to ‘inclusion.’ After indigenous revolts during the Federal War of 1898–1899 that challenged the power of the *criollos*, the dominant groups understood that the “Indian Problem” would not “go away” by expropriating these communities and that a new solution should be devised (Brienen 2002). The search for a model for indigenous education appeared as a part of this solution. Both the liberal and conservative forces at this time believed that the role of education was to make indigenous people into more docile laborers by teaching them the Western values of modernization that would replace their ancestral and backward social and agricultural traditions. Even the most liberal and sympathetic views toward the plight of indigenous groups saw education as a way to “civilize” them, as a means to provide them with the culture and knowledge they presumably lacked (Claure 1986; Luykx 1999). Rooted in this belief, the liberal governments of the beginning of the Twentieth Century engaged in a debate about indigenous education and attempted to develop a state-based educational organization for these communities. Since most of these communities lived in rural areas, this initiative aimed at the creation of a

rural education system that would allow the Bolivian educational administration to launch, implement, and monitor state-led school programs (Brienen 2002).

Not surprisingly, this ambitious attempt to develop the first centralized rural education system soon encountered many and unsurpassable obstacles (Brienen 2002). In 1909, for example, the state created the first teacher-training program for rural teachers. However, teachers graduating from this program lacked knowledge on indigenous communities and were, therefore, completely unprepared to teach in these contexts. Similarly, in 1907, the state created the so-called *escuelas ambulantes*, an initiative designed to send itinerant teachers to serve several rural communities at the same time. Just 3 years after their foundation, the shortage of teachers led the Bolivian government to declare this initiative a failure. The lack of state resources and transportation in rural schools, coupled with the harsh conditions of teaching in these communities made this option very unattractive to teachers. The failure of these initiatives led indigenous communities to increase their demands for the free and public state education system already established in the 1880 Constitution but that had never materialized (Mamani 1992). For these communities, literacy was a powerful instrument in the fight for their legal rights, particularly for those concerned with the ownership of the land; thus schools were a subject of almost religious devotion (Castellanos 2005). Even prior to this attempt at establishing a rural, state-based educational system, for example, indigenous groups had created their own community schools. Lacking financial help from the government, these schools could hardly afford teachers and usually employed members of the community, mostly those returning from the compulsory military service where they had learned how to read and write in Spanish. Because of the fierce opposition of the *hacendados*, who perceived them as a brewery of indigenous resistance, most of these schools were forced to operate clandestinely (Luykx 1999). The region of Warisata had a long tradition of clandestine schools, which made this location, in Pérez's estimation, an ideal enclave for his community-based pedagogical proposal (Soria 1992; Zibechi 2010). Indeed, Avelino Siñani had suffered incarceration and torture because of his strong commitment to these schools.

By the late 1920s, the Bolivian educational administration was still searching for a national system for indigenous education but lacked a pedagogical model upon which to build such a system. Elizardo Pérez's proposal for a community-based initiative came to fill this void and was enthusiastically embraced by the liberal government at the time (Pérez 1962). To support this proposal, the state offered to pay for the teachers and to provide some funding for the two-store building the community was willing to construct with its own efforts (Pérez 1962). This financial contribution aid made the opening of the school possible in 1931. Equally important, it signified the official endorsement of a model of indigenous education that, for the first time, considered indigenous communities an integral part of the process of schooling. Contrary to prior educational policies envisioned and implemented by the *criollos*, Pérez proposed an educational model rooted in the cultural traditions and needs of the indigenous tradition and developed by indigenous communities. Pérez explained "his initial motivation for the school as being rooted in the notion that indigenous education would never succeed unless the school was integrated into the indigenous community itself" (Brienen 2002, p. 631). Supported by this

view, Pérez claimed that “the curriculum should reflect the needs and wants of the indigenous community, and indeed the adult members of the community should have a say in how the school should be run” (Brienen 2002, p. 631).

Pérez understood the notion of the “*ayllu*” as the central organizational and cultural referent of his pedagogical project. In the Andean tradition, the term *ayllu* refers to a network of interdependent communities based on collective agriculture and kinship ties and sharing a common judiciary and organizational system. In the *ayllu*, there is no private possession of the land; the work in the community is always collective, and everyone contributes to the leadership and the future of the group (Rojas Olaya 2011). The *ayllu* also functions according to five grounding philosophical principles (Rojas Olaya 2011). Liberation, the first of them, requires that all actions in the community, including the construction of new schools, lead to the improvement and the self-determination of the group. The second principle, community organization, determines the *ayllus* as self-governed entities that select their leaders by direct representation in popular assemblies. The next principle, production, requires all members of the *ayllu* to actively engage in the producing of materials or skills needed by the community. Work, according to this principle, is central to the production of the community resources and, consequently, a community task required of all its members. The fourth principle is cultural identity. The *ayllus* actively pursue the maintenance of the indigenous identity. Finally, the fifth principle is solidarity and reciprocity. As implied in these principles, consensus, collaboration and consensus lead all the activities of the *ayllu*.

The possibility for a state-based system based on Pérez’s pedagogical project ended abruptly in 1940 when the *Ayllu*-school and schools in the different *núcleos* were forced to change their goals and curriculums. Unfortunately, the rapid success and recognition of the school had also brought the attention of the economic elites in the country who considered indigenous education as a great ideological threat to their interests (Luykx 1999). Retaliating against this threat and with the formal consent of the now conservative administration, the *hacendados* destroyed the school and persecuted many of the teachers and members of the community (Zibechi 2010). The organizational structure of the *núcleos* survived this period of destruction. Indeed, it was this educational organization, still in place today, that has created a rudimentary rural education system that also has channeled subsequent educational policies for indigenous communities. None of these policies recovered Pérez and Siñani’s vision of education as liberation. After the destruction of *Ayllu*-school, work and production remained the focus of the school but the official policies prioritized agricultural and vocational skills over literacy and the empowerment of the community (Luykx 1999).

Learning by Working in the *Ayllu*-school

One of the most significant implications of placing the Warisata school within the structure and values of the *ayllu* was the disruption of the separation between school and community that characterize formal schooling. Both Elizardo Pérez and Avelino

Siñani believed that indigenous education should respond to the needs and visions of indigenous communities and that the process of schooling should involve the respect and strengthening of indigenous values, goals, and organizational structures. For them, school should reach beyond basic literacy, the main goal of rural schools at the time, by preparing students to thrive in their own cultural context and to contribute to the betterment of the group (Pérez 1962). This belief assumed that the school and the community shared the same goals and that these two entities would work together toward the achievement of such goals. This assumption grounded all aspects of the school operation and curriculum (Revilla Orías 2011).

Administration

To assure the achievement of the community goals, the administration system of the *Ayllu*-school followed indigenous practices of leadership and self-government and involved the participation of the entire community. The first school founded by Siñani and Pérez soon became the central school of the Warisata's *núcleo* and operated both as a provider and as a pedagogical overseer to the other satellite schools. For example, the Warisata school built educational supplies such as desks, rulers, geometrical figures, etc. needed in neighboring schools. Likewise, this school prepared new teachers to teach in the other schools and monitored the educational practices of all instructors in the *núcleo* (Pérez 1962). There was no educational decision, however, that the school made in isolation from the community. The Andean tradition of leadership required the full involvement of all the members of the community. Following this practice, the administration of the school was entrusted to the *Parlamento Amauta*, the highest governing body of the *ayllu*. It was this body that made all the administrative and curricular decisions and that determined, for example, when and how a new school should be built, what holidays should be observed, or how to implement the pedagogical project of the school. This organization was comprised of members of the community elected to this role by direct vote in general assembly. When the school opened in Warisata, the composition of this body expanded to include the school's principal and other school representatives (Rojas Olaya 2011). The *Parlamento Amauta* functioned through various committees, such as construction, agriculture, classes, etc. that were responsible for the different areas of the life in the *ayllu*. These committees were composed of standing members belonging to the *Parlamento Amauta* and additional community members, including teachers, parents, and students.

With the integration of the school within the leadership structures of the *ayllu*, very soon the Warisata school became, both physically and metaphorically, the hub of the community. The *Parlamento Amauta* met regularly in the two-story building that housed the school to discuss all matters of community concern (Rojas Olaya 2011). The school also became the site of community deliberations for a variety of issues such as those involving indigenous rights, especially the rights to the ownership of the land, and the resolution of disputes among community members.

Additionally, the school building served medical and cultural purposes by, for example, dispensing medical attention and organizing public readings and discussions of newspapers in the evenings.

Pedagogy

The pedagogical foundations of the *Ayllu*-school were also heavily informed by the shared goals of the school and the community. Pérez's educational vision pursued the improvement of the living conditions of indigenous communities and the development of an education system in which academic subjects would contribute to the economic production and the self-sustainment of the community (Pérez 1962; Salazar 1983). In his view, this kind of education was required to "sustain the central elements of the social organization and the Andean pedagogy consisting in 'learning by doing' so the ayllu could maintain its organization and Cosmo vision" (Rojas Olaya 2011, p. 256) [our translation]. One of the elements of this Andean pedagogy entailed the practice of communal respect and reciprocity. Another element was land holding. The Andean tradition believed that the land belonged to the community, and not to its individual members. Thus, communal work was an essential component in the survival of the community. This tradition required the contribution of all individual members of the *ayllu* to its agricultural production and dictated that such production benefited the entire community. The *Ayllu*-school embraced these Andean elements and developed an active pedagogy that combined work and academics articulated through the academics-work-production trilogy (Pérez 1962). Contrary to traditional schools, academics in Warisata were fully integrated in the life and needs of the community. Indeed, in the *Ayllu*-school, the main site of pedagogical intervention was the work that students were expected to perform as members of the community. In the pedagogical project of the *Ayllu*-school, it was work that gave meaning to learning. Also contrary to traditional schools, academic knowledge in the *Ayllu*-school was not an aim in itself but served the larger goals of the community. The goal of the academic subjects imparted in the school was to improve the professional skills of the members of the community and, consequently, to raise the economic and living conditions of the community by increasing the agricultural and technical production of the *ayllu*.

The implementation of a school pedagogy grounded on the academics-work-production trilogy, led the *Ayllu*-school to create a learning site absent from traditional schools: the *talleres*. This term referred to technical and professional programs developed by the school to address the economic needs of the community and the promotion of small family business (Pérez 1962). Attendance at the *talleres* was mandatory for students 11 years old or older. There were two kinds of *talleres*. The first one, construction, was related to the building of houses in the community and prepared students for all the tasks involved in this process. Carpentry, mechanics, tile crafts, etc. were some of the programs that the *talleres* offered in this category. The second kind, industrial production, prepared students to respond

to the industrial demands of the community and offered programs in textiles, shoe-making, pottery, leather treatment, etc. For Pérez and Siñani, the *talleres* were a crucial element in the struggle for the liberation and self-sustainment of the community. In their view, these programs contributed to the technical modernization of the *ayllu* and, therefore, to the economic growth that could eventually eliminate poverty from the community.

Consistent with the trilogy academics-work-production, the *talleres* closely connected academics with agricultural production, the main source of economic sustenance and cultural identity for the community. Students in the *talleres* were required to contribute to agrarian production of the *ayllu* by engaging in activities that intended to improve production and living conditions in the community. Students in the boarding school, for example, were taught planting and harvesting techniques for new foods intended to increase the dietary options of the community (Pérez 1962). Additionally, the *talleres* recognized and nurtured the identity of the students as productive members of the community. Understanding that students would later perform professional and leadership roles for the betterment of the community, this system designated academic subjects as relevant only when they contributed to these future roles. Furthermore, the academic-work-production trilogy implied that activities such as measuring, counting, calculating, comparing, analyzing, etc. were significant only when responding to the needs of the community and when fostering students' identity as active contributors of the *ayllu* (Salazar 1983, 1992).

Curriculum

The formal curriculum of the *Ayllu*-school was also grounded on the close connection between school and community. The school conformed to the regulations dictated by the Bolivian educational administration in terms of the grades, school levels, and subjects imparted (arithmetic, language, geometry, geography, history, music, arts, physical education, and natural sciences). The curriculum of the school, however, was germane to the experience of the community and implemented the academics-work-production trilogy from a very early age (Rojas Olaya 2011; Salazar 1983). In kindergarten (4–6), for example, students participated in the harvesting of farm products and in the raising of domestic animals such as rabbits, chickens, etc. They were also introduced to the study of local animals and plants. In the pre-vocational level (7–10), students were not required to attend the *talleres*, but they were invited to participate in them. The Bolivian education administration required that students become literate and master certain mathematical and social science knowledge. The school pursued this goal by integrating the different academic subjects into professional skills and by making students more knowledgeable and appreciative of the environmental characteristics of the community. In this level, students were expected, for example, to classify local and regional animals, to learn more about the properties of the natural resources of the area, or to construct teaching utensils for other schools. Students were also required to participate in the construction of community houses and to learn about all the tasks involved in this

process. In the vocational level (11–14), the goal of the curriculum was to identify the vocational and intellectual preferences of the students. Attendance at the *talleres* was now mandatory and students were required to “produce” something useful for the community such as home utensils or other objects needed to build houses or for farming. In terms of the academics, students were required to apply analytical skills to literary tasks such as compositions or to the study of school subjects such as zoology, history, geography, etc. Finally, in the professional level (15 on), the goal was to develop a professional specialty based on the skills learned in the *talleres* in the vocational period. In this final stage, the school provided students with different career paths. Those who wanted to become teachers, for example, were trained in this area and given the necessary pedagogical knowledge to exercise this profession.

The curriculum of the *Ayllu*-school included additional innovative features. Because the academic subjects were integrated in the *talleres*, the school neither implemented a formal assessment system nor administered exams (Pérez 1962). Learning was demonstrated by working, by “producing” artifacts or skills needed by the community. The school, however, devised an alternative evaluation system with detailed information on students’ progress. For example, teachers created a log that, starting in kindergarten, traced students’ learning potential and skill preferences and that was later used for advising with professional choices. The school calendar and schedule were also unique to this pedagogical experience. The school observed very few holidays, all of them related to the agricultural production or to the cultural identity of the community. Also, the school was open all day and not confined to a rigid schedule. Congruent to the academic-work-production trilogy and their expected contribution to the *ayllu*, students “worked” all day. Classes were usually imparted in the morning, and the knowledge and skills reiterated in the *talleres*. Co-education was another important curriculum feature. While in lower numbers than their male counterparts, girls participated in the school, contributed to agricultural work, and attended *talleres*, such as textiles, that prepared them professionally (Pérez 1962).

The *Ayllu*-school was also an innovative experience in terms of language. Most members of the community possessed very limited knowledge of Spanish, the only language of instruction in schools until 1994. Thus, the school implemented an Aymara-Spanish bilingual system involving the use of both languages in daily instruction and inviting students to produce written texts and to engage in literary production in their native language (Luykx 1999; Pérez 1962). Following this program, Spanish was introduced in kindergarten and mastered in the pre-vocational level where students were expected to translate texts from Aymara into Spanish (Rojas Olaya 2011).

Teachers

Recruiting teachers for the *Ayllu*-school was a challenge from the outset. Pérez believed that teachers’ main pedagogical site was the *talleres*, and not the classroom, and that teachers needed to understand the professional needs of the community.

The lack of teachers' preparation to work in indigenous contexts (Brienen 2002) had convinced Pérez that professionally competent members of the community were better suited to teach the academic knowledge needed in these vocational programs. Indeed, he founded the school with three other instructors who directed the *talleres* of carpentry, mechanics and masonry and who he had been purposefully chosen from the community, and not from the pool of graduates from the schools of education, because of their familiarity with indigenous practices and values. The school still employed teachers to impart the main academic subjects but Pérez expected them to share the goals of the *ayllu*. Because of this need for culturally competent teachers, the school offered teaching as a career path in the professional level, the last level of schooling.

The Legacy of the Ayllu-school

Undoubtedly, the most enduring educational legacy of the *Ayllu*-school in Bolivia and Latin America is the successful development of a pedagogical project within the cultural and social organization of the indigenous community (Luykx 1999; Zibechi 2010). As envisioned by Siñani, the Warisata school articulated the *ayllu*'s vision of schooling for liberation that had sustained the movement of clandestine schools. As envisioned by Pérez (1962), the *Parlamento Amauta* allowed full ownership of the community over this pedagogical project. In Zibechi's (2010) words, "Warisata was a communal way of organizing education" (p. 320). The trilogy academics-work-production clearly illustrates this communal organization of the school. The active pedagogy of work served as the core of the curriculum not because of its educational merits but because of its ability to express the indigenous' vision of society that understood the self-sustainment of the *ayllu* as depending upon the productive contribution, agricultural or otherwise, of all its members. Another important example of communal organization was the creation of the *núcleos*, an educational organization inserted in the structure of the *ayllu*. This organization outlived the destruction of the Warisata school and is still in place today. Indeed, it was adopted by other Latin American countries.

While the communal ownership of the school's pedagogical project was its main educational achievement, the legacy of the *Ayllu*-school has been largely political. A simple search in the literature reveals that the Warisata school is consistently highlighted as a political accomplishment in the struggle for indigenous rights. This political significance is not surprising considering the intimate connection that indigenous groups feel with the land. As Claure (1986) argues, the battle for the Warisata school was also the battle for the land, a highly contested issue in all Latin American countries with a large indigenous presence since it challenged the very core of the unequal relations of power that have continuously marginalized these groups. Indeed, the *Ayllu*-school is recognized in the literature more for its contribution to the liberation of indigenous groups than for its pedagogical innovations (Zibechi 2010).

In Bolivia, the *Ayllu*-school is still alive in the collective memory of educators and indigenous communities. Its impact on current educational policies, howev-

er, has been limited. The recent 2010 educational law advancing interculturalism and plurilingualism in the schools was named “Avelino Siñani- Elizardo Pérez” in recognition of the importance of the Warisata school (Reid 2011). Despite this symbolic power and the efforts of the current Bolivian administration to address the needs of indigenous groups, however, the debates around the design and implementation of the law have not included a serious discussion on the theoretical propositions of the *Ayllu*-school and the educational merits of these propositions for indigenous communities in Bolivia today. To be sure, the current legislation shared the principle of indigenous liberation that inspired Warisata and demands collaboration between school and community. Nonetheless, the conversation on the implications of the Warisata school for the debate on indigenous education today has been absent. This omission, sadly understandable for those familiar with the complexities of education reforms, reminds us that perhaps the most important legacy of experiences such as the Warisata school is to keep the collective hope for an educational system that could truly serve those students traditionally marginalized by this institution. Unfortunately, in the current political context of Bolivia today, so favorable to the struggle of indigenous people, this omission has prevented a fair assessment of the possible contribution of the *Ayllu*-school to this educational system.

In Conversation

Rodríguez As a non-indigenous person who grew up in a different country but also in a rural context of poverty, I am amazed at the strength of the *Ayllu*-school in the struggle for cultural and political identity. What does this school mean to you as an indigenous person and educator in Bolivia?

Arispe Hinojosa For me, Warisata is an interrupted political-pedagogical project, a project that pursued the liberation of indigenous people but also the recognition of this group as a political and social subject. In education, for me Warisata signifies the creation of a new pedagogical paradigm that contributed to the self-sustainment of the indigenous communities based on the Andean principles of learning by working and producing for the community. I believe, however, that our reflections on this school should not be restricted to indigenous contexts. The *Ayllu*-school was a very innovative experience in this sociocultural context, but, in my opinion, the analysis of the philosophical, pedagogical, and political goal of the school should benefit other social groups traditionally marginalized by schools.

From my social position as indigenous Quechua, I think that the inclusion of the sociocultural context of the students in the *Ayllu*-school provides an important reflection on how to include these contexts in our current education policies. As an indigenous person, I also think that we need a profound reflection on the ideological position of the school, particularly on the acceptance of the social integration of indigenous people according to the narrative of modernity that prevented the development of an Aymaran philosophy of education.

Rodríguez The conversation on education today focuses mostly on issues of measuring and assessment. What do you see as the main contributions of the *Ayllu*-school to this conversation?

Arispe I believe that the most important contribution to education today is the reminder that schools should not be divorced from the students' sociocultural and productive realities and that pedagogy and politics are inseparable. Warisata was successful because it was fully integrated in the community and intimately connected to the community's living, working, and productive practices. I believe that the trilogy academics-work-production based on the pedagogy of learning that made this success possible needs to be recovered today because formal schooling continues to alienate a large number of students and leaves them outside of the job market. This approach to work and production in Warisata illustrates that pedagogy and politics are intimately connected and remind us that we should acknowledge this connection in our current conversations on education.

Rodríguez The literature presents the *Ayllu*-school as an unquestionable symbol in the political struggle for indigenous rights. Do you see any limitation in the educational philosophy that grounded this struggle?

Arispe Hinojosa The answer to this question needs to be contextualized in the social, cultural, and political context of Bolivia and Latin America at the time that shaped the discussion of the role of indigenous people in society. Indigenous groups wanted self-determination and knew that education was their path to liberation, but the public conversation in the country still debated between only two solutions to this debate: extinction or social integration. Considering this context, I believe that one of the main pedagogical limitations of the school is that the curriculum responded to the political aspirations of modernizing indigenous communities and did not reflect an indigenous vision of education. An additional limitation was that the *Ayllu*-school focused exclusively on rural education. This geographical scope prevented the adoption of this experience in other areas, for example, urban schools and, therefore, the possibility of becoming the grounds for national educational policy.

Rodríguez Even understanding the complexities involved in the processes of national education reforms, I am surprised by the limited impact of the *Ayllu*-school in the current educational policies of Bolivia since they also pursue indigenous liberation. How do you explain this situation?

Arispe Hinojosa It is important to mention that the current law of education, as its name indicates, was inspired by the Warisata school and pursues the liberation of indigenous people by requiring schools to contribute to the decolonialization, depatriarchalization, and democratization of the political and economic structures of the country. The translation of the law in concrete pedagogical projects, however, involves numerous difficulties. One of them is the inherent tension between indigenous visions of education that demand attention to diversity and the state proposals of school reform that tend toward the homogenization of society. Another

difficulty, already in place when Warisata existed, is the colonial and homogenizing vision of the teacher education programs. These programs disregard indigenous knowledge and, therefore, ignore any possibility for education transformation based on the epistemological perspective of these groups. Also, teachers have always been heavily unionized making changes in school more difficult. An additional difficulty is the lack of political power of those indigenous organizations involved in education. Despite these difficulties, however, the law also provides many reasons for hope. There are several regional curriculums based on the notions of inter- and intra-culturalism that are very interesting and that are reaching national recognition.

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Chapter 4

Tsé Ch'izhí Diné Bi'ólta'—Rough Rock, The People's School: Reflections on a Half-Century of Navajo Community-Controlled Education (U.S. 1966)

Teresa L. McCarty and Charles M. Roessel

Named for the rocks near a spring at the base of a pine-studded mesa, Tsé Ch'izhí—Rough Rock—is the site of the first American Indian community-controlled school. This high, arid, stunningly beautiful land is the place where Navajo families returned in the late 1860s, having survived 5 years in a federal concentration camp known as *Hwéeldi* (Fort Sumner, New Mexico), more than 300 miles from home. Arriving back in their homeland with a few head of government-issued goats and sheep, Hwéeldi survivors began rebuilding their lives. Place helps to define a people, and this is the place where, a century later, the Rough Rock Demonstration School would be born.

This chapter tells one story of this path-breaking school. We emphasize that this is “a” story rather than “the” story, as Rough Rock, like all places, has been built by the vision and investment of many individuals, each with her or his own experience and perspective on the school. Born and raised on the Navajo Nation, Charles (Monty) Roessel enrolled in Rough Rock's first beginners class in 1966, when the demonstration school first opened its doors. His mother and father, the late Ruth and Robert A. Roessel Jr., helped found the school and are widely regarded as architects of Navajo and American Indian community-controlled education. Robert Roessel served as the school's first director and later returned to work at the school as a grant writer, program developer, and again as director in the 1990s. Ruth Roessel was Rough Rock's long-time director of Navajo Studies. At the invitation of the school board, Monty Roessel assumed the school directorship in 2000, serving in

Parts of this chapter are adapted from McCarty (2002), and C.M. Roessel (2007).

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that position for 11 years; he currently heads the U.S. Bureau of Indian Education, which oversees all American Indian/Alaska Native tribally controlled schools. At the behest of the Roessels, Teresa McCarty, who is non-Native, came to Rough Rock in the early 1980s to work on a bilingual-bicultural curriculum development project, living there for 3 years and completing a dissertation on the school's bilingual-bicultural education program. In the years since she has continued to work with the school's language education projects. As coauthors, we have collaborated on Navajo and Indigenous education projects at Rough Rock and beyond, and it is from these individual and combined perspectives that we present this account.

We begin with some demographic, economic, and historical background on the school, initially called the Rough Rock Demonstration School, and today known as Rough Rock Community School. We then discuss the school's early programs in culturally based education and Navajo community control. In subsequent sections, we explore an exemplary bilingual-bicultural initiative at the school, and the tensions and possibilities inherent in "doing" school in such a radically different way. We conclude by discussing the current situation at Rough Rock, its efforts to sustain and revitalize the Navajo language, and the larger lessons the Rough Rock experience teaches, looking back nearly 50 years after the demonstration began.

Throughout this account, we rely on our personal and professional involvement with the school, our individual and collaborative ethnographic and oral history research at Rough Rock, and documentary sources. This is, as a consequence, a "peopled" account; what Rough Rock has achieved and what it has meant have been constructed by the many people who have animated the school, each leaving her or his individual imprint. We turn now to the resources and events that precipitated the modern school.

Demonstration Roots

Understanding Rough Rock's story requires knowing something of the social, economic, educational, and political context in which the school developed. Navajos—Diné, The People in the Navajo language—are the second most populous Native American group in the U.S., with a population of more than 300,000 (Donovan 2011). The Navajo Nation is the largest Indian reservation in the U.S., encompassing more than 27,000 square miles of spectacular red rock buttes, canyons, and forested mountains spread over three Southwestern states. Four sacred mountains in each of the cardinal directions demarcate the traditional boundaries of *Diné Bikeyah* or Navajoland (see Fig. 1).

In the years preceding the demonstration school, the Navajo Nation remained predominantly Navajo speaking. Situated in the reservation interior, Rough Rock in the 1950s and 1960s was particularly insulated, with transportation still largely by horse and wagon over unpaved roads. A forced federal livestock reduction program begun in the 1930s had brought great economic hardship, and families struggled to

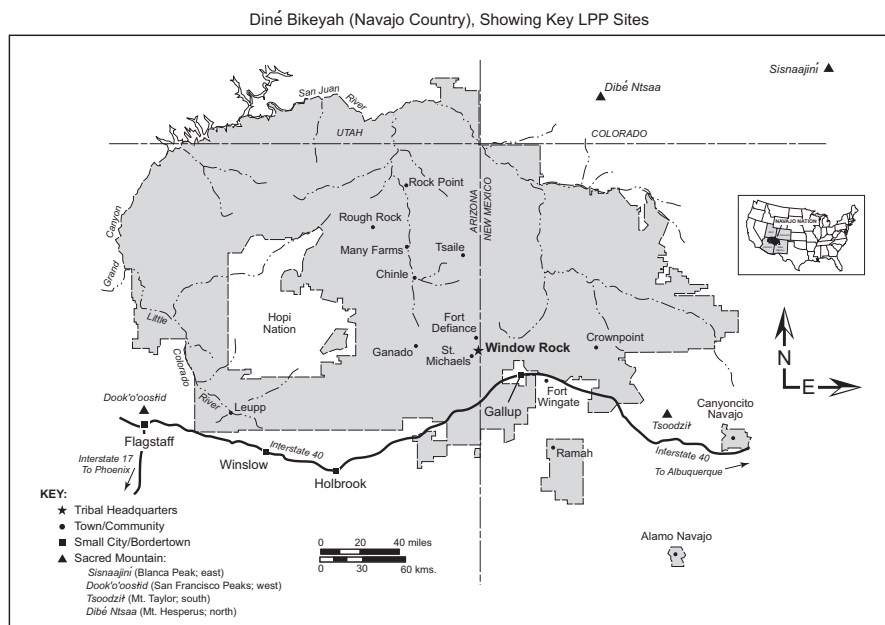


Fig. 1 The Navajo Nation and Rough Rock

make a living from the land. As one indicator of the socioeconomic situation at the time, family incomes in the Rough Rock area were among the lowest in the country—about \$586 per year (Sasaki 1961).

In terms of Western schooling, the experiences of those living at and around Rough Rock differed widely. Many in the parent and grandparent generation had never attended an Anglo-American school. As long-time Rough Rock school board member John Dick recalled in an interview many years later, his mother resisted the coercion of federal Indian agents sent to take her son away to an Indian boarding school, pleading that “he is the only one” to help care for the family home. “So that is why I didn’t go to school,” John Dick related, “not even one term” (McCarty 2002, p. 47). Others endured the boarding schools, with their notorious militaristic discipline, forced manual labor, and punitive English-only policies. Consciously designed to eradicate Indigenous languages and cultures, often through physical violence, the boarding schools are remembered by many who attended them as lonely, abusive, alienating environments. School “was not a place for Navajos,” wrote Galena Sells Dick, who attended several boarding schools and later served as director of Rough Rock’s bilingual-bicultural programs (1998, p. 24; for more on the boarding school experience, see Archuleta et al. 2000); Child 1998; Lomawaima 1994, 1996; and Reyhner and Eder 2004).

But the federal assimilationist agenda was not simply received by its intended targets. “Formal education did change my behaviors and attitudes,” Galena Dick

(1998) notes; “[a]t the same time, I maintained a strong belief in my language and culture” (p. 24). In the context of a broader Civil Rights Movement, the American Indian Movement,¹ and mainstream political reforms—in particular, the Lyndon B. Johnson Administration’s “War on Poverty” campaign—experiences and attitudes such as Galena Dick’s found expression in a growing push for American Indian self-determination. Change had been precipitated by the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1954 ruling in *Brown v. Topeka, Kansas Board of Education*, which reversed a century-and-a-half of legalized racial segregation, and by the 1964 Civil Rights and Economic Opportunity Acts, which, respectively, provided legal protection from racial discrimination and authorized community development programs for the poor. In 1965, Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the most massive piece of education legislation in the nation’s history, which provided programs for children from poor and working class backgrounds and students of color. In this political climate, Native American leaders, educators, activists, and scholars continued to press for tribal sovereignty: “self-government, self-determination, and self-education” (Lomawaima and McCarty 2006, p. 116).

It was in this context that then-Navajo Tribal Chairman Raymond Nakai, Robert Roessel, and a group of Navajo education leaders submitted a proposal to the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO, the federal agency charged with administering Economic Opportunity Act programs) for an experimental school at Lukachukai, Arizona, about 45 miles northeast of Rough Rock (see Fig. 1). The project proposed to transform the Lukachukai Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) boarding school by placing a locally elected Navajo governing board in charge of the school and implementing an innovative Navajo language and culture curriculum. Although it had been funded for 3 years, by the end of its first year the Lukachukai project succumbed to the conflicts inherent in a two-tiered system of existing BIA staff and new OEO employees—an “organizational nightmare,” as Robert Roessel (1977) later described it.

Despite the early termination of the project at Lukachukai, it would have a positive impact on subsequent developments at Rough Rock (Roessel 1977). To complete the 3-year project, the BIA offered a new and unstaffed boarding school facility at Rough Rock. A nonprofit corporation of Navajo leaders called DINÉ, Inc. (“Demonstration in Navajo Education” and the Navajos’ self-referential term) would serve as an intermediary to receive federal funds. With time running out on the federal fiscal year, the crucial question remained: Would Rough Rock community members agree to these arrangements and to taking charge of the school? As noted by Wayne Holm, a prominent bilingual educator who observed these events, “Rough Rock got asked, ‘Would you like to do something that nobody’s ever heard of before, on very short notice?...[T]hat was really pretty frightening and pretty innovative at the time” (McCarty 2002, p. 81). Following “many discussions,” Robert

¹ Founded in 1968 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the goals of the American Indian Movement (AIM) are to address federal treaty violations, poverty, substandard housing, health care, and other social and educational inequities facing Native Americans.

Roessel (1977) recalled, “the Rough Rock community unanimously endorsed having the demonstration school and [elected] a five-member school board to provide direction and control” (p. 8).

On September 12, 1966, the Rough Rock Demonstration School opened its doors to 220 students from beginners (5- and 6-year-olds) to grade 6. Three certified Navajo teachers staffed the beginners classes. Although teachers in the higher grades were not Navajo, they had the support of six bilingual teacher assistants who had been born and raised at Rough Rock, and who would eventually go on to take certified teaching positions at the school. Staffing by local educators was important, as all but one child in the beginners classes was reported as speaking no English (Roessel 1966). Together, these educators, parents, children, and the school's leadership began a course of action that would not only make Rough Rock's new school “a place to be Navajo” (McCarty 2002), but would forever alter the content, scope, and direction of Native American education.

From “Unthinkable” to “Doable”: The Early Demonstration

In a speech given at the Eighth Annual Indian Education Conference at Arizona State University in March 1967, Robert Roessel (1979) noted the key elements that made the Rough Rock Demonstration School unique. The first was local (Navajo) control; the second was the school's cultural identification emphasis. “Navajo control over Navajo education began with Rough Rock,” Roessel stated, “and that control was most vividly reflected in the focus placed on teaching Navajo language, culture and history in the classroom” (1979, p. 49).

What did this approach look like in practice? The school administration encouraged the Navajo staff to use Navajo as much as possible, and, according to one teacher at the time, “to pick up Navajo [literacy] as much as they can” (McCarty 2002, p. 93). During the first school year, a single Navajo language teacher rotated between different classrooms; she also offered evening language classes to Navajo and non-Navajo employees. By the school's second year, four new Navajo language and culture specialists had been hired to provide instruction in Navajo literacy and social studies in each grade. The principal's report of September 1968 provides a sense of how instruction was organized: “Instruction is entirely in Navajo in Phase I [beginners] where there are bilingual teachers, except for the daily...oral English program” (Pfeiffer 1968, p. 10). In classrooms staffed by non-Navajo teachers, instruction took place in English with Navajo-language support by bilingual teaching assistants. Non-Navajo teachers also participated in periodic home “live-ins,” residing with local families for 2 or 3 days as a way of learning about their students' lives and home experiences. In every classroom, students had the opportunity to learn Navajo arts, history, and culture from elders and other community members. Coupled with an English-as-a-second-language (ESL) program that combined the

then-popular audiolingual method with contextualized language learning, these programs enabled Rough Rock to provide what Robert Roessel (1977) described as a “both-and” approach in which children learned “important values and customs of both Navajo culture *and* the dominant society” (p. 10).

At the most basic level, this radical approach to Native American schooling required Native teachers and teaching materials. In 1966, the number of certified Navajo teachers could be counted on a few hands, and Navajo-language curricula consisted of a few BIA-produced primers, a dictionary, and translated Biblical works. Rough Rock improvised by “growing its own” teachers and curricula (Holm and Holm 1990). To accomplish this, the school established the Navajo Curriculum Center, which began publishing books in Navajo and English on Navajo history, culture, language, and contemporary affairs. As Rough Rock school board member Thomas James stressed in a 1996 interview, “We...wanted the Navajo language to be learned....We wanted books in Navajo” (McCarty 2002, p. 94). Through federal grants under the newly authorized Bilingual Education Act (BEA), the school collaborated with regional universities to prepare local teachers, offering on-site courses that enabled Navajo teaching assistants to obtain education degrees while working at the school. As Galena Dick, who participated in these teacher education projects, later reflected, “We grew up with the school” (Dick and McCarty 1996, pp. 81–82). In addition, elders and parents served as classroom consultants and assistants.

Yet Rough Rock’s demonstration extended well beyond the classroom; the school’s broader aim was to cultivate the talents and resources of the entire community. In a region in which family incomes remained among the lowest in the nation, school jobs and economic development projects constituted key components of the school’s demonstration. For example, an OEO-funded toy and furniture factory employed local residents, whose products were distributed to reservation preschools. An adobe home project provided on-the-job training that enabled local workers to complete a school office, science building, and several model homes. A school poultry farm sold eggs and chicks to community members and school staff. An arts and crafts project hired Navajo instructors to teach rug weaving, basket and moccasin making, silversmithing, leather work, pottery making, and dress and sash belt weaving, helping to revitalize traditional Navajo arts and crafts and establish new markets for local artists’ work. Parents and grandparents staffed the school dormitories, providing counseling and moral support to children, and sharing oral traditions during evening storytelling sessions. A Navajo Mental Health Project prepared Native healers under the apprenticeship of established ritual specialists.

More generally, the school operated like a branch of the extended family, assisting community members in times of need. During a blizzard in the winter of 1967, school personnel cleared roads, transported hay to marooned livestock, and brought food to isolated homesteads. During another hard winter, the school purchased coal from a regional construction company and distributed it free of cost to local residents. The school’s water supply provided stock and domestic water. As school

board member John Dick recalled, “the school helped in so many ways” (McCarty 2002, p. 88).

Together, these initiatives nurtured the community's human resources and fostered a shared sense that Rough Rock was, in fact, “The People's School.” The demonstration project explicitly drew upon the cultural capital of community members—the “funds of knowledge” in Rough Rock households and families (González et al. 2005). “This is a community-oriented school,” Robert Roessel emphasized, adding that, “In the past, Indian schools have taken little interest in their communities, but here, we want to involve adults and teenagers, dropouts, [and] people who have never been to school” (Conklin 1967, p. 8). Anita Pfeiffer, one of the first Navajo certified teachers and Rough Rock's inaugural elementary principal, concurred, noting that “the mission of Rough Rock at that time was to educate everybody....It was a very exciting time. It was such a new idea, this school board making decisions” (Roessel 2007, pp. 77–78).

These revolutionary education initiatives did not escape the attention of outside observers. Hundreds of visitors—anthropologists, educators, psychiatrists, film crews, politicians, and others—passed through Rough Rock's classrooms each month. “There were so many people who came to visit,” John Dick recalled; “[t]hey were very appreciative of the school” (McCarty 2002, p. 115). Shortly after the school's founding, Eunice Kennedy Shriver and Maria Shriver, sister and niece, respectively, of President John F. Kennedy and U.S. Senators Robert and Edward (Ted) Kennedy, visited Rough Rock; Ted Kennedy delivered the first eighth-grade graduation address. School board members and administrators received frequent invitations to speak at conferences and provide Congressional testimony. Following one such event, Robert Kennedy, then chairman of the Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, proclaimed that, “Rough Rock has proven its point” and should serve as a model for a comprehensive “new national Indian policy” (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 1055). Although Kennedy's life would be tragically cut short before that vision could be achieved, the subcommittee's report inaugurated a new federal policy of American Indian self-determination, reflected in the 1972 Indian Education Act, which provided funding for Native American bilingual-bicultural education, and the 1975 Indian Self-Determination and Educational Assistance Act, which formalized procedures for tribes and Native communities to run their own schools. These policies would have rippling impacts for years to come: In 2014—nearly 50 years after Rough Rock opened its doors—there were 126 American Indian/Alaska Native community-controlled schools, and 32 fully accredited tribal colleges and universities (Bureau of Indian Education 2014).

In short, Rough Rock boldly pushed open a door of opportunity that had been barred shut just a few years before. Supported by federal self-determination policies, many of which Rough Rock and other Native American education leaders fought to bring to fruition, the school produced a corps of bilingual teachers and a corpus of high-quality Navajo teaching materials. Growing numbers of Native American community-controlled schools and bilingual-bicultural programs joined

these efforts. “Before Rough Rock,” Wayne Holm reflected in a 1996 interview, “The notion that you have to have community-responsive curriculum, or...empowerment in the community...it was just literally unthinkable” (McCarty 2002, p. 123). Because of Rough Rock, stated former elementary principal Anita Pfeiffer, what had been “unthinkable” in past years had become “doable” (Pfeiffer 1993).

A New Bilingual-Bicultural Program: “It Got Us Going”

By the mid-1980s, the Rough Rock School had grown into a K-12 facility enrolling approximately 500 students. Over the years the school had weathered a continuous barrage of institutional challenges—financial uncertainty, curricular instability related to uncertain federal finances, and high turnover among the non-Navajo staff—as it struggled with an increasingly conservative federal administration intent on downsizing bilingual and Indigenous education programs. Federal funding cut-backs and ongoing funding delays led to the curtailment of some Navajo classes and programs, and bilingual-bicultural instruction waxed and waned.

The fall of 1983 proved to be pivotal for the school. At the invitation of the elementary principal, personnel from the Hawai‘i-based Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) arrived at Rough Rock to investigate whether KEEP’s approach for teaching English language arts to Native Hawaiian students would be effective with children from a different culture. KEEP’s philosophy was that “students would experience improved school success if a better match existed between the linguistic and cultural knowledge of the students and the school” (Vogt and Au 1995, p. 101). In particular, KEEP had found that modeling English reading instruction after an Indigenous narrative form called “talk-story,” characterized by “overlapping speech, voluntary turn-taking, co-narration and joint construction of a story...opened the door for the students to contribute [to classroom lessons] in a speech style that was linguistically familiar to them” (Vogt et al. 1993, p. 57). KEEP also emphasized contextualized instruction, cooperative learning centers, and “culturally appropriate forms and rates of positive reinforcement” (Vogt et al. 1993, p. 58). The question in bringing KEEP to Rough Rock was, which features of KEEP “would transfer and which would require adaptations?” (Vogt and Au 1995, p. 133). As described by Lynn Vogt, the reading teacher who would serve as KEEP’s lead consultant at Rough Rock, and KEEP researcher Kathryn Au, “The strategy was to install the KEEP program in one...classroom, observe its effects, and work with the Rough Rock staff regarding adaptations that appeared necessary based on the Navajo students’ responses” (Vogt and Au 1995 p. 113).

KEEP strategies *did* require modification to be effective with Navajo learners. Unlike the patterned co-narration of Hawaiian talk-story, Navajo students exhibited discomfort “chopping a story into small segments,” and instead suggested that story elements “could be represented as a spiral” (Vogt et al. 1993, p. 62). Similarly, the mixed-sex groupings characteristic of KEEP learning centers “effectively

annihilated interaction” among Navajo students, who, in keeping with Navajo cultural norms, worked more harmoniously in same-sex task groups.

Despite these differences, Rough Rock educators eagerly embraced KEEP, modifying it to fit more closely with Navajo students' interactional styles and ways of being and knowing. KEEP strategies addressed the very things perceived as lacking at Rough Rock at the time: “listening and reading comprehension, oral language development, cooperative learning groups, and culturally compatible instruction” (Dick et al. 1994 p. 33). Third-grade teacher Afton Sells, in whose classroom KEEP carried out its research, found that KEEP's approach reinforced her own, and, in her words, “I didn't want to give it up” (McCarty 2002, p. 149). Lynn Vogt made periodic visits to Rough Rock, providing workshops, observing teachers' practice, and working alongside Rough Rock teachers in their classrooms; soon, other bilingual teachers joined Afton Sells in implementing KEEP teaching strategies. During this time, Dan Estell, a long-term community resident, assumed the elementary principalship. His presence added administrative stability and further support by providing consistent opportunities for teachers to observe in Afton Sells' classroom. Within a short time, KEEP had emerged as the elementary school's curricular mainstay. “It gave us something to go by,” one bilingual teacher later reflected; “it got us going” (McCarty 2002, p. 149).

In addition to culturally relevant instruction, KEEP provided the structures whereby teachers could work cooperatively and engage in critical reflection on their practice. These opportunities enabled teachers to refashion KEEP, which focused on English, into a new bilingual-bicultural program, which they named the Rough Rock English-Navajo Language Arts Program or RREN LAP. In 1988, the RREN LAP staff wrote and received a new BEA grant to further refine the program. Over the next 8 years, RREN LAP grew from a K-3 transitional bilingual program to a K-6 Navajo-English language maintenance program, the key features of which were: (1) cooperative classroom structures; (2) process-oriented language and literacy development in two languages; and (3) a locally developed system for monitoring and assessing student progress (Dick et al. 1994, p. 35). For example, cooperative structures included 4–7 learning centers in each classroom, “with teacher-guided instruction at Center 1, follow-up at Center 2, and other centers established for students to work in small groups” on Navajo/English writing, listening, art, and research projects (Dick et al. 1994, p. 35). Within this organization, teachers used a variety of teaching strategies, such as language experience activities, individual and small-group reading, process writing in Navajo and English, and art or research projects. Teachers monitored student progress through individual student profile sheets for Navajo and English language development, and a locally developed criterion-referenced assessment system (Dick et al. 1994, p. 35).

These instructional changes occurred gradually and recursively, as teachers observed and provided feedback on each other's teaching, experimented with different approaches, and embraced a pedagogy grounded in local linguistic and cultural knowledge. Key to these changes was a teacher-created study group in which RREN LAP teachers systematically monitored their students' progress, maintained

dialogue journals, and met monthly to review and discuss their students' language and literacy development (for details, see McCarty and Dick 2003). Out of these processes grew new forms of language and literacy assessment and a constellation of curricular and pedagogical innovations. For example, teachers replaced basal readers with authentic works of children's literature, many written and illustrated by themselves or their students. Thematic studies on topics relevant to the local community replaced or supplemented commercial language arts texts. Two- and 3-week summer literature camps reinforced these classroom-based activities. The theme for one summer camp, for instance, was the Navajo *hooghan* or home. As described by McCarty and Dick (2003), "[T]he *hooghan* carries with it a rich oral tradition of stories and songs, as well as a wealth of opportunities for teaching and learning about kinship, Diné values, and the everyday art and science of food preparation and the care and tending of the home" (p. 111). Organizing learning around themes such as this brought together children, parents, teachers, and elders in storytelling, song, drama, art, and research and writing projects. These community-based learning and teaching activities contributed to Navajo teachers' self-empowerment and to the academic success of their students (Begay et al. 1995; Dick et al. 1994).

As Rough Rock approached the new millennium, the school sought and received two new BEA grants to build on the work of RREN LAP at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. These would be the last BEA grants the school received. Within a few years the U.S. Congress would reauthorize the 1965 ESEA, renaming it the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. With this Act of Congress, federal bilingual education funding would be eliminated. Even the word "bilingual" would be expunged from the language of federal education policy, as the former BEA became the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act; the office that had administered BEA programs became the Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students; and the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education was reconstituted as the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition.

NCLB ushered in a new policy era characterized by high-stakes, English-only standardized tests. In the wake of NCLB, Rough Rock saw much of its Navajo emphasis and bilingual-bicultural programming dissolve. It would take the determined efforts of teachers and school leaders who had "grown up with the school" to reclaim an Indigenous educational space. It is to that part of Rough Rock's story that we now turn.

Navajo Immersion: "Our Language Will Not Be Forgotten"

Whereas almost every student in Rough Rock's 1966 beginners class spoke Navajo as a primary language, by the year 2000, elementary teachers estimated that less than half of their students spoke Navajo "reasonably well" (McCarty 2002, p. 179).

Moreover, while the school remained (and remains today) a boarding school, since the late 1990s, Rough Rock has had an open enrollment policy, and students from throughout the Navajo Nation now attend the school. Some of these students have had little prior exposure to the Navajo language or to bilingual-bicultural education. Thus, the context for teaching Navajo language and culture is dramatically different than it was when the school began, or even during the RREN LAP years.

Like other Native American groups, the Navajo Nation is facing a tidal wave of language shift, as fewer and fewer children each year learn Navajo as a first language. The causes of language shift are complex and manifold: The legacy of the boarding schools, linguistic and racial discrimination, and diffuse processes of globalization all have contributed to the present situation. Adults and youth at Rough Rock are well aware of these processes and the threats they pose to Navajo cultural continuity. “What then, if the children forget the Navajo language? What will be our shield as we move into the future?” Rough Rock elder Dorothy Begay asked in an interview in 1996. “For this reason,” she continued, “both Navajo and English should be learned....So in the future, our language will not be forgotten” (McCarty 2002, p. 179).

The role of schools in maintaining and revitalizing endangered languages has been hotly contested. While it is generally agreed that schools alone cannot “save” a language (Hornberger 2008), it is also recognized that school-based language reclamation can help reclaim public spaces where minoritized languages can be taught, (re)valued, and (re)learned (McCarty 2008).

This has become Rough Rock's most recent pedagogical challenge—and goal. As described by Monty Roessel (2011), under whose direction these language and culture reclamation efforts began: “[W]e decided to rededicate ourselves to our roots and mission....While [other] schools were aligning their curriculum to state standards, we began aligning our Navajo curriculum to our traditional ways of thought” (p. 20). For instance, the school staff has identified 6 stages of growth called *Dzil*, “literally meaning growth but also translated as sacred mountains” (Roessel 2011, p. 20). Rather than externally imposed standards, these stages provide the benchmarks that guide student progress, on the belief that this will provide them with “a strong foundation of knowledge to plan and live their lives” (Roessel 2011, pp. 20–21).

These efforts and Rough Rock's Navajo-language immersion program started slowly, with a single teacher, adding a grade each year, with each immersion teacher teaching two grade levels (Roessel 2011). The current goal is to implement a K-8 Navajo immersion program. “Knowing the importance of our culture is as essential as knowing math facts and phonics,” Monty Roessel (2011) points out; “[w]ithout fear of missing out, our culture needs a place in our schools” (p. 21).

Fifty Years and Counting

On the cusp of Rough Rock's 50th anniversary, it is appropriate to pause and take stock. What have been some of the greatest challenges at Rough Rock, and what have been some of its greatest accomplishments? What lessons can be learned from Rough Rock's experience?

One of the premises behind Rough Rock's founding was the notion of moving seamlessly between multiple cultural worlds. Robert Roessel (1977) described this as a both-and approach, juxtaposing this to the either-or, Native-versus-Western, "mother tongue-versus-other-tongue" emphasis of colonial schooling. Former elementary principal Anita Pfeiffer, interviewed in 2006, believes the "both-and" approach is "still very important," and that "[h]ow much of each...needs to be defined by the [Navajo] school boards, but it should be balanced" (Roessel 2007, pp. 72–73). Navajo educator Gloria Grant, who served as Rough Rock's director of education from 2000 to 2003, describes this approach this way: "It tells me that our students can travel and they can be worldly. But they also feel like they can wear their own moccasins" (Roessel 2007, p. 74). Achieving this balance continues to represent both the challenge and the promise of the Rough Rock Community School.

When community members and close observers have been asked to identify the school's greatest accomplishment, they universally cite its demonstration in local control. "The people made the school for themselves," former school board member Simon Secody stated in a 1996 interview; "they took ownership of the school" (McCarty 2002, p. 195). "We planted the seeds...of Indian self-determination, Indian control," Ernest Dick affirmed; "[t]his was one of the most important things that we have done" (McCarty 2002, pp. 194–195). "Until the advent of the Rough Rock Demonstration School, no school had formally empowered parents or the community to have a significant say in the education of their children," wrote Holm and Holm (1990, p. 183).

We have traced this demonstration in self-determination from The People's return from Hwéeldi, to the legacy of the boarding schools, to the present fight to sustain the Navajo language and culture. In signing the treaty that permitted the Navajos' return from Hwéeldi, Navajo leader Barboncito is said to have remarked, "After we get back to our country it will brighten up again and the Navajos will be as happy as the land, black clouds will rise and there will be plenty of rain" (Iverson 2002, p. 7). We think of those black clouds as a metaphor for the struggles that brought forth the demonstration school. From those struggles came a school that continues to demonstrate the challenges and the possibilities of Indigenous education control. Although this is a story of one school, it is also a story for all Indigenous communities that strive to blend Native and non-Native ways of being and knowing, and thereby enable their children to confidently traverse multiple cultural worlds.

In Conversation

Rodríguez You stated above that the main challenge and the main promise of the school still is to help students to move “seamlessly between multiple cultural worlds.” What do you see as the main school experiences or pedagogical elements that could sustain this challenge into the future?

McCarty The Rough Rock Community School’s mission continues to focus on “the Diné fundamental beliefs of Knowledge, Planning, Harmony, and Hope; we will walk in beauty” (RRCS 2008, para. 1). As I have come to understand this mission as a cultural outsider, to “walk in beauty” and the notion of beauty or harmony, expressed as *hózhoh*, is a central tenet of Diné thought—a value that one continuously strives for. In terms of the school’s philosophy, harmony or *hózhoh* can also be thought of as preparing students to walk among multiple cultural and linguistic worlds.

Roessel Yes, this validation of the Navajo World by the school shows students the relevance of Navajo belief and thought—that there is worth in this knowledge. Through myriad daily rituals, the school shows students that there are multiple worlds—not one, or one-and-a-half—and that they belong in all. Whether at Rough Rock or other schools, a sense of belonging is important for students, and it is equally important for the school if it is to accomplish its mission. This is where a school must make the effort to demonstrate, in word and deed, how a student’s language and culture are relevant to whatever the class subject is.

McCarty In thinking of how Rough Rock does this, the Navajo immersion program at the elementary school is one prime example. As we discuss in this chapter, there are plans to extend this into the middle school, and this is part of sustaining the Navajo emphasis into the future. Certain Navajo classes—Navajo literacy, tribal history and government, and so forth—are required for high school graduation in the same way that math and science are. This is not to dismiss the seriousness of the challenges, one of the most obvious being externally imposed high-stakes, English-only testing regimes. Yet, as Rough Rock prepares to enter its second 50 years, one cannot help but be impressed with the perseverance of the school and its staff and leadership in remaining true to the original mission. As articulated by Florian Tom Johnson, the current director of Rough Rock’s Navajo bilingual programs, “Our goal is to prepare students to speak the Navajo language and understand the Navajo way of life, not to pass [English standardized] tests” (Johnson 2014). It takes incredible courage—and a strong sense of mission and vision—to stand up to the tyranny of standardized tests. But that’s what Rough Rock has done from the beginning and continues to do, on the belief that with this foundation, students will in fact be prepared to “walk in beauty”—in harmony with their own culture and others.

Rodríguez Public schools in most countries are becoming increasingly diverse in terms of language and culture. Based on your description of Rough Rock, what kind

of language policies do you think are needed to empower students and communities for whom English is not the first language?

Roessel First and foremost, language policy cannot be viewed as a weapon against a culture, and especially as a weapon against students and their identities. When talking about American Indians and most other minority cultures, history is ripe with examples of this type of artillery. Rough Rock created a safe home for Navajo language and culture. It acknowledged that it didn't have all the answers, but it was certain on the right question: How do we educate the whole child for the whole world?

McCarty I think that's a beautiful statement of exactly the kind of policies that are needed. If we could implement language education policies guided by this single question, we would go a long way toward creating a profoundly more peaceful, just, and equitable world.

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Chapter 5

English Literature at Brondesbury and Kilburn High School (UK 1980–1984)

Alex Moore

The School

Between 1980 and 1984 I enjoyed the privilege of being Head of the Faculty of English and Drama at a co-educational, state high school, Brondesbury and Kilburn High School (known locally as ‘B&K’) in London, England. The school had an ethnically mixed, culturally diverse intake, attracting students from local (mainly white and Asian-origin) professional families in owned or rented accommodation dating from the early 1900s, as well as students from poorer (mainly white and African-Caribbean origin) families housed in various local and more distant social housing estates. This included many students who were bilingual or bidialectal (that is to say, who made regular use, alongside ‘standard’ English, of ‘non-standard’ forms, both outside school and in informal situations in school)—though very few recent immigrants to the country, and even fewer for whom English was a weaker language.

B&K had been founded in the 1960s as the result of a merger between two existing highly regarded, selected-entry grammar schools for academically high-achieving students: Brondesbury and Kilburn High School for Girls, and Kilburn Grammar School for Boys. The new school had been very popular locally, easily out-competing two other nearby high schools in terms of annual student intake and student retention. This was partly because of its grammar-school history and the fact that it was housed in traditional late Victorian/early Edwardian redbrick buildings that set it apart from the more modern premises of the other schools, and partly by virtue of a quickly established local reputation for high quality teaching and management. Sadly, because of a national dip in school-aged youngsters, a decision was taken to close B&K along with the two neighbouring schools at the end of the 1980s and to merge them into a single school on the better equipped site of one of the other schools. Thus, B&K enjoyed a brief but highly successful life of little more than a

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quarter of a century. Many of its staff continued to work in the new school, however, and some are there to this day.

Possibilities: Developing Alternative Assessment and Pedagogy for Alternative Curricula

At the time I joined B&K, there was something of a divide in teacher opinion in England regarding what a school curriculum should consist of, what was important in learning, and how pedagogy should be appropriately fashioned. Many teachers, particularly in high-school English departments, were continuing to find inspiration in two key reports commissioned in the previous two decades by central UK governments, each one responding to government concerns about perceived levels of student engagement in compulsory education leading to widespread underachievement, particularly in the area of basic literacy. The first of these, the *Plowden Report* on elementary-school education (Central Advisory Council for Education 1967), based its argument on Piagetian notions of discovery learning and of learning as active meaning-making. It had emphasised student-centred, progressive approaches to teaching and learning, suggesting the extension of such practice both in elementary education, where it already had a significant presence, and into the high-school sector where it had continued to play second fiddle to dominant transmissive pedagogic modes. The second report, the *Bullock Report* (Bullock 1975) on language learning and teaching in compulsory education, had challenged hegemonic conceptions of so-called standard English as ‘proper’ or fundamentally ‘correct’ English, opening the door to more culturally inclusive curricula and pedagogies, as well as questioning the sanctity of the standard curriculum disciplines (English, Math, Science, Art, History, Languages, and so forth) in an argument for cross-curricular approaches to and understandings of language that did not deny the importance and value of so-called standard grammatical and generic forms of communication but placed recognition and value, too, on non-standard forms. Non-standard forms of English were thus to be understood not as ‘wrong’ or ‘failed’ or ‘incorrect’ forms of English but as dialects of English (just as standard English itself is essentially a dialect of English, albeit a dominant one) which made use of grammar and genre just as much as the ‘standard’ forms albeit in different ways.

It is fair to say that neither the *Plowden Report* nor the *Bullock Report* had been particularly popular with the governments that had commissioned them, who had clearly been hoping for somewhat different findings and recommendations. This was largely because both reports had appeared to support the kinds of progressive, inclusive pedagogies that leading politicians were inclined to blame for the perceived ‘low achievement’ that had prompted their commission in the first place. However, the reports had confirmed the views of many *teachers* that an over-emphasis on traditional, transmissive approaches to teaching and learning had not been working—encouraging them, despite a lack of central support, to further develop their more progressive practice.

In the same two decades that these two reports were published, other things were happening that added to this general tide of encouragement. Notably, professional development for teachers had been undergoing something of a transformation, moving away from a focus on ‘training’ to one of helping to provide teachers with more sophisticated understandings of teaching and learning which they might translate themselves into effective pedagogies. Increasingly, a small but growing group of teachers, critical of conservative, largely unchanging curricula and associated modes of pedagogy and assessment (still dominated by externally set, end-of-course exams) were taking advantage of this shift to extend their professional development by completing local-authority-funded part-time Masters degrees. Here, rather than restricting their professional development to largely practical matters of pedagogic strategy, they were engaging with cutting-edge theory related to teaching and learning, to curriculum theory and design, to the new sociologies of education, and to theories of critical pedagogy emerging from writers in other countries—such as Freire (1972, 1974) and Labov (1972). At the same time—and this was a time prior to high levels of central government intervention in education policy in England that began with the introduction of a National Curriculum in the late 1980s—many local education authorities, supported by such national movements as the National Association for Multicultural Education, were re-addressing issues of racial and cultural bias in formal education. This in turn was resulting in the development of more inclusive local (school, school department, and education authority) policies and practices of positive discrimination, which sought to move education policy away from extreme deficit models in which immigrant children—most specifically, Black immigrant children—were pathologised as “educationally subnormal” (Coard 1971), welcoming them as intellectual equals into comprehensive school classrooms.

If we factor into this situation the fact that, apart from needing to ensure that they and their students met the requirements of national examination boards, most teachers also had a relatively high degree of autonomy in deciding exactly what to teach and how to teach it, these did, indeed, feel like the Golden Years for many practitioners at the time. While the wider education system in England, along with many if not most of the public examination boards, still espoused very traditional, conservative, some might say outdated understandings of and approaches to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, and while such understandings and approaches were still shared by many classroom teachers and school principals (that ‘divide’ that I alluded to above), there was yet a sense of *possibility* among those of us embracing radical change: a feeling that at least (and at last) the conditions were in place for us to succeed in what we wished to accomplish and what we wished to encourage in others.

But what was this radical new approach that we were intent on pursuing? Perhaps with the passing of time, it is hard to think of it as radical at all; simply as a tried, tested, and in many countries, by many politicians, rejected alternative to currently dominant modes of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. However, in the 1980s it felt like something not just different or new but proper and right—as if, after over a century of mass public education, we had finally discovered how best to set about it.

Against a backdrop of national educational policy and practice which continued to favour culturally and linguistically inadequate, one-fit-for-all curricula and strictly norm-referenced assessment procedures, we were, at bottom, seeking to put into practice a set of educational principles leading to modes of pedagogy, forms of assessment, and models of curriculum, that might be broadly categorised as constructive and student-centred. This was a movement which had a number of strands, including: the development of assessment systems that rejected the standard end-of-course, sit-down, pen-and-paper examinations of the past, in favour of systems using continuous assessment and extended individual and collaborative projects; the celebration of learning as endlessly open and provisional, with an emphasis on questioning and exploration that encouraged students to draft and redraft work rather than ‘getting it “right” first time’; an acceptance and celebration of the individuality of engagements with knowledge to set alongside an equally important acceptance and celebration of knowledge as socially constructed, as shared, and as communal; and the promotion (of course) of a genuine love of learning. It meant challenging as teachers, and encouraging our students to challenge, the canonical curricula of the past, most notably, in the case of England, to take an interest in history, geography, religion, science and so forth that was global and humanitarian in its scope and that promoted genuine interest, understanding and wonder rather than repetition, reproduction and rote learning.

In the case of English Literature study, on which I will focus in this chapter, this included challenging the canon of works of the ‘literary greats’ and the manner in which young students were introduced to them—texts which were so often turned into tedious objects of study and responded to via faux appreciations in examinations that relied more on regurgitating pre-validated answers than on pleasure-in-the-text. But it also meant acknowledging the value and interest of work from so-called minority cultures, and promoting assessment practices that encouraged responses which were creative and personal rather than simply ‘right’ or ‘wrong’. Thus, in upper-school English we began to use, alongside the more traditional, White male dominated texts (Shakespeare, Dickens, the First World War poets and so on) more and more contemporary texts written in ‘non-standard’ registers akin to those used by many of our students—including the sharing and appreciation of previously overlooked poems by writers such as Linton Kwesi Johnson and Evan Jones. Alongside standard, ever-present texts like *Of Mice and Men* and *An Inspector Calls*, we introduced or gave greater emphasis to Black and Asian origin and women writers such as Richard Wright, Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, Rosa Guy and Farrukh Dhondy—both as a way of showing our students that such writers’ work was every bit as good, as important and as worthy of study as the literature they had been more used to studying, and as a way of exploring creative writing through texts with which many of our marginalised students could more readily identify. Rather than just setting students, whoever they might be, standard essays on texts that required the elaboration of pre-validated answers about character, plot and literary devices, activities were devised that would encourage personal, idiosyncratic responses and more creative ways of demonstrating understanding and appreciation, enabling students to begin with and build on their own experience

and sense of self: role plays in which characters like Eddie in *A View From The Bridge* or George in *Of Mice and Men* were put on trial, and the trial reported on; invented letters from Juliet to Romeo or from Macbeth to Lady Macbeth; ‘missing’ back-stories told as if by characters in plays and novels, such as Heathcliff recounting his ‘time away’ from *Wuthering Heights*; newspaper reports, with imagined interviews, on events such as the trial of Tom Robinson in *To Kill A Mockingbird* or the revolution in *Animal Farm*; or the ‘translation’ of Shakespearian extracts into modern dialects—all familiar activities now, even in times in which creativity and imagination in education find themselves increasingly marginalised in the drive for knowledge acquisition and academic ‘standards’, but highly innovative at the time and representative of a clear break with pedagogies of the past.

Such developments had their disciples across the country, who would discuss initiatives at annual National Association for the Teaching of English (NATE) conferences or share materials in the pages of the Inner London Education Authority-sponsored English Magazine for teachers of English—some operating alone or in small groups, others as whole school English Departments. I was fortunate to have inherited leadership of a substantial English Department at B&K, committed in its entirety to the policies I had wanted to pursue, and they had been well versed themselves through the initiatives of the highly innovative Head of Faculty who had preceded me. We worked together as a team after school at fortnightly department meetings, discussing, critiquing and agreeing strategies, preparing and adapting materials, refining assessment systems that rewarded students for what they did rather than punishing them for what they did not, and promoting more inclusive, student-centred pedagogies through an ongoing program of peer classroom observation and review. We also sought to involve other departments in the school where we felt there was interest in our work. The school’s Heads of Faculty and Heads of Department also met fortnightly after school with the school’s Senior Management Team (comprising the principal and his deputies and senior teachers), and these meetings provided opportunities to discuss not simply pedagogic and curriculum matters but assessment practices and how these might work in relation to the formal, externally-devised assessment procedures of the school examining bodies. It was clear at these meetings that the English Department’s initiatives were viewed with some suspicion on the part of some department heads and members of the Senior Management Team. However, the department’s inclusive, progressive approach to pedagogy had been achieving good results in public examinations that were still using traditional modes of assessment, and these had got even better since our collaborations with examination boards which were more prepared to work with the grain of our new approaches. As a consequence, the school was happy to let the experiment continue. Some other departments at the school, in any event, had begun to take a rather more active interest in what the English Department was doing, attracted both by its pedagogical approach and by the possibility of achieving better examination results for their own students, leading to some fruitful collaborative, cross-curricular initiatives. These included engaging in co-designed, team-teaching sessions involving English, Drama and Science specialists, in which poetry appreciation and poetry writing on the theme of the animal world was tied in with science

work on the lifecycles of amphibians, and equally exciting collaborations between the English and Art departments using literary and linguistic genres, photography and editing processes to explore plot and character in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* via group projects involving storyboarding and multi-ethnic, updated re-tellings of some of the tales in the form of teen-magazine photoplays. Some neighbouring schools had also begun to show an interest in our work, and I found myself being invited to speak to more and more local Heads of English and school principals about what we were doing at B&K, why we were doing it, and the positive impact it was having on student learning.

Theoretical Perspectives: Accentuating the Positive

Dewey apart, whose definition of and arguments for progressive education are still unsurpassed, a key theoretical figure to emerge for many of us in England in support of our new agenda was the English sociologist of education Basil Bernstein, and in particular a theory of pedagogy, largely implicit in his work at that time but subsequently elaborated shortly before his death nearly two decades later, concerning what he came to call 'performance' and 'competence' models of teaching, learning and assessment.

When Bernstein used the term competence, it was to refer to what might be called a student's extra-formal educational abilities and leanings: those "intrinsically creative... procedures for engaging with, and constructing, the world" which are acquired "tacitly... in informal interactions" (Bernstein 2000, p. 42)—which formal education can work on and with but does not, so to speak, create. What Bernstein called the "social logic" of this conceptualisation reveals a number of underpinning understandings, intentions and possible consequences for formal education generally and for formal pedagogies in particular, comprising:

An announcement of a universal democracy of acquisition, [in which all learners] are inherently competent and all possess common procedures. There are no deficits; the subject is active and creative in the construction of a valid world of meanings and practice. Here there are differences but not deficits... (pp. 42–43)

Competence-based approaches to pedagogy were contrasted by Bernstein with what he called the "performance" model. Unlike the competence model, the performance model (with which we are all all-too-familiar today) "places the emphasis upon a specific output of the acquirer, upon a particular text the acquirer is expected to construct and upon the specialised skills necessary to the production of this specific output, text or product" (Bernstein 2000 p. 44). The performance model suggests a more teacher-led, fixed-curriculum-based pedagogy, which under-privileges difference through assessing individuals against common norms or 'standards'. While competence models privilege 'presences' (what is 'laudable' in a student's outputs, what the student has and brings to their learning), performance models privilege 'absences': what is wrong, what is not there, what is 'missing' (Bernstein 1971a, b; Moore 2005, 2006.).

This notion of finding, praising and building on what students already ‘bring with them’ into the classroom, rather than simply validating certain knowledge, preferences and skills as superior to others—that is to say, rewarding presences rather than punishing absences—was at the heart of our philosophy and endeavours, and of course is at the heart of inclusive pedagogy generally. To return to a point made earlier, in our own case this involved the encouragement of personal opinion and idiosyncratic responses to literature. It also included the rewarding of argument and creativity rather than requiring ‘right answers’, or over-penalising non-Standard grammar and spelling. While the importance of students developing expertise in ‘standard’ forms of written and spoken language, and of possessing knowledge that had currency outside the immediate classroom setting, was not to be overlooked or devalued in our English classes, in Literature study we wanted to encourage students not to feel hindered in any way in offering their own opinions and feelings about what they were reading, either to their teachers or to their fellow students. In terms of formal assessment procedures, which could not be avoided, we sought not so much to ‘judge’ students and to allocate them a place in educational hierarchies in comparison with externally fixed, apparently immutable norms, often under the disguise of mock equality (‘end-of-course, sit-down exams’ we were frequently told by colleagues resistant to our philosophy, ‘are the only fair system, since everybody is measured against the same criteria in the same conditions’), but rather to produce pedagogies, assessment procedures and sufficiently ‘open’ curricula to enable students to show us what they could do as intelligent, creative, idiosyncratic students: after Levinas and Rossiter, to recognise, to validate and to foster “the inexhaustible, irreducible singularity of people...[that]...gives meaning to the utter uniqueness of individuals” (Rossiter 2011, p. 983).

If some form of hierarchisation was to persist—and we knew that it would within an education system that continued to depend on test and examination scores as symbolic capital—then at least it should be one that recognised and recorded what students could achieve and had achieved, rather than letting pass unnoticed any achievement that did not match descriptors in the sanctified texts of existing examination assessment criteria. One initiative that had been introduced by my predecessor and that we continued to develop as a subject team was the practice of ‘double grading’ assignments. We knew that, even with examination boards sympathetic to what we were attempting, their very nature and purpose demanded some degree of norm-referenced judgment, and that some students would inevitably end up doing better in terms of final results than others; but we now gave students two marks for each assignment: one for the thought and effort they had put into the assignment, and one an indicative grade of what we thought their work would achieve against the externally-fixed criteria. These grades would be accompanied by explanations and discussions with students as to why and how the two grades differed (in those instances where they did), and as time went by we began to use the double grading as a key way of helping students to understand and be familiar with the criteria against which their work was being judged within the examination system, explaining to them that these were to be taken very seriously but that, in the end, they simply represented the judgments, tastes and opinions of others and needed to be

understood as such. Even with the examination boards that were most sympathetic to the competence approach, there were some differences of opinion between what we as teachers valued and what the examination system valued—but, just as importantly, key differences began to emerge between what the students themselves valued in their own and others' writing and what appeared to them to be valued in the external assessment criteria. Our policy with these students was to assert the value of their own tastes and their own judgments while at the same time pointing out to them that they might have to modify their approaches if they wanted to achieve the highest grades in the subject. While this might sound like a contradictory, potentially confusing approach, it has to be said that the results the students did achieve, especially in comparison to the results they were achieving in other subject areas or the grades that students of similar backgrounds in other local schools were achieving, suggest that it was a highly successful strategy.

Finding Friends: the Significance of the Examination Boards

Much of the collaborative work carried out across B&K and with colleagues in neighbouring schools would have remained limited and only marginally influential as long as it continued to be bounded by and locked within a (performance based) public examination system which appeared to espouse a competing view of what education and learning were about, and about how to undertake constructive and effective assessment of students' work and understandings. As Elwood (2001) has observed, the nature of public examinations has an inevitable and highly influential 'washback effect' on classroom practice, influencing both the content of our teaching and the manner in which we go about it: i.e. "what is taught, how it is taught, what is learned, and how it is learned" (pp. 83–84). Consequently, it was really the novelty of our becoming involved in dialogue with some examination boards that enabled us to proceed more confidently and successfully with our project—so that for the first time English teachers were able to co-design curricula and assessment practices *with* examination boards rather than simply implementing and adopting the examination boards' curriculum requirements and assessment criteria. Without such a development, ours would doubtless have remained a competence-oriented project (Bernstein 2000) struggling for survival within a dominant performance-oriented educational discourse.

The flexibility and commitment of certain public examination boards were instrumental in—and I would say crucial to—this process. Indeed, it was the boards themselves as much as classroom practitioners which had initiated this dialogic revolution, and which were every bit as committed to it as we were. Certainly, things were different then: crucially, there was far less interference on the part of central government into school and examination board practices than there is England today, resulting in a great deal more autonomy for both. However, it is also true that many examination boards were still firmly wedded to traditional externally

set and marked, sit-down, end-of-course, pen-and-paper examinations and very traditional subject content; that parents tended to trust and believe in such traditional approaches; and that the examination boards which challenged such approaches, albeit with support from some (though by no means all) schools and teachers, were taking a not insignificant risk (that is to say, in the potential withdrawal of schools favouring more traditional approaches, and their signing up to other examination boards' offers).

There had been in place at the time (the early 1980s, prior to the introduction in England of a mandatory National Curriculum) a two-tier public examination system nationally: a 'higher', supposedly more demanding, set of examinations for 'more able' students (though in reality these were mainly students from middle-class backgrounds), leading to the award of the 'General Certificate of Education: Ordinary Level' (the 'GCE' or 'O' level) in each major subject area, and the supposedly less challenging 'Certificate of Secondary Education' (CSE) (taken by the majority of students) in each major subject area. Until now, students had been able to be entered, within each subject area, for either one exam or the other but not for both.

Historically, it had been the CSE Boards which had been most flexible and collaborative in their approach to designing syllabi and organising assessments, having already offered schools different kinds or 'modes' of examination so that, in the case of English for example, schools could opt to design their own syllabi and criteria to be validated by the Board, and to undertake their own assessments of student work (externally moderated by the Board), or to opt for more traditional, largely externally-marked examination papers. During the 1980s, however, some of the 'higher level' GCE exam boards had begun to follow the example of these CSE boards, so that by careful selection of exam boards it had become possible for us to pursue our progressive, inclusive pedagogies for students across the perceived ability range, and, indeed, via the careful selection of texts and assignments, to be able to teach students of all 'abilities' in the same class groups, setting them the same basic tasks as one another.

As Head of Faculty, I worked with the two exam boards that my predecessor had identified as being most appropriate to the pedagogical and curricular approach that the faculty had been adopting: boards which were wholly supportive of a determination, in our very multi-ethnic, multi-lingual school, to adopt an actively anti-racist, inclusive approach to our practice that would recognise, validate *and value* difference; that would promote collaborative learning and student choice; and that firmly believed in the limitations and capacity for error of end-of-course examinations conducted in silent, rather forbidding halls and co-opted gymnasias—just as firmly as they believed in the value of drafting and redrafting work via pedagogic conversations between learners and their teachers.

In collaboration with the CSE Board, whose examining brief covered both language and literature, my predecessor had been able to negotiate a 100-per-cent, teacher-assessed coursework assessment mode, in which students had to complete a folder of ten 'best pieces' of writing, covering an agreed range to include narrative, poetry, drama, and 'writing to persuade and inform'. From the ten best pieces, five were selected at the end of the two-year course for us teachers to assign a grade to,

and samples of these were dispatched to the Exam Board for their own moderation procedures. There was, additionally, an oral examination to assess student's ability in spoken expression, conducted again by teachers and moderated by the Board by way of visiting examiners. The GCE Examination Board, which takes centre stage in this chapter, was the Oxford and Cambridge Examinations Board. This board offered two separate GCEs for English—one in Language, the other in Literature—and negotiations had had to be carried out between school and board in relation to both. For the Language exam, students again had to present folders of work to be marked internally and moderated by the Board, with the proviso that one piece was to be completed under timed 'examination conditions' without teacher help, and examined by the Board's own examiners. The Literature exam was split into two parts: a sit-down end-of-course exam on a pre-set Shakespeare play, marked by the Board and attracting 50% of the overall mark, and an extended essay or 'dissertation', largely of the student's own choosing, to be completed with teacher assistance over the 2 years and again marked by the Board's examiners.

Errol

By way of demonstrating the difference that such arrangements made to us and to some of our students, and the nature of the challenge that they provided to historically entrenched curricular and assessment practices in England, I want to devote most of the remainder of this chapter to the experience of one particular student of mine, a young man whom I shall refer to as Errol. (For another account, see Moore 2006, and, for related issues, Moore 1999, 2005.)

Errol had joined B&K 5 years earlier as an 11-year-old, being assigned at the time to what was then called the 'remedial' class for children deemed to be 'academically backward'. This student had been born in the Caribbean, and tended to speak in a Caribbean dialect of English for much of the time. There were also strong traces of that dialect in his written work. He was one of many students at the school for whom our new approach to public examining for English at 16 plus was particularly helpful. This was a bright, interested young man with a great deal of imagination and plenty of critical ideas who, however, in most school subjects, had clearly struggled to achieve to his potential as he wrestled to become proficient in so-called standard English. Our view as his English teachers was that this apparent failure on Errol's part had been brought about at least partly by the fact that he was continually being assessed by his subject teachers, in relation to their own and externally fixed assessment and marking criteria, not just *through* but *in* his use of English, rather than in his cognitive-affective knowledge and skills: that is to say, one perceived weakness (a linguistic one) was not allowing his very many strengths (both cognitive and expressive) to be recognized and validated as they ought to have been.

I had negotiated with this particular student that his extended piece of Literature writing would be on the life and work of some of his favorite Caribbean poets. When he first showed me a draft of the work, it was clear that, far from seeking to

‘standardize’ his language, as I had half expected him to do and as he had always tried to do in his other work, he had, on the contrary, exaggerated its non-standard nature on the basis, he advised me, that he felt this was an appropriate language to use in writing about poets whose work was written in the same Caribbean dialect as his own. Fearing the worst, and wondering if I was pushing its liberal approach just a little too far, I felt that I should run this proposal past the Board’s external examiners before allowing Errol to proceed. To my pleasant surprise, they were not only accommodating in their response to the idea but expressed pleasure at the student’s approach, advising me that this was just the sort of creative response to the coursework element of the examination that they had been hoping for. There might be issues in relation to marking the work, they said—that is to say, in making sure that the examiner was able to understand what the student was saying—but they felt that this was something they would simply have to deal with. In the event, Errol passed his examination comfortably, obtaining the second-highest pass grade at the time. (Interestingly, if somewhat depressingly, this was his one and only success at this examination level, his other results confirming the fallback view of some of Errol’s other subject teachers that he was indeed a ‘slow learner’ and that the Literature result was simply an over-compensatory anomaly).

Undaunted by some of my colleagues’ negative interpretations of Errol’s success, I decided to try to find out more about how his extended essay on the Caribbean poets had been received by the Board, and how they had found his set Shakespeare paper—the play that year being ‘Julius Caesar’—on which I had feared he might fall down. (The Board’s requirement was that students had to score at least 40% on this element of the paper in order to be awarded a pass grade, regardless of their mark in the coursework element).

Through my participation in the annual meetings of the Exam Board with school Heads of English, I was able to discuss my students’ work with one of the Board’s examiners, who kindly shared with me the examiners’ reports both on Errol’s coursework and on the unseen Shakespeare paper. I learned from this examiner that, in respect of Errol’s coursework, expert advice had been sought and an examiner with a knowledge of non-standard dialects of English and an interest in Caribbean literature had been assigned the marking of the paper. I was advised that this had not been possible with the Shakespeare paper; however, all examiners had been made abundantly aware on many occasions of a 2% rule for perceived technical inaccuracies (i.e. examiners were only allowed to dock a maximum of two points out of a hundred for what they saw as ‘significant technical inaccuracies’), and that non-standard English should only be punished if it rendered meaning too obscure for a standard-speaking readership.

The second examiners’ report could not, by virtue of the Board’s regulations, be made directly available to me, but was paraphrased for me by the examiner along the following lines:

The examiner encountered some difficulty in reading these essays, since they appeared to have been written in a dialect of English with which she was unfamiliar. There was evidence, however, of the candidate’s having a sound knowledge of the text and of using quotation [also in non-standard English, but this time Shakespeare’s!] and paraphrase to

support points. Each essay was also characterized by a willingness on the candidate's part to be critical of those aspects of the play with which he was less than happy. He offered a particularly memorable critique, for example, of Shakespeare's representation of ordinary working people, comparing this to some of the prejudices that exist in modern-day society toward certain ethnic groups.

Thirty Years on

Errol's experience may or may not have been unique. It is certainly not presented here as typical—neither of its time nor, certainly, of the experience he might have of public education in general and of being assessed on his interest in and knowledge of Literature if he were taking his examinations today. In another school, even then, I have little doubt that Errol's ongoing struggles with standard English would have resulted in his failing his Literature exam along with all his others. Nor would things have worked out so positively with an exam board that might have been sympathetic to the principles of coursework assessment but lacking such a pluralistic view of language use. I was intrigued, in this regard, by our examiner's recognition that Errol's Shakespeare paper had been written, in part, using a *dialect of English* with which *she was not familiar*: identifying her own 'deficiency' in this area, that is, rather than pathologising Errol's language as simply 'poor English.' In line with Bernstein's competence approach, it was evident that she had looked for and sought to reward 'what *was* there' in Errol's work rather than, as some examiners might have done, refusing to make the extra effort required to engage with Errol's thoughts—despairing at his perceived 'illiteracy', or perhaps silently cursing Errol's teachers for not teaching him properly and for entering him for an examination that he was not equipped for.

What a different world we live in today! In England, government ministers continue to talk about making public education more inclusive and about ensuring that all young students, regardless of their socio-economic, linguistic or ethnic background, have the same educational opportunities as everyone else and enjoy the same levels of success—the sad fact that this too rarely happens being conveniently blamed on 'racist' or incompetent or dumbing-down teachers rather than on any aspect of public education policy. A recent Secretary of State for Education in the UK, Michael Gove, has even talked of a 'personal mission' to ensure that social and economic disadvantage should not be 'allowed' to equate to a second-rate public education. What constitutes a 'good education' in Mr. Gove's world, however, is tied inextricably and exclusively to achieving high grades in national tests and examinations—and the achievement of such grades is itself dependent not upon the inclusion of cognitive and cultural *difference* but on the acquisition of *sameness*. For Errol to be 'included' now, for him to 'succeed' in a manner acceptable to Mr. Gove and his successor, he would have not only to develop skills in standard English and standard forms of representation (which, of course, he was also doing in our English classes in the 1980s), but to learn to love dominant cultural forms and to turn his back on many treasured aspects of the culture of his birth and his upbringing. In turn, those

aspects would have to be constructed by both learner and teacher as obstacles to be overcome if the door to a good education is to remain open, and any teacher and any examination board not helping Errol to overcome such obstacles simply construed and exposed as letting systemically marginalized students like Errol down.

In Conversation

Rodríguez The collaboration between department and the examination board undoubtedly presented students like Errol in a different light by allowing them to demonstrate their knowledge in a different way. Do you think that this collaboration has also impacted the way that these students learned and/or were taught?

Moore Yes I do. Errol, for example, became a much more confident learner and, following his success in the Literature exam, went on to achieve good grades in other subject areas as an older student, despite performing badly in his other exams the first time around (the exception being English Language, for which he achieved the lowest pass grade). In subsequent years, I developed the criteria-sharing practice with other fifteen- and sixteen-year-old students, getting them to comment on and grade the same scripts that we had been sent to look at by the examination boards as the basis for our own internal marking moderation processes. The students, most of whom were bilingual or bidialectal, gained enormously from this exercise, developing understandings of the differences between what they valued in writing themselves and what the exam boards appeared to value. These insights resulted in some astonishing results in their English Literature and Language examinations without engendering any feelings that their own judgments were somehow inferior to those of the Board. In fact, they became what I would call functionally biliterate: able to write in and enjoy their own favored styles and registers as well as adapting their work to suit other needs such as those required to achieve well in public examinations. In the late 1980s and into the 1990s, the kinds of creative response to Literature being pioneered at the time I am describing became standard fare for English teachers across the country and are still used now, albeit with decreasing frequency as ‘traditionalism’ reasserts itself in our nation’s education policy. I’d have to say, though, that the degree of inclusivity and pluralism displayed by the exam board in relation to Errol lasted no more than perhaps 3 or 4 years. A new moral panic, which saw so-called standard English resurrected and reasserted as ‘correct English’, and work such as Errol’s dismissed as illiteracy, raised its head with the introduction of the National Curriculum for England and Wales (now, just for England) toward the end of the 1980s, and it has gathered momentum ever since.

Rodríguez As you mentioned in this chapter, the current educational policies in England, and, I would argue, worldwide, work with a very narrow understanding of assessment. Based on your experience in this school, what do you think are the spaces, if any, both inside and outside school, that could allow us to (re)claim a more democratic role for assessment in public education?

Moore I agree with you. It's a global phenomenon—though some nations are at least making what I would call the right noises, including some interesting ones like China and Japan where efforts appear to be being made to reduce the volume of standardized testing and examining, and the emphasis is shifting more to developing capacity for and attitudes toward learning than on the 'acquisition' and 'demonstration' of knowledge and skills. In England we have problems with a fundamentalist and educationally ignorant central government which has become so prescriptive and dictatorial in taking us back to 'traditional', constraining modes of assessment, in which end-of-course student grades are used as metrics through which to judge teaching quality, that it has become very difficult for teachers to be anything other than reluctantly compliant. We can—and I think must—continue to debate these issues among ourselves, however, joining or creating local national subject- and phase-related groups (like NATE in England), and contributing forcefully and persistently to public consultation whenever it is available—even if we may feel our voices are likely to fall on deaf ears. Our teacher unions have a key part to play also. Of course, teacher unions must continue to represent and fight for their members' interests in relation to pay and conditions of service; however, I would argue that they also need to be more proactive in some countries (England being a case in point) in challenging current education hegemonies and arguing constructively for what have become 'alternative' approaches. It's interesting in England how oppositional many of our leading universities and their associated exam boards are to current government policy on curriculum and assessment, urging a return to deep, independent, creative learning rather than the memorization and regurgitation of facts. So there is principled and widespread resistance to what is happening even if we are currently obstructed in turning it into practice. To return to what has been argued in this chapter, I'd also say that our public memory provides an important space to help us (re)claim a more democratic role for assessment. In fact, the chapter has been premised on a belief that it is essential to keep alive our positive memories of past achievements, even as we contemplate with despair some of the punitive, controlling practices passed off as education to which so many young people are subjected today on a daily basis. We need to remember, particularly, how successful our endeavours at schools like B&K actually were, and to resist attempts to label such memories as delusional nostalgia, or to condemn the practices they describe as old-fashioned or misguided, or—as the political right in England like to do—as educationally damaging to the young people with whom we worked and whose best interests we sought so diligently to serve.

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Chapter 6

“Starting Life Again”: School and Community at Arthurdale (U.S. 1934–1936)

Daniel Perlstein

Few parts of the United States revealed the economic collapse of the 1930s as dramatically as the coalfields of West Virginia, and even by West Virginia standards, the settlements at Scott’s Run were places of exceptional misery. Despite extraordinary wealth beneath the surface, unemployed miners and their families lived in crude tents and shacks coated gray and black with coal dust. Inhabitants drew water for washing, cooking and drinking from sewage-filled streams. Children dressed in rags and slept on rag piles instead of beds. Hunger and disease stunted their growth; school attendance was beyond the reach of many (Clapp 1952; Perlstein 1996; Maloney 2011). Scott’s Run, in the words of one observer, represented “a reduction of living standards to as low point as not to seem those of humans” (Maloney 2011, p. 42).

Misery and inactivity, asserted progressive educator Elsie Clapp (1939), had “paralyzing physical and psychological effects” (p. 115) breeding not only sickness but also suspiciousness, submissiveness and fear. Inhabitants of the camps, Eleanor Roosevelt (1983) would recollect at a 1939 press conference, “were like people walking around dead. They were alive, but they were dead as far as any real living was concerned” (p. 115). The wife of US President Franklin Roosevelt and a prominent reformer in her own right, Eleanor was a leading voice in defense of workers, women and racial minorities. After a 1933 visit by Mrs. Roosevelt to Scott’s Run, the nearby Arthur estate was developed as a new community through which to revitalize the lives of people stranded in mining camps where unemployment and poverty precluded self-direction. At Arthurdale, its creators anticipated, homesteaders would support themselves by farming small plots and working part-time in a

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factory. Progressive, community-centered schools, however, would serve as the hub of the project.

Progressive Education and Community Schools

Repudiating textbook lessons and rote learning, progressive educators aspired to build on and extend students' *experience* through active *learning by doing* that *connected learning to life*. They highlighted problem-solving rather than the acquisition of discipline-based knowledge and adapted lessons the particular needs, interests and capacities of particular children.

If, as progressives argued, the entirety of children's experience was the basis of learning and if that learning was judged by students' capacity to impact their environment, then education and social action were a mutually constituting, iterative process: learning changed what one did, and doing changed what one learned. This relationship of experience and education led progressive educators to advocate lessons about the "here and now" (Mitchell 1921) rather than broad abstractions and generalities.

"Instruction in the formal, symbolic branches of learning—the mastering of the ability to read, write, and use figures intelligently," educational theorist John Dewey had long urged, should "be gained out of other studies and occupations as their background" (Mayhew and Edwards 1936, pp. 25–26). At Dewey's University of Chicago Laboratory School, children's work in carpentry introduced mathematics; chemistry entered through cooking, observing plants grow raised biological questions. Activities at the Dewey school centered on the evolving ways humans have collectively answered their basic needs for food, clothing and shelter. History did not focus on "a record of something which is past and gone;" rather, by reenacting the "typical relations of humanity" (Mayhew and Edwards 1936, pp. 29–30) with the simplified and observable methods of an earlier age, Dewey argued, children could begin to develop a sense of the processes through which their own needs were met.

Progressive visions of self-actualizing learners defining their environment mirrored the liberal democratic political synthesis of individual autonomy and collective self-determination. By providing students with "the instruments of effective self-direction" while promoting a "spirit of service" (Dewey 1915, p. 29), Dewey (1916) argued, schools could promote "greater individualization on one hand, and broader community of interest on the other" (p. 101). They would thus both "liberate individuals ... from bondage to repressive modes of life" (Dewey 1952, p. viii) and constitute "the deepest and best guaranty of a larger society which is worthy, lovely, and harmonious" (Dewey 1915, p. 28).

"A society," Dewey (1915) claimed, "is a number of people held together because they are working along common lines, in a common spirit, and with reference to common aims" (p. 11). And yet, even as progressive pedagogy resonated with liberal democratic ideals, it presumed an environment that nurtured democratic

aspirations. In the minds of progressive educators, pioneer life on the frontier epitomized America’s promise of meaningful activity and social harmony, and pioneer study occupied a privileged place in their schools.

Even amid the massive political, social and economic crises and conflicts of the 1930s, many educators and activists were convinced that progressive pedagogy could foster the capacity of working-class students to transform their environment and help build a new, cooperative social order. And the notion education should focus on students’ immediate surroundings suggested that those students should study and transform their own communities. “Young people,” as leading progressive educator William Hurd Kilpatrick (1938) argued in support of community schools, “cannot learn democracy except as they live democracy” (p. 1). Such an education, Dewey (1939) echoed, was best pursued through encounters with matters “local, present, and close by,” not the “pale and shadowy” (p. viii) abstractions that often passed for social study.

The crises of the 1930s affected political elites no less than educators. Their simultaneous efforts to lessen the suffering of destitute Americans and restore stability to the social order led to President Franklin Roosevelt’s *New Deal* of pro-labor government programs, increased economic regulation and a dramatic expansion of the American welfare state. Progressive community schooling met the goals of New Dealers as well. A joint undertaking of central planners, progressive educators and resettled miners’ families, Arthurdale synthesized the multiple forces shaping American education and life in the 1930s.

Community Schooling in Action

If Dewey provided the theoretical rationale for progressive community schooling, he did little to actually initiate it (Johanek and Pluckett 2007); for that he, Eleanor Roosevelt and other reformers turned to his protégée Elsie Clapp (Stack 2004). She was recruited to serve as Head of Arthurdale School and Director of Community Affairs. “A socialized school,” Clapp (1939) argued, “uses all the means of learning which a progressive school anywhere employs.... But a community school has social ends of some sort in view, and arranges its plans and activities and gathers data for these.... This means that the real learning experiences of the school [come] chiefly through the vocational life of the community” (p. 49).

In order to foster healthy habits, productive activity and community revitalization, Clapp argued, schools could not limit themselves to academic work or even to the provision of social services. Rather, when the school served as the “center for the entire community life” and “guides ... and integrates ... activities ... learning and living are one” (Perlstein 1996, p. 633). Students then gained the capacity to “to be healthy; to be honest; to be able to support themselves adequately; to live pleasantly and profitably with their neighbors; and to be good citizens” (Perlstein 1996, p. 630).

At Arthurdale, community-centered education blurred lines between school and other arenas of community life. The educational program extended from early childhood through adulthood. Visits to community homes, farms and construction sites constituted a central part of the curriculum. Students frequently interviewed family members about their activities, enabling parents to function as teachers. Nursery school well-baby clinics and teachers' home visits educated parents about toilet training, diet, hygiene, exercise and the need for fresh air. Adult education entered the school when mothers met there to prepare lunches for the children. Meanwhile, women teachers joined mothers to make treats for holiday parties, and men teachers formed a band with some of the fathers to provide music for community events (Perlstein and Stack 1999; Clapp 1952). "Gradually," Clapp (1939) observed, "the old fatalistic acceptance of death and illness, born of misery and poverty and ignorance, vanished" (p. 97), restoring health to children and hope, dignity and intelligence to all.

In Clapp's (1939) eyes, community-centered teaching did not entail "putting over" (p. 169) a preconceived curriculum or analysis. Rather, by sharing the life and interests of community, teachers unified educational experience with participation in social and civic life. Schooling was transformed from a public agency delivering a service into a cooperative enterprise. In training teachers, Clapp included narrowly technical matters of pedagogy, but she stressed as a "primary essential, the ways and means of working as a member of a community" (Perlstein 1996, p. 634).

School began in Arthurdale in the fall of 1934. Initially, all of the teachers were committed progressive educators who had either worked under Clapp at a rural progressive high school she had directed or participated in the national network of progressive educators in which Clapp was prominent. After a few months, three local teachers joined the original thirteen. The staff embodied common gender patterns among American teachers: eight of nine elementary school teachers were women; six of seven secondary school teachers were men (Stack 2004).

Nursery school director Jessie Stanton came to Arthurdale from New York City, where she was well known for her work at the Bureau of Educational Experiments' Harriet Johnson Nursery School. Like Clapp, Stanton had also taught at New York's City and Country School, where Caroline Pratt pioneered progressive approaches to field trips and children's play with blocks. Under Stanton's direction, children explored Arthurdale and then used data from their field trips as the basis of art and storytelling projects. Play with blocks allowed children to enact and explore the social processes they witnessed in their new community. The blocks were made for the children by high school boys in the school shop, highlighting the role of cooperation in community life (Stack 2004; Pratt 1948).

Throughout the grades, children studied life around the school. First graders focused on farming, a central component of Arthurdale's subsistence homestead model but an activity that had been absent from the mining camps. On frequent field trips, the children made observations of their fathers and other homesteaders planting crops, threshing buckwheat and husking corn. And as their parents answered questions about what they were doing, the adults became teachers. At the start of the school day, time was allocated for the children to talk about their out-of-school

experiences. One day, children’s observations about cows generated a visit to a family that had just obtained one, then more discussion and finally projects preparing dairy foods back in the classroom. An encounter with yellow warblers on a spring field trip led to the study of local birds. While a portion of the school day was devoted to reading, writing and arithmetic lessons, formal study built on and provided tools for students’ explorations of their environment, rather than field trips serving as enrichment activity at the margins of the curriculum. For instance, the “text-books” with which children practiced reading were teacher-created compilations of students’ stories of their shared experiences (Clapp 1952; Stack 2004).

Exploration of their new surrounding not only formed the basis for academic study and introduced children to cooperation in community life; it helped heal the scars of life in the mining camps. In their initial days at the resettlement, Clapp (1952) observed, first graders experienced “recurrent periods of grieving and fear and lassitude that had no apparent immediate cause.... But with good food and care, country living out of doors, and freedom from strain, the children’s health improved and these emotional disturbances gradually lessened and finally disappeared” (p. 34). The first graders’ recovery, Clapp concluded, “makes clear how much and how quickly the children learned from activities going on around them and from what their families were making and doing” (p. 35).

Second and third graders studied community living. When students expressed interest in building houses, their teacher, intent on enlarging their notion of community life, guided them to think about the other structures being built as well. Children observed their fathers constructing Arthurdale village just beyond the schoolhouse doors and talked with the men about their work. They studied the use of various tools, and then planned in detail a replica of Arthurdale which they built with scrap lumber they collected around the project. The students not only practiced the rudiments of carpentry and stone masonry and learned mathematical concepts; they also learned to cooperate and communicate as they developed a common interest by working toward a shared end (Clapp 1952; Stack 2004).

Fourth graders studied pioneer life. Children learned to dye wool with pokeberries, walnuts and acorns, dip candles and cook pioneer style. With the help of high school students and adults from the Mountaineer Craftsman’s Cooperative, they made split-log benches, tables, a cradle and a churn. The curriculum centered on an old log cabin on the Arthurdale site. Repairing the cabin and recreating pioneer experience, children learned carpentry and arithmetic in the process of “solv[ing] problems that dealt with real things” (Clapp 1952, p. 44). Stories students recounted about pioneer activity served as texts for reading instruction; through their Flax Notebooks, they developed their writing; reading pioneer diaries inspired the creation of a drama about pioneer life (Perlstein and Stack 1999).

The cabin, Clapp (1952) concluded, “makes real to the children the people who lived here before them” (p. 41). And in so doing, fourth grade teacher Elisabeth Sheffield (Clapp 1939) added, it

interprets present-day living to these children.... After they have carded, spun, and woven wool, they start to understand more about materials; after they have tanned a hide, they begin to know more about what goes into making a pair of shoes. (p. 143)

Moreover, pioneer history foreshadowed their own experience: when the children “studied about the experience of the settlers who came into West Virginia, they were in effect learning about their own families’ pioneering in taking up a homestead and starting life again at Arthurdale” (Clapp 1952, p. 41).

In the eyes of progressive educators, pioneer life exemplified both the ways humans have met their fundamental needs and the self-direction and social solidarity they wished to revitalize in contemporary industrial society. Indeed, Clapp (1952) believed, the virtues of pioneer study extended beyond the children, reminding “their fathers and mothers the life they had known on farms long ago in their childhood.... The cabin ... assured them that the life they had left when they went into the mines was theirs still” (p. 41).

Community Revitalization and Community Schooling as a Political Ideal

The creation of the Arthurdale subsistence homestead project echoed long-held American visions of remaking lives in new rural communities. In the nineteenth century, religious and secular Utopians founded or imagined myriad new settlements. Twentieth century calls to move “back to the land” (Brown 2011) combined nostalgic agrarian yearnings and humanitarian notions of relief with new forms of government oversight and social engineering.

For countless American urbanites and intellectuals, fantasies of country life promised a haven against the vicissitudes of the capitalist economy and a means of recovering the autonomy and interpersonal connection they found missing in urban society. Cities, in the words of one back-to-the-lander, offered “a narrow, un-educative, imitative, more or less selfish and purposeless existence” (Brown 2011, p. 143). “Country men and boys,” Franklin Roosevelt (Conklin 1959) had imagined long before becoming President, “have more time to think and study for themselves” (p. 34). In rural areas, he claimed, “there is suffering, there is deprivation; but in the smaller communities and on the farms, there is not the same kind of being up against it ... that you find in cities” (Roosevelt 1932a, Feb. 1, p. 484).

Still, even as they invoked individual autonomy “comparable to pioneer days” (Maloney 2011, p. 61), back-to-the-land advocates sought “government paternalism” (Wilson 1934, p. 81) through a vastly expanded state. Resettlements were designed in advance through the bureaucratized selection of settlers, expert planning of community facilities and scientific direction of farming. As governor of New York, Roosevelt (1932b) proposed that government spearhead a new “rural industrial” way of American life, and he experimented with relocating the unemployed to rural communities (p. 348). Through small garden plots and part-time work in decentralized factories, his wife Eleanor echoed in 1934, subsistence homesteading would rescue people from urban slums while avoiding competition with commercial agriculture (Roosevelt 1934).

In the 1930s, as the Great Depression undermined the legitimacy of capitalism and the capitalist state, liberals joined socialists and communists in challenging unfettered corporate power through the expansion of the public sector. Meanwhile, a wave of books and articles extolled rural life as a shield against economic disaster (Brown 2011). Federal homesteading drew on both trends. Soon after they entered the White House, the Roosevelts began to formulate plans for government-sponsored resettlements. Included in 1933's \$ 3.3 billion National Industrial Recovery Act was \$ 25 million to address “the over-balance of population in industrial centers” through the creation of “subsistence homesteads” (Clapp 1952, p. 6). Arthurdale was the most famous of the new communities. Promoting residents' initiative but planned and directed centrally in Washington and constituting an economic haven without really challenging capitalism, it epitomized the contradictions of progressive reform.

Eleanor Roosevelt, who was Arthurdale's leading backer, had a deep interest in education as well as in subsistence homesteading. Dispossessed miners, she told a resettlement conference, “must be taught to live” (Lash 1973, p. 541). Reformers and New Deal policy-makers joined with such noted educators as John Dewey and Lucy Sprague Mitchell to create “a social experiment in community life which,” in the words of Mrs. Roosevelt, “centers around its school” (Perlstein 1996, p. 629). Community-centered schooling made community life the focus of Arthurdale's curriculum and the school the focal point of community life.

Through her efforts to synthesize the Deweyan curriculum and the community school model in a rural high school she directed, Elsie Clapp had already gained a reputation as leading authority on progressive education in rural communities when she was tapped to direct school and community activities at Arthurdale, a dual appointment signaling the planners' commitment to community schooling (Clapp 1952). Born to a privileged family in 1879, Clapp studied under John Dewey, served as his teaching assistant, and then became a teacher. She also joined with some of America's most prominent activists in support of radical labor organizing (Stack 2004). Still, Clapp was a moderate in political debates among progressive educators. In response to George Counts' celebrated 1932 call (Perlstein 2000) for educators to expose the bankruptcy of the capitalist system through lessons critiquing the social and economic order, Clapp countered (1939) that people's commitment to “social reconstruction” was “not produced by imparting information about different conditions or by gathering statistical data about what exists” (p. 67). Rather (Clapp 1932), “the process of living and learning and doing” was itself “revolutionizing” (p. 270).

Like the back-to-the-land resettlement ideal, the notion of the school as a hub, indeed engine, of democratic community revitalization reflected progressive educators' understanding of social and economic life. The American strand of a global pedagogical movement that emerged in the late nineteenth century, progressive education sought to adapt schooling to the perceived demands of modern life. According to Dewey (1916), the commodification of goods and the specialization of labor required for large-scale manufacturing rendered people ignorant of “the technical, intellectual and social relationships” (p. 98) by means of which our needs

are fulfilled. Dispossessed of such awareness (and of the intrinsic motivation for work which it provides), people in related occupations developed group ambitions and class-consciousness. Social conflicts overwhelmed the self-sufficiency and cohesiveness that had characterized rural communities (Dewey 1915, 1919). Class identities and divisions, according to this view, reflected limited consciousness and therefore could be overcome by education. Community schooling applied this broad social vision to the particular needs of working class youth.

Elsie Clapp (1952) contrasted the ephemeral nature of “the things ‘cash money’ could buy” with “the enduring means of existence” manifest in “the homely implements and utensils for planting crops, making barns and houses and furniture, and cooking and canning” (p. 41) recreated in Arthurdale schools. Even faced with the systemic dislocations of the Depression, Arthurdale’s creators believed that American society reflected the cooperative, democratic spirit with which they characterized rural, preindustrial America. “Studying this pioneer life in school as an important period in the history of our country” Arthurdale teacher Elisabeth Sheffield argued (Clapp 1939, p. 143), dignified the lives of Arthurdale’s dispossessed refugees, asserting and enabling their full humanity and citizenship.

Community and Social Inequality

All progressive educators walked a fine line between teacher guidance and student self-direction. Community school teachers’ recognition of both the brutalizing impact of poverty and the potential for self-direction even among the dispossessed added to this tension. Although Elsie Clapp (1939) envisioned community school teachers participating in activities as “fellow-workers” (p. 89), an “authority not of position, but usable knowledge confirmed by actions and events” (p. 169), she acted as an intermediary between homesteaders and Arthurdale’s central planners in such varied matters as electricity rates, construction schedules, and clinic operations. As one pupil would recollect decades later, Clapp “knew what she wanted done and she knew how to accomplish it. She wasn’t just a school principal. She was really an overseer of the whole community... and she was interested in not just the ones in school, but the ones too young at home and the ones that thought they had gone as far as they needed to go and were just hanging around” (Wuenstel 2002, p. 762). As much as Clapp (1939) shared in resettlement activities, community educating required both “working with others” *and* “guiding” them in that work (p. 169).

Inevitably, however, the very process of community revitalization fostered its eclipse. As homesteaders became more self-reliant, guidance became more onerous. Moreover, in their very commitment to revitalize refugees from the mining camps, Arthurdale’s creators both overstated the degree to which homesteaders had been incapacitated and obscured the politics and economics of their dispossession. Scott’s Run, as Eleanor Roosevelt (1949) acknowledged, had earned the name “Bloody Run” (p. 126) for militancy of its miners’ strikes. In order to promote a harmonious community, government officials screened Arthurdale applicants for

church attendance, sobriety, “moral character...intelligence, perseverance and foresight” (Cook 1999, pp. 138–39). They even demanded references from former bosses in order to assess financial prudence and reliability at work.

Although community educators, like New Deal reformers more broadly, sought to foster social harmony, their efforts obscured the very social divisions they sought to overcome. “Here sound the echoes of old cries, ‘correct injustice but preserve the system,’” social critic T. R. Carskadon (1934) sneered. “Here the ‘Roosevelt Revolution’ shoots its farthest bolt, and changes nothing. Here broods the spirit of Henry Ford.... Karl Marx is not wanted” (p. 314).

Whereas reformers believed that by recovering the spirit of preindustrial rural life, they could restore the humanity of refugees from the mining camps, critics stressed that the miners’ attitudes were not the source of their dispossession. “The coal company became the ruling body of the people I’ll call ‘slaves’” (Lee 1991, p. 45), former Scott’s Run inhabitant Sidney Lee (1991) argued. It “controlled the entire life of the miner and his family.... How could any stable form of human life be built upon such an insecure foundation?” (pp. 45–46). Fearing that the project would discourage workers from unionizing, the United Mine Workers voiced considerable opposition to the homestead.

The obscuring of class antagonism shaped Arthurdale’s curriculum. One might expect that a curriculum based on activity, interest, local conditions and social life would highlight the structure of the coal industry or the impact of the Depression on students’ recent misery and the continuing misery of their former neighbors. When children studied West Virginia’s products and industries, however, a 1790 iron furnace was the only acknowledgment of extractive industries; the word coal was not mentioned.

Although they made no use of it, Arthurdale educators had a model of class-conscious progressive education. In November 1932, at a time when Elsie Clapp served on the journal’s advisory board, *Progressive Education* (Sailor 1932) described Pioneer Youth’s West Virginia summer play schools, established with the cooperation of the West Virginia Mine Workers Union and the League for Industrial Democracy. The children, project developers reasoned, could not help but reflect on hunger, eviction, police power in defense of class privilege, and the need for a new social order. Topics addressed by means of child-centered activity and exploration of the built environment included wage cutting, strikes, evictions, unemployment and social change.

Deweyan invocations of the collective fulfillment of universal human needs both encouraged social solidarity and set its limits. Just as Arthurdale promoted students’ understanding of modern industrial life through the exploration of archaic, small-scale technologies of production seemingly uncontaminated by capitalism, teachers imagined an earlier, authentic cultural life free from movies, radio and minstrel shows. “The experience in the coal fields, according to music and drama teacher Fletcher Collins (Clapp 1939, p. 219), “had obscured” to homesteaders “their cultural heritage” (p. 219). Teachers promoted community bonds by celebrating a sentimental and sanitized version of West Virginian folk culture. Instead of exploring working-class life through, for instance, the industrial ballads which animated labor organizing, children sang traditional Scotch-Irish ballads such as *Barbara Allen*.

No less than the desire for class harmony, the call for cultural commonality undermined Arthurdale's egalitarian project. Although blacks and immigrants constituted a significant percentage of Scott' Run's inhabitants and a quarter of the applicants to become homesteaders were black, only native-born white Protestants were selected for Arthurdale. In Clapp's (1939) eyes, the accepted applicants' "up-bringing and racial background" predisposed them to "generosity and good humor" (p. 117). The project thus relied on the very sense of a shared identity that it claimed to foster. Community, it turns out, was a form of exclusion as well as inclusion; the quest for social harmony "local, present, and close by" (Dewey 1939, p. viii) obscured social divisions as much as it combatted them. Charging that Arthurdale put "the stamp of federal government approval upon discrimination" (White 1934, pp. 80–81), African American civil rights leader Walter White led an unsuccessful campaign to repeal Arthurdale's exclusionary selection procedures.

The erasure of racial conflict was manifest in Arthurdale's curriculum. The first white settler in what became Arthurdale was Colonel John Fairfax, who had been advised by US President George Washington to buy the tract. Ignoring the labor performed by slaves, Clapp imagined (1939) that Fairfax "built some little cabins for his slaves" (p. 252), one of which survived and was used as a school laboratory of pioneer crafts. By using Old Watt's cabin to celebrate the self-direction and community spirit of pioneer life, Arthurdale educators legitimized white racial privilege and black subordination.

Arthurdale, as one student confirmed (Perlstein and Stack 1999), became "an excellent trainer of citizenship. Not only did it give us the experience, but it gave us enough freedom to use our own creative ability and initiative" (pp. 223–24). Grounded in invocations of liberal democratic citizenship, Arthurdale's schools gave real substance to invocations of local democracy. Still, class conflict and racial exclusion were woven into the very fabric of Arthurdale's community and into the vision of democracy that its educators espoused. The tension between Elsie Clapp's (1939) commitment "to arouse a desire to better their own condition" (p. 69) among working class families devastated by the economic crisis of the 1930s and the obscuring of race and class divisions constituted a contradiction at the heart of community schooling.

The Right-Wing Assault on Arthurdale

Arthurdale's problematic stance on class and race was not the source of its undoing. Created by elite reformers, more liberal than radical, the resettlement community and its schools made manifest a belief that those dispossessed and disenfranchised by political and economic conditions had the right to lives of "comfort, beauty [and] inspiration" (Clapp 1939, p. 100) and to an education grounded in such ideals. Arthurdale thus embodied an expansive, humanistic vision of education and a dynamic notion of the public, not as the mere sponsor of school systems but as something always in the process of being created as citizens gained a deeper understanding of

their shared experience. Dewey (1939) himself concluded that Arthurdale’s community schools possessed “extraordinary significance for education” (p. vii).

Ironically, the very commitment to fostering residents’ capacity to articulate their desires contributed to the eclipse of community schooling. As the initial glow of resettlement wore thin, malaise set in. Although cooperative practices were nurtured in Arthurdale, policy was made in Washington. Like the Roosevelts and other Americans, residents believed in the myth of pioneer yeomanry. Homesteaders, to Elsie Clapp’s dismay, “furthered personal ends” (Perlstein 1996, p. 644) as much as the common good. They wanted the homes the government built, but they also wanted the government out of their lives.

Moreover, reformers’ efforts to link education to practical activity were undermined by forces over which Arthurdale had little control. Apart from work building Arthurdale itself, few jobs materialized. Teachers simultaneously urged high school students to explore livelihoods available within Arthurdale and tried to help them envision possibilities beyond the limited world in which they lived. Learning of possible careers in glassmaking, students studied geology and inorganic chemistry. By offering electrical shop and woodworking to girls as well as boys, the school challenged current gender roles. Practical activity also introduced students to the study of West Virginia history. Still, the very economic conditions that led reformers to create Arthurdale undermined community schooling’s links to actual life.

As residents’ hopes grew, their notion of connecting learning to life included their children having access to college, a stance requiring a traditional, academic discipline-based curriculum (Pickett 1953).

In the end, though, it was not educational concerns or local misgivings that determined the project’s fate. Arthurdale’s creators, as Joseph Lash (1973) has put it, were determined not “to subordinate human values to cost consciousness” (p. 532). To foster pride, self-sufficiency and community spirit, they hired residents with limited carpentry skills to build the project and then to paid them union-scale wages. They considered luxuries like landscaping with flowering shrubs and indoor toilets fitting even for the poor. They embraced a model of community schooling that cost significantly more than typical public schools and that required teachers to work exceptionally long hours in uncertain conditions (Report 1940).

In contrast, conservatives argued that if the poor needed some sort of government action, it should be a Spartan, narrowly instrumental affair. They portrayed Arthurdale as a “communist project” and “West Virginia commune” (Conklin 1959, p. 118). They deployed the managerial inexperience, confused lines of authority, high costs and inadequacy of planning that plagued Arthurdale to attack the very desirability of planning. Although no private company was willing to move a factory to the isolated homestead, Congress blocked the construction of a post office furniture factory in Arthurdale, lest the government create competition for private companies (Cook 1999).

By the summer of 1936, the sustained attack on the project had taken its toll. Donations from liberal philanthropists which supplemented public funding dwindled, and Arthurdale lost the support of Franklin Roosevelt and key policy makers. “We should not place people in a position where they cannot make good” (Perlstein

1996, p. 642) financier Bernard Baruch admonished Eleanor Roosevelt in 1936. “Let us not put these people on their feet, unless it is humanly possible for them to stand by themselves when the helping hand is removed” (Perlstein 1996, p. 642).

Appreciative of Clapp’s work, a majority of Arthurdale families petitioned her to remain. Without an “industrial solution and security,” she lamented, “our educational enterprise cannot go on here” (Perlstein 1996, p. 643). Although, as historian Martin Berman (1979) notes, Arthurdale served as the “prototype” (p. v) for efforts to establish community-focused progressive schools in marginalized communities across the United States (Johanek and Plunkett 2007; Getz 1997), in Arthurdale itself, Clapp and many of the outside teachers left, the community school model was abandoned, and gradually progressive practices faded (Report 1940).

Arthurdale, Community Schooling and the Legacy of Progressive Education

Progressive education emerged in the late nineteenth century as part of a broader movement advocating rational planning in political and economic life. A complex amalgamation of social welfare, social solidarity and social control, Progressivism constituted an accommodation of industrial capitalism as well as a critique of it. Although the New Deal dramatically increased the administrative capacity of the American state, its relationship to Progressivism represented more continuity than change (Reagan 1999; Rodgers 1998).

Just as the resettlement community at Arthurdale epitomized progressive and New Deal commitments to modernity and nostalgia, to social melioration and social control, community schooling epitomized the political ambiguities of progressive education. While progressivism resonates with liberal democratic ideals—Dewey (1916) acknowledged that class stratification was “fatal” (p. 101) to democratic education—, it also presumed an environment that fostered democratic aspirations. Active inquiry into social life, African American historian and educator Horace Mann Bond argued in 1935, presupposed “an elastic, democratic social order in which there are no artificial barriers set against the social mobility of the individual. In such a society classes are assumed to be highly fluid, and there can be no such thing as caste” (Perlstein 2008, p. 93).

Like the back-to-the-land movement, like progressive education and progressive reform more broadly, community schooling simultaneously looked backward and forward, a nostalgic attempt to engage new social, political and economic demands. The power of Arthurdale’s community school pedagogy was thus of a piece with its limitations. Envisioning a democracy in which working class Americans joined together to address the pressing problems of their daily lives, it served dispossessed students far better than did traditional schools. And yet, community schooling relied on a romanticized vision of community bonds that effaced social conflicts in American life. Its genuinely humanizing and democratizing potential was thus mirrored by the silences with which it reinforced relations of domination.

In Conversation

Rodríguez What do you think made Arthurdale so vulnerable to racial discrimination and disconnection to the community, when these seem like central goals of progressive pedagogy?

Perlstein Encarna, a simple answer is that most of the whites involved, including Elsie Clapp and even John Dewey, do not seem to have been very concerned about racism, but your question highlights contradictory aspects of progressive community schools. Progressive educators’ commitment to liberal democracy, social efficiency and social harmony could challenge segregation and the reproduction of unequal social relations, but could also legitimize them (Kliebard 2004; McGerr 2003). Meanwhile, a focus on the techniques and technologies of daily activities rather than the social relations of labor conflated the quest for a future of social harmony with the presumption that it already existed.

Dewey (1916) attributed two qualities to democracy and, by extension, to democratic education. “How numerous and varied are the interests which are consciously shared?” (p. 100) and “How full and free is the interplay with other forms of association?” (p. 100). Your question involves both qualities and their relationship to one another. Arthurdale did far better on Dewey’s first criterion than on the second. Children and their families had constant opportunities to engage in and reflect on activities that deepened their common bonds and engaged their real interests. In its insistence that students articulate their own interests and collectively address their own problems, Arthurdale constituted a far more democratic model of school than was, or is, the norm.

But the very mean by which progressive educators extended the pedagogy of liberal democratic citizenship to white working class youth and profoundly enlarged the realms of civic study and action also defined the project’s limits. Like American liberalism more broadly, Arthurdale challenged an extreme manifestation of capitalism but not capitalism itself. The process through which educators fostered bonds at the local level therefore exacerbated wider social divisions. The skills and habits that students developed did more to foster social, political and economic participation than transformation, and so they left unexamined and untouched America’s deepest social divisions.

Rodríguez Based on your analysis of Arthurdale, what do you think we should realistically expect from progressive, child-centered pedagogies when advocating for public education to fulfill its democratic responsibilities for poor communities?

Perlstein I’ve tried to convey the ambiguous politics of progressive, community-centered education and my attendant ambivalence about it. If, as John Dewey (1915) famously claimed, progressive education created a setting “where individualism and socialism are at one” (p. 3), it could as easily sway in one direction as the other. Still, I criticize Arthurdale’s failures because of its great achievements. Understanding the failures better enables us to build on those achievements.

Too often, I think, educators either deny the ways oppression scars poor children or are able to see nothing but those scars. At Arthurdale, teachers were attentive both to oppression's scars and to students' humanity. They did much—even if not enough to help students' make sense of their lives and world. To do so, they looked backward to an idealized past. But democratic communities are always in a process of formation. By looking forward to an as yet unrealized future we are positioned to more fully realize Arthurdale's promise that school can become an "embryonic community" (Dewey 1915, p. 27) foreshadowing the construction of more democratic bonds in the wider society.

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Chapter 7

***Bachillerato* IMPA: Middle School Education for Adults at a Recovered Factory (Argentina 2003)**

Gabriela Mendez

In most Argentinean public middle schools, the first thing visitors would see is a typical classroom made up of a group of approximately 30 students, listening to a teacher's lecture, writing, working individually or in groups. Students would be sitting in rows, facing the blackboard and the teacher up front. When visiting the *Bachillerato* IMPA (henceforth BI), however, one enters a factory where aluminum bars and machines are used to produce spray tubes, toothpaste tubes, and cake pans. On the third floor of this industrial building, two teachers work together nightly co-teaching the class that they have collaboratively planned. In this context, male and female learners between the ages of 15 and 75 years of age are actively pursuing a middle school diploma with a specialization in cooperatives and microenterprises. They sit around big wooden tables working individually and in groups. If it is assembly day, most students, teachers and the school's coordinators meet to discuss strategies, address problems, and suggest ideas to improve the curriculum. Some topics of discussion may be the school's rules, attendance, and how to keep the school clean (Cabrera 2012). Some students are workers at the factory. Many of them are neighborhood youngsters who have dropped out of other schools and who are now attempting to complete middle school while holding a job (Sverdlick and Costas 2008).

The name of the school is revealing of the history that brought workers and neighborhood students together in this atypical school setting. Fifteen years ago, the Industrias Metalúrgicas y Plásticas Argentina (IMPA), the building after which the school is named, was a factory that manufactured aluminum and plastic products. Like many other factories in Argentina at that time, IMPA became a casualty of the neoliberal reform of the 1990s that took the national economy to bankruptcy. Unlike many of the other factories that suffered this fate, however, in 1998 a group of workers took over the company assuring its economic survival. By virtue of this process, the IMPA became one of the first "recovered factories" (*fábricas recuperadas* in Spanish), in the country. As implied in the name, the term "recovered" refers to the

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economic initiative by which “enterprises that after being abandoned by their owners, emptied, declared bankruptcy on or closed, were re-opened by the companies’ workers and put back to work under the workers’ leadership”¹ (Martinez and Vocos 2002, p. 1).

While recovered factories are not unique to Argentina, the story of IMPA is particularly relevant to education. Since the 1980s, international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank imposed neoliberal economic formulas in all of Latin America that forced many companies like IMPA to close (Margheritis and Pereira 2007). The story by which IMPA became a school reflects the unique way in which the recovery process was connected to education in Argentina. To its workers’ credit, IMPA is still an operating factory that employs approximately 169 workers and, according to the Government of Buenos Aires, is the second producer of aluminum in the country. The creation of the school, however, would not have been possible without the support of the National Movement of Recovered Factories/Companies [Movimiento Nacional de Empresas Recuperadas] (henceforth MNER), the national movement of employee-managed companies that orchestrated the recovery process of the factory. For this movement, the goal of recovering factories was not limited to economic feasibility. While economic survival was an imperative, this workers’ organization believed that recovered factories were a social space to redefine economic relations according to more democratic principles such as horizontal decision making and direct representation in assemblies (North and Huber 2004). The BI, founded in 2003, was informed by this belief and pursued a kind of education aligned to the political principles that made this movement necessary in the first place.

Recovered Factories: From the Failure of Neoliberal Policies to New Opportunities for Workers and Students

In Argentina, the political and economic context that led to the recovery of factories started in the 1990s. By this time, the neoliberal policies had created the economic crisis that led to the closing and bankruptcy of many companies and to high levels of unemployment. Implemented by President Carlos Menem throughout the 1990s and presented as necessary to modernize the country and make it more competitive in the global economy, these policies involved opening up the markets, privatization of national companies, and reduction of the state (Figari 2007). In 1991, for example, the government implemented the “convertibility plan” that locked the peso at the same value as the dollar. This economic strategy was intended to control the value of the national currency, to provide fiscal discipline, and to open the economy to the free flow of capital and products. One of the main consequences of this plan was a national reform involving the privatization of previously public enterprises such as telephone, water, gas, natural gas, electricity, trains, airlines, television, radio, and

¹ All translations from Spanish are mine.

mail (Figari 2007). Another important consequence was the elimination of state subsidies for exported products. Encouraged by international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Menem administration also privatized the social security system (Stiglitz 2002).

Predictably, these economic policies resulted in high levels of unemployment. Local companies, now without subsidies, had to compete with an influx of inexpensive imported products forcing them to minimize costs by firing personnel or reducing salaries. New labor regulations were also established to encourage labor flexibility. Neoliberal reforms saw the state-regulated market as inflexible and unappealing to foreign capital, attributing this inflexibility to the workers' rights that unions had gained as a result of historical struggles (Figari 2007). In response to this "problem," new national laws were created to regulate employment and to allow for salary reductions. The level of unemployment skyrocketed. While in the 80s the unemployment rate was 7.5%, in 1995 and 1996 it reached 17% and by 2001 it climbed to 25% (Jimenez and Garcia Martinez 2002). Social unrest and social conflict also increased dramatically as evidenced by the numerous *cacerolazos* (gatherings of people on the streets to hit pots and pans in protest) and street demonstrations that took place in December of 2001. By the end of that year, the economic crisis resulted in an unprecedented political crisis as poignantly illustrated by the five presidents taking office and resigning within less than a month.

The movement of recovered factories took place as both a reaction to and as a coping mechanism in this chaotic scenario. As the neoliberal policies continued to be implemented, diverse social actors started to publicly reject them by developing practices of social participation and resistance through organized demonstrations, neighborhood assemblies, and the creation of unemployed workers' organizations (Gluz 2011; Sverdlick and Costas 2008; Rosa 2005). Factory takeovers by workers were one of these practices. By 2003, in Buenos Aires alone, there were between 127 and 180 recovered factories providing employment to almost 12,000 workers (Abramovich and Vázquez 2005). After December 2001, the MNER consolidated as an alternative for workers to get organized in order to recover their work place (Sverdlick and Costas 2008).

The main purpose of the MNER was to provide workers with the legal and financial support they needed to recover the factories. But this was not its only goal. The MNER believed that worker-operated factories should reject the authoritarian boss-worker model of the closed factories and that they should become democratic places that embraced collaborative practices and values. Larrabure et al. (2011) explain that this organization "belongs to the family of social movements that are not only oriented to criticising and protesting against the status quo but are also engaged in 'regenerative activities' and in the development of viable alternatives" (p. 183). Two principles were fundamental in searching for these alternatives: the notion of factories as crucial parts of the community and a commitment to horizontal models of decision-making. The strong connection between the factories and their communities is clarified by Larrabure et al. when arguing that, for the MNER, the process of recovering a factory has always been a workers' issue as much as a community issue. According to these authors, recovered factories are "new forms of

social production [that] extend out to include provision for the social, cultural, and economic needs of surrounding communities by opening up their plant to cultural, educational and social activities, by involving themselves intimately with the needs of local communities, and by donating goods or services to local institutions like hospitals, schools or libraries” (p. 192) [emphasis in original]. The commitment to horizontal organization and decision-making processes is primarily manifested in the adoption of cooperativism as the organizational model for recovered factories. While, as Larrabure et al. indicate, only a few of the workers in these factories had worked in cooperatives before, this model became central to the struggles for new economic alternatives that would secure democratic participation and self-governance. Assemblies assured the direct representation of their members in this process. By adopting this model, the MNER not only supported workers on changing traditional and obsolete factories’ structures but also allowed for workers to work collaboratively and equitably on important matters such as their salaries and job responsibilities.

The IMPA: Much More Than a Factory

Successful since its foundation in 1910 by a German investor, by 1997 IMPA had accumulated an eight million dollar debt that virtually paralyzed its productivity and took the company into bankruptcy. In response, the next year a group of 60 workers occupied the company and created, in assembly, a new workers’ cooperative. The administrative board renegotiated the debt and reactivated the factory (Government of Buenos Aires 2014). In 2001, soon after the IMPA started its journey of recovery, most of the factory’s employees joined the recently founded MNER. This decision brought IMPA the support of the national workers’ movement. It also marked the beginning of the BI. Because the MNER viewed factories as community spaces, IMPA actively engaged with the social and cultural needs of the neighborhood from the outset. Even today, “IMPA... is also known as *La Fábrica Cultural* (The Cultural Factory) because it dedicates a large portion of its space to an art school, silk-screen shop, free health clinic, community theatre, and an adult education high school program” (Vieta 2014, p. 204). Education was seen as one of the essential needs and the now worker-owned factory arranged for assessing and responding to that need. In 2002 the MNER solicited the collaboration of the Cooperativa de Educadores e Investigadores Populares (CEIP), a cooperative of teachers and researchers from the University of Buenos Aires (Lozano et al. 2010). This organization conducted a study the conclusion of which indicated that many young adults in the neighborhood had not had the opportunity to go to school or had failed or not completed their education. The BI was established based on this study and as an attempt to also extend formal education to the adults working in the factory. Thus, the middle school diploma was intentionally created to address the educational needs of both young adults in the neighborhood and factory workers.

The demand for education in the community was so high that during the first year the school opened two sections for its first class (Quintana 2008).

Significantly, and despite the MNER's understanding of factories as public spaces, the BI was founded outside of the public school system. This was not by choice. Without official government support at the time, the school establishment and survival was possible because of a voluntary agreement between workers and teachers by which IMPA provided the building and payed overhead costs and the teachers, all CIEP members, who volunteered to teach ad honorem. Undeterred by its public vocation, however, the school pursued official recognition and public funding from the education system from its inception. In 2011, and as a result of the passing of 238/SSIEYCP/11 Act, the BI finally became a part of the public Adult and Youth Education System of the autonomous City of Buenos Aires. IMPA continues to cover all of the overhead expenses but the local government now pays for the teachers' salaries.

Curriculum and Pedagogy at BI

In compliance with the Adult and Youth Education System of the City of Buenos Aires, BI offers a traditional 3-year middle school curriculum that includes courses in biology, civic education, geography, physical education, economy and accounting, physics, chemistry, history, math, and language and literature. But because of the school's affiliation with the CIEP and the MNER, the curriculum at BI also presents distinctive elements grounded in these organizations' view of students as active political agents. In the words of North and Huber (2004), students are expected to engage in "a wider process of social change through the construction of a 'solidarity economy'" (p. 973) and in the "struggle for work and dignity and against neoliberal deindustrialization" (p. 974).

The first of these distinctive elements is the inclusion of two courses to those required by the official curriculum; one on cooperativism and another one on micro-enterprises (Cabrera 2012). These courses are not mere additions to the curriculum. Indeed, they are fundamental to the pedagogical project of the school as they speak to the very process by which the IMPA workers were able to recover the factory and to work with the community. For Larrabure et al. (2011), recovered factories are an important part of the "new cooperativism" in Latin America, a movement born out of the immediate need to keep factories viable but that resulted in the workers' learning of democratic practices. In their analysis, "as these workers live[d] out daily the challenges of self-management, they begin to replace the values of individualism, competitiveness and profit maximisation with a new ethos based on cooperativism, equal compensation, solidarity and 'horizontalism'" (p. 189). Cooperatives were, therefore, essential places for the MNER where workers learned to become more responsible for themselves and for others. Places filled with "the ethic of responsibility for the other [that] emerges in the very change from owner-

management to worker-management, and from being mere workmates to becoming *socios* (associates) of the cooperative” (Vieta 2014, p. 199) [emphasis in original].

By endorsing the opening of the BI, the MNER was seeking a similarly transformative experience for the students in the school. On its website, this organization states that schools should function “as social organizations inserted in their neighborhoods that generate holistic and liberating education in the Freirian sense.” This statement reflects the MNER’s commitment to non-authoritarian pedagogies but also echoes a critique of the official school system which excludes the students served by the official system. A teacher at another recovered factory articulates this critique when stating: “students don’t engage (with the [official] school), they don’t feel the respect they deserve, everything that they experience outside school, they cannot bring into school, [school] is marginalizing, the schools generate exclusion. Because the school, well, repeats what society does, today [school] is not intended for transformation” (Padawer et al. 2009, p. 149). Attempting to parallel the transformative process that the factory workers have experienced when organizing themselves into cooperatives, the MNER further states on its website that, “Schools [should be] considered to be part of social organizations that educate political subjects in values such as autonomy or self-government, cooperative work, and the development of critical and reflective thinking.” It is in pursuing this goal that the course on cooperatives and microenterprises became critical to the curriculum as they offer the possibility of learning the organizational processes of self-management that will prepare them to embrace more democratic practices in their future role as workers (Cabrera 2012; Fernandez et al. 2009). It is, not only but particularly, in these courses in cooperativism and microenterprise in which students learn the history of cooperativism and how to work cooperatively and that they can develop a new political subjectivity as future workers; just as current workers in recovered factories became political agents when working in solidarity with each other in cooperatives (Larrabure et al. 2011). As a teacher in another recovered factory school put it: “I don’t know if, in the current labor market students will become bakers, but *I know that they will all be workers*” (Padawer et al. 2009, p. 149) [the emphasis is mine].

At the BI, advocating for this new political subjectivity also involves advocating for a sense of reciprocity among students and workers that is absent in other schools. In recovered factories, workers become learners when practicing cooperativism (Larrabure et al. 2011; Vieta 2014). Reciprocally, students are educated as workers subscribing an understanding of education that “inspire[s] a sense of pride, dignity, and confidence in participants, so they might become autonomous both politically and socially” (Torres 2013, p. 24). This reciprocity is much more than a rhetorical principle. Over the years, IMPA’s workers have been thoroughly committed to the sustainment of the school and of the students. In return, students are educated to support the factory when needed, for example when threatened with eviction, and to participate in public protests to advocate for social rights, particularly for workers’ rights (MNER 2013). Students and teachers also guard the factory in the evenings when most workers are out of the building.

Consistent with the endorsement of cooperativism and self-management, the curriculum at BI is heavily grounded in the principle of solidarity. Just as “workers gradually learn[ed] to take a deeper and more committed interest in the wellbeing of the enterprise and the community from the social bonds that emerge in collective social action” (Vieta 2014, p. 198), teachers at the BI have committed themselves to a view of learning that makes them responsible for education with their students. This view is manifested in many instances in the curriculum. Conceptually, teachers refuse to construct students as failures. Instead, they work in solidarity with them. Paraphrasing Sirvent (2005), teachers recognize that their students are youth likely to struggle in the future with social, political and economic exclusion. Echoing this author, they believe that the experiences of disenfranchised youth “include a complex situation of poverties (in plural) related to fundamental needs that are not so obvious, [such as] the need for care, reflective thinking, understanding and social and political participation” (p. 28). Consistent with this view, teachers at the BI acknowledge the complexity of their students’ experiences and see solidarity as a way to take institutional responsibility for their students’ learning. They do so by, for example, respecting students’ individual processes of learning and by addressing these differences with teaching pedagogies that support, scaffold, and promote collaborative and caring exchanges in all areas of the curriculum. The decision of instituting individual learning modules on Friday is illustrative in this regard. Since many of the students are working, classes take place from Monday to Thursday in the evening. Friday, however, is dedicated to individual and collaborative work. On this day, teachers work individually with students who were not able to attend some of the weekly classes or that simply need to review the subjects studied during the week.

Student evaluation is also grounded in the principle of solidarity. During the students’ first year of school, teachers refrain from using traditional methods of assessment that may have contributed to students’ sense of academic failure in the past. Instead, they use observation, performance assessments, and other types of formative assessment that scaffold and further promote learning. By so doing, teachers treat evaluation as a process, rather than as a product (Quintana 2008) attempting to strike a balance between what Stiggins and Chappuis (2012) refer to as assessment of learning, determining how much students have learned, and assessment for learning, using assessment and feedback to promote learning.

Also consistent with promoting self-management and cooperativism, the BI has adopted horizontal organization as its main organizational practice. The school has never had a formal principal and the decision making process has always been shared by coordinators, teachers, and students (F. Salas, personal communication, April, 13, 2013). Paralleling the organizational elements of the larger social movements that housed the process of recovering factories (North and Huber 2004), the BI committed from its outset to allocate decision-making to assemblies. In this forum, which takes place at least once a month, the entire school meets to discuss issues ranging from concerns raised by any of its constituencies to issues requiring the school’s immediate attention (Cabrera 2012). Even the designing and implementation of the school curriculum was conducted in this deliberative manner. As

Roberto Elisalde, one of the founding teachers at the CEIP, explains, the curriculum at the BI was developed over a 6-month period of assemblies in which students and teachers discussed how to integrate the required school subjects with students' preexisting knowledge and learning expectations (Quintana 2008).

Pedagogically, assemblies also function as educational spaces where the teacher-student relationship is reconstructed in more democratic terms. According to Padawer et al. (2009), these forums, "consider students' opinions and capacities to make autonomous decisions, modifying, at least to a certain extent and in these deliberative moments, the relation of subordination between teacher and students common to other middle-schools in which deliberation is not frequent" (p. 150). Furthermore, assemblies function as sites of academic knowledge creation and integration where teachers and students engage in finding solutions to specific problems. In one instance, for example, the assembly addressed the problem of students not returning to class after a break or coming back late. Through discussions students and faculty were able to find the main cause of the problem. Since there was no cafeteria at the school, students had to leave the school to buy something to eat when hungry and sometimes this took longer than the allotted break time. The assembly resolved to create a school food stand that would be managed by the students. This issue became a curriculum matter when students decided to apply what they learn in the class on cooperativism to build this stand. Students developed strategies to purchase the store's first merchandise, to promote participation in this project among other school members, and to decide what to do with the profits (Cabrera 2012). The final outcome was the students' decision to buy the merchandise themselves, to institute shifts among themselves to run the food stand, and to dedicate the profits to buy items needed by the school. In 2011, for example, the money collected in the stand went to buy paint that students and teachers used during the summer break to paint the school.

The BI: A School at the Heart of the Community

The BI is deeply rooted in the community in at least two fundamental ways. First, the school originated as a part of the struggle to create new social subjects that produce not only goods but also culture. Sitrin (as quoted in Larrabure et al. 2011) notes that, as a part of the larger social movement at the moment, the MNER "understand[s its] everyday experiences and innovations as revolutionary acts. Horizontal relations, self-management, autonomy, community engagement and solidarity are not only new democratic practices in the workplace but also part of the process of creating new social subjects and new relations based on dignity, equality and freedom" (p. 267). IMPA committed to this process by redefining itself as a community-based space where workers could engage in the production of culture. In 2012, for example, the factory "hosted 40 theatre productions... as well as many musical events and workshops for art and singing" (n.a. 2013, p. 17). The BI is an extension of this community spirit and can be understood as one of the new community-based spaces

as it engages students in the production of the knowledge and the skills they need to become these new social subjects. Elisalde—one of the school educators—contends that at the BI students become intellectuals engaged in social movements trying to solve community problems (Quintana 2008).

Second and as stated above, the BI was born as a community-based space because it found its rationale in the educational needs of the community. Holding classes in the evening, including the courses on cooperatives and microenterprises, and dedicating Friday to individual work are some of the ways in which the school has addressed such needs. Furthermore, the school has also modified its definition of the students to accommodate these needs. In other schools belonging to the Adult and Youth Education System of the City of Buenos Aires, admittance is defined by age and students can apply at 15. The BI also requires students to be at least 15 years old but, inspired by the MNER's recognition of the needs of working adults, the main criteria to enter the school is not age but life experiences and responsibilities (F. Salas, personal communication, April, 13, 2013). Students who work, who are young parents, or who are financially responsible for other family members such as siblings or parents, are considered adults regardless of their age. In other words, it is the level of responsibility that defines a students' candidacy for school. Not surprisingly, this commitment to young, working people with significant familial responsibilities makes the school particularly attractive to students who were unsuccessful in conventional public schools and, by 2007, 70% of the students enrolled in the program had previous to attending BI experienced failure or exclusion from the official school system (Lozano et al. 2009).

The Short and Important Legacy of BI to Education in Argentina

The BI has been a very important educational avenue for the community. The school has graduated approximately 250 students since 2004. In 2013, there were 200 students registered in the school with an equal distribution of males and females. The attendance rate is about 30% higher and the dropout rate about 30% lower than in other schools, including private schools. Teachers' attendance rate is 95% (Quintana 2008). Additionally, students' testimonies indicate they feel academically and personally supported. In the words of one of the students, "It was very scary for me to get back to school last year. I thought that, again, in the middle of the school year I would feel frustrated and say 'I can't, I am not smart enough.' Suddenly, I notice that I am saying 'What happened?' Here I am accepted the way I am. They understand me, support me and help me; they don't let go of my hand and abandon me" (Cabrera 2012, p. 4.).

The national and international recognition achieved by the BI in such a short history, however, has to be credited to the pioneering role of the school in creating an alternative model of education that contests traditional education by challenging neoliberal forms of production (Cabrera 2012; Jaramillo et al. 2011; Vieta 2014).

Paraphrasing Giroux (2004), the BI “offers alternatives to an age of profound pessimism, reclaims an ethic of compassion and justice, and struggles for those institutions in which equality, freedom, and justice flourish as part of the ongoing struggle for a global democracy” (p. 39). This model rejects the taken for granted separation between the school and the community. As such, the BI is a part of the community and students are expected to support public actions that benefit the community and the workers. This alternative model to education also advances more democratic practices in schools. Because of its organization as a cooperative and its commitment to horizontal decision-making and solidarity, the school rejects individual leadership and all decisions regarding curriculum, the building, and even the school’s budget, are made by teachers and students during monthly assemblies. This is a very attractive element for potential students. Quintana (2008) explains that, about 60% of the students who registered when the BI first opened chose this school because they supported the idea of attending a school that functioned as cooperatively run by workers. Finally, and essentially, this alternative model of education refuses the ideological neutrality claimed by traditional schools. The BI openly acknowledges its commitment to the workers movement and to cooperativism and unapologetically redefines the student as a social subject with political agency (Quintana 2008).

For Jaramillo et al. (2011), this alternative educational model that originated within the larger social movement of recovered factories is characterized by what they term as critical pedagogy of recuperation. This concept conceives the educational, cultural and political struggles that take place in recovered enterprises as instances of resistance in which knowledge is recuperated (recovered) by workers and rewritten from the perspective of the workers. Importantly, this pedagogy re-locates the working class in the public sphere. As stated by these authors, “the very notion of recuperation implies a directed and protagonist movement to re-establish the presence of the working class in the public sphere. Central to this is an understanding that the presence of the working class in public activities is neither a privilege nor an entitlement. It is an expression of being and becoming within the larger optic of a developing critical citizenry” (p. 752). The BI shares this commitment to give public voice to the working class by recognizing students as workers and by understanding education as a site “to establish new relations and connections among action, theory and practice” (p. 752). For Jaramillo et al. the BI and the pedagogy of recuperation it symbolizes view students as “transforming a physical, social and intellectual space into a site of cultural production (...) Interpersonal relations guide instruction and curricula (rather than vice versa), solidifying the power or decision-making among the popular classes. Thus, the pedagogy of recuperation implies a way of organizing governance, of teaching/learning, and of defending the popular struggle for autonomy from private or state-led interference” (p. 753).

The promises of the new model of education and pedagogy articulated by the BI are evident in the rapid expansion of schools in recovery factories in the country (Cabrera 2012). The BI was the first school established in a recovered factory but

there are currently more than 40 *Bachilleratos Populares* in Argentina. This proliferation is indicative of the considerable growth of all the organizations involved in the creation of the school. In the last decade the MNER has consolidated its influence in Argentina and similar organizations have emerged in other Latin American countries. In 2005, for example, the MNER and representatives from 263 recovered companies in eight other countries met in Venezuela to coordinate efforts and to create strategies to lobby for support for recovered companies in the region. As the MNER expanded and as it continued to support recovered factories, the CEIP also needed to grow to fill the need for teachers in the schools established in these factories (Cabrera 2012). As a part of this process, in 2006, the CEIP and other organizations formally created the *Coordinadora de Bachilleratos Populares*, the organization that currently coordinates all schools that are associated with the CEIP (Colombari and Iorio 2012). Interestingly, the CEIP itself adopted the principles of the MNER and embraced the assembly as the forum for professional collaboration and for rethinking school practices. The symbiotal relationship between all these organizations is eloquently illustrated in the new initiative that IMPA is currently spearheading. The creation of the *Bachilleratos Populares* generated a need for teachers to be trained in adult education for cooperative school settings. In response to this demand, in April, 2013 the IMPA opened the *University of the Workers* (*Universidad de los Trabajadores* in Spanish) and started offering teacher education programs in math, biology, language and literature, and history.

All the *Bachillerato Populares* associated with the CEIP are administratively autonomous but share the main organizational and conceptual elements of the BI. All these schools, for example, have replaced the figure of the principal as manager with a group of faculty that collaboratively develops and implements the schools' educational project. Similarly, teachers in these schools work closely together and co-teach all their classes. The schools also share a political commitment to the working class since, "by virtue of being located in a worker-led, cooperative factory whose efforts extend into the broader community, the space of 'school' becomes a potential space for a social movement" (Jaramillo et al. 2011, pp. 752–753).

The expansion of the *Bachilleratos Populares* is an indisputable legacy of the collaborative nature of the work of IMPA, the MNER and the CEIP in conceptualizing the BI. The work of these schools in implementing an alternative model of education and a new pedagogy is also one of the most important educational promises when thinking of how education can respond to the current social challenges that neoliberalism presents globally. As Jaramillo et al. (2011) asserts, while the notion of critical pedagogy of recuperation has been inspired by the struggles in the Argentinean recovered factories and schools, it is "a transnational pedagogy or resistance, one that is multi-voiced, epistemologically decolonized and decolonizing, and that fosters oppositional and alternative spaces of reciprocity and struggle. It is a pedagogy that requires a commitment to new ways of being and becoming, to new forms of subjectivity and to the strategic and tactical imperatives necessary to build egalitarian forms of human sociability, expression, and production" (p. 755).

In Conversation

Rodríguez What elements of BI can help us to rethink our view of schools?

Mendez In my view, the BI offers us multiple ingredients to rethink our current assumptions about schools. The location of the BI in a factory challenges the common view that schools have to be physically isolated and pedagogically disconnected from other social struggles in the community. The BI helps us to understand schools as spaces within political contexts. It also helps us to think of schools as educational sites that can emerge and grow out of these political contexts and neighborhood struggles.

The BI also disputes the notion of schools as apolitical and as ideologically neutral. This school openly takes a political stand and considers the education of youth and adults a political right. Thus, it compels us to think of schools as places where we imagine and construct new political subjectivities. This perspective warns us about the illusion of political neutrality and offers us alternative ways to rethink what we understand as education for liberation. For the BI, it is its explicit political project that sustains all its innovative components such as the alternative organizational structure of the school as a cooperative, the democratic and collaborative practices epitomized in the central role of the assembly, and the inclusion of students' voices in the school's decision-making processes.

In the same breath, the BI teaches us that it is possible to contest traditional notions of schooling and to adopt non-hierarchical relations of power in schools, including in the developing and implementation of the curriculum. It helps us to imagine schools able to promote cooperation among social and political agents and associations, instead of reinforcing the competition between individuals and organizations typical of capitalist societies. The collaboration of IMPA, the MNER, and the CEIP in the creation and sustainment of the school is exemplary in this regard and can function as a road map for those of us who believe in the democratic responsibilities of the school.

Finally, the experience of the BI allows us to challenge the current process of curriculum standardization by incorporating student and teacher voices in all areas of the curriculum. The BI is a powerful example of the need to see teachers as engaged intellectuals capable of working collaboratively with other teachers and with their students in developing rich learning processes. In more concrete terms, the BI helps us envisioning more schools that reject traditional concepts of evaluation linked to control and discipline and that adopt evaluation strategies that promote and celebrate learning from a more democratic perspective.

Rodríguez What do you see as the main contribution of the BI to the current discourses in education and the possibility of reimagining public education?

Mendez I see the BI contributing to the task of reimagining public education in at least two ways.

First, at a time when the predominant discourse emphasizes the privatization of education, the experience of the BI represents a move toward the public. In the United States, the discourse of privatization is evident in the expansion of privately managed schools such as charter schools. The BI moves in the opposite direction.

It starts as a private space but with a strong public vocation that insistently argued for the need to see schools as a part of larger and public social movements that give voice to the socially disenfranchised.

Second, and very much related to this public vocation, I believe that one of the main contributions of the BI is to serve as a reminder that pedagogies, even liberatory pedagogies, originate in concrete historical contexts and, thus, have to prove their emancipatory nature in such contexts. The BI originated in the concrete struggle of recovered factories and its pedagogy, what Jaramillo et al. (2011) referenced above as a critical pedagogy of recuperation, articulated an understanding of education that integrated work, learning, and political agency. For the BI, reimagining public education was also imagining a new and historically responsible pedagogy and this process holds important lessons for all of us. Just as this school was able to create alternative ways of thinking about education, we could now envision other contexts and other communities empowering their students by engaging them in practices that do not isolate them from “the real world” but that help them to transform themselves and their contexts as they learn to become politically engaged social subjects.

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Chapter 8

Promoting Social and Political Change Through Pedagogy: Lorenzo Milani and the Barbiana School (Italy 1954–1967)

Almudena A. Navas Saurin

To mention Barbiana in Europe is to invoke images of a rural and remote school where education became synonymous with social transformation. Founded in 1954 by a very remarkable teacher, Father Lorenzo Milani, and in existence only until 1967 when he died of leukemia, Barbiana continues to be a living memory of an educational experience that charged schools with the responsibility of empowering working-class students. To many, Barbiana is still one of the best examples of the possibilities of critical pedagogy and of the liberatory power of education (Batini et al. 2014).

Nothing about Milani's early background predicted his later contribution to education. Born in 1923 in Tuscany to a non-religious and highly educated family, Milani was destined to be a part of the affluent class in postwar Italy and to have little contact with disenfranchised rural communities. "As a child, Milani's upbringing was cushioned by privilege, comfort, intellectual stimulation and bourgeois 'distinction' (Bourdieu 1984). His immediate social context was serviced by maids, a cook, a driver, a private tutor and a wet nurse" (Borg et al. 2013, p. 1). Much to the dismay of his parents, who were atheists and who married in the Catholic Church to protect Milani's Jewish mother against the anti-Semitic sentiment of the time, Milani decided to convert to Catholicism and to dedicate his life to the poor. He was ordained into the priesthood in 1947.

The environment of the school could not have been less suited for a pedagogical experiment of this caliber. The building that housed the school, today a pedagogical museum, was located in the small village of Saint Andrea di Barbiana in the Vicchio Mountains where the Florentine Curia had sent Father Milani as penance for his leftist views. There were no roads reaching this location. There was no light, running water, or telephone. Dispersed throughout several small villages in the mountains, most students had to walk for over an hour to attend school. This daily journey was particularly difficult in the winter when students endured snow or heavy winds.

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Yet, as soon as he arrived in Barbiana, Don Milani, as the students referred to him, established a school that, by most educational accounts, was the cradle of one of the most innovative and pedagogically interesting experiences of the twentieth Century (Borg et al. 2013; Mayo 2013; Streck 2008). Remarkably, considering that Milani was a priest, this was a non-denominational school open to all students, where the offspring of the local farmers learned, in the words of one of the former students, to “never bow their heads” to those who held power over them (Kleindienst 1994).

Barbiana’s Pedagogical Roots

If something typified Milani’s pedagogy at Barbiana, it was his sense of urgency on teaching poor rural students the academic knowledge that history had repeatedly denied them. He contended that, in the heavily economically polarized Italian society of the postwar-era, schools continued to marginalize disenfranchised students by failing to help them to bridge the gap between their daily experiences and the knowledge imparted in the classroom (Martí 1972). He further contended that schools were clearly class-based institutions that benefited children from affluent families. As he explained, “to the bourgeois child, a few of school hours are enough because his real school is at home with the conversations with his parents, with the books in his family’s library, with the collection of records, the Sunday fieldtrips, the vacation trips, a single room for himself (one lamp and one table), parents and siblings who help him with homework or even a private tutor... [...] For the poor child, all the hours outside school are hours of cultural impoverishment. There are no books or records in the house, only the last romance story bought by her sister and the ‘Sport Magazine’ bought by his older brother” (Milani 1966, p. 31) [my translation].

In Milani’s view, this was a situation that schools needed to remedy, and quickly. For him, poor students “had to overcome the centuries-long cultural gap that characterized less industrially or culturally developed areas, [to achieve] the knowledge that would allow them to reach social and economic autonomy as well as to contribute to the development of their environment” (Kleindienst 1994) [my translation], and schools were responsible for them achieving this goal. He reasoned that, in overcoming this historical gap, schools had no time to waste and should offer extended hours. He lived by this belief at Barbiana by keeping the school open 12 h a day, 365 days a year. As with most of his political and educational views, Milani’s endorsement of such an intense school schedule attracted criticism that claimed the extended hours to be oppressive to children. Milani, who never walked away from controversy, was adamant in rebuking this charge and in counterposing that his critics were classist hypocrites. In *Obedience is no Longer a Virtue*, a letter in which he defends conscientious objection as a right, he specifically responds to this critique and boldly replied to the bourgeoisie, “Would you also be outraged if these children were to continue working extended hours as they have before attending school,

working as many hours and days, and much more exhausted, just to provide wool and cheese to all of you living in the city? Who sacrifices these children's well being more, you or me?" (Milani 1966, p. 31) [my translation].

Milani also thought that schools should be free from the distraction of leisure. Convinced that schools needed to work harder with working-class students, Milani contended that leisure was an impediment to this goal. In his view, "the school was the goodness of the working class, leisure the ruin of the working-class" (Milani and Corzo 2004). This opposition to recreational activities in school was the basis of his well-known reproach to the Italian Communist Party and the Catholic Church, the two institutions that polarized political life in Italy at the time and that were the most concerned with the education of disenfranchised students. Milani contended that both organizations placed "more emphasis on entertainment, such as carnival balls [...] than on education, with a view to swelling membership in the PCI's case or winning souls in the case of the Catholic Church" (Mayo 2007, pp. 530–531). As Mayo (2013) explains, Milani's "austerity [was] based on the notion that working-class students need to work hard, shedding 'blood, sweat and tears', to acquire that which comes almost naturally to middle-class children (the 'figli di papà', daddy's children), through their cultural capital and *habitus*" (p. 6) [emphasis in original].

However, for Milani, the education of the sons and daughters of the Italian working-class was not only a matter of more and more austere education but, more importantly, of a *different kind* of education. For him, schools should educate for critical citizenship and, therefore, should equip these students with the language they would need to defend their rights as working-class citizens (Brown 1992; Corzo 1995; Martí 1972; Mayo 2013). It was in San Donato di Calenzano, his first post as a chaplain, that he tested the grounds for this proposition (Gesualdi et al. 2000).

San Donato di Calenzano was a newly industrialized City receiving a large number of rural immigrants. In his pastoral work with some of these families, Milani became keenly aware of the cultural changes they experienced when transitioning from a rural and self-sustained economy to laboring in the factories. He noticed that people in this context lacked the language to protect themselves against the abuses of the factory owners (Milani 1966, 1957). He was also distressed by schools' lack of understanding of the cultural adjustments these families were required to make and by the exclusionary processes by which schools categorized these students as "failures" and convinced them of their lack of ability (Guichot Reina 2008; Martí 1972). His observations were further substantiated in his own experience. All the students from affluent contexts in his graduating class, himself included, successfully completed their studies. In contrast, only four of the 22 working-class students had graduated (Martí 1972). Milani observed that "schools perpetuated class distinctions that were centuries old" (Brown 1992, p. 45) even when poor students succeeded and some of them eventually achieved positions of power. This argument was further developed in *Letters to a Teacher* (Alumnos de la Escuela de Barbiana 1975), a book of great political and educational significance in Europe written by some of the Barbiana students under Milani's supervision. In this text, Milani's students denounced schools' culturally alienating practices toward poor students by arguing that, "working-class and peasant-class people who made it through the

formal education system, against the odds, and entered parliament were often ‘em-bourgeoisied’ in the process” (Mayo 2013, p. 4).

For Milani, schools could reverse this process of exclusion only by explicitly placing the mastering of language, in this case Italian, at the center of the curriculum. At San Donato, Milani witnessed how poor people’s language when addressing professionals in the factories reproduced servant-master relationships (Brown 1992). He would further elaborate on this concern in *Pastoral Experiences*, a compilation of his personal reflections as a rural priest upon consciousness and obedience, wherein he argued that poor people’s lack of language dehumanized them and disabled them from understanding and, therefore, changing their position in the world. Based on these observations, he concluded that education and schools be charged with the responsibility of providing such understanding by offering students “the linguistic tools that would allow [workers] to defend themselves against the injustices, against the manipulation and indoctrination on the part of the powerful ones” (Guichot Reina 2008, p. 95). Milani was crystal clear, however, that schools’ ultimate aspiration should not be to teach poor students to talk with the voice of the powerful, but, rather to empower them to understand their own social experiences and the very processes by which their voices had been silenced (Guichot Reina 2008; Mayo 2007; Milani 1957, 1966).

This was, precisely, the goal he set for himself when opening San Donato’s Night School, a free school for the 14–25 years old sons and daughters of farmers and factory workers which prepared students for the basic school diploma. The school was intended to “give voice to poor people, a voice of their own, not [the voice] of the bourgeoisie, of the owners, of the dominant class” (Guichot Reina 2008, p. 95) [my translation]. For Milani, helping students to find this voice necessarily meant to master the Italian language. Thus, his teaching focused on lexis and language. As one of his students recounts, “he insisted on the fact that the only things us poor people needed was to improve our Italian...we would ask him to do arithmetics and technical drawing...Don Lorenzo started off at some of these things just to keep us happy and then he would get bored and spend an hour on one word; an insignificant word would open up a whole world” (Sessi 2008 as quoted by Batini et al. 2014, pp. 23–24).

However, Milani knew that the voices of the poor could emerge only if students’ interests and experiences were placed at the core of the learning process. Language, in his view, should be grounded in students’ experiences and should be a tool to express their thoughts about issues of concern to them (Martí 1972). Fridays at San Donato’s enshrined this principle. Milani reserved this day for lively debates and dialogues with numerous guest speakers on topics as diverse as astronomy, art, or colonialism as well as child labor, medicine, music, the death penalty and even religion (Batini et al. 2014). Milani wanted students to respond to the ideas discussed in these debates based upon their personal experiences. Thus, he required students to prepare themselves for these conversations and to critically explore the importance of these topics in their lives. Predictably, these discussions became heated and political, the main reason leading to the closing of the school only 6 years after it had opened. As the parish’s chaplain, Milani had worked under the protection of

the pastor, a person who never really understood his teaching methods but who had unconditionally supported him. With the pastor's passing in 1945, local political leaders and other *christian souls* concerned with Milani's controversial practices joined forces to terminate this educational experience (Martí 1972).

Milani in Barbiana: Developing a New Pedagogy

Those who expected Milani to withdraw from his radical pedagogical views were soon to be disappointed. Milani arrived in San Andrea di Barbiana, population of about 100 people, on December 6, 1954. The region was so remote that it had not even had a chaplain for the previous 15 years. Poverty and geographical isolation defined living conditions. These circumstances, however, did not deter Milani from establishing a school that is still revered in Europe and increasingly celebrated in the English-speaking world (Batini et al. 2014).

Establishing the School

Officially, Barbiana had a public school. It was located in an old shack and functioned as a single-room providing elementary education (1–5 grades). The school was hardly operative, though. The teacher lived far away and, very often, the harshness of the mountain weather precluded her from reaching the school. Farming obligations also prevented students from attending school consistently. If students managed to finish elementary school, furthering their education was almost impossible, as this option required relocation to the city, which most students could not afford (Martí 1972).

For Milani, there was no question that Barbiana needed a school. Indeed, he felt it was his duty as a priest to open one. As a priest who saw Catholicism as a vehicle toward a more just society through Catholicism, Milani's pedagogy was inspired in the Gospel and in his own process of conversion (Mayo 2013). He also wished the school to prepare students in their own encounter with God, something that, based on his own process of conversion, he believed could not be taught but must be voluntarily chosen. Despite his religious influences and goals as a priest, and based on his years at San Donato, Milani was convinced that mastering language was a precondition to understanding the scriptures and, ultimately, for people's comprehension of their own religious experiences (Guichot Reina 2008). Consequently, his intention when opening the school was to ratify the argument he had developed in his previous position at San Donato. As he worded it when talking about his prior post, "my school will not turn [students] into Christians... but it can turn them into men" (Milani 1957 as quoted in Batini et al. 2014, p. 23). Consistent with this goal, Milani established Barbiana as a non-denominational school. This is not to say that Milani relinquished religion altogether. Catholicism and the role of the Church in students'

lives were frequently topics of discussion, particularly when religious figures came to the school as guest speakers. The Gospels were also often used as a geographical or historical reference (Martí 1972). Unlike public schools at the time, however, religion was not treated as a separate subject; nor was religion taught to indoctrinate students (Batini et al. 2014). Significantly, it did not escape critical scrutiny either. Milani claimed that schools for the poor should furnish students with the language to critique any organization and to oppose any practice dehumanizing or manipulating them (Milani 1957, 1966). To the consternation of his superiors in the Church, he subjected religion to the same level of scrutiny.

Using the few resources at his disposal, the school was housed in the parish's rectory, a single room that eventually hosted almost 40 students, almost all of them males, studying elementary, secondary, and, in the last years, vocational education (Martí 1972; Kleindienst 1994). The walls in this space were filled by bookshelves holding books on diverse subjects such as for example, Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* or Gandhi's autobiography (Batini et al. 2014). In the few spaces between bookshelves, there were posters, maps, or other texts intended to inspire students to learn. The school had neither individual desks nor a blackboard. Milani believed that learning happened through the study of original sources, in this case, books, and in dialogue with others (Mayo 2007). Hence, for him traditional artifacts such as desks or chalkboards were not essential for teaching. In the summertime, classes took place outdoors. In the winter, students sat around the big tables forming a square shape around the chimney.

Curriculum and Pedagogy

Since Barbiana was not an accredited school, Milani worked without institutional pressure and could freely experiment with innovative pedagogies. Yet, Barbiana's students needed to take the annual national examinations required for students pursuing formal education outside officially recognized schools. To prepare students for these examinations, the curriculum at Barbiana covered the same subjects as other schools, including language (Italian), history, civics, natural sciences, Latin, geography, physical education, mathematics, and philosophy. To this compulsory curriculum, Milani added subjects such as theater, music, art, crafts, etc. (Alumnos de la Escuela de Barbiana 1975; Martí 1972). To teach some of these subjects, over the years Milani recruited teachers in the surrounding areas who volunteered a few hours on a regular basis.

If the curriculum was similar to other schools, Milani's teaching was significantly different in many ways. First and foremost, Milani's pedagogy reflected a preferential treatment to language in all areas of the curriculum and school activities (Brown 1992; Corzo 1995; Mayo 2007, 2013). "If one would want to reduce the complex teaching of Lorenzo to a single idea, it would have to say that his whole program concentrated on giving the word to the poor, giving back to them the dignity of being talking subjects, recovering them from their frightful obvious

linguistic inferiority” (De Falco 1978 as quoted by Brown 1992, p. 46). Consistent with this goal and expanding on his work at San Donato, Milani’s pedagogy focused on the teaching of Italian, and he infused reading and writing throughout the entire curriculum (Martí 1972). Two activities in particular illustrate the core elements of this pedagogy.

The first of them was the study and discussion of the newspaper. Every afternoon, Milani would read the news aloud and would thoroughly explain the meaning of those words unfamiliar to students. This reading would be followed by a detailed discussion of the editors’ choice of words and the contrasting ideologies that such choices expressed in different newspapers. When the news presented international conflicts such as the Cuban-USA crisis in the early 1960s, Milani would entice students to learn more about subjects such as history or mathematics by researching the origins of the conflict, the history and culture of these countries, or the contrasting political nature of their regimes (Kleindienst 1994). The second was preparing students to dialogue and to respond to people presenting a variety of ideas to them. Emulating the practice he had initiated at San Donato and building on his large network of friends and acquaintances, Milani hosted guest speakers regularly. Among those visiting Barbiana were personalities such as South African government officials, Protestant ministers, New York’s union leaders, and German workers. Similar to his method in San Donato, Milani carefully prepared Barbiana students for these visits by asking them to research the topic to be presented and to generate questions for the presenters. Many times, students were so engaged in the discussion that the seminars lasted all day. If the guest speaker were a mathematician, for example, students would dedicate all day to studying and discussing the mathematical concepts involved in the presentation (Kleindienst 1994).

Even when not explicitly focusing on language, most of the school’s activities involved reading and writing. As outlined by Brown (1992), Milani’s pedagogy followed three rules: “never fail anyone; provide full-time schools to those who appear slow; give a sense of purpose to those who are fooling around” (p. 45). These principles led Milani to allow time in the curriculum for students to pursue the individualized education paths that reflected their personal interests. Reading and writing were carefully crafted in this process (Kleindienst 1994). One of his former students with an interest in machines recounts that Milani, capitalizing on the student’s passion for engines, had encouraged him to spend as much time as he wished assembling and dismantling mechanical objects. When this student encountered difficulties he could not solve on his own, Milani provided him with books to look for a solution. Once the problem was solved, Milani skillfully lured him into expressing his thoughts through language by asking him to write about the problem, about what he had tried, what pieces he had used and why, and how he succeeded in reaching his solution.

Reading and writing was also a part of the travel abroad program Milani established to tackle the physical isolation that, in his view, deepened the cultural disadvantages of the students in Barbiana’s remote rural setting. On the strength of his extensive network of acquaintances, Milani persuaded students at 15 years-of-age to travel to neighboring countries such as England, Germany, France, or Morocco

for the purpose of learning another language and experiencing other cultural contexts. Milani's friends in these countries served as host families and took care of students once they arrived at their destination. Students traveled in pairs and were meticulously prepared for this experience and for the kind of situations they were likely to encounter. They were expected to look for a job and to survive on their own means during the weeks they remained abroad. Believing that writing was a crucial tool for students to interpret their experiences and their learning, Milani required these students to write letters to the school at least twice a week. "When his illness got worse and his 'sons and daughters' around the world were too many to write to separately, he thought up the idea of the circular letter. The first one was titled *Circular Letter from the Republic of Barbiana to All of its Diplomatic Representatives Abroad. Their Offices*" (Batini et al. 2014, p. 36) [emphasis in original].

A second element that differentiated Barbiana from other schools at the time was Milani's conviction that learning was a collective rather than individual process (Mayo 2013). For him, students' works should benefit the group and not just the individual students. The letters he required students to write when abroad provide a poignant example of this educational principle. The letters were read aloud and discussed in class to ensure that students at Barbiana benefited from the knowledge and experiences of the student travelers. Thus, this collaborative spirit informed all other aspects of school life. Chief among them was the practice of mentoring. At Barbiana, older students were expected to teach younger ones, and Milani allotted plenty of time during the day for this purpose. Also crucially important was Milani's insistence that the lesson would not continue until all students grasped the meaning of the subject at hand. As the student authors of *Letters to a Teacher* relate, "whoever lacked the basics, who was slow or unmotivated, felt that he was the favorite one. He was welcome just as you'd welcome the first in class. It seemed as if the school existed solely for him. Until he understood, the others did not move ahead" (Borg et al. 2013, p. 37).

These two important pedagogical elements, a focus on language and on the collective dimensions of learning, became even more germane to Milani's pedagogy when combined together. This was the case of the method known as *collective writing* wherein reading and writing were practiced in collaboration. Students were required to engage in this exercise when communicating their perspectives. In some cases fictional characters in books or plays became the basis of that perspective, or in other cases that perspective emerged when clarifying their group's position on a particular topic such as, for example, the critical information presented by some of the guest speakers whom Milani invited to Barbiana (Guichot Reina 2008). In a carefully planned sequence, Milani would first require students to carry a little notebook at all times and to write the ideas that may occur to them. After thinking about the topic at hand, the notes were to be placed together on the table in class. Those entries with similar ideas would be piled together representing future chapters. In the next step, piles were divided into separate ideas indicating different paragraphs. A discussion on the order of paragraphs would follow. A skeleton of the chapters and paragraphs would be built and the piles would be reorganized accordingly. The skeleton would be copied and a subsequent group discussion would assess the need for cutting unnecessary ideas or adding new ones. A new copy of the skeleton would

be made and students, individually, would look for repeated words and ideas, difficult terms, complicated sentences etc. Once agreed upon, the text would be given to a person unfamiliar with the topic to be read aloud in order to discern the difficulties it may present for future readers. The process would conclude with the incorporation of those suggestions from the reader that students thought could enhance the manuscript.

Relationship with the Community

Milani's involvement with the community was also a very unique element of his pedagogy. Because his urgency for farmworker students to acquire the academic knowledge that the affluent classes easily obtained at home, Milani convinced families to send their children to school every single day, even when they were needed on the farms. He also urged them to send their daughters, a request met with more resistance by families because in rural contexts women's education was not considered as important as men's (Mayo 2013). Milani also frequently visited students' homes and relentlessly cajoled parents to keep their children in school or to allow them to pursue other educational opportunities such as traveling abroad (Kleindienst 1994). Milani also involved the entire community in other initiatives such as the construction of a small pool, as well as the canal that supplied its water from a neighboring river. This project occurred when Milani realized that students had an irrational fear of water. For him, this fear was simply one more sign of the students and their community's cultural disenfranchisement; thus, he presented the pool and canal to parents as an educational issue the school should address.

Milani was also attentive to what parents perceived as educational needs. Most families in the area were afraid that the education students received at the school would not prepare them professionally. To ease their concerns, in 1956 Milani started a vocational educational program and enlisted a local mechanic and a local carpenter to teach their trades as subjects (Martí 1972). This program was not just skill-based but was informed by the same pedagogical principles implemented in the other subjects (Batini et al. 2014; Martí 1972). Milani directed the instructors to permit students to experiment and to learn from their mistakes. When teaching to weld a chair, for example, Milani asked the instructors to wait until students would actually sit on it to see if the chair had been properly crafted. If the chair collapsed, Milani would use this situation as a learning space asking students to think about the possible inaccuracies in the welding process that may have led to the collapse.

Milani's Pedagogy and Legacy

Barbiana's legacy is both political and educational. As a Catholic priest often at odds with the positions of the Church, Milani arrived at Barbiana already a controversial political figure. This reputation was further magnified during his time at the school

with his publication of such writings as *Letter to Military Chaplains* and *Letters to a Teacher*. In the former, Milani publicly expressed his disagreement with the army chaplains' condemnation of conscientious objection as an insult to the country. The latter was narrated through two fictional characters. One of them, Gianni, who mirrored the poor, rural context of Barbiana and represented "the low-socio-economic status students who have been pushed out by the education system and forced into internalizing a complex of inferiority and low self-worth, an education system that did not respect their culture, an education system that was at war with the poor" (Borg et al. 2013, p. 12). The second, Pierino, "represent[ed] the privileged students who are rewarded and promoted by the education system" (Borg et al. 2013, p. 12). This book documenting and denouncing the exclusionary educational practices that marginalized poor students eventually became one of the leading texts in the Italian student movement of 1968 and was translated into English in 1970, only 3 years after its publication in Italian and the same year that the English version of Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was issued (Batini et al. 2014).

Educationally, Barbiana has become a powerful example of a pedagogy that locates the hope for social transformation in the collective rather than solely in the individual. The school's practices aimed at the construction of a collective consciousness about class by which students could become increasingly aware of their experiences as peasants and become increasingly empowered through their growing awareness. In this sense, Milani's pedagogy illustrates John Dewey's belief that "education is a regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness; and that the adjustment of individual activity on the basis of this social consciousness is the only sure method of social reconstruction" (Dewey and Archambault 1974, p. 437). By embracing learning as a part of a collective consciousness, Barbiana implemented a class-based pedagogy that contrasts with those educational positions that place the power of transformation in an individual removed from his or her social context. As Mayo (2013) indicates, "Milani [...] believed in a directive form of education. Allowing his students to indulge in the alternative *laissez-faire* pedagogy would have been a case of utter irresponsibility on Milani's part, given the age of the students at Barbiana and Milani's concern for their future in a society where knowledge is power" (p. 14) [emphasis in original]. Mayo further echoes Milani's warning regarding the ideological dangers of those methodologies that imagine the individual in a vacuum when he advised: "teachers would do well to heed this before lapsing into 'romanticised' versions of 'child-centred' learning" (p. 14).

In Europe, Barbiana has been the subject of several educational analyses (Corzo 2007; Guichot Reina 2008; Mayo 2007, 2013; Martí 1972). Its pedagogical views have also lived in the spirit of organizations such as the *Movimientos de Renovación Pedagógica* [Movements for Pedagogical Renewal] and the *Movimiento de Educadores Milanianos* [Association of Milanian Educators] in Spain. Yet, some educational theorists suggest that the legacy of the school can be best assessed in relation to its contribution to critical pedagogy (Borg et al. 2013; Guichot Reina 2008; Mayo 2007, 2013; Streck 2008). For these theorists, Barbiana is an example of the power of transformative education when working with disenfranchised students. In Giroux's words, as quoted in Batini et al. (2014), "the Barbiana school contributes

to the history of critical pedagogy as a radical example concerning how to provide space for ‘voice and empowerment’” (p. 81).

Mayo (2007, 2013) and Streck (2008) further contend that Milani’s view of education shares important similarities with Paulo Freire’s, and that such similarities highlight some of the most defining elements of the Barbiana school. While there is no evidence that they ever crossed paths and there are no references to each other in their work, Mayo explains (2007), for example, that both Freire and Milani were committed to social justice and saw schools as sites of contestation. Mayo further identifies the notion of learning as a collective process. In Barbiana, this notion was represented by the “I care” motto written in English and hung upon the classroom’s wall. Milani had chosen this slogan in opposition to the “I couldn’t care less” mantra chanted by fascism and to remind his students that learning was always a collective responsibility. By grounding his pedagogy on this motto, Barbiana “provided a learning space that affirmed the collective dimensions of learning in contrast to the dominant compulsory school that promoted a notion of citizenship predicated on the ideology of competitive individualism so endemic to capitalist social relations” (p. 540). As with Freire, Milani also insisted on the “*collective* dimensions of knowledge” (p. 539) [emphasis in original] and understood dialogue as a main tool to engage with such dimension. Milani thought that it was only through dialogue that people could create the knowledge leading to actions informed by common interests (Guichot Reina 2008). But, for him, there was no dialogue if there was no shared language, as the emphasis on language at Barbiana illustrates.

Streck (2008) identifies some additional similarities between Freire and Milani that, in his opinion, establish these two authors as two of the most important educational figures of the last century. For both of them, educators’ work is prophetic and testimonial. Streck argues that what grants pedagogies their revolutionary nature is not the methodologies they use but, rather, the ethical and political options on which they are grounded. Both Milani and Freire believed that teachers committed to social justice should also opt for the poor. In their opinion, they should be witnesses of injustices and advocate social actors accountable for remedying them. As reflected in *Letters to a Teacher*, Milani and his students believed that failures in education should not be accredited to the students but to the school. In their words, as quoted by Streck, “if education happens as an encounter of people as human beings, as whole persons, school failure and dropouts cannot be considered ‘natural’” (p. 246) [my translation]. In Milani’s view, teachers were to take responsibility for this encounter and to conduct their teaching inspired not by the question of “how to teach” but, rather, by the prospect of who we are when teaching. Milani articulates this argument by stating that, “a liberating and democratic education does not belong to the world of ‘having’; it belongs to the world of ‘being’” (Mayo 2007, pp. 534–535) and by defining the latter as a political space that “entailed having clear ideas about social and political issues... the mark of those who educate for a critical citizenship” (p. 535). Additionally, Streck (2008) notes that Milani and Freire also shared a deep respect for the concept of the Other and for his/her knowledge. Transformative education for both of them was never about *saving* disenfranchised students but about providing them with tools for social empowerment.

Finally, Streck calls attention to the transformative power of language shared by both authors, an underlying assumption that Milani conveys when stating that “what separates an engineer from a technician... is not their technical knowledge as much as their language” (p. 251) [my translation].

As a corollary to these similarities, both Milani and Freire rejected education as ideologically neutral and reclaimed teaching as a political act (Corzo 2007; Martí 1972). When examined in light of this claim, Barbiana’s legacy appears as particularly relevant for education today because it reminds us that teaching always involves taking sides, and that the crucial question for educators today still is: “on whose side I am when I teach/act?” (Mayo 2007, p. 531).

In Conversation

Rodríguez The Barbiana school implemented a kind of methodology that we would now refer to as constructivist or child-centered. What do you think differentiates Barbiana from other positions within this methodological perspective?

Navas Many times constructivist or child-centered methodologies have become apolitical educational propositions that equate students and/or community participation with democratic pedagogy. They often reduce participation to an individual act, emphasizing the role of the individual but forgetting the collective construction of the community’s goals.

Milani’s pedagogy, however, is living testimony to the political nature of transformative pedagogies. For Milani, learning was a collective act, never an individual one. Milani’s pedagogy is also grounded on class struggle. For him, this struggle was neither outdated nor unable to generate thought and actions. Rather, Milani capitalized on the notion of class struggle to teach his students that the world is theirs, not only as a right but also as an obligation to become knowledgeable so they could transform their reality to make sure that it was collectively constructed.

Constructivist perspectives that lack the explicit goal of social and class transformation sustain the status quo that positions some groups as dominators and others as subjects. To make participation real, schooling should change the students’ social consciousness when they enter school. This change is only possible from a perspective of thought and praxis anchored in a notion of the collective that acknowledges the deep social complexities in which this term acquires its real meaning.

Rodríguez What do you think is the Milani’s main pedagogical contribution to our attempt to (re)imagine public education from a more equitable perspective?

Navas As suggested in my answer to the previous questions, I believe that one of Milani’s most important contributions to education is his understanding of education as a political act grounded in the notion of class. Today, we tend to think that class no longer exists or that this notion is no longer fundamental in our analysis of education. We feel comfortable placing pedagogical knowledge at the center of our conversations on educational change, but we often forget that pedagogy should

always be at the service of social transformation and that class is still a necessary element of such transformation. Not to take class into consideration is, in Milani's view, shortchanging working-class students and communities by continuing to favor those who occupy dominant positions.

I also believe that Milani contributes to our educational imagination by reminding us of the critical role that literacy should play in students' lives. Milani's proposition is that language always conceals social relations of power and that, therefore, this is a precious tool that schools should use to empower students. Most of the time, we either treat language as just another academic subject or we think about it as a way to increase students' functional literacy. Thus, schools, particularly those serving students in impoverished communities, usually deliver unsophisticated knowledge that tells students very little about who they are or about how they can negotiate the relations of power in which they live. For Milani, however, schools have the social responsibility of exposing students to language in all its social complexity. Similar to Freire, Milani reminds us that reading the word is, fundamentally, about reading the world. In my view, with this proposition Milani encourages us to reimagine the relationship between language and social equality in education and, consequently, to envision schools that acknowledge the transformative potential of this relationship as the very core of the process of learning.

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Chapter 9

Cifteler, the First Village Institute (Turkey 1937–1954)

Gokce Gokalp

In the history of Turkish Education, the one type of public school that has made its mark on the twentieth century is the Village Institutes. They were created in 1940 and closed down in 1954. While short-lived, the experience of these institutes still constitutes a major educational reference in the country today (Ortas 2005). The accomplishments of these secondary-level, five-year boarding schools located in rural areas are also widely recognized. At a time when 80% of the population lived in rural areas, when the rate of illiteracy was very high, and when schools of education produced only a quarter of the teachers needed (Seren 2008), the Village Institutes trained 15,000 teachers, about half of the total number of teachers in Turkey by the mid 1950s. The institutes are also known for their contribution to the economic growth and the democratization of the Turkish villages during this time.

Built in 1937, Cifteler preceded the official establishment of these schools in 1940, and became the first of the 21 Village Institutes in place by the time this program was dismantled. Thus, it was the site of pedagogical innovation and a model to be disseminated to other schools later, as well as the embodiment of the democratic principles embraced by the newly founded Turkish Republic. The Republican People's Party (henceforth RPP), the political force governing the country since the establishment of the republic in 1923 until the mid-1940s, believed that the road to a modern, economically strong, and secular nation rested in significantly raising the education level of its people (Cakiroglu and Cakiroglu 2003). Cifteler Village Institute, as well as subsequent institutes, was created with the explicit purpose of achieving this goal in rural communities. It was also created according to the party's belief that the Village Institutes would help spread the new national and democratic identity that represented the country's transformation into a republic from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire (Arayıcı 1999; Akyuz 2009).

Because the Village Institutes targeted the education of villagers at a time of profound political changes and limited economic resources, Cifteler was the first of these schools to implement the three main educational principles germane to this experience. First, the school intended to raise the less than 10% literacy rate among villagers by providing its students with five more years of study in addition to the 5 years of elementary education at the time (Seren 2008). Second, grounded

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in the country's need for modernization, the school pursued economic development. Until the establishment of the republic, villagers had little access to national resources. The new government believed that educating villagers on the best agricultural methods would help rural communities make better use of these resources and help them develop a sense of independence. Cifteler, therefore, was intended to be a place for economic production where new agricultural and technical skills were applied. The third goal was to promote a new kind of citizen for the republic. As a newly developing democracy, the Village Institutes were to convince the villagers of the importance of their participation in a secular, modern republic by embracing more participatory practices. Accordingly, Cifteler served as a living example of a democratic institution where students participated in the decision-making process and internalized the democratic values that they would later share with other villagers (Arayıcı 1999).

Education in the New Republic

The story of Village Institutes can best be described as a quest for modernity of a republic that was born from the remnants of the old Ottoman Empire. In 1923, Turkey became a republic "after a struggle against foreign powers and an internal revolution which substituted a republican form of government for the existing Ottoman-Islamic theocracy" (Kazamias 1966, p. 117). The establishment of this regime led to radical political and social changes that sought to make Turkey a Western nation. This political transformation was galvanized by the new constitution approved in 1924, which formally replaced the Islamic theocracy with a secular national republic that instituted an elected national assembly, an industrialized and planned economy, and a state system of secular school, as well as participation of all members of the state in politics with emphasis on knowledge and scientific thinking (Kazamias 1966). This political transition was led and consolidated by the RPP, a party that firmly believed that the road to modernization necessarily required the secularization of public institutions, including schools. As Kazamias (1966) explained, modernization for Turkey meant transforming Ottoman Islamic institutions, concepts, and ways of life into that of a secular, constitutional republic.

The secularization of national institutions was not an entirely new proposition. During the nineteenth century, the power of the Ottoman Empire started to decline due to limitations imposed by the Islamic theocratic government still grounded on an economic system of bureaucratic feudalism that privileged foreign investment and that used primitive agricultural methods. Both primary schools and colleges were governed by the rules of Islam, and there was a sharp contrast between urban and rural areas (Kazamias 1966). Many people at this time blamed the superstitious way of thinking nurtured by the rules of Islam for this decline and identified the lack of secular education as the main reason for the regression of the empire (Celenk 2009). Attempting to change this situation, but having limited impact, the empire went through a renovation period between 1839 and 1876 that emphasized

the importance of science over religion and led to the establishment of a modern western educational system. Religious schools continued to operate with their religious curriculum creating, by default, a dual educational structure where religious and public schools depended on two different ministries. Some authors argue that it was, indeed, the conflicts brought by this dual system, along with the military mistakes of the Ottoman Empire during World War I that created the climate for the establishment of the Turkish Republic and for the support of a secular democracy that saw freedom of religion and science, and freedom of thought as protected rights (Celenk 2009).

The unsuccessful attempt during the last 50 years of the Ottoman Empire to modernize the country through education led the Republican People's Party to create and prioritize a strong national and secular education system. This was a major concern for the founder of the Republic, Atatürk, who firmly believed that education was an important agent for the transformation from a traditional Islamic way of living into a modern society (Gök 2007). To achieve this goal, however, the country faced major challenges. First, the country lacked a centralized education system to channel educational policies. Additionally, the educational structure in the villages, where most of the population lived at the time, was highly deficient and the educational experience of rural students was far removed from the reality of their communities (Arayıcı 1999). School attendance was nominal. By 1927, 89% of a total population of 13.5 million was illiterate, with this rate being 94% in the villages. The country was also struggling with poverty. Only 5000 of 35,000 villages had a school at this time (Seren 2008). Adding to these difficulties was the scattered nature of the rural population and the scarcity of teachers.

The government tried to address these problems in multiple ways. Several laws, such as the Law of Unification of Instruction, were approved which pursued the creation of a strong and unified education system, aiming to centralize the education system and emphasize secular ideology (Gunduz 2009). In addition, the alphabet was changed from Arabic to Latin to address illiteracy. This change made it much easier for students to learn to read and write since schools aligned the alphabet used in the spoken language with the one now used as the method of instruction. The government further believed that for the development of Turkey's new citizenship identity, education serving as an agent for causing social and cultural change was essential (Gök 2007). Thus, the new government engaged in an active quest to develop the most appropriate education system to achieve these goals and invited renowned international scholars such as John Dewey and Dr. Alfred Kuhne to examine the educational system inherited from the Ottoman Empire, and to provide possible solutions (Celenk 2009; Gunduz 2009). The creation of the Village Institutes was supported by these international figures. Dewey's suggestion to create "a school at each workplace and a workplace at each school" (Varlı 2008), for example, was particularly influential in rethinking the role of schools in the new republic. It highlighted a key component for achieving economic development in the new society Turkey intended to become. This suggestion also validated the position of some Turkish scholars such as Fuat Gunduzalp who had already advocated for a separate training process for those teachers willing to work in rural schools (Altunya 2010).

While the government welcomed the contributions of these scholars, the notion of the Village Institutes, as it was eventually implemented, can be attributed mostly to Ismail Hakki Tonguc, the general manager of primary level education from 1935 to 1946. As a person from a poor rural family himself who attended teaching school through a scholarship, Tonguc was able to think of the Village Institutes as a solution for two major problems: the lack of trained teachers and the lack of economic resources to supply village schools with adequate infrastructure (Altunya 2010). By 1935 there was a need for 40,000 teachers in the villages but the number of trained teachers was only one quarter of that number. Additionally, the school buildings were so worn-down that they could barely be called schools (Altunya 2010). Tonguc deeply believed in a democratic society made up of smart, freed individuals who were active participants of the society. In his view, only people who have been made conscious through an emancipating education could protect their rights as well as their country (Altunya 2010). He felt the purpose of education should be to awaken the awareness of being a citizen of a republic. If the villagers would reach this consciousness, no force would be able to exploit them and their rights would always be protected. Tonguc saw rural education as a fundamental need for the new republic and believed that the failure of past attempts to solve the village's educational problems was because the people in charge of these initiatives were unfamiliar with the realities of village life (Altunya 2010).

For Tonguc, the Village Institutes would also solve the problem of trying to create a strong national educational system that focused particularly on rural areas with the stripped national budget available for this project (Arayıcı 1999). Tonguc proposed that schools were to be built by the villagers they served. He also thought that they could become self-sustained through the practical work they generated (Arikan 2012). In his view, these schools should also follow the productive model of the villages, so they were to provide education that would contribute to the community and help villages to prosper economically (Arikan 2012). Tonguc referred to this model of schools as "education within work, for production." Additionally, and because of the lack of teachers who understood the harsh realities of rural life, he believed that these schools were to provide trained teachers who were from the villages and understood what it meant to be a villager.

First Steps Toward Establishment of Village Institutes

The Village Institutes were not the first attempt to address the shortage of teachers in rural areas. In 1926, the RPP had established the Village Teacher Training Schools. Unlike regular teacher training institutions at the time, which trained mostly urban teachers, these three-year schools were intentionally designed to prepare teachers to live in the villages and incorporated both occupational and general knowledge into their curriculum. Graduates of the schools would be hired as village teachers. Despite this clear intention, this experiment was unsuccessful for many reasons. There was a lack of teachers experienced in rural life who could teach the agricultural

training and other applied courses in these programs (Ergun 2008). The number of teachers trained in these schools was insufficient to address the large teacher shortage in the villages (Kirby 2010). These schools also worked with a deficit model which assumed that the low level of economic production in the villages stemmed from villagers' lack of knowledge. They did not consider the possibility that it was due to the lack of knowledge of the educated elite and the teachers trained in these schools about the realities of village life. Finally, the Village Teacher Training Schools were very costly, which prevented the spread of this education project throughout the country and contributed to their closing in 1933 (Ergun 2008).

Despite this unsuccessful attempt, Tonguc's vision for the Village Institutes as economically self-sustained and intimately connected to the village life became a very attractive proposition. As he envisioned them, the institutes would train teachers from and for the villages. This would reduce the financial burden of education for the state by providing modern production tools and by teaching prospective educators effective agricultural strategies that could secure their economic survival (Atakul 2008). Tonguc's biggest departure from the Village Teacher Training Schools was the perspective that teaching villagers also meant learning from them. The education-for-production philosophy that inspired the Village Institutes meant that the education in these schools should be relevant to the lives of students. They could apply themselves to this work as a way to achieve economic production in the community. This philosophy was also pertinent to the teachers. They were paid a low salary and would have to make their earnings from the crops they would produce on the small pieces of land the government would give them (Erdem 2008). Tonguc imagined that the success of these schools would depend almost exclusively on the collective efforts of the teachers, students, administrators, and villagers. This way, these schools would not require much government support but they would be able to produce all the resources required for the survival of the community (Altunya 2010). In his view, this philosophy of education-within-work would also help the villages prosper.

One of the major difficulties in materializing Tonguc's vision was finding educators working in traditional schools who were willing to teach at the Village Institutes. Initially, Tonguc selected literate young men, who had already fulfilled their military duty, to serve as temporary teachers. Even though he provided them with a 4 month teacher training program, this was not a lasting solution. The young men lacked the academic knowledge to teach village children beyond practical occupations and, consequently, to further the educational opportunities of these children. Searching for more capable teachers, in the early 1940's they selected teachers not according to their formal level of education but from those instructors working in vocational schools who were expert craftsmen (Atakul 2004). The goal was finding professionals who loved their job, were willing to adapt to village life, and were committed to modernizing the villages in which they worked (Sagdic 2011). With these new criteria, only one-third of all teachers graduated from two-year colleges and one-third of these educators were graduates of technical high schools. Most of the others were graduates of arts, construction, and architecture institutes. Additionally, some teachers were graduates of middle schools of agriculture or local professionals and craftsmen interested in working in the schools (Seren 2008).

First Village Institute of Turkey: Cifteler Village Institute

Cifteler, the first Village Institute, opened its doors on October 1937 in two locations, Mahmudiye and Hamidiye, in the city of Eskisehir, Central Anatolia. The Ministry of Agriculture provided 730 acres of land for each of these locations. Cifteler was selected as the site for the school because of the proximity of the Seydisuyu River, and because the county was a productive agricultural area. Additionally, most people living in this region were immigrants who valued education and were law-abiding, open-minded individuals. By choosing this location, the institute intended to secure the success of the school by recruiting healthy, intelligent, and industrious boys and girls from nearby villages (Seren 2008). Altunya (2010) identifies the opening of this first village institute in this particular location as the first step taken by the Ministry of Education towards preparing high-quality teachers. It explicitly intended to educate these students to become future teachers.

In the spirit that has inspired the creation of the Village Institutes, Cifteler's main pedagogical principle was that teaching activities should be work-based (Seren 2008). The school held true to this principle from the very beginning. Because the school started to function when the buildings were only partially constructed, teachers and students, with the help of the villagers, had to almost build everything from scratch. The school took a student-centered approach, proposing that knowledge is meaningful when students are actively involved in their own learning (Ergul 2008). This engagement, with learning under the premise of learning by doing, was particularly important to achieve the school's goals of increasing the economic production and self-sufficiency of the villagers.

Pedagogy

Prior to the establishment of Cifteler, teaching pedagogies in rural areas were not concerned with addressing the productive needs of the villagers (Karaomerlioglu 1998). Most of the schools' work was only directed to teach villagers reading and writing, skills that were easily forgotten since most people did not use them for years. Karaomerlioglu (1998) explained that, until the establishment of the Village Institutes, the secondary education curriculum did not include practical or managerial skills. Thus, they supported the suggestions of foreign scholars like Dewey and Kuhne to teach these skills in relation to production (Arayıcı 1999). In particular, Ismail Hakki Baltacioglu, a well-known Turkish scholar who participated in the foundation of the Institutes, emphasized the importance of teaching production techniques and argued for schools being directly involved in the economic life. He believed in making real-life situations central to the education system.

The Village Institutes resolved to address the need for productive skills by making work-education the center of their educational philosophy (Uygun 2008). Tonguc referred to this concept as "education-for-work" or "education-for-production" since it took into consideration the practical needs of the villagers to increase

economic production and to achieve sustainability (Cakiroglu and Cakiroglu 2003). Because of the explicit goal of the institutes to educate a new kind of citizen, this notion of learning by implementing practical skills to increase production was coupled with the notion of learning by doing proposed by Dewey and Turkish scholars in the hopes of creating more active thinkers (Uygun 2008). The inclusion of these two elements signaled a crucial change in pedagogy in the country. Despite the new republic's efforts to make education more accessible to all by opening more state-based schools and community centers all over the country, it was not until the establishment of the Village Institutes that school pedagogy became an effective tool in teaching villagers to become the educated and culturally developed citizens needed by the new democratic regime (Bilir 2003). The Village Institutes expected to achieve this goal by implementing a pedagogy that provided villagers with practical skills to improve their material lives, and, equally important, by teaching the democratic principles of collaboration and problem solving. When students learned to produce goods in schools and build their own schools, for example, they also learned the value of cooperation by helping to build schools in neighboring villages. This emphasized the importance of protecting all moral and material national and historical values they created through this participation with others. In essence, it was this participation in building the new republic that helped the process of democratization and made villagers aware of their right to participate in governing the country (Bilir 2003).

Being the first village institute, Cifteler intended to present the principles of education for work and learning by doing as a pedagogical model for the other institutes to be opened later (Celik and Bayrak 2011). To this end, the school focused its methodology on problem solving and economic production and presented students with a problem/solution to which they could apply the skills and knowledge they had just learned (Kirby 2010). The school structure that sustained this methodology imitated the productive conditions of the villages and included an arts and crafts studio, classrooms, stable, hen coop, garden, and play area for children used by student-teachers to practice and apply their teaching skills. As envisioned by Tonguc, by teaching students to raise crops and preparing them to produce the materials they would need when assigned to teach in a village after completing their program, students were also given opportunity to learn about agriculture and develop teaching and production materials. Through these activities, students learned to work with and for their own community, and value the consumption of community-produced goods (Arayıcı 1999).

Curriculum

There was no standard curriculum that all Village Institutes applied. Rather, the curriculum at each institute was developed according to the needs and conditions of the particular village. In Cifteler, half of the curriculum, 22 h a week, was dedicated to what was known as cultural courses. These courses involved subjects such as

math, physics, Turkish language, history, psychology, pedagogy, writing, foreign language, painting, economics, agriculture, and zoology (Uygun 2008). While theoretical in nature, the institute's pedagogy grounded on problem solving and learning by doing was infused in all courses. The other half of the curriculum included practical courses evenly divided between agriculture and technical courses. In the agricultural courses, students would spend part of each school day in the field growing their own fruits and vegetables. In the technical courses students would spend part of the day involved in all aspects of construction and related to that machinery and motor building, carpentry, and blacksmithing. Additionally, as part of the formal curriculum, at the beginning of each school day students were required to engage in physical activity including dancing and physical education.

The curriculum at Cifteler explicitly pursued the three main goals that Tonguc has envisioned for the village institutes: economic production, teacher training, and the education of Turkey's new citizens (Seren 2008; Vexliard and Aytac 1964). The emphasis on practical courses intending to make the institute self-sufficient was directed to the achievement of the first of these goals. In consonance with the principle of learning by doing, however, the curriculum was also designed to maintain a close alignment between each of the theoretical courses and the students' fieldwork (Seren 2008). For example, physics and chemistry courses were taught in alignment with and in connection to the electrical circuits and the plumbing of buildings, using the motors and other tools in the work stations, or in connection to making wine, pickles, cheese. Students were also trained for vocations appropriate to the needs of their villages such as health practitioner, farming, fishing, commanding livestock, forestation, and road and building construction.

To achieve the second goal, the training of teachers willing to teach in village schools, Cifteler implemented a track system by which teacher candidates were identified. Students were separated into either the teaching track or the healthcare or other trades track in their third year of the institute (Ergul 2008). Those students who were deemed to be not suited for the teaching profession were trained as tradesman in a field in which they showed promise (Seren 2008). Those who were identified as suitable candidates, however, were placed in a teacher training curriculum that emphasized pedagogy. Students were required to take 368 h of specialized coursework through their 5th year including sociology, work education, child and work psychology, work education history, and teaching methods and practice (Atakul 2008). Additionally, all teacher candidates were required to gain competence in one technical area and an area related to agriculture that would be useful for the village where they intended to teach (most of the time, their villages of origin).

The third goal of Cifteler's curriculum was to develop the whole student and to raise self-sufficient, civilized, cultured, modern, democratic villagers with the necessary skills to help their villages prosper (Ergul 2008; Vexliard and Aytac 1964). This goal which highlighted learning that supported the body and the mind (a foreign idea to this population until that time) permeated the entire life of the school, including its daily schedule. The students' day would start at 6 am. After cleaning up the room and getting dressed, students and teachers would gather outside for some type of physical exercise. At 8:30 am attendance was taken and, depending on the

course schedule for the day, students would go either to the classrooms for one of the theoretical courses, to the labs for a technical course, or to the fields for an agricultural course. After lunch a similar schedule was followed. Before dinner there was a reading and discussion meeting in which an important literary work was read, discussed, and critically analyzed. The time between this activity and dinner was used for individual study, theater and musical work. Due to Cifteler's emphasis on training teachers and on educating modern citizens who appreciated arts and literature, this was an important time for the school. It was in this part of the curriculum that students were taught the value of reading for pleasure and were given music education, such as playing an instrument. For prospective teachers these skills were particularly important as they were expected to instill the same types of skills and appreciation for these subjects to their future students. The day would end with about an hour or two of study time after dinner (Seren 2008).

Students

As mentioned earlier, one of the criteria for establishing the first Village Institute in Cifteler was the open-minded and hard-working reputation of the largely immigrant community residing in this area. To maximize the success of the school, Cifteler recruited healthy and hard-working village children within this population who had been particularly successful in the required 5 years of compulsory education (Seren 2008). It is estimated that at any given time over the almost two decades of existence, the institute was serving 600–800 students in Hamidiye, one of the locations, and about 400–600 in Mahmudiye, the other (Kucukcan 2008). All students came from neighboring villages.

Although the institutes were co-educational and admitted both males and females, the number of female students was significantly lower with only 21 of the total number of students being female. Likewise, only 2 of the total of 13 teachers in both campuses were female (Altunya 2010).

Administration

To make schools a real tool for modernization, Tonguc reasoned, the administration of the village institutes should apply the democratic principles endorsed by the new Turkish government. The institutes should emphasize the collective notions of government, nation, and society but, above all, they should raise students to become the subjects of the enlightenment and the modernization process rather than objects (Coban 2011). In his view, this meant the establishment of a democratic administration system in school that involved students in the decision making process (Altunya 2010). It also meant educating students through participation and shared responsibility, and developing the leadership skills they were expected to implement in the future when leading their own communities into modernization and economic

progress (Guvenc 2007). Tonguc expected this participative system to help students to understand and to internalize the culture of democracy.

As the first Village Institute, Cifteler adopted all of these ideas and created a participatory, democratic administration system where the administrators, teachers and students worked collaboratively in almost all managerial duties. This administration structure in which students and teachers took turns with managerial duties assured that management and leadership were never under the hegemony of just one person (Coban 2011). The principal of Cifteler was expected to be a good leader who made good use of the collective mind of the institute through a kind of participatory approach. All activities proposed by the principal were evaluated for financial and educational purposes by the staff and the students (Altunya 2010). Thus, students had as much say as the principal in the management of the school and they greatly contributed to solving the problems of the institute.

The Legacy of the School

The contribution of the Cifteler Village School to the villages it served has been widely acknowledged. In terms of production, the school built a clean drinking water system, instead of this please insert “their own cafeteria and dormitory,” and a library (Kucukcan 2008). The school also turned a broken mill into a power generating plant that produced electricity for the village, and it turned 3500 acres of fields into agricultural lands which could be harvested by the students. In terms of training teachers, Cifteler prepared 1300 hundred village teachers, 1400 researchers and academicians, and approximately 200 health-care professionals. The stories of the many graduates who became accomplished authors, artists, scientists, and scholars have kept the legacy of the school alive well after the institute was closed (Ergul 2008).

Because Cifteler was the first Village Institute, it became an encouraging model for those established later. In this regard, Cifteler functioned as a laboratory for innovative teaching methods that experimented with a pedagogy that combined the notion of learning by doing with democratic leadership practices and the goals of modernization and economic production.

The enduring legacy of the Cifteler school is inseparable from the legacy of the 20 Village Institutes in Turkey that existed in the 1940s. This legacy has always been highly controversial and has served as an enduring debate on the democratic nature of this experience. Some critics have argued that behind the purpose of educating modern democratic citizens was the RPP's desire to force its ideologies on the Turkish citizens. Karaomerlioglu (1998), for example, claims that the government expected students from these schools to vote for this party after graduating. Authors like Coban (2011), however, suggest that the institutes went far beyond the expectations of the government and produced results that were in conflict with the regime. Coban argues, for example, that the adoption of this non-traditional education system to establish democratic practices in the country aimed at activating the liberating

power of education. In support of this argument, Karaomerlioglu (1998) describes the enthusiasm with which the students participated in the daily hard labor of the institutes, indicating the important role the power of human will and volunteerism actually played in solving the problems of rural Turkey, such as low productivity at the time.

If the legacy of the institutes has been controversial, so are the reasons for their sudden termination in 1954. Some argue that the RPP closed them because they no longer served the party's purposes because they educated students who became too disobedient and independent (Karaomerlioglu 1998; Stone 1974). Others argue that the reason for the closing was the pressure created by big landowners with their accusation that communism was being spread in the institutes (Altunya 2010; Arikan 2012; Atakul 2008; Kirby 2010; Seren 2008).

Despite the controversies, few will dispute the pedagogical merits of the Village Institutes. These schools implemented a model of education based on the notion of learning by doing that is still central to the conversations on education today in Turkey. In this sense, the Village Institutes have provided fertile grounds for current conversations on education as exemplified in the movement towards a more constructivist and student-centered curriculum that advances educational principles allowing students to be active participants in their own learning. The Village Institutes have also contributed to the current conversation in educational administration by making an argument for participative decision making and leadership practices involving students, teachers and administrators (Yalcin 2012).

In Conversation

Rodríguez: In your view, what are the lessons of the Village Institutes for public education in Turkey today?

Gokalp: In my view, one of the most important lessons of the Village Institutes for public education in Turkey lies on the process of education reform that generated these schools. The educational reform that was made in the 1920s which later led to the establishment of Village Institutes was implemented after consulting prominent scholars in the field of education like John Dewey and Alfred Kuhne. These scholars examined the education system and wrote extensive reports to be shared with government officials and Turkish scholars. Likewise, Turkish educational figures such as Ismail Hakkı Tonguç traveled all over the country to assess the educational system and discuss the recommendations in these reports. In an attempt to make the reforms in Turkey more comprehensive, Tonguc also went abroad to study the educational systems used in nearby European countries. Another important feature of this reform process was piloting these reforms in some schools before implementing them nationwide. This process is in stark contrast to the development of current educational policies in Turkey today. In the last 20 years, the country has initiated many educational changes and two national reforms, but most of these attempts were not successful in addressing the educational needs of the country (Cakiroglu and Cakiroglu 2003; Yilmaz 2007).

In my view, the shortcomings of these policies are due to the fact that many of these educational changes lacked a strong theoretical basis and the process of consultation with education scholars at the national or international level that grounded the creation of the Village Institutes. Current changes and reforms seem to be based on political agendas rather than on a comprehensive process aimed at improving education and addressing the educational needs of the country. Additionally, the short-lived nature of recent educational reforms has prevented a thorough evaluation of their effectiveness. In most cases, the implementation of one reform ended abruptly while another would begin without proper assessment of whether prior changes were effective. In this context, I believe that one of the most important lessons of Village Institutes for public education in Turkey today is to show how to better implement educational reforms. The Village Institutes serve as a perfect example in this regard as they accomplished all of their goals and led to increased literacy rates, increased production, and, by extension, wealth in the rural countryside. They also helped solve the teacher shortage the country was experiencing. The positive outcomes of the Village Institutes indicate that, for reforms to be effective, they should be developed in collaboration and consultation with experts in the field, and should involve a realistic assessment of problems it intends to solve as well as a careful examination of the solutions it proposes.

Another important lesson of the Village Institutes has to do with addressing the needs of learners in different contexts. The Village Institutes understood that those living in villages were experiencing difficulties that were different than those living in the cities, and that; therefore, they needed to develop different skills and abilities. They needed to be educated differently. I believe public education in Turkey today could benefit from an educational approach where needs of different types of students are taken into consideration in developing educational programs. Particularly since the 1980's the education gap between students from different socio-economic statuses has widened further to the advantage of those who come from well-to-do families (Aydoğan 2008, as cited in Kosar-Altinyelken 2011; World Bank Report 2011). The Village Institutes during their existence in the 1940's, helped solve the inequalities in the education system by providing more opportunities for everyone to learn and demonstrated that it could be done by taking into consideration needs of all students and tailoring educational approaches based on these needs. Considering today's much improved conditions, Turkey can overcome the inequalities in education again, as long as our policies put benefit of all students at the center of their aims.

Rodríguez: What reflections on the Village Institutes do you think can be useful for educators in other countries?

Gokalp: I believe that the Village Institutes is a good illustration of the important role that education plays in developing a national identity. The notion of a nation, a republic, and democracy were all foreign concepts to the villagers when the republic was first established. The existing educational system was not reaching the masses, and more importantly, it was not sufficient to help the citizens internalize these ideas advanced by the new republic. Through the learning by doing pedagogy and the notion of education-for-production, however, the Village Institutes

promoted a better life for the villagers (and in turn the entire nation since 80% of the population at the time were living in villages) and, therefore, gave villagers the opportunity to experience the benefits of becoming a citizen of a democratic nation.

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Chapter 10

Building Inclusive Education from the Ground Up: The Transformative Experience of HKRSS Tai Po Secondary School (Hong Kong 2006–2013)

Franky K. C. Poon and Angel M. Y. Lin

At a first glance, HKRSS¹ seems to be no different from any other school in Hong Kong. There are 34 teachers (16 males, 18 females) teaching in this government-funded secondary school that serves 282 students from grades 7 to 12 (192 males, 90 females) in a working-class residential area in a new town in the New Territories of Hong Kong. Only schools which admit the top 40% of academically strong students can use English as the medium of instruction under the government's policy. This school uses Chinese as the medium of instruction. Inside the school, however, almost everything seems different from other schools. HKRSS is a vibrant secondary school known for its inclusive approach to teaching and for the commitment of its teaching team to provide differentiated instruction for all students, including students with special needs. Currently, there are over 100 students who are diagnosed as having Special Educational Needs (SEN). Over 60% suffer from dyslexia, while the others are diagnosed with ADHD, autism and other learning difficulties. The innovative work of the school has been recognized not only by parents and community members who continue to send their children to the school, but also by the national educational administration and the education community at large. In recent years, for example, some teachers at the school have achieved prestigious teaching awards, the school has been the focus of media attention, and numerous teachers and administrators in the area have visited the school.

¹ HKRSS stands for Hong Kong Red Swastika Society, which is a charitable organization founded in 1931 in Hong Kong. Contrary to the western recent history, the word swastika has been a character in the Chinese writing system at least since the Liao Dynasty (AD907–1125), meaning “all” or “eternality.”

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HKRSS's achievements are noteworthy considering the school started its journey toward the inclusion of students with special needs only a few years ago and that Hong Kong's mainstreamed curriculum is highly competitive and selective. What makes these achievements particularly significant, however, is that they were the outcome of a school-based process of transformation by which teachers unfamiliar with students with special needs engaged in, experimented with, and reflected on differentiated learning and teaching practices. In this sense, the journey of developing inclusive education as a whole-school process provides a much needed case study. Critical pedagogical literature rarely provides examples of changes in the ecology of the whole school, especially leading to curriculum changes and transformation on the habitus of both students and teachers (Luke 2009). This chapter illustrates the main challenges the school faced in its attempt to serve a large number of students with special needs. This narrative is the result of a collaborative process between the two authors. Poon was a senior teacher in the school for 9 years before being appointed the administrator in charge of academic changes in 2006, and provides an insider account. Lin, a university professor and Poon's mentor, provides additional theoretical analyses to conceptualize the importance of the school changes presented. Thus, even when, for clarity purposes, the chapter uses the term "I" or refers to Poon's role in this process, the reader is invited to assume that this chapter is the product of a reflective dialogue between the two authors.

To appreciate the difficulty and challenges faced by the school in this process, it is important to understand the national educational context against which HKRSS changed its pedagogical practices to serve special needs students.

Special Education and Demographic Changes in Hong Kong

Hong Kong has witnessed a slow, gradual change in both its discourse and approach to educating students with special education needs (SEN). Discursively, the government signaled its commitment to serve these students in 1995 by endorsing the Salamanca Statement issued after the 1994 UNESCO World Conference on Special Needs Education (UNESCO 1994) and issuing the *White Paper on Rehabilitation- Equal Opportunities and Full Participation: A Better Tomorrow for All*. In this proposal, the government embraced a policy of integration that called upon the community to endorse integration in the schooling system and to support the development of special education as an integral part of all educational programs. This publication was followed by the promulgation of *The Disability Discrimination Ordinance* in 1996, a legislative move to safeguard equal opportunities for all citizens in territory-wide institutions, including education. This ordinance established the legal obligations of schools to provide non-discriminative schooling to all students, making them liable to legal prosecution if their practice was deemed to infringe on the rights of special needs school-aged children. This set of legislation provided the legal framework for two additional regulations that intended to alter traditional teaching practices for SEN students. Aware of the educational challenges

of teaching in inclusive contexts, in September 1997, the Education Department launched a two-year pilot project entitled *Integrated Education Programme* that explored new effective modes of school-based support for students with special educational needs (Crawford et al. 1999). Because of its success, after this two-year pilot phase, the program was extended to other mainstream schools. In 2001, the government took further actions to protect the rights of students with special needs in mainstream schools with the enactment of the *Code of Practice on Education* (EOC 2001). Under this code, all schools were required to adopt a whole-school integrated approach to support SEN students by making use of all the available resources to accommodate students' diverse learning needs.

As important as these regulations were, the move towards more inclusive schooling encountered several problems, such as the fundamental structure of the schooling system in Hong Kong. Luk (2005) describes this system as a highly academic-oriented and competitive, one in which a three-tier banding system exists (with Band 1 for the academically superior and Band 3 for the poorest performers). Not surprisingly, most students with SEN often end up in Band 3 schools. With a large population of SEN students, it was difficult for the lower banding schools to effectively cater to their needs. Because of this difficulty, in the decade between 1990 and 2000, only 16 primary and 5 secondary schools became involved in the whole-school approach to the integrated education policy. It was only in the 2007–2008 school year that this number dramatically increased to 359 schools. The rise was impressive as it accounted for 33% of all government-funded mainstream schools (EDB 2008). There were two main reasons accounting for this more enthusiastic response. According to Forlin and Lian (2008), the first was the new funding mode that provided additional resources for schools admitting SEN students. Schools would receive \$ 10,000–\$ 20,000 per year for each student based on their SEN classification. The second reason that prompted regular schools to become more inclusive was the shrinking student population due to Hong Kong's declining birthrates. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of Primary One (Grade 1) students in government/subsidized schools dropped significantly from nearly 69,000 to less than 40,000, accounting for an over 40% plunge. The same decade witnessed a similar drop in government funded secondary schools, with the number dwindling from nearly 80,000 Secondary One (Grade 7) students to barely over 57,000 (Census and Statistics Department 2011). Faced with the possibility of closure because of low enrollment, many schools adopted "inclusion," instead of "selection," as the main criterion in their student admission policy and welcomed students with SEN.

The beginning of the Journey at HKRSS

The recent history of HKRSS and the transformative process is intimately linked to both the demographic shift and the governmental support provided to schools embracing inclusion. HKRSS is located in one of the districts deeply affected by Hong Kong's decade-long birthrate decline. In 2006, for example, the number of Secondary One students dropped from 140 to less than 67, an enrollment number

lower than the one the government required to secure the survival of the school. This situation was challenging for HKRSS. As a band three school using Chinese as the medium of instruction, the chances of attracting students from other districts was slim. At the same time, the good reputation of the school among parents who had children with SEN led to the rise in the number of applications of students with SEN. This dramatic increase of students with SEN was actually bittersweet. On the one hand, the increase in the number of SEN students interested in attending the school could boost the overall student numbers despite a territory-wide decline. On the other hand, the increasing presence of students with SEN would pose a huge challenge to teachers who felt unprepared to meet these students' needs. This was a very difficult moment for the school. Teachers' morale hit rock bottom because of poor job security and insufficient preparation for them to support these students.

Eventually, the school decided to address this dilemma by making a commitment to inclusion and by creating a six-year development plan required by the Education Bureau for schools with low enrollment but wished to remain open. Based on the previous achievements of the school, this plan outlined the new purpose of the school as an inclusive center devoted to addressing the learning needs of all students by making changes in curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. As required by the Education Bureau, this six-year plan included an assessment of the school facilities, manpower to provide quality education, and proof of additional financial support to pay for extra teachers and services. For HKRSS, this additional financial support came from the school sponsoring body, a charitable organization in Hong Kong which provides educational and medical services to the disadvantaged.

This six-year plan proved immediate benefits to the school. HKRSS was the only school in Hong Kong (out of eight) which was spared potential closure that year. In addition, the implementation of the plan brought important recognition to the school for its innovation in pedagogies and curriculum supporting SEN students. Just 2 years after the school began its inclusive practices, three teachers were nominated for and received the "The Hong Kong Chief Executive's Award for Teaching Excellence" in the category of "supporting students with special educational needs," the highest educational award presented by the Hong Kong government in recognition of teachers. The three teachers were the only award recipients from a mainstream secondary school. Subsequent to the award, the school was invited by the Education Bureau to become one of only five resource schools in Hong Kong designated to support mainstream schools in adopting a whole-school approach to educating students with special educational needs between 2009 and 2013. To this day, teachers and administrators of the school are frequently invited to share experiences and practices in supporting students with SEN in an inclusive school setting.

Poon: Leading the Change in the School's Mission and Practices

I was appointed vice-principal in 2006, and my first task was to design a six-year plan that would secure the survival of the school. With the success of this plan, the next task would then be leading its implementation. I started this professional

journey by asking myself the following questions: What did I want to achieve? How would I meet the challenge of designing and implementing an inclusive curriculum? How would this be a process of possibilities for the school and our SEN students? Given the falling student enrollments and deteriorating teacher morale, what could I do to provide the best learning and teaching experience for both the students and their educators? Overall, I wondered how I could capitalize on and initiate fundamental change in curriculum and instruction while enhancing our ability to cater to students with diverse educational needs. I knew I had the unconditional support of the school principal. I was not only able to experiment with new initiatives, but also with the great challenge of engaging teachers in an important educational project at a time when they were facing redundancy and the threat of unemployment.

Understanding that for any innovation to succeed, rallying and mobilizing support from those enacting the changes is important (Murphy and Meyers 2009), I designed new mission statements reflecting the essence of the curriculum changes and expected they could also serve as the guiding principles of school policy. This proposal stated: “We believe that every student: (1) is willing to learn; (2) is capable of learning; (3) is able to gain successful experience in learning; (4) is unique and has different educational needs; (5) enjoys equal opportunity for learning; (6) is entitled to quality educational services.” Articulating strong mission statements was particularly important as we needed teachers to endorse the school’s pedagogical project. These mission statements were widely accessible to teachers and parents since they were printed on teachers’ handbooks and on the back of the business cards of the principal, vice-principals, and all senior staff. Based on the mission statements, I also proposed changes to the teachers’ appraisal system placing more emphasis on the quality of support provided to students with diverse needs. While these changes resulted in positive teacher engagement, they also resulted in the early retirement of a few teachers who had difficulty adapting to the change.

Before 2006, teacher collaboration was not common in HKRSS. Most management tasks focused on inspection of an individual teacher’s work. I believed, however, that building collaborative teams was crucially important to initiate a fundamental and collective change in teacher practice. Thus, in 2006 I instituted a new working team to inclusively and collaboratively design curriculum and pedagogies, and I invited seven curriculum leaders from key subject areas to form a School-Based Support Team (SBST). The members of the SBST became the school’s SEN coordinators (SENCos) and, were required to take courses related to SEN, organized or commissioned by the Education Bureau. To provide them with more time to address their new responsibilities and to implement the ideas they had learned in the SEN courses, team members were released from teaching duties for two afternoons in every six-day cycle for staff development, group planning and learning activities.

This kind of school-based professional development, with a clear focus on the inclusion of students with SEN, provided new opportunities for faculty reflection and collaboration. Teachers in the SBST could translate what they had learned in their SEN courses to their real work. Concrete student cases were often discussed in the meetings and good practices were shared informally with teachers at the school. Additionally, this team was instrumental in the school being awarded the 2008 Chief Executive Award for Teaching Excellence mentioned above. Despite

its initial success, however, the members of SBST suggested the team disband after only 1 year of existence. They realized the majority of teachers still had a great deal of difficulty embracing more inclusive teaching practices. The SBST members believed that full participation in these practices could only be achieved by all teachers experimenting on their own, rather than having designated members fill this role. This decision greatly impacted the dynamics of the school and provided stronger need for a whole-school approach to inclusive curriculum and pedagogies. While I was still the pedagogical leader and the instigator of curriculum changes described below, the implication of involving all educators in the search for new teaching practices to serve SEN students resulted in a stronger emphasis on professional development in a collaborative and transformative process. The next section chronicles the evolution of this process and the outcomes for school curriculum.

Changing School Practices: One Professional Development at a Time

Phase One: Empowering Teachers on Instructional Practices (2007–2009)

The dismantling of the SBST was aimed at turning the majority of teachers from “bystanders” into “prospective practitioners” by making them more aware of what they could do to better cater to students’ diverse needs. Three activities proved to be particularly significant in achieving this goal.

The first activity was a class-based project to document how teachers were structuring their teaching to accommodate the diversity of learners in their classrooms. Teachers selected one of their classes and wrote a lesson plan. A standard form was designed to guide teachers in the planning process of this activity asking them to: (1) divide their selected class into three ability groups; (2) describe the learners’ characteristics in each group; and (3) show how they designed differentiated content, learning materials, and expected outcomes for different groups of learners. Most teachers favorably responded to this activity, as they found the task manageable, relevant, and meaningful. They also viewed this lesson as a non-threatening, low stakes professional development activity that helped them focus on the planning of the teaching activity rather than on its implementation.

The second activity was the creation of a 10-minute video clip to promote a shared understanding of differentiated instruction. For this activity, teachers were not required to identify or define this concept. Rather, they were asked to produce a 10-minute video showing at least one effective strategy they used to help learners with different abilities in their classes. Teachers were also asked to provide the corresponding, written lesson plan. These videos were collected and examined by the entire teaching team to learn more about the variety of strategies teachers utilized in their teaching. All the strategies used were analyzed, classified, and documented in a table format. Eventually, the videos represented an inventory of strategies for

future administrative and teacher reflection. By watching these videos, teachers realized, for example, that most of their practices could be categorized as heterogeneous grouping, ability grouping, cooperative learning, peer assessment, questioning techniques, graded worksheets, computer-assisted learning, and individual instruction, etc. This project became an unanticipated cause for the celebration of good teaching practices. To illustrate this, ten teachers with outstanding lesson plans and videos were invited by the vice-principal to share their experience on an internal staff development day. The feedback forms for this event indicated the sharing of these lesson plans was useful for all the teachers as they could see how their own students responded to the lessons of other teachers who were experimenting with new/different teaching methods. On the other hand, those teachers whose plans or strategies were less successful, were put under little pressure, as the focus of the professional development activities was to showcase good practices for school capacity building, and not to necessarily judge the performance of teachers. The primary effect of these two projects was that teachers engaged in initiating changes in their instructional practices.

Once this engagement was in place, the third activity was designed to promote teachers' awareness of and confidence in differentiated instruction by focusing on a lesson observation. Traditionally, lessons lasted 40 min and were conducted mostly in a lecture format. To allow for the use of various teaching strategies to promote more classroom interactions among teacher and students, the school had previously requested to the School Board that classes would be extended to 55 min per lesson. This additional time allowed for the implementation of a variety of instructional strategies and, as a part of the third activity to promote teachers' involvement in the creation of inclusive practices, all teachers were scheduled a time for the vice principal to observe a lesson executing such strategies. A month prior to the observation, an easy-to-use lesson observation form was designed and delivered to all teachers. The specific criteria stated in this form were: (1) clear statement of learning objectives; (2) establishment of useful classroom routines; (3) presence of diversified learning/teaching activities; (4) strategies to address different learning styles and abilities; and (5) provision of timely and effective feedback to students. Teachers were evaluated by the vice-principal on how they achieved the stated goals and detailed qualitative feedback was later given to them by the observer.

Phase Two—Designing and Experimenting With Differentiated Learning Materials (2009–2010)

Prior to 2009, and even when involved in the projects mentioned above, teachers had not been formally introduced to the notion of differentiated teaching. Through analyzing the classroom videos in the first project, however, there was one common practice observed by the teaching team that became central to the school's definition of this notion—the use of differentiated learning materials. The presence of increasingly diverse learners made it nearly impossible to rely on undifferentiated learning materials. Therefore, the design of differentiated materials in a mixed-ability

classroom became a school priority. Teachers in charge of various subject areas were called on to assist in this task by providing at least one set of differentiated/tiered assignments, student work samples, and additional comments on how this particular design could aid the learning process for students with different abilities. Appropriate examples were collected from a variety of content areas to illustrate effective task-design strategies. These included providing choices in terms of levels of difficulty, formats and designs and the amount of input and expected output for different learners. Other effective design strategies such as using visual aids, creating real-life scenarios, allowing multiple representations, as well as providing organization tools were also demonstrated.

In an attempt to systematically share these effective practices with all teachers, a staff development workshop was organized during which 130 slides illustrating student work samples from each subject were presented. Teachers were also given an inventory of strategies generated from student work samples. The workshop provided teachers with the hands-on experience of applying the strategies to design differentiated learning tasks, which was crucial to the further development of the school's pedagogical innovations. This professional development activity was successful in removing barriers to allow for subject-specific good practices to be transferrable across different subject areas. This was significant, as good practices are rarely shared across different learning areas in Hong Kong.

Phase Three—Designing Differentiated Assessments (2010–2012)

As teachers became increasingly involved in the transformative process, starting in 2007, they also became increasingly aware of the conflict between their belief in standardization as a way to secure the quality of teaching for all students, and the need for the individualization of the curriculum to address SEN students' learning characteristics. This conflict was the topic of heated debates about assessment. When attempting to accommodate individual needs by differentiating instructions and students' learning tasks, some teachers progressively argued that without differentiation in assessments, their efforts to address students' differences were futile. If students were to be taught differently, they claimed, students should also be assessed differently. Other teachers, however, were concerned about the fairness of differentiated assessment. Schools in Hong Kong are used to giving every student standardized assessments to maintain the "standard" and "fairness." Thus, some teachers worried that differentiated assessments based on individual students' needs might lead some parents to complain about the fairness of the school's examinations.

In 2010, after years of discussion and capitalizing on the fact that Hong Kong has no national policies on school-based assessments and that schools have the discretion to design and implement their internal assessments, the school opted for a system of differentiated assessment. This decision was implemented by the Studies Committee, a school-based organization in charge of making decisions related to learning and teaching, and allowed teachers to employ two sets of assessments. The first one, Paper A, was to be applied to all mainstreamed students. The second, Paper B, an accommodated version of paper A, could be administered to students

diagnosed with SEN, but only when recommended by the teacher, approved by the parents, and consented to by the student.

The possibility of an alternative to uniform assessment became a crucial step forward in creating a more coherent pedagogical framework capable of aligning daily learning and teaching with assessment of individual students. While supporting this option, teachers were concerned about their lack of expertise in designing these differentiated assessment tools as well as the additional time this would require. To address time concerns, teachers were assured that it was not a question of additional workload but, rather, a change of the nature of their jobs. They were reminded that when school enrollment was much higher, teachers spent more time marking papers. With fewer students, there was more time for designing more effective assessment instruments. The Studies Committee conducted a teacher workshop that reiterated the importance of aligning assessment strategies with those found in differentiated learning materials. To help institutionalize the new assessment system, teachers were provided guidelines on how to set and report scores of the differentiated assessment papers.

Despite the significance of adopting a new differentiated model of assessment, teachers continued to be troubled by this issue. They worried, for example, about their ability to prepare students with SEN to face the highly standardized public examination. They were concerned that the various accommodation strategies they developed to meet students' diverse needs might not be adopted for the public examination. The school turned to the Hong Kong Diploma of Education (HKDSE), a new public examination implemented in 2009 that allowed for more flexibility in students' assessment by embracing standard-reference evaluation. In line with a global trend toward standards-based assessment (Tognolini and Stanley 2007), this examination established a standards-referenced reporting (SRR) system. This system, however, was not norm-referenced (Burger 1998). In a norm-referenced assessment, teachers have to teach everything in the examination syllabus, regardless of students' abilities and aspirations because the assessment tool compares students with one another based on standardized examinations. However, a standards-referenced system, as the one embraced by the HKDSE, allowed teachers to tailor curriculum by focusing on how individual students can perform such standards. The shift in the assessment paradigm represented by this new public examination was favorable by the school. It further encouraged teachers to participate in differentiation initiatives by paying particular attention to the requirements of each attainment level used by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) and by utilizing a differentiated assessment, paper B, to learn more about the readiness levels of individual students in relation to such requirements.

Phase Four—Planning a Differentiated Curriculum (2012–2013)

After a few years of constant experimentation, evaluation and reflection on how to engage students traditionally left behind because of their diverse learning needs by promoting differentiated instruction, differentiated learning materials and differentiated assessments, our current efforts to build a more inclusive curriculum can be

understood as an attempt to understand the most fundamental issue facing educators: the questions of what to learn and what to teach. The previous phases presupposed a fixed and standardized curriculum. Thus, it was assumed that the best way to help each student to master it was to make content more accessible through differentiated instructional practices and learning materials. Over the years, however, teachers understood that there were limits to the differentiation strategies. Some students experienced a great difficulty mastering an undifferentiated curriculum, no matter how the content was presented. Largely influenced and constrained by the previous standardized public examination, Hong Kong secondary school curriculum was exam-oriented and insensitive to individual learning needs. However, with the introduction of HKDSE and its various levels of standards and performance requirements, differentiation of content became possible and the school engaged in two new initiatives.

First, in 2012, the school set up a Curriculum Development Team (CDT) comprising two vice principals and the panel heads of Chinese, English, Mathematics, Liberal Studies and Science. The team met weekly with the specific goal to help teachers differentiate content. The team discussed how the knowledge of each key learning area could address different students' needs by dividing its parts into three categories: core, extended and challenging. The core contained the most basic and fundamental components of a topic, usually factual information without higher-level analysis. The extended component required a deeper understanding of a topic, which involves multiple perspectives and higher cognitive skills. The challenging component intended to reach beyond the curriculum and to expose students to additional reference materials for in-depth inquiry. Following Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson et al. 2000), all level descriptors of all school subjects were studied and divided into these categories.

Guided by the CDT, the second initiative was to draft a "Learning and Teaching Progress Scheme" (LTPS) requiring all teachers to divide their course curriculum into these three parts. To make the curriculum more transparent for both parents and students, the school uploaded the LTPS for all subjects at all grade levels to the school's intranet. Because teachers were not used to this practice and they feared missing important knowledge in the curriculum, the curriculum leaders worked extensively and diligently with them to make sure the differentiated curriculum could guide the setting of learning goals, learning content, and assessment. The following Chinese Language lesson illustrates the positive impact of this process of curriculum differentiation in the school's inclusive pedagogies. The objective of the lesson was to introduce Chinese writing techniques to a group of students with a huge range of abilities. The teacher began with a short introduction to the target writing techniques and continued with classwork that students could accomplish at four different levels. The first level involved a matching exercise helping students to identify distinctive writing techniques with visual aids. The second level requires students to identify and compare different writing techniques in a longer text. The third level challenges students to write a short paragraph using the techniques. The most difficult level asks students to identify writing techniques used in a Classical Chinese text. Students were allowed to begin with whatever level they felt comfortable with, and after finishing the task, they could move onto the next at their own pace.

Coda: Inclusive Education as Transformation

Before 2006, HKRSS was a traditional secondary school in Hong Kong where teachers taught a standardized curriculum in isolation from each other, with little understanding of students' individual learning needs. Today teachers engage in a process of collaboration and a collective discovery of the importance of differentiated instruction and assessment for all students. Constant sharing and collaboration among teachers on curriculum adaptations, pedagogical innovations as well as task and assessment differentiation has become the new school culture. This new philosophy is the result of a comprehensive restructuring of curriculum, learning materials, instructional practices and assessment. It recognizes the importance of catering to the needs of individual students using a whole-school approach, and the knowledge and experience that has been built up gradually from the ashes:

- Curriculum is no longer something imposed on students. Instead it has become a “tool” for students to achieve their own personal goals.
- We have taken a more constructivist approach to learning. Students' strengths, not their weaknesses, are identified and built upon. Differentiation strategies aim to provide as many choices as possible so that the diverse potentials of each learner can be developed.
- Through our pedagogical and assessment differentiation, we have tried to convey to students and their parents the message that personal learning goals can be realized through various, attainable means.
- Our choices in assessment and internal professional development allow for the development of diversified, continuous and more individualized assessment methods.
- Instead of looking at students' learning “disabilities” which are often narrowly defined by limiting criteria, we have been focusing on the abilities of individual students.

Teachers and students have gradually moved away from the deep-rooted paradigm of teaching and learning to pass uniform tests and examinations, to the paradigm of teaching and learning based on students' needs. In the consistent and persistent transformative work carried out by local school participants, we have proved that, against all odds, it is possible to make a difference in our students' lives through transforming both student and teacher subjectivity (Lin 2012). That is, public schools still have a chance of initiating school reforms towards more inclusive education by drawing on a sociological logic of practice, intervening to shift the field at the different structural pressure points, as Luke (2009) has proposed:

- Accurately and fairly recognize and evaluate the cultural capital that students bring to school: This would entail a much more detailed understanding and engagement with student habitus beginning with systematic, face-to-face developmental diagnostic procedures that would evaluate students' competence in their community languages, engage with their “stocks of knowledge” (Moll et al. 1992, p. 132) and repertoires of practice gained in community (McNaughton 2002). The aim would be to identify and validate cultural scripts and schemata,

skills, knowledge and practices, in order to set the optimal conditions for transformation and conversion of these into a substantially modified and augmented version of school knowledge. A principled, culturally and linguistically sensitive, sociologically grounded evidence-based approach would supplant deficit thinking (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 2004).

The approaches noted above will require enhanced professional technical knowledge and professional expertise, and cannot be sustained solely by principled belief in justice and equality (Luke 2009). We hope this bottom up experience will offer hope to public school participants located in other parts of the world facing similar challenges.

In Conversation

Rodríguez: Your description of the transformative process that took place in the school in the last decade argues for the need of schools to take a collaborative and whole school approach to deliver new ways of thinking about crucial curricular issues such as professional development, curriculum development, and assessment. In retrospect and besides the critical role that you, Franky, have played as the leader of this initiative, what do you think are the main elements that sustained this process in your school?

Poon: Besides leadership, I think there were three important elements that promoted and sustained curricular and pedagogical innovations in my school. The first one was teachers' commitment to student learning. The strong belief among teachers in promoting learning success in each student, regardless of their ability or disability, was the motivating force behind each innovation. Many of the teacher dialogues in school meetings focused on "how to help a particular student/group of students to learn." Without such a belief, all the school's professional development activities could have ended in failure.

Another important element was an effective school administration that helped identify, collect, share and institutionalize successful teacher practices. Oftentimes, good teacher practices are not communicated and understood among colleagues. HKRSS, however, developed a strong culture and system for teacher-to-teacher peer learning. Teachers would upload their best practices to the school intranet regularly, and curriculum leaders would analyze and conceptualize these practices for wider application. Templates and guidelines for lesson planning, learning material designs and assessment accommodations were drafted and revised constantly to institutionalize effective practices.

The third element concerns the active participation of all stakeholders throughout the innovations. The entire transformation process was not solely led by the school administration. Teachers provided significant input on what they thought were the needs of the students and how they could be met. Additionally, sufficient opportunities were given to students to voice their needs through focus group discussions and

student surveys. Students were also empowered to choose the learning and assessment tasks which they thought were appropriate, developing in them a strong ownership of their learning. That was a breakthrough from the one-size-fits-all curriculum common in Hong Kong. We also solicited parent support through workshops on our school differentiation policy as well as collected their views and feedback through parent meetings and surveys. All those elements contributed to the development of our curricular and pedagogical innovations.

Rodríguez: Based on the transformative process you experienced, what do you think are the new possibilities that inclusive pedagogies offer as we rethink public education?

Poon: Public education, at least in Hong Kong, is increasingly obsessed with performance, results, competition, selection and standards. Under a sophisticated accountability framework, not only are students' achievements narrowly defined and measured, the ways in which they can make progress are limited and controlled. HKRSS broke away from this "framework." We know students' achievements are not gauged by rigid standardized criteria. We agree that teachers must constantly initiate curricular and pedagogical changes to better meet the learning needs of our students and evaluate what they need to learn, how they learn, and how their learning outcomes are represented and evaluated. Students are encouraged to be accountable for their own progress, and the roles of teachers are to maximize choices available to all learners. We do away with one-size-fits-all curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. I must admit that this is not an easy journey. Any challenge to a powerful mainstream educational model would attract skepticism and suspicion, and we have experienced this. However, the positive responses from our students and stakeholders give us hope that there could be other possibilities for public education. Every learner must be fully included and their potential realized.

Lin: Schools are very complex systems which are major apparatuses for the reproduction of social classes. Much of the critical pedagogy literature looks at issues at the levels of pedagogy, curriculum or classroom innovations and efforts, but seldom looks at the possibility of developing a whole-school approach to transforming the habitus of school children.

Echoing Allan Luke's belief that professional technical knowledge goes hand-in-hand with a belief in justice and equality in order to make a difference, Franky's school's experience in building inclusive education from the ground up and through transforming both teacher and student habitus in the context of Hong Kong, speaks to the possibility of building expertise and technical knowledge with a whole-school approach even though it was a school from the margins and on the edge of being closed down by the government just about 7 years ago. I think the experience in this public school instantiates Luke's sociological logic, which in turn, might provide further inspirations to other public schools faced with similar challenges in other contexts of the world.

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Chapter 11

Los Talleres: A CONAFE Post-primary Center (Mexico 1996–2003)

Santiago Rincón-Gallardo

Zooming-In: Life in Los Talleres

It is a cloudy morning of the year 2002 in *Los Talleres*, a middle-school in a rural community located in the mountainous region of Estado de México, a few hundred kilometers away from the capital city of Toluca. A group of about twenty-five students ages 12 to 18, two young instructors ages 17 and 20, and a few adults are gathered inside the school, a spacious, single-room building built in the community six years ago. The school is equipped with two computers, a TV screen, a video player, and a small library, which includes conventional middle-school textbooks but also original oeuvres and videos of science, literature, history, and geography, encyclopedias and dictionaries, as well as some manuals of architecture, farming, and traditional medicine, among others. While some of the books have been selected and sent by the National Council for the Promotion of Education (CONAFE), a branch of the Federal Government that promotes basic education in rural communities, others have been acquired to respond to the expressed interest of students and adults from the community. The two young instructors live in the community. Although most of the students attend *Los Talleres* from 9 am to 2 pm, the school stays open in the afternoon for those interested in continuing their study projects or simply reading books, watching videos, or using a computer.

There are currently 30 students enrolled in this school, 16 women and 14 men, ages ranging from 11 to 53. Three of the five students who are not in the school today are helping their parents to harvest corn, whereas the other two have gone to the market of the Municipality to sell some of the mushrooms they have been producing with some of their peers for a few years, since they took a workshop on mushroom production originally offered to the community in *Los Talleres* a few years ago. As will be discussed in more detail below, students here choose their own topics of study and follow personal lines of inquiry at their own pace. This flexible structure allows students to be absent from the school when they need to help their parents or serve the community with other chores. When they come back, they simply continue their study projects.

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This cloudy morning, as is now routine in *Los Talleres*, students are working individually, in pairs or small groups, each with a topic of their choice. While some students may take a few hours to complete their units of study, others take weeks, depending on the length of the topic and the comfort of the student in using the skills of independent learning. Each student is paired with a tutor in the group—one of the two instructors or another student—who has previously gained mastery of the selected topic. A flipchart sheet hanging on the wall indicates the topics available in the group and the names of those who have mastered the topics. Sometimes the tutor for a particular student is assigned by an instructor, but other times students simply refer to the flipchart sheet to identify who can help them as their tutor.

Topics include, among others, math problems, short stories, poems, readings in English, texts about science, history and geography. Most topics have been selected from the official middle-school curriculum offered in conventional Mexican public schools, but they include also locally relevant themes identified and selected by students and adults in the community, such as immigration, sustainable farming, traditional medicine, and architecture. Some of the adults in the center are learning how to read and write, whereas others spend a few hours every day reading books of their interest. At any given moment, some students read, while others write down information they consider relevant or reflections on their learning process in their notebooks. Others prepare public presentations of their learning, and yet others alternate between studying and acting as tutors to other students. Every now and then someone stands up to search for a book or a dictionary from the bookshelves in the room, or to use a computer. The two young instructors walk around to observe and comment on the work of students. Whenever they have a chance, the instructors themselves sit down to study topics of their own choice. There is a constant buzz created by the voices of tutors and students talking about their work, but everyone seems to be highly focused.

Where a tutor and a student are working together both sit next to each other and talk about the text being studied, the math problem being solved or the work being produced. The tutor asks the student questions aimed at better understanding how the student is thinking about the particular topic or problem on which she/he is working. When the student has a question, the tutor avoids giving direct answers and instead seeks for questions or clues to help the student find the answer by herself/himself. Both student and tutor take note of what and how the student is learning. Students are expected to make their learning and their process of learning visible to their peers, the instructors, and the community, by creating written reports of what and how they learned, making a public presentation to the group, and finally, by becoming tutors to other students interested in learning the topics that they have now mastered. The notes taken by the student and their tutor during the inquiry process, the written report of what and how they learned, and the materials used for the public presentation, become part of the portfolio of each student, which is used to assess the student's progress.

In *Los Talleres*, Fridays have become days for public presentations, where students who have completed topics that week present major takeaways on what they learned and how they have learned it. These presentations have become a signature

event in the community. Parents and community members attend the presentations and actively participate as an audience, asking questions to the presenters. After attending these presentations, some adults decided to enroll as students in the school, some to complete their primary education, others to complete middle-school, and yet others simply to explore topics of their interest. The presentations are followed by a community celebration in which adults and students bring food to share, play music or initiate a volleyball or soccer game.

Soon after it was built in 1996, *Los Talleres* became a vibrant hub for community life. Adults often visit the center to study or to attend presentations by the students, but also to host meetings to discuss collective problems and figure out solutions. The young instructors are often invited to these meetings, having become trusted advocates of the community within the Municipal government. Through their close connection with the community, instructors in *Los Talleres* are aware of the collective needs and encourage their students to undertake study projects that benefit the entire community, including, among others, gardening, local initiatives to promote community health, sustainable farming, architecture, carpentry, etcetera. When students achieve mastery in these topics, they are included in the available catalogue of the school, which in turn attracts some adults who every now and then stop by the center. To stimulate adults' attendance, the school also offers a variety of workshops ranging from arts and crafts, sustainable farming, and first aid to human rights, English, and advanced math. The workshops are delivered by itinerant advisors, experts in a particular field who visit the community for a day or two to deliver a workshop in exchange for a modest monetary stipend, room and board.

The activities in *Los Talleres* evidence a rich and unique pedagogical experience in which independent learning and tutoring become crucial elements of an educational model tailored to the learning needs of students and adults in the community. This pedagogical experience, however, is not unique to this school. Indeed, *Los Talleres* is only one of the approximately 350 schools known as post-primary centers that were opened in rural and urban marginalized communities across 27 Mexican States between 1996 and 2003. As in *Los Talleres*, these centers attempted to address the specific needs of students and adults in the communities they served by encouraging independent learning through tutorial dialogue.

Zooming-Out: The Mexican Educational System, CONAFE, and the Post-primary Project

Mexico is one of the most unequal countries in the world, home to the richest man on the planet according to 2010 Forbes List (Forbes 2014) and to millions of people living in extreme poverty. These social inequalities are poignantly reflected in education. Elementary and lower-secondary education in Mexico (K-9) is predominantly provided by public schools. The public educational system in the country, however, is highly segregated, with disproportionately fewer resources and less experienced teachers being assigned to schools in historically marginalized com-

munities—small, scattered rural communities as well as marginalized urban settings—compared to schools for more privileged groups.

While over one third of its total population is concentrated in its three largest cities, over 90 percent of the communities that constitute Mexico are small, geographically isolated communities with less than 2,500 inhabitants. The small size of the student population in many of these communities makes it unviable to create formal regular public schools, leaving the education of the students in the most remote communities under the purview of the National Council for the Promotion of Education (CONAFE), a unit of the Federal Government under the umbrella of the Mexican Ministry of Education that provides basic education to small, scattered, mainly rural communities with less than 500 inhabitants. CONAFE's main task is expanding basic education to children and youth who would otherwise have no access. Instead of formally trained teachers, CONAFE recruits and trains young middle- or high school graduates, ages ranging from 15 to 20, to work as instructors for one or two years and offers them in exchange a scholarship to continue their high-school or university studies.

Since the mid-1990s, CONAFE has been instrumental in expanding access to middle-school education in small rural communities. Until then, this institution had only provided preschool and elementary education. In 1993, when a federal bill made education for grades 7–9 mandatory in Mexico, CONAFE was expected to provide lower-secondary services as well. The Post-primary Project launched in 1996 was a response to this expectation. The Post-primary aimed at promoting the ability to learn independently through texts among rural youth, young instructors, and interested adults.

As in the other post-primary centers launched by CONAFE, the school in *Los Talleres* was created through a covenant between CONAFE and the community to provide elementary school graduates with the opportunity to continue and complete their lower-secondary education. But the center was also open to anyone in the community interested in developing the skill to learn independently through texts. After a few meetings between leaders from CONAFE and community leaders, an agreement was made whereby CONAFE would provide construction materials, equipment, and assign and train two instructors for the center, whereas the community would provide a piece of land and the labor to build the center. In addition, community members were granted power to authorize or withhold the monthly payment of the instructors based on their regular attendance to the post-primary center.

For CONAFE, the challenge of providing lower-secondary education to communities where no service was available before was also an opportunity for innovation. The most predictable response to this challenge from CONAFE, a highly centralized organization would have been simply expanding its regular services by creating new materials, hiring more instructors, and finding or building school facilities for grade 7–9 students, while keeping the prescriptive features of its programs unchanged. But instead, the director of CONAFE at that time, Edmundo Salas, saw in the need for expansion of educational services an opportunity to depart radically from conventional practice. In his search for promising ideas, he came across Gabriel Cámara, a long-time leader of grassroots educational projects (Cámara 1972;

CEG 1977, 1994; Lavín de Arrivé 1986) whose philosophy had been deeply influenced by his close connection to and collaboration with radical thinkers such as Ivan Ilich (1970), who invited him to participate in the center he created to develop critiques and alternatives to schooling, and Paulo Freire (1970), whom he had met while completing his doctoral studies at Harvard. Grounded in the ideas he developed in close dialogue with these thinkers, Cámara assumed a life-long commitment to working with historically marginalized communities to create conditions for meaningful learning encounters between children and adults.

Together, Salas and Cámara designed the Post-primary Project as an alternative to the conventional middle-school that sought to create the conditions for meaningful learning encounters between students and tutors. Seven key features distinguished the Post-primary Project from conventional middle-schools. First, its focus was to develop skills to learn independently rather than covering predetermined content. Second, post-primary centers welcomed every interested member of the community, not only middle-school age children. Third, the practice of independent study would be taught and learned through personal relationships of dialogue, against the grain of homogeneous lecture-style training sessions. Fourth, the project encouraged constant exchange between participants through school- and inter-state visits, rather than confining each school and State to their own efforts. Fifth, in the Post-primary Project, design and execution were tightly connected, against the conventional practice of hiring an external group of experts to design a project for others to implement. Sixth, the pedagogical model was deliberately designed as open and unfinished from the outset, instead of creating a “finished” model expected to be transmitted to the schools with as few changes as possible. Finally, local teams were granted autonomy to adapt the model to their local circumstances instead of creating central mandates and prescriptions.

To introduce these features in all post-primary centers, a national leadership team was created under the direct oversight of Edmundo Salas and independent from the office conventionally in charge of overseeing CONAFE’s educational programs. Provided with such flexibility, this team created a process of training and recruiting instructors less centralized and more flexible at the local and national levels. Following this process, the federal government transferred funds to participating states, granting them autonomy to select and hire a consulting team to lead the Post-primary Project in their territory. All the state-level teams, however, were trained on the principles of independent learning by the national leadership team. State teams also had autonomy to recruit, select, and train the young instructors to work in their territory and to support their work in the post-primary centers. The national leadership team also established new requirements for instructors. While other programs of basic education offered by CONAFE required instructors to have completed middle-school, Post-primary instructors were hired from among high-school graduates. These candidates were offered the opportunity to continue their studies while they served in the post-primary centers, attending university or local teachers’ college courses over the weekends (Cámara 1999, 2003).

Pedagogical Principles of the Post-primary Centers

The main goal of post-primary centers was to develop in students and adults the ability to learn independently through texts. There were three main reasons that justified the focus on this core skill. First, the ability to learn independently was considered a “master key” with lasting benefits to those who learned it, regardless of their age or formal education prospects. Second, learning to learn independently was seen as an obviously laudable goal, common to almost any educational endeavor. And third, the relatively low academic preparation of the young people who served as post-primary instructors, made it necessary to concentrate the efforts on the development of skills that could at the same time be transmissible, observable (and thus evaluable), and worth the effort of all those involved (Cámara 1999).

The foundational axiom that oriented the achievement of this general goal was the understanding that learning occurs when the interest of the learner is matched with the capacity of the teacher (Cámara 2003). As Gabriel Cámara (1999) expressed in one of his books about the Post-primary,

When these two things, interest and capacity, exist, valuable learning occurs [...] otherwise, school formalism prevails, together with all this entails in terms of mis-education, simulation and waste [...] Interest and capacity encompass the personal relationship between student and teacher. As every human relationship, it must be based on freedom and truth. (pp. 119–120)

Self-evident as this axiom may seem, however, the encounter between interest and capacity is hardly encouraged in regular schools, not only in Mexico, but in middle-schools around the world. Requirements to cover the same pre-determined content at the same pace and the organization of the school day into 50-min sessions leave little or no space for the interests of students to surface, and for the capacity of the teacher to meet their interests. To overcome this problem, post-primary centers identified tutoring as a fundamental tool to develop the skills of independent learning. Tutorial relationships of dialogue were envisioned as the key process to match the expertise of tutors with the interests of students. The role of tutors was to serve as guides who had already traveled the journey of gaining mastery of the topic chosen by the student. Through one-on-one dialogue, tutors endeavored to understand the process of thinking of the student, point out critical parts of their work to help them identify misconceptions or errors, and articulate questions that allowed students to find their own answers and make meaning from their topics of study. At the same time, each student was allowed to work at her/his own pace, taking as long as needed to gain mastery of the topics of study. Everyone was expected to demonstrate mastery of their topics in writing, in public presentations, and whenever possible, as tutors to other students.

The embracement of this axiom and the need to create learning conditions to match the interest of learners with the capacity of the teachers shaped the pedagogy of post-primary centers in fundamental ways. Content, for example, was decided based on the principle that tutors would offer to their students only those topics they had studied and mastered and students would choose from the available topics

the one in which they were most interested. Initially, these contents were selected by local and national project leaders and later shared with instructors and students in training sessions and in post-primary centers. As students and instructors gained confidence and skill to learn independently, they started identifying new topics of interest and requesting their tutors to add those to their personal catalogues. Over time, the knowledge constructed through tutorial relationships formed a collective property of the group made available to whoever was interested in learning any topic from the catalogues of the multiple tutors in the group. The specific content available to be studied in post-primary centers, therefore, was not delivered in a static form but was the result of negotiations between students and their instructors, between instructors and their trainers, and between the trainers and the Post-primary leadership. Thus, different combinations of content (some with a stronger focus on the conventional middle-school curriculum, others with a more diverse range of themes that included locally relevant topics) could be found in different communities.

The coupling of teaching capabilities and students' preferences was also at the core of the national and local training of post-primary instructors. Through a process that the leaders of the project termed "artisanal transmission" (López and Rincón-Gallardo 2003), young instructors were first exposed to the practice of tutoring by taking the role of students themselves. Through intensive and ongoing professional learning sessions, trainers at the regional, state and national levels served as their tutors and modeled the practice of tutoring that was expected from them in the post-primary centers. Instructors themselves—like anyone else participating in the Post-primary Project, chose their topics of study, followed individual lines of inquiry, and were expected to demonstrate mastery of their topics and serve as tutors to other peers. In addition to these training sessions, instructors had multiple opportunities to see the practice of tutoring in action during visits to the post-primary centers by project leaders at the regional, state and national levels, who constantly modeled the practice of tutorial relationships in post-primary centers.

The term "artisanal" serves well to qualify the process through which the skills of independent learning and tutoring were transmitted all the way from the national leadership of the Post-primary to the project teams in the states and ultimately to teachers and students. In an artisanal workshop, apprentices at different levels of mastery establish personal relationships of mentorship with a master artisan; they are able to observe the expert practice of the craft in action, and have multiple opportunities to practice, sometimes supported by other more accomplished apprentices. In a similar fashion, Post-primary actors were constantly exposed to the practice of independent learning and tutoring as performed by more experienced tutors, and had multiple opportunities to try out their new skills through constant engagement with new topics and as tutors to others (López and Rincón-Gallardo 2003).

The pedagogical principles of the Post-primary Project resulted in instructional practices that departed from the "default culture" and institutional structure of conventional schooling (Elmore 1996; Sarason 1982) in many significant ways. The freedom post-primary students had to choose their topics of study was in clear contrast with the relatively high concentration in the hands of teachers of the deci-

sions on the topics to be studied in conventional classrooms. Their opportunities to move at their own pace and to have prolonged periods of time available to focus on their topics of study contrasts with the expectation that all students move at the same pace and change from one subject to the next in predetermined time slots in traditional schools. The position of the post-primary instructor as a tutor sitting and discussing one-on-one with students finds its counterpart in the conventional culture of schooling where teachers stand up in front of the group asking questions that require simple and short answers that are either correct or incorrect. The relative freedom of post-primary students to move within the classroom—and in some cases even outside the classroom—and the constant buzz from conversations between students and tutors is at odds with the arrangements of students sitting in rows and the expectation in conventional classrooms that they remain silent and in their seats throughout the whole lesson. The public demonstration of mastery of the topics—in writing, in oral presentations, and in tutorial relationships with others—in post-primary centers finds its counterpart in conventional testing practices that characterize mainstream instruction. The participation of post-primary students as tutors to others and their contribution to a common fund of knowledge that becomes available to anyone in the group is at odds with traditional practice where the teacher acts as the only source of knowledge available to the group.

A close link between design and execution placed the Post-primary Project at odds with conventional education policy development. Unlike many externally designed educational projects expected to be implemented faithfully by actors on the ground, the Post-primary model was defined from the start as open and unfinished, to be adapted to local conditions and constantly changed based on feedback from the field. The leaders of the project at the national level committed to demonstrate that the Post-primary model could work in practice, not only in theory. Constant visits to post-primary centers, communities, and professional learning sessions became a regular practice of project leaders. During these visits, they tried out, observed, and modeled the practice that was expected from teachers and students in the schools. The visits provided Post-primary leaders with first-hand knowledge of the impact of their training model on classroom practice. This knowledge was then used to critically examine, adjust, and change the original model so that the instructional practice that was expected from instructors could become a reality in post-primary centers. After some years of experimentation and adaptation, the training model of the Post-primary evolved into an artisanal model of training whereby everyone in the project, regardless of their formal position in CONAFE, was expected to master and model the practice of independent learning and tutoring. (Cámara et.al. 2003; López and Rincón-Gallardo 2003)

Legacy of the Post-primary Project

By this cloudy morning of 2002, the vibrant learning center in *Los Talleres* is in its sixth year of operation, and the Post-primary Project has fared pretty well in both national and international evaluations (Turner 2000; PAREEIB 2002; Universidad Veracruzana 2003). These evaluations have appraised it as a successful and promising program for rural communities. Furthermore, a 2002 independent evaluation that applied national standard tests to post-primary students in the states of Estado de Mexico and Hidalgo showed that these students are, on average, scoring higher than the national mean in Mathematics and at the national mean for all middle-school students in Language (DAE 2002). The guiding principles, the design, and the evolution of the project has been or will soon be presented and discussed in five books (Cámara 1999, 2003; Cámara et. al. 2003; Cámara and López 2001; López and Rincón-Gallardo 2003), two international articles (Cámara and Fitzhugh 2001; Turner and González 2001), and multiple conferences and expert meetings nationally and internationally. The Post-primary Project is expanding its influence to other programs in CONAFE through a pilot project called *Learning to Learn*, whereby teacher trainers and instructors from five states are receiving on-site coaching to participate in and promote learning communities in pre-school centers and elementary schools. Because of its positive evaluations, the International Development Bank has suggested to use the post-primary centers as a model for the design of Community Education Centers, aimed at integrating all educational services in one single space.

Despite its relative success, the Post-primary Project came to a halt in 2003 when Roberto Moreira became the new director of CONAFE. Appointed by Vicente Fox, the president of Mexico from 2000 to 2006 who won an historical election against the official Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) that had ruled the country for over six decades, Moreira's agenda was at odds with the philosophy and practice of the Post-primary Project in two major ways. First, he showed a strong preference for quantity over quality. The 350 post-primary centers were but a minimal fraction of the more than 15,000 communities served by CONAFE. To reach all these communities, Moreira opted for a quick expansion of access to lower-secondary education and launched a new program of Community Middle Schools that would adopt the materials and infrastructure of *Telesecundaria*, an already existing program that combined elements of formal and distance education. Developed as an alternative for small and remote communities, *Telesecundaria* had played a fundamental role in expanding access to lower-secondary education across the country since the early nineties. The adoption of the *Telesecundaria* model by CONAFE shifted the focus from quality learning to rapid expansion of access.

The second core difference between Moreira's agenda and the philosophical principles of post-primary centers was the nature of the relationship between institutional authority and local educators. While Post-primary leaders had promoted a culture of horizontal communication and dialogue with students, instructors, and state-level leaders of the project, Moreira's administration endeavored to establish a hierarchical structure of leadership, where each level was expected to execute

the decisions of the higher level. Moreira placed the Post-primary team under the direct supervision of the Department of Community Education, which drastically reduced the independence and autonomy that the Post-primary leadership had been granted under Edmundo Salas. The Post-primary leadership was marginalized from the decision-making process on important programs such as the development of the above mentioned Community Education Centers for which the post-primary centers had been recommended as a model of reference. By 2003, two thirds of the regional leaders of the Post-primary Project were fired, the state-level Post-primary teams dismantled, the planned expansion of the Post-primary for that year halted, and the budget dramatically reduced. In June 2003, Gabriel Cámara left CONAFE and two months later the rest of the Post-primary national team presented their resignation.

While 2003 signals the end of the Post-primary Project, its impact continued beyond this date. Upon leaving CONAFE, Cámara and other former Post-primary leaders joined Convivencia Educativa, A.C (CEAC, Redes de Tutoría, S.C. since 2012), an organization founded by Cámara himself in the early nineties, with the intention of transferring the experience gained through the Post-primary to the public educational system in Mexico. Since 2003, this organization initiated a series of small-scale projects aimed at radically transforming teaching and learning in public schools by introducing tutorial relationships of dialogue in classrooms through the recruitment, training, and classroom-based support of voluntary public school teachers (Cámara 2006; Rincón-Gallardo et. al. 2009). Through the work of this organization, the tutorial model originally developed in the Post-primary Project expanded to hundreds of schools through informal networking and outreach undertaken by participating teachers, local educational authorities, and CEAC leaders. In 2009, the tutoring model of the post-primary centers inspired the creation of the Program for the Improvement of Educational Achievement (PEMLE), a nationwide initiative aimed at transforming instructional practice in 9,000 schools (DGDGIE 2010). By 2012, nine thousand public schools had joined PEMLE and the students in these schools seemed to have benefited by the tutoring model that informed the practices of this organization. In just two years, the 4000 schools participating in the program from the 16 states with available data had significantly increased the proportion of students scoring at “good” and “excellent” levels in the national standardized test ENLACE (DGDGIE 2012). Other reported outcomes included increased student engagement as observed in students’ interest in spending more time in school and increased percentages of graduates enrolling in high-school; increased student confidence as observed in their skills to present their learning in public and to act as tutors; as well as improved classroom discipline and better and more frequent use of school libraries (Rincón-Gallardo 2009, 2011).

The tutorial model first crafted in the post-primary centers and then expanded to scale through PEMLE has attracted the attention of leading experts in the educational change field, including Richard Elmore, Michael Fullan, Andy Hargreaves, and Dennis Shirley. Since 2012, twenty four doctoral students in the Educational Leadership program at Harvard have visited Mexico to learn first-hand about the tutorial networks first conceived through the Post-primary Project. Furthermore, the Mexican model of tutorial networks has been featured as an illustration of the future

of learning in a chapter titled, “Redefining Education: The Future of Learning Is Not the Future of Schooling” (City, Elmore and Lynch 2012) in the book *The Futures of School Reform* (Mehta, Schwartz and Hess 2012), in which leading experts discuss promising new approaches to educational reform.

In Conversation

Rodríguez One of things that makes the Post-primary Project interesting to me is the fact that it developed a very unique student-centered approach for students and communities, in this case poor rural communities in Mexico, that we traditionally disregard as not able to engage in academic projects independently. What do you think have been the particular features of the program that allowed for this unique perspective?

Rincón-Gallardo As a member of the national leadership team of the Post-primary Project between 1999 and 2003, I will highlight two key features of the Post-primary that help explain its unique perspective of trust in the innate ability of all students to learn independently and its commitment to make this perspective a reality in rural schools across Mexico. The first one is the story and leadership of Gabriel Cámara, which shaped in fundamental ways how the Post-primary Project was conceived and carried on. Having been a “bad” student himself in elementary school and most of middle-school, Gabriel Cámara discovered a passion for learning during a Summer vacation, when a good friend in a higher grade suggested that they spent some days studying Euclidean geometry—without any pressure of time, and as a project between friends. As Gabriel recalls in one of his books (Cámara 2008), his experience of meaningful learning in a relationship of friendship radically transformed his view of himself as a learner and his later engagement with school. From a young age, he made the commitment to figure out how to encourage similar experiences of powerful learning for students in schools. Through his later connection and collaboration with radical school critics such as Ivan Illich and Paulo Freire, Cámara refined the ideas that, slowly but steadily, he developed since his youth.

A second key feature that enabled the materialization of independent learning through tutorial dialogue as the educational practice advanced by the post-primary centers was the deliberate decision of the CONAFE’s leadership team to keep a strong link between design and execution, whereby the leaders of the project committed to demonstrate that the ideas advanced through the project could be materialized in the concrete practice in post-primary centers. The constant presence of project leaders in post-primary centers and their ongoing communication with leaders of the project at all levels gave them first-hand knowledge of what was happening on the ground, which in turn was used as information to refine and adapt the program strategy in ongoing cycles of learning.

Rodríguez Thinking of the difficulties of public education in rural contexts such as Mexico, what do you think are the main reflections we can take from the Post-primary Project to (re)imagine schools in these contexts?

Rincón-Gallardo I think the Post-primary Project offers three key lessons to re-imagine public education, in Mexico and abroad.

The first lesson is *envisioning and interacting with the margins as a space of possibility, rather than a space of need*. It was in the margins of the public educational system—small, scattered communities—that the Post-primary Project found a fertile ground for radical innovation. Instead of simply reproducing conventional middle schools in rural communities, the Post-primary had the audacity to reimagine public education for youth and adults in rural communities as a collective enterprise where multiple opportunities were created to promote meaningful learning encounters between students interested in particular topics and tutors willing and able to provide support and guidance. Rather than imposing a rigid structure of conventional schooling in far-off communities, meaningful learning was placed at the core of the endeavor.

The second lesson is *to focus the effort on a simple goal—independent learning through tutorial relationships of dialogue—and reconfigure instructional practice accordingly*. The Post-primary Project was successful at keeping a relentless focus on developing the ability to learn independently among students and educators. With this simple goal in mind, different approaches were tested, keeping those strategies that proved successful in attaining this goal and discarding those that didn't. More than encouraging the implementation of a particular method or technique, the work of Post-primary leaders was driven by the search and the creation of conditions that could enhance independent learning. Tutorial relationships of dialogue became a key mechanism to encourage independent learning skills due to their demonstrated effectiveness to achieve this goal.

The third key lesson offered by the Post-primary to public education is *making learning through tutorial relationships a collective endeavor, not only in classrooms but across the educational system*. Post-primary Project challenged conventional views that separate teaching and learning as activities to be carried on by two different groups of people with clearly differentiated access to power: teachers on the top in charge of “teaching” and students below responsible for following instructions. Instead, the Post-primary tells a story of the boundaries of teaching and learning becoming blurred, in such a way that anyone can teach and everyone is expected to learn, provided that the student is interested in a particular topic and the tutor has the capacity to help him master it. In the Post-primary Project, everyone was expected to develop the skill to learn independently and to serve as tutor to others, not only teachers and students, but also the leaders of the Post-primary at the national and State-levels. Who was to be a tutor was determined by the demonstrated mastery of a given topic, not by formal position within the classroom or the institutional structure of CONAFE. This way the Post-primary Project challenged the dominant view of educational policy that separates policy and practice in a top-down fashion, with policy-makers at the top in charge of establishing mandates and teachers at the bottom as implementers of policy mandates.

The Post-primary Project radically redefined, in a way that is grounded in concrete experience, the relationships at the core of the educational endeavor: the relationship between teachers and students in the presence of content, and the relationship between educational policy and pedagogy. This experience invites us to imagine public educational system where the ability to learn independently is continuously cultivated through relationships of dialogue between someone interested in learning and someone with the capacity to support the journey. Furthermore, the Post-primary Project invites us to imagine public education as a system where the teacher becomes a learner and the learner becomes a teacher, but also where educational policy learns from practice and practice reshapes policy in ongoing cycles of learning.

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Chapter 12

A Multicultural Curriculum for Educational Equity: Montclair High School, (U.S. 1983–1990)

Bernadette Anand

Implementing multicultural education effectively can take time, energy, and a great deal of work. But, imagine, for a moment, the potential: Learners seeing themselves in the curriculum, their voices being heard and valued in the classroom. Students feeling a part of the educational process, learning and obtaining the high expectations that are set for them, and beginning to believe that they belong. Imagine students feeling informed, competent, and able to make decisions that have an impact on their lives, their children, and generations to come. Multicultural education holds the power to transform, it provides hope at a time when the future is unclear, and, perhaps most importantly, it provides an opportunity for us to imagine the world as a fair, equitable, and just place in which to live and work. (Cumming-McCann 2003, p. 12)

Introduction

In the above quote, Cumming-McCann reflects the work of key theorists in the field of multicultural education. In 2010, Geneva Gay called for cultural responsive teaching, a practice she defined as “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students” (pp. 30–31). Christine Sleeter (2013) insisted that any true multicultural education must empower students to “analyze and act together on social justice problems” (p. 5). bell hooks (1994) stressed the importance of “building community in order to create a climate of openness and intellectual rigor” (p. 40). In short, Cumming-McCann has asked us to imagine what it takes to transform schools, move them from institutional racism and other forms of discrimination (Giroux 1985) to an environment where students feel confident, have a voice within a curriculum that

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mirrors their personal and cultural experiences, while acting as “social critics who can make reflective decisions and implement [them]” (Banks 1991, p. 131).

In 1983, Montclair, New Jersey, a suburban community integrated by race and class, took up this challenge and supported the efforts of its high school English department to create an equitable multicultural space for Black and White students. What follows is the English Department’s journey told from my perspective as chair from 1983 to 1990. A detailed account of how this process unfolded within the department and the community illustrates how the confluence of many factors led to a transformed curriculum and a radical change within a formerly unjust system of ability grouping.

Montclair High School: Undoing Racial Segregation

In the Reconstruction period 1865–1877 that immediately followed the Civil War (1861–1865) three amendments to the U.S. Constitution (The Thirteenth, The Fourteenth, and The Fifteenth) and a Civil Rights Act in 1865 were passed to provide rights to former slaves. Almost immediately after slavery was officially ended with the passing of the Thirteenth Amendment, “Black Codes,” state and federally sanctioned laws were passed in 1865 and 1866 to severely restrict the rights of African Americans. In 1890, a series of Jim Crow laws were passed to guarantee separate and unequal facilities, from rest rooms, to trains, to schools. From 1849 until the middle of the next century, the *de facto* (segregation by fact) and *de jure* (segregation by law) realities of segregation were one (Anand et al. 2002).

A change occurred in the 1950s and 1960s. Through a series of demands punctuated by mass protests and actions organized by national organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), as well as through the leadership of civil rights figures such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Fanny Lou Hamer, and John Lewis, the nation grew to understand the constitutional rights that all citizens had but were still being denied. By the mid 1960s, Jim Crow Laws were being challenged and overturned. This period came to be known as The Civil Rights Movement. Among its several milestones was the establishment of integrated schools through the landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). While many schools in the South began their integration efforts soon after, implementation in the North lagged.

Such was the case in Montclair, New Jersey, a suburban northeastern town located about 25 miles outside of New York City. Demographically, 40% of Montclair is Black; the remainder is mostly White with a small percentage of Latinos and Asians. Montclair residents come from mixed economic backgrounds with wealth and poverty represented across racial groups. While national events played a major role in bringing about equity in 1973, almost sixteen years after the nation’s Supreme Court ruled that segregation within schools is unconstitutional, this town

of 38,000 came to grips with its own de facto segregation under the guise of local schools serving racially concentrated neighborhoods. To remedy this inequity, local organizations such as the NAACP, community activists, civil rights lawyers and a New Jersey state court order in 1966 pressured the local Board of Education to adopt a school integration plan. This plan of action sought to correct racial imbalance in the school system by the creation of magnet schools and the implementation of voluntary busing to these magnets. Attractive themes around the arts supported by many resources drew children from the White Northern sections of the town to elementary schools (Pre K through Grade 5) and middle schools (Grades 6–8) on the predominantly Black South side of town; while schools in the mostly White northern section became magnets for Blacks wanting to receive a strong fundamental education. These magnet elementary and middle schools all fed into one comprehensive secondary school—Montclair High School.

Addressing Inequities Through a Multicultural Approach

In 1983, when I chaired the English Department at Montclair High School, the Montclair Public School System had consolidated a magnet choice program that would later be praised by national organizations such as the Educational Testing Service (ETS) (Anand et al. 2002). Despite the strides in the district's school integration, however, what I found was a rigid, racialized and classed tracking system in place reflecting the inequity of opportunity that pervaded "integrated" U.S. schools (Conchas 2006). Of the thirteen hundred students enrolled at the high school, 70% were White; and the remaining 30% were mostly Black with a small percentage of Latinos and Asians. Within the English 9–1 A (the highest honors ninth grade course), there were only two Black students enrolled in a class of thirty-three students, while in the tenth grade, the lowest tracked class, were all Black students with the exception of two White students. This segregation during their first two years had consequences that followed Black students through the remainder of their four years at Montclair High School. Integration that worked well in the elementary schools, and somewhat in the middle schools, had been dismantled within all the departments and subject areas at the high school.

At district wide curriculum meetings middle school English teachers would voice their concerns regarding the process they had to follow when recommending their students for leveled high school courses. They asserted that eligibility for advanced placement classes based on test scores, grades and personal recommendation was an unfair practice because it locked some students out of the rich, academically challenging curriculum in the advanced placement courses required for college readiness. They pointed out that the process of tracking sent messages that intelligence was fixed, inherited, and racially determined rather than "acquired and multidimensional" (Oakes et al. 2013, p. 165). As concerned educators, they were "through a serious, correct, political analysis unveiling opportunities for hope..."

(Freire 1995, pp. 9–10). However, little was done to address their concerns so, the process and the school's traditional tracking system remained in place until the English department took up the challenge many years later.

Over time, dissatisfaction mounted around the inequity and accessibility to high quality classroom experiences for African American students at Montclair High School. Nationwide there was a growing multicultural curriculum movement which Grant (1998) attributed to a rise in the U.S. immigrant population; a change in the country's workforce, and a shift away from traditional individualism to "the acceptance and affirmation of both groups and individuals" (p. 190). In an effort to be responsive to these demographic changes, the Montclair Public School District contracted with the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education to provide an intensive one-year professional development program for the high school English teachers. The goal was to offer members of the English department ways they might build their cultural competency. In other words, to expand their cultural sensibilities by reading literature that reflected perspectives of diverse cultures and one that maintained "cultural integrity as well as academic excellence" (Ladson-Billings 1995, p. 160).

As eager participants in The Metropolitan Center's professional development workshops, we began to understand more clearly that access and equity meant more than the addition of more students of color in the advanced placement sections. In order to achieve true equity of experience, students also deserved to read and discuss quality literature that reflected their own and others' cultures and to be prepared to write about and connect these experiences. Under the guidance of two Black scholars from the Metro Center, we received not only resources but a multicultural framework that could be used when working with the rich literature missing in our students' education. That year, we purchased single copies of African American masterpieces recommended by the Center and added additional literature representative of the cultures of Japan, China, Russia, Mexico, Native Americans, and India. Each of the teachers in the English Department selected a book to read and discuss during our regularly scheduled group meetings. Decisions were made about which newly found multicultural classics could be added, paired or substituted for more traditional pieces in the existing syllabus.

But, as Banks (1998) reminds us, it's not enough to simply add ethnic or global content because alone "it fails to help students view society from diverse cultural and ethnic perspectives" (p. 37). If we expected to change our classrooms, we needed to address the fact that our own academic training had taught us to ignore the literatures of other cultures, see them as "non-canonical," and critique them mostly through a Western European lens. In order to teach students how to appreciate such works as Chinua Achebe's (1994) *Things Fall Apart*, Zora Neale Hurston's (1937) *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, or Anita Desai's (1980) *Clear Light of Day*, we would have to acquire an understanding of other world views, challenge our perceptions and assumptions about "classic" literature. We needed to steep ourselves in the traditions, history and culture that produced these classics. In short we needed to develop competencies such as these in our students (Sleeter 1991). It was imperative for us to do a respectful and knowledgeable crossing of borders by giving

attention to the notion of difference and its rootedness in history, culture, power and ideology (Schwartz 1995). For this kind of reading and analysis we would also have to acquire skills required as global citizens, namely understanding, empathy and connection to the universal human condition. For example, when reading *Two Old Women* (Wallis 1994), based on an Athabasca folk tale told by mothers to their children in Alaska, would we and our students be able to critically examine the experience of two women elders left behind by their starving people and thereby have empathy with a world broader than our own? Would we be able to

place knowledge that we teach, the social relations that dominate classrooms, the school as a mechanism of cultural and economic preservation and distribution, and finally, ourselves as people who work in these institutions, back into the context in which they all reside people who work in the that existed, and still does in U.S. society? (Apple 1990, p.k r

In the summer of 1985, three department members and I enrolled in a two-week intensive seminar called Global Perspectives on Literature. We experienced an intensive reading regimen of six novels representative of the cultural demographics of Montclair, and as we worked with these we became more aware of the cultural aspects and critical literary frameworks necessary for understanding: Anita Desai's (1980) *Clear Light of Day*, *The Waiting Years* by Fumiko Enchi (2002), *Miss Sophie's Diary* (Ling 1985), *Death and the King's Horseman* (Soyinka 2002), and *So Long a Letter* by Mariama Ba (2008).

In 1989 I became a member of the National Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity Project (SEED), a staff development program that encouraged its participants to discuss literature as related to personal experience and culture. Our seminar group met monthly to think about our own education in relation to race, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, abilities, and age, and how these factors impact our schools and classrooms. That year and for six consecutive years after, I deepened not only my understanding of myself and others' experiences, but discovered ways to take this learning and to build a curriculum that grew out of the "textbooks of my students' lives" (Style 1998).

A poignant example of our new ability to build curriculum from our students' voices was the way in which we changed our classroom pedagogy. Before our SEED experiences we would teach each piece of literature as a separate entity. Tenth grade students would read, study, and write about *Night* by Eli Wiesel (2006) and repeat the same process when engaging with Frederick Douglass' (1995) *The Narratives of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. But after our SEED experiences, we changed our approach. We began with the students' personal experiences around the theme of oppression central to Wiesel's personal account of the Holocaust and Douglass's around Enslavement. Our students shared personal stories about times they had experienced oppression. They talked about how this oppression made them feel. Were there any allies who were there for them and if so, what did those allies do? If not, what would they have liked someone to do to interrupt the oppression? We collected and published these personal testimonies that framed our readings of Wiesel's and Douglass' narratives. Because of our personal growth in SEED, as teachers, we were able to start from the students' own experiences with oppression and personal marginalization and then build empathy across racial lines.

When both Black and Jewish students saw the parallels in each others' cultural and historic experiences with oppression and read about the alliances Jews created with Blacks in the Civil Rights Movement (Takaki 1993), they discovered their mutual bond and began to work collaboratively to dismantle the forms of exclusion extant in their daily lives.

The English Department Takes Action for Social Justice

Through practice based on learnings at SEED and readings provided by the Metro the members of the English Department became committed to issues of social justice and democracy. Fine et al. (2000) remind us that in the absence of community, commitment to creative analysis of difference, power and privilege and an enduring investment in democratic youth are absent, then

...settings that are technically desegregated will corrode into sites of oppositional identities, racial tensions, and fractured group relationships, which simply mirror the larger society. To create these conditions requires deliberate counter-hegemonic struggle by educators, activists and youth, to invent and sustain multiracial intellectual and social sites for everyone—what integration means after all. (p. 23)

By 1992, all twenty teachers in the high school English Department signed a letter to the district's director of curriculum outlining the urgency to eliminate the three tracked sections of ninth grade English. They proposed instead a single heterogeneously grouped multicultural English course for all ninth graders. The department's decision was bold, striking at the heart of inequity because it initiated a process that could dismantle years of "separate and unequal" education at the Montclair High School and possibly change a system that had "disproportionate numbers of black students [that are] placed in special education and basis skills improvement classes..." The letter also addressed the issue that the "...Montclair High School National Honor Society, with a membership of approximately 150 students... rarely [has] more than three Black members per class" (Manners 1998, p. 90). The town went through a rancorous debate mirroring on the one hand national fears of cultural dilution, loss of academic rigor, and a tearing of the nation's social fabric. On the other hand, there was the knowledge and the research that multicultural education was indeed the foundation for "E pluribus unum," our U.S. motto (Takaki 1993). The debate closed, and the Montclair Board of Education in a 4–3 vote institutionalized the ninth grade heterogeneous World Cultures and Literature Course.

To implement the board's action, three of us from the English Department, myself included) met to design a course that would, "given the multiple lines of differences within society...produce shared experiences...and enable students to develop ties with others unlike themselves" (Minow 2010, p. 161). Buoyed up by what bell hooks calls "engaged pedagogy" (hooks quoted in Florence 1998, p. 75), we reworked our curriculum content, activities, assessments and approaches to instruction to interrupt power inequities that are hallmarks of hegemonic, homogenous teaching and learning.

We focused on the subject of world literatures for two reasons. First, the department was committed to decentering Western canonical literature and expanding towards the inclusion of classics from around the globe. Second, since all students in their ninth grade year were required to study World history, again on different tracked levels, we decided to focus on the historic and cultural backgrounds of the material the students would study. While our aspiration was to integrate history and English into one interdisciplinary World Cultures and World Literature course, we could not go ahead since the History Department was not entirely supportive. We focused on eight cultural groups, namely, Greece, Nigeria, South Africa, Mexico, China, Japan, Iraq (Former Mesopotamia), and England, whose literature was readily available and resonated with high school students.

We gathered core texts that we had become familiar with during our professional development seminars, readings and course development process. The following texts were used either because of our familiarity with them or the fact that they were recommended by the National Council of the Teachers of English (NCTE): *Things Fall Apart* (Achebe 1994), *Legend of La Llorona* (Anaya 1991), Bhagavad Gita from the *Mahabharata* Epic (2009), *Antigone* (Sophocles 2005), *The Sound of Waves* (Mishima 1956), *The Tao Te Ching* and *The Tao of Pooh* (Hoff 1982), *The Odyssey* (Homer 1991), *Kaffir Boy* (Mathabane 1986), *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare 1992). We supported each of these works with short stories, poems, essays, memoirs, and autobiographical selections that would integrate well with the larger core texts and contribute to a deeper understanding of each. In order to understand further the role colonialism played in Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart*, we read the short story, *The White Old Witch* by Grace Ogot (1968) and a selection from Ngugi wa Thiong'o's (1986) *Decolonizing the Mind*. When the theme of happiness surfaced in our reading of Chinese literature, we enriched the discussion with Lao Tzu's writings and an essay on happiness by Naguib Mahfouz (1993) entitled *The Happy Man*.

And then, through our deep reading of *Things Fall Apart*, one of the teachers discovered the masterful way Achebe wove Nigerian proverbs, folk tales and ancient stories into his novel. We explored the role traditional folklore played in shaping the thought processes of not only Nigerian but other cultures, as well. As a result, we decided to root the study of each culture with a deep look into their ancient traditions and mythologies (creation stories, folktales, proverbs and fables). This approach would also provide a way for us to dispel stereotypes, values, perceptions and beliefs. We knew having this knowledge would provide the necessary background to delve into authentic deep reading of the biographies, autobiographies, historical and realistic fiction, poetry and essays from each of the eight countries students would explore. Responses to these texts would take the form of reflective journals, creative papers, expository essays (specifically persuasion), literary analysis, and cause and effect, and students would be expected to write in a variety of ways including literary analysis and extended definition. Our assessments would also be authentic. To demonstrate their knowledge of the literature students would choose to either write a dramatic version of *La Llorona*, debate George's concluding action in *Of Mice and Men* or choreograph a dance rooted in the values, beliefs

and traditions that produced *The Bhagavad Gita*. A portfolio indicative of growth in writing expository essays and more creative responses would be at the heart of a strong writing workshop.

A richer curriculum emerged—one layered over and over again with poetry, mythologies, personal stories, drama, critiques, and more importantly student-centered discussions that interrogated oppression and the ways power was used to deny and devalue cultural, racial and gendered voices. But since many of the texts would call upon the students to come into contact with different cultural values and experiences around which they didn't feel "safe", it would be important for us as teachers to call upon what Pratt (1991) would describe as a set of

...pedagogical arts of the contact zone...exercises in storytelling and in identifying with the ideas, interests, histories, and attitudes of others, experiments in transculturation and collaborative work and in the arts of critique, parody and comparison.... the redemption of the oral; ways for people to engage with suppressed aspects of history (including their own histories), ways to move *into and out* of rhetorics of authenticity; ground rules for communication across lines of difference and hierarchy that go beyond politeness but maintain mutual respect; a systematic approach to the all-important concept of *cultural mediation* [emphasis in original]. (p. 40)

We would teach our students to see what Apple and Buras (2006) term the "subaltern," to learn how to talk about other groups and examine our perceptions of them in light of our own experiences and through our personal cultural lenses. For example when a posse of male elders insist Okonkwo, the protagonist in *Things Fall Apart*, kill his adoptive son to exonerate the village from a past crime, Okonkwo puts aside his love for his son to demonstrate his strength and masculinity. To help the students not to dismiss this act as culturally primitive, I devised an exercise that charted the male and female gender messages in this book and those we receive in our own culture. While the students still found the act of murder horrific, they recognized that there was little difference in the cultural thinking behind gender roles and expectations in both cultures.

And just as we thought our syllabus was complete, we conversed about the road ahead and how important it would be in that first month of school to "inspire and support those students who enter the course biographically assured of their (assumed natural) academic advantages and those students who have long been convinced of their (assumed natural) inability to work through challenging texts" (Fine et al. 2000, p. 164). If this course was to achieve its goal of creating a community of learners as we responded to complex cross ethnic and racial identities, values and perceptions, then our classrooms would have to be places where every voice would be heard, and where no one was afraid to speak up or respectfully challenge another.

Out of those pregnant moments came our introductory unit titled *Perspectives, a curriculum plan* that would prove to open the space in the classroom to what Geneva Gay (2010) would call "cultural responsiveness" in teaching and learning. We wanted to design a place where the styles, experiences, values and beliefs of all students would find expression and be open to examination. We crafted each lesson for the unit. Beginning with journal writes based on Sandra Cisneros' (1991) *My Name*

in *The House on Mango Street*, we moved to an examination of five poems culturally different in their experiences but expressive of the themes of stereotyping, bias, and prejudice. We were asking our ninth graders, through poetry's sheer emotive quality, to experience the effects of hurtful remarks, name calling, and the multiple micro-aggressions that often fill classrooms. As Fine et al. (2000) remind us,

No classroom is Teflon-resistant to the winds of racialized, gendered and classed, and homophobic elements in America. The splitting into "good students" and "remedial students," which characterizes high schools and is interrupted in this [World Literature] classroom, reveals the workings of power. ...power and privilege are ruthlessly enacted in integrated classrooms, evident particularly when educators seek to interrupt racialized and classed hierarchies. (pp. 171–172)

Students read how incidents of racist name-calling, hurtful jokes about a person's ethnicity as well as gender bias all contribute to feeling alienated and marginalized. Through the reading of a poignant television drama *Twelve Angry Men* we explored the effects racial and prejudicial attitudes can have when making decisions about a person's innocence or guilt. We read two short stories. The first, *Stopover in Queretaro* helped our students to think more critically about how assumptions of others form beliefs and influence behavior. They were challenged to consider the different, the other, and to ponder the fragility of their own ideas, and to understand how "hegemonic systems have inherent weaknesses and are always in the process of defending themselves against challenge, although this defensive stance is often invisible and the systems are regarded...as impenetrable and omnipotent" (Vaught 2011, pp. 202–203).

In the second short story, *Sunday in the Park*, studying conflict helped them to see how a small sandbox incident can actually mirror what occurs outside the classrooms and around the globe. And the novella *Of Mice and Men* would expose the victim blaming that goes on when working within uneven power issues and when considering difference in abilities and gender. With each reading, each discussion and each example of how oppression reveals itself in the lives of the individuals within the literature, we built an awareness of otherness.

Two Years Later: The Results of the De-tracked Multicultural Project

Curriculum change evolved because of the concurrent braiding of the following efforts: the English Department's commitment to equity and excellence and de-tracking; community support from organizations like the NAACP, the Board of Education, and The League of Women Voters, and through strong professional development provided by SEED and the Metro Center.

The first positive effect could be seen in the attitudes and behaviors of the students who initially arrived at the high school after completing their elementary and middle school education in classrooms of heterogeneity. At one end were the sup-

posed “smart” kids with course material and its associated “mono-cultural” pedagogy traditionally geared to Western “classics.” Students at the middle and bottom ends of this sorting were understandably discomforted in being tagged. The ninth grade English program addressed this inequitable sorting immediately by balancing all six sections of the ninth grade classes by race, gender and prior achievement levels measured by grades and national and state tests. Through multiple pedagogies including collaborative learning groups, discussions, and field trips, students were able to build strong relationships and see each other as valued members of the class (Roche 1994).

Growth measured through student achievement data was also encouraging. An examination of scores on the New Jersey State Early Warning Writing Test indicated improvement from 82.8 in Grade 8 to 84.0 in Grade 9. Since the state also provided proficiency levels, the district looked at those and noted, “more students fell into the level 1 (competent) proficiency level than in the prior year.” The selection of Grade 10 English courses was also used as an indicator of the number of students able to perform at a higher level as a result of their ninth grade World Literature experience. In addition, 83% of the students in the World Literature course selected the higher-level 10th grade English courses over the prior year’s 77% (Roche 1994).

Surveys were distributed to parents, students and staff. Students said that after taking the course, they: (1) knew more about the literature of other cultures; (2) were more aware of the perspectives of other cultures; and (3) felt the course helped them to be more collaborative learners and critical thinkers. Some teachers highlighted the significant gains in student performance but requested additional staff development and time to plan with each other.

Simultaneously the district held workshops for parents to orient them to the new curriculum content. Local churches held discussion groups and the League of Women Voters offered a series of workshops in support. The town, known for its commitment to Civil Rights, came together to understand and embrace this well-considered development.

While we had changed the course content, as English teachers we recognized our need to learn how best to develop, deliver, and assess it. We saw that to engage in culturally relevant teaching our students would have to experience success, cultural competence and critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings 1995, p. 160). We attended specially designed professional development programs and discussed culturally appropriate ways of approaching and analyzing the multicultural material we now taught. We as teachers visited each other’s classrooms and practiced how to manage this new cultural landscape by giving and receiving feedback to each other in an atmosphere of collegiality.

The school district funded a yearlong (1992–1993) initiative for two SEED programs, one for teachers and the other for the community. Members of the Montclair community, home to many journalists and writers, volunteered to coach and teach in the Writer’s Room a program that continued for several years, and closed only recently due to budgetary issues. Because coaches and outside readers gave re-

sponses to first drafts, teachers were able to make their classrooms more writing process oriented. Students at various points in their writing proficiency were able to either find their voices or progress substantially. In the final year-end report to the Montclair district, one of the course evaluators indicated “The portfolios portray a course where students are asked to perform to high standards of the kind that are particularly being formulated at the national level” (Roche 1994, p. 2).

The school superintendent established the Community Council, a partnership of community members, organizations and the schools. Out of this council, balanced study/discussion groups were formed to explore issues of racism and sexism in the classrooms and obstacles to the resolution of community concerns. A Student Leadership Project brought integrated forums of middle and high school students together to work with other youth groups on local and state levels. Sunrise Seminars and Special Events offered additional opportunities for community members to get to know each other. During the summer of 1993, two parents and I submitted and received a grant proposal to establish a Culture of Community Project in order to engage in race dialogues and community building.

Teachers agreed to hold themselves accountable and gauge student achievement through New Jersey’s standardized tests, the National Standards Project Assessment, and through yearlong writing portfolios. Drs. Denny Palmer Wolfe and Willa Spicer were engaged to assist with this process and, as mentioned above, the three teacher leaders, including myself as Department Chair, attended graduate courses at Montclair State University and consulted with its English Department’s multicultural literature experts.

Michelle Fine, supported by the Spencer and Carnegie Foundations, documented over a two year period the evolution of classroom praxis looking “closely at a space in which racial, gendered, and economic power are self-consciously analyzed and interrupted; a space in which re-vision is insisted upon” (Fine et al. 2000, p. 165). In addition to the resulting research article, some twenty years later, *Off Track* (Fine et al. 1998), the short documentary of this effort, still enjoys a significant following. Finally, Montclair’s students are now exposed to new perspectives and cosmopolitan voices through “a rich literary heritage of cultures foreign to most teenagers but central to their understanding of the global society they will inhabit as adults (Montclair Times 1995, November 16, p. A 14).

While the World Literature course survives to this day, the tenor of the times emphasizes high stakes testing and wide scale privatization of the educational enterprise throughout the United States (Fabricant and Fine 2013). This affects Montclair as well. Funding for professional development has been cut, and teachers, the professional guides charged to be empowering liberators of young people, are reduced to becoming purveyors of state mandated Common Core Standards. Montclair’s parents continue their struggle in coalition with teachers and students to strengthen civic capacity and build solidarity across racial and ethnic groups in order to confront their Board’s mandates for high stakes testing as they continue to sustain a democratic sphere for public education.

In Conversation

Rodríguez This chapter presented multiculturalism and de-tracking as necessary practices to achieve social equality in contexts of unequal relations of power. In retrospect, how do you think students in the district with histories of oppression, particularly Black students, benefited from this approach?

Anand I believe there were three ways students, particularly Black students, benefited from this course. First, because the literature represented a wide range of cultures, there were opportunities for these students to see themselves reflected in these stories—a first for so many of them. At the same time, they were able to notice how other characters' perspectives and values differed from their own. A combination of the personal and the other, the mainstream and the subaltern traditions were then exposed and space was opened up for new discussions unique to our formerly homogeneously configured high school English classrooms.

Secondly, reading about Crooks, Curley's wife and Lennie in *Of Mice and Men*, Rukmani in *A Nectar in a Sieve* and Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* and La Malinche in *The Legend of La Llorona* helped these students to understand how race, class, gender and "disability" constrict the realities of a wide range of characters. This recognition opened up another space in the classroom to critically examine multiple forms of oppression in the works and to make the necessary connections to their own lives. When students read about how Crooks is forced to live separately from the other workers because he is Black; how Rukmani suffers more at the hands of a society because of her gender; or how Okonkwo's way of life is destroyed by the "cultural bomb" that a colonial empire drops in his country, discussions became more animated, sometimes divided, often interrupted with victim blaming but filled with the unheard voices of Black students who were less inhibited to speak about race, ethnicity and oppression than most of their white peers and were thereby able to interrupt the blame game.

These discussions facilitated by their culturally responsive teachers offered a multicultural heterogeneous group of students many opportunities to develop a critical consciousness about their identities and to scrape away at the power differential that had pervaded their prior schooling experiences and education.

Finally, as Black students presented their unique identities and engaged in classroom discussions around race, class, gender and disability, the deficit script many had acquiesced to began to change. Marginalized voices became strong and secure in their own "smartness" and challenged the negative myths, stereotypes and perceptions extant in our traditionally homogenous high school. As Tarique, one of the students in the video *Off Track* (Fine et al. 1998) said so aptly, "We became convinced of our different intelligences."

Rodríguez Based on your experience at Montclair HS, what possibilities does multiculturalism offer us to rethink the public nature of public education?

Anand In the United States, we are experiencing a backlash against public school education and inadvertently one against democracy. Schools are becoming more and more socio-economically and ethnically segregated. The more fortunate are fleeing poorer urban areas to more affluent suburban areas that tend to be more homogenous in terms of race and income level. Even within our urban areas, schools are serving neighborhoods and single ethnic groups increasingly dominate these neighborhoods. The town of Montclair with its history of working towards equity and social justice could offer an alternative to this trend. The community has had experience in building coalitions across racial lines. It established and still maintains a magnet school system to guarantee demographic racial balance in the schools. Montclair allowed us to rethink public education by reminding us how important it is for communities to continue their struggle for social inclusion and for schools to develop, live and implement a multicultural philosophy in all aspects of the curriculum and in their school practices. Montclair has been a beacon in its struggle for equity and excellence.

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Chapter 13

La Nostra Escola Comarcal: An Educational Cooperative in Defense of Democratic, Active and Valencian Pedagogy (Spain 1973)

M^a del Carmen Agulló Díaz and Andrés Payá Rico

Introduction

In the final years of the Franco dictatorship, which persisted in Spain across four decades (1936–1975), a group of parents determined to give their children a more democratic and pedagogically sound education founded, with great collective effort, *La Nostra Escola Comarcal*. The school began in Villa Carmen, a building located in the town of Catarroja in the region of Valencia on October 6, 1973. With 50 students between 2 and 6 years of age and four teachers, the school started offering early childhood education, an educational level not compulsory at that time (Raga 1983). More grades were progressively incorporated until the 1976–1977 academic year when the Ministry of Education, the national accrediting body in education, authorized the school to also offer elementary education. Presently, the school is located in a newly constructed building in Picassent, a community close to the original school site. It provides education to more than 400 students enrolled in early childhood, elementary and compulsory secondary education (2–16 years of age) and has a teaching faculty of over 30 teachers (CIRIEC-España 2012). At the beginning of the 1980s, the school ceased to be completely private and became a part of the public education network by remaining privately managed but receiving funding from the Autonomous Community of Valencia, the political entity of the Valencia region.

From the beginning and given its concern with democratic educational models, *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* has sought to establish pedagogical flexibility and collaboration between teachers. In the initial moments, these characteristics were facilitated by the low number of students and by the opportunity for integrating groups of students from different levels. During the four decades of its existence, the school has conserved this flexibility by following the three fundamental elements that characterized the originating moment: (1) Parents continue to be the school's engine and to be highly involved in the school through a representative

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system that assures their democratic participation; (2) The school continues to be non-denominational and coeducational, characteristics now recognized in the national education legislation but that were unique and defining to the founding of the school; (3) *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* continues to be committed to recognizing local forms of knowledge and practices as well as to the teaching of *Valenciano*, the language of Valencia which was prohibited during the Franco Regime, and which is now recognized as the official second language of the Autonomous Community of Valencia.

These elements, however, have not remained intact but have adapted to the natural changes experienced by educational cooperatives as well as to the Spanish educational context marked by the political transition to democracy during the 1970s and 1980s. The following sections provide an account of the educational significance and current impact of the school's founding and development.

Pedagogical Innovation as Alternative to Schools of the Franco Regime

La Nostra Escola Comarcal was born as a reaction against the centralized and monolithic school model of the Franco dictatorship, a political regime characterized by its authoritarianism, its Spanish nationalism and its Orthodox approach to Catholicism (Mayordomo et al. 2007). This regime, born out of a bloody civil war, admitted no political dissent, considered Spain to be a single and unified nation, and imposed the Castilian language and culture on the entire Spanish territory, effectively denying the rich linguistic and cultural diversity of the different Spanish regions. Moreover, the official Orthodox Catholicism defended traditional values subjugating secular policies to its religious values.

Educationally, this regime imposed a passive methodology typified by the practices of recitation, memorization and repetition. It also maintained a rigid separation between social classes and genders in schools, the former by leaving education in the hands of private initiatives and the latter by prohibiting coeducational education and by mandating a separate curriculum for women (Agulló Díaz 1994).

Structurally, schools at the beginning of the 1970s were still regulated by the 1857 law, also known as *Ley Moyano*. In conformance with this legislation, obligatory schooling did not begin until 6 years of age and extended only until 12 years of age (grades 1–6). This law did not include early childhood education, consequently creating a first degree of discrimination between children who could afford private Catholic schools for this educational level and those who could access only daycare centers run by caretakers lacking pedagogical training.

In the face of this unequal and authoritarian educational reality, the end of the 1960s witnessed an eruption of pedagogical initiatives of great social significance. The cooperative movement of Catalonia, Valencia's neighboring region, and since the early 1980s one of the Spanish Autonomous Communities (Canals et al. 2001), and the *Tramuntana* school in Valencia, also now recognized as a political Autono-

mous Community, are good examples in this regard (Agulló Díaz and Payá Rico 2012). In Catalonia, the movement for pedagogical reform materialized in the creation of schools organized as cooperatives and founded by the “Intellectuals,” a group of intellectuals who were determined to defend Catalonia’s language and culture, to foster democratically structured organizations, to advance ecumenical councilian Christianity, to claim civic and political commitment and, in education, to promote active methodologies. In Valencia, the *Tramuntana* school was prompted by the collective effort of a variety of groups dedicated to defend the identity and interests of people of Valencia. The school was established in 1968 as a pilot pedagogical experience promoting active pedagogies and democratic principles rooted in local culture, while promoting civic consciousness. All these initiatives contended that schools should be democratic, pedagogically innovative and grounded in the local. Given that these practices were forbidden in public education at that time, all of these schools began as private.

These pedagogical innovations gained strength in the 1970s. Prompted by a timid liberalization of the economy and by the need to provide better education to the new Spanish workforce, in 1970 the dictatorship promulgated the *Ley General de Educación* [General Education Law]. Structurally, the great change in this legislation was the establishment of 8 years of common and compulsory education from 6 to 14 years of age (grades 1–8). Pedagogically, however, this legislation introduced few changes. Because it endorsed a technocratic model, the law promoted little innovations in teaching methods or school materials and conserved much of the ideological bases of the National Catholicism that characterized the dictatorship.

It was within this educational legislation still anchored in the dictatorship and still lacking coverage for early childhood education that a group of parents in the region of l’Horta Sud in Valencia envisioned an alternative educational experience for their small children.¹ The common denominator to the members of this group was a strong commitment to the community. The majority of them were involved in political groups, labor unions, or community-based religious groups that demanded democratic policies. The group also shared the conviction that the greatest chance of social transformation resided in education. It was precisely this commitment to democracy and community what caused them to establish *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* as a cooperative and not as a private school (Bragualt 1985).

There were other common characteristics that shaped the vision of the school and that furthered the group’s commitment to collaborative practices. All of the founding members came from the same region. Many of them had also participated as mothers or fathers or as teachers in two previous innovative schools. *Tramuntana*, the first of them and already mentioned above, had been the first secular, coeducational, and democratic school in Valencia that also promoted *Valencian* identity. Pedagogically, the school was inspired by the educational theories of Cé-

¹ The main members of this group were: Pep Soriano, Pura Raga, Rosa Raga, Carme Diego, Nicolau David, Vicent Diego, Pep Sanchis Lola Ausina, Xavier Alfonso, Emili Tortosa, Paco Labiós, Lluís Valero, Paco Pons, Roser Martínez, Lluís Martínez, Manolo Marco, Norbert Moreno, M^a Amèlia Vilanova and Toni Ferrer.

lestin Freinet and by A.S. Neill. The second, *Massanassa*, was an early childhood education school founded in 1969 by a group of families that disagreed with the traditional notion of day care centers as non-educationally relevant and that introduced an innovative pedagogical perspective in this stage.

Additionally, many mothers in the founding group worked as teachers and were involved in the *Movimientos de Renovación Pedagógica* (MRPs) [Movements for Pedagogical Renewal], the umbrella organization for pedagogically innovative experiences at that moment. Many of them, for example, belonged to the Pedagogical Chapter of the cultural association in Valencia known as *Lo Rat Penat*, an organization that attracted teachers and students interested in a model of school rooted in the *Valencian* culture that would eventually become an alternative and widely reputed teacher training program. Others belonged to the *Asociación para la Correspondencia y la Imprenta Escolar* [Association for Correspondence and the School Printing] created to promote the techniques and pedagogical principles of Célestin Freinet. Many of the mothers/teachers in the group had also participated in the professional development encounters of the *Escoles d'estiu* [summer schools] of Barcelona, summer schools for teachers organized by the MRPs, and had visited pedagogically emblematic schools at the moment such as *Rosa Sensat* in Catalonia (Codina 2002) or the *ikastolas* in the Basque country (Basurco 1995).

Participation in this type of pedagogical experience generated a great commitment to collaborative practices, a sentiment reflected in the group's engagement to debate, cooperation and collective work from the outset. During the approximately 2 years the school was under development prior to the opening date in 1973, the founding members attended innumerable meetings and organized themselves into the working committees that would ultimately configure the cooperative organization of the school. This participatory process also informed the collaborative approach to design the school's organization and pedagogical principles explained below.

Establishment of the Bases for a Participatory and Democratic School

The Cooperative Model

La Nostra Escola Comarcal worked as a cooperative from the beginning and required the economic contribution of all the parents. For the founding group, this model of operation was not only necessary to secure the full participation of all of its members but, also, to assure the democratic functioning of the school. This decision was favored by the previous experience in cooperative management of several group members who had participated in *Grup Empresarial Cooperatiu Valencià*, an organization of businessmen in Valencia who believed in the humanistic propositions of the well-known Mondragón cooperative group (Martínez 1990). The

group's familiarity with this business organization persuaded its members to envision a school in which educational values complemented the cooperative economic structure to foster human relationships and collective decision making (Arizmen-diarrieta 1984). Thus, from the beginning *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* understood cooperativism as a system of democratic management that secured the economic viability of an educational project that strived for parents' participation and for the pedagogical and organizational autonomy of the school.

The official recognition of the school as a cooperative came on July 11, 1972 when the bylaws for *La Nostra Escola Comarcal Society* were approved. Significantly, because cooperatives were not officially recognized in education, the cooperative was accredited by the Ministry of Labor, rather than by the Ministry of Education, and was identified not as a school but a cooperative for the consumption of education. Despite this fact, the educational possibilities of the cooperative model were reflected in the organization's statutes when declaring that the goals of this cooperative were: "to achieve affordable high quality education, to give parents decision making power over the pedagogical perspective of the school, and to establish an active school in which parents and teachers work as a team."

The Organizational Structure

Consistent with the cooperative model that inspired the creation of the school, *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* established from the beginning a democratic and participatory organization working through three main groups. The first one, the *Asamblea General de Socios* [General Assembly of Associates], was formed by all the cooperative's associates and the main decision making body that assured the participation of the entire collective by meeting at least once a year. One of the responsibilities assigned to this assembly was, and still is, the election of members of the *Junta Rectora* [Board of Directors], the second main organizational entity with key decision-making power in the operation of the school. Still today, this group is the main governing body among general assemblies and is comprised of a president, a secretary and representatives from the different working commissions. These latter groups constituted the third pillar of the organization and assured the direct participation of the associates in the daily operation of the school. Although devoid of decision making power, these commissions immediately became the backbone of the organization and were divided into two types: the *Comisiones de Trabajo* [Working Committees] and the *Comisiones de los Pueblos* [Village Committees].

The first ones, the Working Committees oversaw all the daily operations at the school and covered three main areas. The *Comisión Organizativa* [Organizing Committee], was made up of a representative from each of the villages that students came from and was charged with calling meetings, guaranteeing the flow of information and assuring the direct participation of the parents from the villages that fed the school. This committee also assumed responsibility for record keeping, the submission of administrative and bureaucratic information, the school's rules and

regulations, publicizing the school to attract new members, and the publication of the bulletin *El Full del Divendres* that would later become the school's newsletter. The second, the *Comisión Pedagógica* [Pedagogical Committee], was charged with coordinating all of the pedagogical and psychological matters within the school but also assuring continuity between school and family educational practices. Lastly, the *Comisión Económica* [Economic Committee] was responsible for studying and analyzing the budgets, managing payment of dues, and applying for loans and grants.

Over time, these three permanent and original groups were supplemented by additional committees created in response to new school needs but still assuring the democratic participation of all parents. For example, there was a new committee to oversee the hiring of teachers, another to establish guidelines on nutrition and eating habits, a committee to improve bus services for students, a maintenance committee to improve the infrastructure of the school, and a gardening committee to foster student and parent involvement in the planting and conserving of vegetation around the center.

The *Comisiones de los Pueblos* [Villages Committees] pursued greater organizational agility among the villages students came from. These committees, later discontinued when the school became publicly subsidized and the school's zone changed, were crucial in the initial stages since they facilitated: (1) channeling information to and from the various local communities, assuring that school's decisions and news reached all the associates; (2) attracting new associates; and (3) solving local and concrete problems such as the coordination of the bus schedules with class schedules.

The Financial System

One of the major challenges *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* has had to confront from the beginning was finding a financial system consistent with the democratic objectives of the organization. The goal was to develop a way to support the collaborative and participatory practices envisioned by the school while still ensuring financial survival. A formula was needed to cover the high economic cost of, for example, an individualized education with a maximum of 25 students per teacher, the maintenance of adequate educational spaces both indoors and outdoors, and the quality of food services and transportation. This was a huge challenge for the school as the dictatorship offered no loans or state grants for democratic projects and the majority of the founding members were lower middle and working class and had little economic power.

In response to these difficulties, the school embraced a collaborative financing formula according to which parents were required to make an initial contribution to become members of the cooperative and subsequent monthly payments to cover the expenses of the school. Although high in the initial phase, these financial contributions were well adjusted to the costs of food, instruction and transportation.

This formula established that future members of the cooperative needed to make an initial contribution comparable to those of the founding members and to pay the required monthly payments thereafter. Because the cooperative was grounded on the principles of cooperation and solidarity, this formula also instituted a voluntary school fund that assured monthly dues would remain commensurate to families' financial status with families with greater wealth paying higher rates.

Despite its democratic spirit, this formula encountered important difficulties and had to be amended later. Every year, for example, new contributions were needed to pay extra costs. Also, the growing number of students required the construction of new buildings in 1976, a project that demanded a large economic disbursement by the members. Unfortunately, these additional costs caused some members to leave the cooperative even though strongly supporting the school's pedagogical project.

Pedagogical Keys and Curricular Guidelines of La Nostra Escola Comarcal

Pedagogically, the founders of *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* sought to give their children the kind of education that the public schools of the Franco regime denied them, namely, democratic and quality education rooted in the values, practices and language of the community. The cooperative model allowed the school to be independent from the state system, offered the legal space to become secular and co-educational, and supported innovative and active teaching methodologies. While these were principles later adopted by the new democratic educational legislation, they were highly transgressive at the time. This model also allowed for the close collaboration between parents and the school. Many of the teachers, for example, were also mothers of students and participated in the governance structure of the school. To strengthen the community-based roots in its educational project, the school also established very early a school for parents that is still in operation today. Methodologically, *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* drank from the political experiences and innovations of the founding members and established educational practices that promoted action-reflection and that sought the transformation of the students' environment.

By choosing this pedagogical perspective through the cooperative model, the school intended to pursue both political and pedagogical goals. Coupling these two objectives led the school to explicitly state its aspiration to create a school which was "critical, transformative of the educational reality, research-based; constituting itself as an innovative front within the process of change" (Chesa and Madero-Candelas 1993, p. 19). Likewise, it led the school to define itself according to five fundamental pedagogical elements: Active, *comarcal* (locally rooted), *Valenciana* (affirming the culture and language of Valencia), participatory, and coeducational.

Active

In concurrence with the experiences of pedagogical innovations of that period, *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* considered active pedagogies fundamental to the construction of a democratic school. This commitment to educational principles seeking to educate a critical and active citizen resulted in the adopting of those pedagogical views that understood education as a practice of liberation. Likewise and contrary to the lack of consideration for the students' feelings in the schools of the Franco regime, the founders of *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* wanted to assure that the school methodologies would promote students' happiness. The perspectives selected to achieve these goals were very eclectic and included educational propositions such as: (1) the centers of interest of Ovide Decroly which promoted students' self-understanding by pursuing activities that interested them in class; (2) the Montessori literacy method that emphasized the development of sensory responses while reading and writing; (3) the concept of critical and transformative consciousness of Paulo Freire that understood schools at the service of democracy; (4) the anti-authoritarian proposition in A.S. Neill which prioritized learning in freedom and happiness as the central goal of education; and (5) the concept of public school as a popular institution at the service of the working class that should function in the cooperative manner envisioned by Célestin Freinet.

These pedagogical principles informed all areas of the school from the beginning and still remain present today. In early childhood education the school focused on language and psychomotor skills, activities that were taught through active pedagogies allowing students to experiment and to express themselves through artifacts such as clay, paper, or play (Payà Rico 2008). Some of the activities that typify this emphasis on active pedagogies in the early grades were: choirs to promote musical expression; free and guided painting; work in the plastic arts; activities with recyclable goods; workshops; etc. In elementary education, active pedagogy had its maximum expression in the rejection of textbooks and the adaptation and creation of school materials through the technical printing activities of Freinet. This decision was also prompted by the fact that at that time there were no books in the language of Valencia, the chosen school language of instruction.

The adoption of active pedagogies naturally resulted in the school's emphasis on knowing the students' natural and social environment and the inclusion in the curriculum of activities such as excursions, camping experiences, and cultural field trips. The school wanted students to learn through action and to follow their own interests, but it also wanted this learning to contribute to the students' knowledge of their geography and their cultural context. The gardening commission is a good example in this regard. Composed of parents this commission created a farming camp where students learned local farming practices built on the knowledge acquired in the natural science classes. To provide students with a wider range of experiences to learn about the natural world around the school, the school later added a small barn and a fishpond.

By endorsing active pedagogies as the major educational principle, the school also opted for a holistic notion of teaching in which all subject areas contributed to a well-rounded student. To this end, the school always fostered extracurricular activities such as sports and other leisure activities. Likewise, the school opted for values based in cooperation, as opposed to competition, and favored activities that promoted a positive self-knowledge in the students. This principle was especially important in areas such as evaluation. In *La Nostra Escola Comarcal*, this process always involved the close monitoring of students' individual development, emphasizing not grading but the quality of students' individual processes of learning.

Comarcal

Comarca in Spanish refers to the group of villages that share defining economic and social characteristics. Based on this socio-geographical notion, *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* included the term *comarcal* in the school's name to assert the identity, the pride, and language, in this case the *Valenciano*, of the communities in which students lived. By including this concept, the school's pedagogical project endorsed the educational sentiment at the time that strived for the recognition of the economic, social and cultural elements that defined students' experience, by raising an awareness of belonging in the community-*comarca*, and by decentralizing the school to respond to the characteristics of each *comarca* (Palacios 1984).

This commitment to the *comarcal* materialized in several concrete initiatives. Chief among them was the decision to consider the local context as a crucial site of students' interests and meaningful learning and to articulate the school knowledge about the natural, cultural and the social environment through students' experiences. The goal was, and still is, that students valued and felt a part of the community in which they lived by learning more about it. Thus, the school promoted a deep knowledge of the *comarca* through active pedagogies that expected students to seek the collaboration of their family and of other people and that effectively involved everyone in the student's community. The school also fomented the study of the students' environment through research projects that entailed visits to places, monuments and institutions of importance to the community. These projects were conducted through discovery learning requiring students to interview different people in the community and to compile this information in their research project. The school also transformed ordinary activities such as bus rides that crossed several villages, school visits, or the field trips into opportunities to actively learn about the school's immediate natural and social context and to foster students' cultural connections with their environment.

Valenciana

For *La Nostra Escola Comarcal*, the term *Valenciana* refers to the defense of the language and culture of Valencia. During the first three decades of the dictatorship, Castilian was the only language permitted in schools. The above-mentioned General Education Law of 1970 recognized vernacular languages in education, a change followed by the official authorization in 1975 to introduce these languages in schools, in this case *Valenciano*, on an experimental and voluntary basis. Castilian Spanish continued being the official language, but these regulations opened the possibility for bilingualism in those regions of the Spanish territory, today considered Autonomous Communities with two official languages, which had struggled for the recognition of their language under the dictatorship. Naturally, this possibility also opened the debate on the best way to implement bilingualism in schools.

The school founding members' involvement with innovative educational experiences had familiarized them with the MRPs demand to teach the local language at the school and with the two existent models to implement this demand. Initially, the school followed Catalonia's model, which started with the Catalan language and gradually introduced Castilian. Thus, native speakers of *Valenciano* were taught in *Valenciano* while Castilian speakers were taught in Spanish (Castilian) first, but gradually introduced to *Valenciano*. To implement this model, the class blackboards were divided into two parts, one devoted to Castilian and the other to *Valenciano*. By the end of the 1970s, however, the school assessed the immersion model implemented in the Basque country as more advantageous and moved toward teaching all the school subjects in *Valenciano* (Moliner et al. 1976). The schools in Catalonia also later adopted this immersion model.

At the same time that *Valenciano* was introduced as the language of instruction, consistent with the emphasis on the *comarcal*, the school prioritized from its inception the history, culture and natural environment of Valencia in all areas of the curriculum. In literature, for example, students were exposed to works by authors from Valencia. Natural sciences included the topography of the region and information on local rivers and mountains. Extracurricular activities also fostered learning about local culture. Likewise, the school newspaper reported community issues that further nurtured the knowledge of the region.

Democratic and Participatory

As mentioned earlier, the school's organizational structure as a cooperative working through different committees assured formal channels of democratic participation as well as that the decision making process which resided in the assembly of the cooperative's associates, all of them parents. In addition to these formal avenues, the school favored the involvement of parents in the school's life through activities that required the participation and cooperation between parents and teachers on numerous occasions such as celebrations (i.e. commemorating Spring, Christmas, end

of the year academic activities, etc.), excursions and camping, activities connected with improving school infrastructure (i.e. repairing minor maintenance or electrical), the publishing of the school's paper, or parents' participation in the classrooms (i.e. parents speaking to students about their jobs or professions). This collaboration between teachers and parents resulted in a shared excitement about the school's educational project, a feeling that reached the students by creating a sense of shared ownership among them.

The educational continuity between the school and the families was assured by the Pedagogical Committee, the working group representing both constituencies and responding to the "need to establish a dialectical process of interaction between the pedagogy of the school and the pedagogy of family practices" (Soriano 1983, p. 6). This committee allowed teachers and parents to share similar pedagogical guidelines effectively extending family learning into the school, and promoting common objectives and constant communication between home and school. This committee also decided on other issues such as the textbooks to use, the materials to be used in the debates organized by the school, the organization of educational talks, or the best way to handle disciplinary issues. The process by which the school decided on the notion of authority and disciplinary regulations to be adopted by the school serves as testimony to the success of this participatory and collaborative model. After the thorough debate of issues raised by the assemblies in which different members of the educational community voiced opinions and generated proposals, the school, in a collegial manner, opted for the non-authoritarian pedagogy that would be later incorporated into the school's internal regulations, in the section on ideological and organizational foundations.

Student participation was also assured through the practice of assembly that instigated students' critical reflection, particularly regarding issues of self-discipline and self-regulation. Until the present, the school holds a weekly general assembly in which all students participate, as well as daily class assemblies and level assemblies to discuss special topics when needed. A parents' representative and a representative from the Pedagogical Committee attended all of them. The assemblies followed Célestin Freinet's premises, especially the technique "We Criticize, We Celebrate, We Appeal" which expects students to engage in self-reflection and self-discipline as the group assists them to be more critical of their immediate reality while emphasizing constructive ways to improve.

Coeducational

Officially, coeducation was established in the General Education Law of 1970, the same law that allowed the introduction of vernacular languages into the school curriculum. Given that *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* enrolled boys and girls from the beginning, this regulation had only limited impact upon the school. While the inclusion of both genders was not an issue that needed further attention, sex education, however, became an important conversation as it addressed the question of how

to teach boys and girls to relate to each other. In the Spain of the 1970s, sexuality was a taboo topic. Rooted on Freud's propositions, prevalent among the most progressive groups at the moment, particularly those revised by Reich in the 1970s proclaiming that education should not contribute to students' sexual repression and that contested the vision of the Franco dictatorship, *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* assumed sex education as a necessary component of the school and organized a debate with parents on this topic. The Pedagogical Committee provided the texts to be discussed and arranged talks on sexuality to be presented by a psychologist and a sex education specialist.

Presently, coeducation and sex education no longer exist as separate concepts but have been absorbed by the educational legislation that was developed under the new democratic era that has seen gender relations as a core concept in educating for equality and that requires schools to include anti-sexist practices in their educational project.

La Nostra Escola Comarcal: Pedagogical Legacy and Educational Debates

The historical legacy of *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* is unmistakable in the school's leadership for change and pedagogical innovation in Valencia in the final years of the dictatorship and the transition to democracy (Colom 2011). Inheritor of the pioneering *Tramuntana*, the school's model was followed by other cooperatives such as *La Gavina* or *Les Carolines* in early childhood and elementary education and *L'Horta*, *La Safor* and *La Serrania* in vocational agricultural education. Similarly, the school is recognized as the embryo of democratic and participatory practices by which a group of people, in this case parents committed to change education, motivated and inspired other families with similar interests to construct a new kind of school. To this end, the school is reputed for its cooperative educational structure and for the process of dialogue and active participation of all of its members. While a transgressive educational proposition during the final years of the Franco regime, the school provided an authentic democratic learning experience for its founders.

Still today the school remains a symbol of democracy, participation and educational innovation, as well as of the defense of the language and culture of Valencia. With the passing of the years, however, the school experienced important changes.

One of them has been the change in affiliation. During the 1980s, when democracy was already established, public schools became a space for opportunities for those initiatives that in the 70s were only possible in private education. As it happened to many other cooperative schools born in this decade, particularly those in Catalonia, *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* had to decide whether to remain private or to become a part of the public State-run network (Canals et al. 2001). The final decision embraced the latter option and the school is today a cooperative that functions in the form of a private entity but which receives public funding (the formal name for such schools in Spain is *concertada*) but the debate provoked great tensions

between participants who wanted integration into the public sector and those who wanted to conserve total pedagogical and political autonomy. Some of those associates left the school at that time.

A second important change was leaving the immersion program in favor of linguistic pluralism. Paradoxically and despite the fact that the democratic regime has recognized regional languages as co-official in all Spanish Autonomous Communities and that the need to teach foreign languages has increased people's sensitivity to the different languages and cultures of the country, the decision to leave the immersion program has endangered the learning of the *Valenciano* language and has generated constant debates between different social, institutional, and political groups that have participated in the functioning of the school.

In Conversation

Rodríguez As you have explained, *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* was born in the context of the movements for pedagogical innovation that tried to create a new democratic alternative to education in the time of Franco. Within this context, what do you believe has been the most significant contribution of the school?

Agulló Díaz and Payá Rico It is important to mention that this educational cooperative, along with other contemporary experiences that took place later, signified a pedagogical and social revolution. There is a strong connection in these schools between pedagogical and social action. Also, they reject the separation between school and society when seeking to educate children to become citizens connected to their people, their local region and their country. Cooperativism in Valencia has not emerged as a new pedagogical theory but, rather, as a synthesis of different influences from places such as France and Catalonia and, in terms of organization, from the cooperative movement of Mondragón (in the Basque Country). In this regard, *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* is part of a pedagogical revolution that emerged from the movement for educational innovation but that has great social implications.

Another major contribution of the school is the democratic experience it provided for students, teachers, and parents, that is to say, for the entire educational community. *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* did not foster any political view or attempt political indoctrination. Rather, it pursued political democracy as an exercise of freedom. As a cooperative, the school understood its democratic role as educating critically and socially sensitive citizens seeking change in society. Thus, the school viewed political education as a way of empowering people to exercise their political rights and to practice democracy through participation, debates, assemblies, and committees. The very selection of the cooperative model was understood as a part of the political preparation of the school members and as an act of reclaiming education as an inevitable political act.

Rodríguez Spain, like other countries, is experiencing an educational moment defined by economic cuts, globalization and of disproportionate emphasis upon academic results measured by standards, to the detriment of educational processes. In this sense, what do you believe to be the major contribution of the school toward the idea of democratic and pedagogically significant education?

Agulló Díaz and Payá Rico The fact that cooperatives foster political involvement and a more significant pedagogy, motivates students and allows schools to work in different areas. This is global education (not globalized) rooted in the most significant social and civic realities that surround the student that consequently objects to some of the current forces toward recentralization. Cooperatives contend that children have to appreciate their immediate environment and community, not falling into localism but, rather, developing a pride of belonging to their identity, language and culture.

In a time of pedagogical reactionary-ism such as the present, educational cooperatives appear as particularly promising in creating a different kind of school for a different kind of society. In this sense, cooperatives can be seen as alternatives to current practices that, for example, base the introduction of technology and new teaching materials on achieving efficiency or on a deceiving notion of quality and excellence in education. The bureaucratization, segmentation, technologization, and obsession with results involved in these practices forget that schools work with people living in communities. They also undermine the deliberative and decision-making power of participatory governing bodies and subject the leadership at the school to more administrative pressure.

Against this reality, *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* reminds us that cooperatives were organized to promote the ideal of cooperation. They consider education to be a service to people, never a business. Today, as we are continually bombarded with the importance of efficiency, efficacy, profitability, quality and outcomes, we are forced to see schools as a part of the capitalist market and, therefore, to see education as a profitable product. The pedagogical and social projects advanced in educational cooperatives, however, serve as a reminder that education cannot be understood merchandise and provide us with a concrete and real example of how another kind of school is possible.

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Chapter 14

Public Schools as *Publicly Imagined*

Encarna Rodríguez

This book began with the proposition that current educational policies and school practices have undermined the *publicness* of public education by allowing private visions of education to percolate, and even to dominate, our educational imagination. The rationale for this proposition was substantiated by the increasing trend in public education systems worldwide to rely on the private sector and to implement market-based educational reforms. Educational policies that reflect this trend differ greatly. In developing countries, organizations such as the World Bank foster educational practices “operating outside state-run school systems, drawing on a range of private entities for the implementation of various educational activities” (Nordtveit 2012, p. 24). In highly industrialized countries such as Australia, England or the U.S., evidence of market-based reforms is abundant in, for example, the dwindling financial resources for public schools in favor of school choice programs that support privately-managed educational practices (Fabricant and Fine 2013; Reid 2002; Rizvi and Lingard 2010; Watkins 2011). The increasing presence of the private sector can also be witnessed in school areas such as assessment or professional development (Ball 2009a; Ball and Youdell 2009), or the way many schools are forced to change their curriculums to accommodate current policies’ appetite for accountability measured through standardized testing (Carter 2010; Darling-Hammond 2010; Sloan 2008). While all these market-inspired initiatives have deeply compromised our expectations for state-funded and state-managed schools by placing the democratic hopes for social equality in the hands of business oriented functions, the leading argument in this book has been that one of the less noticeable, but equally dangerous, forms of privatization in public education has been the privatization of our educational imagination. As presented in the initial chapters of this book, the ubiquitous presence of private visions of education in public schooling has not happened overnight. Rather, the quiet but steady adoption of these visions has occurred as a part of a larger process of change in the notion of government and in the

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changing nature of the state in a global and neoliberal reality (Ball 2009b; Burchell 1993; Rose 1996).

This book has argued that it is precisely the social and political genesis of this process, as opposed to educational alone, that has made it so difficult to identify the conceptual and ideological views inherent in privatization. This text has also contended that privatization is a part of a larger perceptual shift that involved a different relationship between the state and the individual and that, as such, it has legitimized a subtle series of fallacies at the premise of expectations for public education. As illustrated in the book's opening arguments, schools engaged in the new neoliberal rationale rooted in the logic of the market at the same time that this rationale became pervasive in all areas of government, including people's understanding of themselves as political subjects (Peters 1996; Rose 1992). Many ideological changes in public education escaped scrutiny within this new rationale. Chief among them was the silent but dangerous redefinition of the public good as a matter of private interests (Broom 2011; Covalleskie 2007). Contrary to democratic traditions of education that place public education at the center of the struggle for social equality (Apple and Beane 1995; Cuban 2004; Dewey 1916/1997; Freire 1994; Giroux 1988; Greene 1995), current educational policies direct our attention to notions of accountability and efficiency and demand our implicit complicity in defining quality of education as almost exclusively a matter of students' personal gains. The appeal for privately managed schools as the saviors of public education presented in the documentary *Waiting for "Superman"* (Guggenheim, 2010) is a poignant example in this regard. This film entices viewers to believe that charter schools are the *only* option for the five students featured in the documentary. A discussion of the fact that these schools are not fully accountable to the public, that they are grounded in values that relegate issues of pedagogy and curriculum, or that they offer us no new insights on how to understand, and to address, the persistent and collective histories of inequalities that shape the educational expectations of disenfranchised communities, however, is conveniently omitted from this narrative of individual success.

Believing that public education will not be able to perform Freire's (1993) mandate to make the "democratic process more consistent" (p. 123) if deprived of the public imagination that identified this institution as a fundamental pillar of modern democracies, this book has proposed the notion of education as *publicly imagined* as a tool to reclaim the jeopardized public grounds of our educational imagination. Thus, the present chapter now turns to the narratives of the 11 schools presented in this text to explore the theoretical possibilities of this notion.

Publicly Imagined: Where the Rubber (Social Visions of Equality) Meets the Road (the Communities they Serve)

The differences between these 11 schools are deep and far-reaching. They live(d) in disparate social and historical contexts, they serve(d) very dissimilar students and communities, and they implement(ed) very different pedagogical projects.

Arthurdale, in the U.S. and the *Ayllu*-school in Bolivia, for example, were established to educate culturally homogenous but deeply impoverished children respectively in a mining community and in a rural indigenous community. The Brondesbury and Kilburn High School in the UK and the Montclair High School in the U.S., on the other hand, serve(d) heterogeneous groups of students who have experienced deep cultural ruptures because of their status as outsiders to the British and U.S. traditions, respectively. These schools are also dissimilar in terms of the forces that shape their educational projects. While teaching practices in schools such as *Los Talleres* in Mexico and the Cifteler Institute in Turkey were informed by the larger national educational initiatives that created the schools, the HKRSS Secondary School in Hong Kong and the Rough Rock school in the U.S. are poignant examples of home-grown pedagogical practices developed and implemented by the teachers and administrators at the schools.

Significantly, the schools' affiliations with public education also differ greatly. Montclair High School in the U.S. and *Los Talleres* in Mexico fall very neatly within the scope of what we have traditionally understood to be public schools. All of them are publicly funded and publicly managed. The boundaries of this public affiliation, however, appear much more porous in some of the other cases. Schools such as the *Ayllu*-school in Bolivia or the Cifteler Institute in Turkey were also fully endorsed by their national governments. Yet, their construction and survival was assured only by the strong commitment of the community in which they were located because it was these communities that generated the material resources needed to build the schools and to sustain their pedagogical projects. The Barbiana school in Italy further muddies the perimeters of these schools' affiliations to the public education system by presenting the case of a single-room school that functioned with no institutional funding but that occupied the public space left vacant by the lack of state-supported schools in the area. Furthermore, schools such as the *Bachillerato IMPA* in Argentina and the *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* in Spain offer significant examples of schools created outside of the purview of the state-run school network by educators and movements with a profound public vocation that ultimately sustained these initiatives until they eventually became included in the public education system.

Despite these differences, the 11 schools share three conceptual features that, according to the analysis presented in this text, are central to the notion of public education as *publicly imagined*.

First and foremost, the educational projects that these schools articulate(d) unapologetically argue, albeit in different ways and to different degrees, that schools can achieve a more equitable future for the students they serve only if they are willing to connect their curriculum and pedagogical practices to the larger social issues shaping the lives of their students. Whether asserting the cultural recognition of bidialectal students by transforming assessment practices as in the case of Brondesbury and Kilburn High School in the UK, preparing students to reclaim the native language of their ancestors as in Rough Rock, U.S., or educating illiterate villagers to inhabit a new and modernized Turkey as in the case of Cifteler Institute, these schools contend that curriculums and pedagogies are intimately linked to the schools' collective hopes for the kind of society they wish their students to both

inhabit and contribute to as active citizens. The 11 schools presented in this book further contend that the beneficiary of such hopes should not be the individual student, as promoted by private visions of education, but the entire community. Some of the schools illustrate this argument eloquently. The Barbiana school in Italy, for example, assumes that class is the most defining social category in its students' lives and that, consequently, education needs to subvert this category to change the future of the community. The students at the *Bachillerato* IMPA in Argentina have to openly grapple with the proposition that schools are intimately linked to systems of production and that, therefore, schools are also social organizations that should educate students as engaged political subjects. *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* contends that the democratic way to benefit individual students is by creating spaces where the different schools' constituencies build together a shared vision of education. In all these examples, schools have committed themselves to the notion of the public good, not just through the achievement of the individual students but, more crucially, by providing educational experiences by which the students' learning was expected to benefit their larger communities.

Secondly, these 11 schools have pursued their goals for social equality through pedagogical projects and organizational principles purposefully devised to respond to the historical specificities of the communities they serve(d). In the account of these schools, curricula and pedagogies are far from being universal recipes to improve students' learning outcomes as suggested by current educational discourses. Rather, they are fundamental tools to achieve the social and political goals by which students' learning achievement could, and should, benefit the larger society. For Montclair High School, for example, adopting a multicultural curriculum and de-tracking the introductory English course were necessary steps to disrupt the dominant relations of class, race, and gender that shaped the lives of the students attending the school. To this end, curriculum choices such as reading Chinua Achebe were acts of resistance to colonial relations of power that intended to help students contest the legacy of such relations in their own personal and collective histories. *Los Talleres* in Mexico further wrestled with the question of how to empower the school's community by fostering individual autonomy and initiative in a rural context in which economic dependency on local and powerful landowners has been the prevailing power disparity. In this vein, Barbiana offers a particularly interesting example of a curriculum developed to respond to the historical specificity of its times. By identifying the notion of class as the main defining element of the school's pedagogy, Barbiana's goal was providing students with the symbolic means to change their otherwise defined social destiny as rural or factory workers in poor and rural post-war Italy. The role of curriculum and pedagogy in pursuing social goals for the community is also evidenced in the fate of the *Ayllu*-school. It was this Bolivian school's potential to empower self-determination within the community that was perceived by neighboring landowners as a very dangerous example of indigenous defiance and that led to its eventual destruction.

Thirdly, teachers in these schools engaged in these pedagogical projects collectively. The word collectively here has two interrelated meanings. On the one hand, it refers to the collaborative process by which teachers, administrators, and, in many

cases, community members, envisioned, developed, and implemented curricular and pedagogical practices. The collaborative process by which HKRSS Secondary School in Hong Kong transformed teaching, curriculum, and assessment laudably illustrates the nature of this collaborative process as a school-wide effort. The inclusive pedagogies developed by this school in recent years have established testimony to the shared journey by which teachers have engaged in the interrogation of their own assumptions about teaching and learning and which have eventually led them to redefine their assumptions about the best way to address the wide range of abilities of their students. The *Ayllu*-school in Bolivia further illustrates this collective process in the relationship between the school and the community. In the Bolivian case, the school and the community became fundamentally indistinguishable from each other because both entities were represented in the Parlamento Amauta, the highest governing body of the community that decided on all matters of communal life, including the curriculum and organization of the school. The Rough Rock school in the U.S. serves as a further example of how teachers, collectively, secured the pedagogical survival of the school by engaging in pedagogical reflection on the most beneficial language practices for the students and the community they served.

Understood as the collaborative practice that sustains the development and implementation of curricula and pedagogies, these schools suggest that *publicly imagined* education necessarily involves educators engaging in collective visions, no matter how imperfect or tentative they may be. Furthermore, the narratives of these schools indicate that keeping our public imagination public inevitably requires educators: to develop collective visions for a better future for students; to test such visions in the face of the educational uncertainties that saturate everyday life at schools; and to make sure that these visions will remain open to the entire community.

Collective here also refers to the schools' determination to frame pedagogical visions around social and community histories. Because all these schools serve(d) disenfranchised communities, poverty is an important referent for the dreams for social equality within all of them. But because poverty is never a self-evident category, these 11 schools directed their visions to those social problems that define(d) economic scarcity for their students in very specific historical and geographical ways. The pedagogical project of Cifteler Institute was informed by the struggle to achieve literacy and to meet productive needs of rural communities in Turkey at a time when the new political regime purposefully opened new possibilities for economic self-sustainment and higher political participation. The literacy needs that shaped the pedagogical practices at Rough Rock in the U.S., while also rooted in poverty, however, addressed the community's painfully felt colonial history of subjugation of the Navajo language to Standard English. For the *Bachillerato* IMPA, economic disparities are ingrained in a neoliberal system of production that not only leaves workers without jobs, but that also strips them from cultural and social resources, such as workers' solidarity, upon which their social mobility and class identity have traditionally rested.

Understood as pedagogical projects concerned with the multiple ways in which students' realities are informed by larger social inequalities, the term collective

applies here to the educational visions developed by these schools. Coherently, this term further refers to those practices of education that are responsibly anchored in the social experience of the community but that are also fully committed to a more socially just future for the communities for which such visions were imagined.

Publicly Imagined Education: Contesting Current Educational Policies

Taken individually, these schools may seem isolated examples of pedagogical experiences intentionally developed for disenfranchised students. They may appear as additional contributions to the already extensive literature on schools committed to transformative education and social equality (Apple and Beane 1995; Fielding and Moss 2011; Meier 2002; Sahlberg 2011; Semel and Sadovnik 1999; Wrigley 2003; Wrigley et al. 2012b). Conceptualized in this way, these schools could even be palatable to current education reformers who ferociously believe in the principles of the market as the only way to secure the quality of education in public schools. The intrinsically subversive pedagogical nature of some of these schools' projects may not even present much of a problem for those who situate themselves as reformers. Since current reforms subjugate issues of curriculum and pedagogies to fiscal and organizational practices pursuing accountability and efficiency, and since such reforms proclaim allegiance, albeit mostly rhetorically, to the community-based and learner-centered pedagogies central to these schools, market-based proponents may be even inclined to accept these narratives as legitimate examples of good public education. The final judgment on their educational worth would depend, of course, on whether these schools' expectations for their students' performance could be easily packaged in the current language of accountability. That this emphasis on performance outcomes would make the very nature of these schools' pedagogical projects virtually impossible would not be a conversation that market-based reformers would be likely to entertain. As individual narratives of change, the 11 schools presented in this text would also be very likely applauded by people like David Guggenheim, the director of *Waiting for "Superman"*, who sees privately-managed education as the solution for public education. Plausibly, these advocates of private solutions for public problems may regard these schools as courageous examples of the educational commitment that, in their estimate, most current state-funded and state-managed schools lack.

Collectively, however, the narratives of these schools articulate at least three powerful critiques to current educational policies and to the market values that inform their claim for educational equality in such policies.

First, these schools raise strong suspicions about any educational vision constructed outside of the historical and social specificity of the students whom schools educate. Inevitably, neoliberal narratives of school improvement identify the individual as the main beneficiary of education and appeal to context-free policies that apply educational recipes to very different educational settings (Luke 2011; Samoff

1999; Tabulawa 2003). The damaging consequences of this appeal are painfully discernible in the recent educational policies of the U.S.

Under both the No Child Left Behind Act (the federal legislation regulating public education since 2002) and Race to the Top (the federal program sponsored by President Obama's administration requiring school districts to compete for additional funding based on their willingness to implement tighter financial measures), schools are mandated to adopt fiscal efficiency as their main operating principle and to produce similar learning outcomes in schools in sociocultural contexts that have radically disparate income and resource levels. These policies expect, for example, that public schools in Philadelphia, a school district that serves students whose lives and experiences are excruciatingly defined by urban poverty, that educate a large number of students with disabilities and English Language Learners, and that suffers from an endemic shortage of teachers, would produce, by virtue of tougher accountability measures, academic achievements similar to schools in a neighboring suburb renowned for its quality schools. In an act of blatant social obliteration, these mandates conveniently disregard the fact that urban centers like Philadelphia serve predominantly low-income students of color with a dramatically smaller budget than that of the predominantly White, professional, and affluent bordering communities. This uncensored disdain for students' political and social histories reaches particularly arrogant overtones in some of the solutions offered by reformers. Omitting any allusion to educational historical analyses, a representative of one of the largest charter school companies in the country, for example, stated his case in favor of market-based policies in *Waiting for "Superman"* by stating: "25 years ago there was no proof that something else worked. Well, now we know what works. We know that it is just a lie that disadvantaged kids can't learn. We know that if you apply the right accountability standards you can get fabulous results so, why would we do something else?"

The schools presented in this text strongly reject market-based solutions and the proposition that fiscal efficiency is *the* necessary next step toward improving the quality of public education. Indeed, these schools' narratives are a powerful reminder that, "the most important social policies, including quite particularly educational policies, have never been based on scientific evidence but on a sense of what is equitable, just, and morally right" (Fischer 1966/1967, as cited in Perlstein 2004a, p. 288). To be clear, the emphasis here is not on rejecting scientific modes of inquiry but, rather, on making sure that what mobilizes any educational quest is the larger public goal of achieving socially just schools. These narratives also reject pedagogical proposals proclaiming validity regardless of social and geographical contexts; they contest one-size-fits-all approaches by presenting community-tailored pedagogical projects. Disputing this desire for universality, these narratives compellingly contend that responsible schools can emerge only if inspired by a thorough understanding of the sociohistorical realities of their students. As articulated by these schools, education is, unquestionably, a historically, geographically, and socially specific task by which schools become accountable for the social future of the students whom they teach.

The second critique that these 11 school narratives pose to current policies is that they dramatize the neoliberal fallacy that “the individual” is a politically neutral archetype embedded as the premise of current market-based educational reforms. This enticing notion of individual as self-managing and as an enterprising self (Peters 1996; Rose 1992, 1996), as discussed earlier in this book, is an important signifier of the changes that both the state and educational institutions have articulated in the last decades as they engaged in a new kind of political rationality. It is also this notion of the individual as a self-contained entity removed from any political context that this book has argued from its introductory chapters is the structure that has made public education so vulnerable to private visions of education. If individuals, in this case students and their families, are expected to profit from their educational opportunities by acting as enterprising selves always searching for personal benefits, it stands to reason that raising the quality of education would be best accomplished by increasing education opportunities for students to pursue their personal and individual educational gains. According to this logic, it also stands to reason, as argued in the documentary *Waiting for “Superman,”* that the most appropriate alternative for students in communities with low-performing schools would be to offer them additional school options such as charter schools that promise greater educational benefits. The problem with this assumption, as Labaree (2000) asserts, is that, “public interest in education is not reducible to the sum of the private interests of all individual consumers, for in the latter situation no one is looking out for other people’s children” (p. 121). Thus, the individual success of students in any school tells us very little about public schools’ responsibility to engage in more socially equitable practices, unless, of course, we submit such successes to political and ideological scrutiny. Stated differently, there is little to be learned from the possible gains of the students featured in *Waiting for “Superman”* to debate the benefits of charter schools for the Anthonies, Franciscos, Biancas, and Daisys of the world if the stories of these students are presented individually rather than politically. As postmodern and poststructuralist critiques have taught us, without this political specificity, the notion of individual articulated by the current neoliberal rationality becomes yet another reincarnation of the modernist notion of the subject that stubbornly refuses to acknowledge the social relations of power that it carries (Carter 2010; Silva 1998; Tabulawa 2003; Walkerdine 1984).

Third, these 11 narratives strongly contest current educational policies’ determination to delegitimize public schools as sites of public imagination. Areas such as curriculum and professional development, students’ assessment, or school management, increasingly rely on the expertise of non-education professionals (Ball and Youdell 2009; Ravitch 2013; Reid 2002). This reliance consolidates the dominance of private visions of education and provides room for private companies making critical decisions on schools’ curricula and schools’ practices. Even more importantly, this deference to the private removes public schools from their historical role to imagine new ways in which such curricula and practices should contribute to a more equitable future for all students (Darling-Hammond 2010; Labaree 2000; Meier 2002). The 11 narratives presented in this book, nevertheless, strongly contest this view by having envisioned new educational horizons for their students.

These narratives make no claim that schools are the *only* site of public imagination. As illustrated in the chapters above, when taken seriously, crafting socially and politically responsible educational visions is not an act confined to the limits of the school. The stories of these schools do contend, however, that individual schools are central enclaves on the map of our imagination as they are the sites in which educational visions translate into concrete learning experiences for the students they intend to empower. In this regard, they support Wagner's (2002) argument that individual schools are still the essential unit of change and, consequently, saturated with democratic possibilities. Indeed, these 11 accounts suggest that schools are crucial venues of educational imagination not only because they allow educational professionals to labor, in historically specific ways, in crafting socially responsible practices but, even more importantly, because of their potential to become spaces where collective visions can guide this labor to transform the historical realities that required these visions in the first place.

New Public Grounds for Our Public Imagination

The natural corollary to these critiques is that public education remains a complex social task that requires high dosages of social commitment and educational imagination. Against the simplicity of current policies that offer market-based solutions for most educational problems, these 11 schools view education as a multilayered endeavor deeply connected to larger social, economic, and political contexts. By working within this complex understanding of schools, these narratives not only raise the critiques stated above but, more importantly, they build a topographic map of educational possibilities that draws new conceptual spaces from which to reclaim the public grounds of our imagination.

Chief among these spaces is the need for social and historical specificity. In the account of the 11 schools featured in this text, the *publicness* of public education should rest, fundamentally, on schools' commitment to imagine a more just future for their students within the historical and social concreteness that shapes their students' lives. Since it is the specificity of this context that defines the educational realities of these students and that requires schools to conceive more equitable landscapes to transcend such realities in the first place, no educational vision refusing to engage the political and historical context of schools should be granted democratic legitimacy. Stated differently, we need to unapologetically reject any educational policy, at any level, that provides no account for, or prevents the inclusion of, the historical and social specificity of the students they are mandated to serve.

This commitment to historical specificity should help us to see the pedagogical fallacy of current outcome-based policies that pledge rhetorical advocacy to context-based and constructivist perspectives but that disdain sociocultural analyses endorsing the centrality of communities' knowledges, values, and educational practices (Apple 1993; Gutierrez and Rogoff 2003; Li 2008; Moll 1990; Valenzuela 1999). Without such analysis, outcome-based policies unproblematically champion, and

indeed trivialize, these perspectives by contending that the curriculum should be “relevant” to students while at the same time dismissing the sociopolitical nature of learning. But, as Wrigley et al. (2012a) argue, the “search for greater *relevance* is not enough, nor the proposal that learning becomes more *experiential* [as] both can mean an uncritical assimilation to the *status quo*” (p. 99) [emphasis in original]. In contrast to this apolitical view, the schools presented in this volume recognize the critical role of students’ social and collective realities in the construction of our visions of education and help us to avoid the neoliberal fatal trap of thinking of schools as agents of democracy while confining the breadth of these changes to the realm of the individual (Peters 1996; Walkerdine 1984). They also suggest that our educational dreams can only be pursued by transcending the modernist notion of the individual at the core of neoliberal propositions that claim no ties to history or location and by acknowledging the historical and discursive specificity of the student that constitutes the subject of our imagination (Dimitriadis and Carlson 2003; hooks 1994; Silva 2001).

The second conceptual space opened by these 11 narratives is the understanding of curriculum and pedagogy as crucial tools in pursuing our democratic imagination. Anchoring the *publicness* of our public imagination at the intersection of democratic dreams and concrete sociopolitical realities shaping students’ lives will necessarily lead to reclaiming the centrality of pedagogy and curriculum to achieve these dreams. After all, in democratic systems, these are the deliberative and political practices that connect learning to social change (Giroux 2011). Rooting our educational imagining in both the concreteness of students’ social experiences and also within the transformative possibilities of schools ultimately supports Perlstein’s (2004b) call to reject “any discussion on educational methods for disenfranchised students that omits the centrality of social change” (p. 27) and emphasizes the close connection between pedagogies and educational policy. It further echoes Wrigley et al.’s (2012a) argument that working for more democratic visions of schools requires developing context-based pedagogies “based on a collective construction of knowledges that are grounded on the learner’s lifeworld and rooted in place and identity” (p. 99). Indeed, the proposition to view curriculum and pedagogies as central to our democratic imagination helps us to remember that, “worthwhile school change is a thoroughly pedagogical matter” (Wrigley et al. 2012b, p. 195).

As indispensable tools to secure educational visions of equality that are rooted in the schools’ political realities, curriculum and pedagogy also become fast-flowing currents of hope. They remind us, for example, that “the purpose of curriculum [is] to engage the imagination” (Doll 2000, as quoted by Joseph 2011, p. 3). This emphasis upon the imagination also calls the field of curriculum to task by engaging in the question of how to “reimagine education as more than a technical, corporate enterprise” (Hendry 2011, p. x). But, as Wrigley (2003) contends, hope is also constructed in particular sociocultural spaces and should arise “out of the full recognition of materials and social needs and possibilities” (p. 6). It should be, in Giroux’s (2004) words, “educated hope,” a concept which goal “is not to liberate the individual *from* the social—a central tenet of neoliberalism—but to take seriously the notion that the individual can only be liberated *through* the social” (p. 39) [emphasis in original]. In this light, curriculum and pedagogy appear as particularly

helpful tools to build more democratic educational landscapes. In Giroux's words, educated hope constitutes a discourse of social transformation by making the "leap for us between *critical education*, which tells us what must be changed; *political agency*, which gives us the means to make change; and the *concrete struggles* through which change happens" (p. 38) [emphasis in original]. Riding on the notion of educated hope, pedagogies and curriculum appear as pivotal instruments of political agency that situate schools' transformative efforts in both the everyday and concrete struggles by which we hope change would happen and the democratic visions that determine what practices are needed to carry out such change.

The third space of possibilities suggested by the schools presented in this text is the conception of schools as sites of collective visions. Premising educational imagination in the sociopolitical realities of the communities school and conceptualizing curricula and pedagogies as instruments of political transformation naturally lead to viewing schools as places where groups of educational professionals can, at least potentially, craft new educational visions to alter such realities. In other words, operating as a contextually-based locus of education that employs curriculum and pedagogies to articulate schools' social aspirations, schools emerge as places where educators can knit, even if imperfectly and tentatively, their social visions of equality and democracy with the yarn of the political hopes of the communities they serve. They also emerge as spaces of hope where teachers can not only resist current discourses of education that disregard the collective nature of their pedagogical projects but also where they can generate alternative visions of education within the historical and geographical specificity in which they work.

A fourth space of possibility for new public grounds for public imagination, intrinsically related to the three already mentioned above, is the understanding of schools as *counterpublics*. Collectively dreaming and collectively working to materialize such dreams as a more socially just future for students implies that schools are social institutions with tentacles into the larger public and that they educate the political subjects who inhabit what we call public sphere. Against a view of this sphere as intrinsically representing the public good, Fraser (1997) argues that, "where societal inequality persists deliberative processes in public spheres will tend to operate to the advantage of dominant groups and to the disadvantage to the subordinates" (p. 81). Thus, this author proposes the notion of *counterpublics* as spaces where subordinate groups construct alternative publics. For Fraser, *counterpublics* work in two ways: "on the one hand, they function as spaces of withdrawal and regroupment; on the other hand, they also function as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics" (p. 82). It is in these political sites, quoting Wilson (2010), that Fraser believes that "marginalized groups can claim discursive spaces" (p. 648). This claim, Fraser argues, is not to be understood as a call to fragment public life but, rather, to provide new ways to engage with the public. Following this notion, schools for disenfranchised groups such as the ones presented in this collection can be conceptualized as *counterpublics* as they have the potential to foster public engagement by creating educational spaces where marginalized communities constitute themselves into the political subjects able to carry their claims for equality into the larger public.

Undoubtedly, the ultimate judgment on whether these possibilities can bear any fruit resides in their ability to create new conceptual routes for educational practices and policies to transcend the many ways in which neoliberalism has limited our democratic imagination at the local, national, and international levels. In this sense, the question underlying this book has not been what we can “learn” from the paths taken by the 11 schools presented here but, rather, how our understanding of the specificity of their struggles can help us to “relearn what is possible” (Beane and Apple 1995, p. 23) in our own historical contexts and geographical spatialities. Stated differently, the question that distills the call to (re)imagine public education through these 11 schools is: how can our awareness of the “common differences” (Mohanty as cited in Roman 2003) that shape(d) our localized hopes for education yield new itineraries toward more socially justice schools in the face of market-driven forces that increasingly create technological, social, and cultural inequalities and that are heavily invested in rendering such inequalities invisible? This book contends that it is by revealing the histories of “displacement” crafted in the relationship between language and knowledge and by placing such relationship at the center of our pedagogies of hope, as *Barbiana* and Rough Rock did, that we can, for example, imagine schools that give political voice to communities such as those displaced by the changes in global labor markets that are now voiceless. It further suggests that it is by wondering, as the *Ayllu*-school or *La Nostra Escola Comarcal* did, how the hopes and knowledge of disenfranchised communities can democratize schools’ structures and decision-making processes that we can envision new partnerships *with* these communities in contexts, such as for example urban school districts, in which schools and their communities are seen as the problem rather than as the solution. It is by exploring the role and delivery of the formal curriculum in (re)constructing social identities, as Montclair High School and Brondesbury and Kilburn High School did, that we can develop socially responsible curriculums to challenge the current technocratic approach to this subject. It is by concerning ourselves with the task of reconceptualizing teaching as an act in which every interaction is informed by both the collective and the individual, as HKRSS High School and *Los Talleres* did, that we can (re)claim professional development programs and methodologies that recognize the needs, hopes, and knowledges of teachers, students, and communities. It is, ultimately, by echoing the question of the role of schools in shaping more democratic economical and political futures explicitly raised by *Bachillerato* IMPA, Arthurdale, and Cifteler, that we can imagine curriculums and pedagogies committed to the centrality of disenfranchised communities in constructing and partaking such futures.

Concluding Thoughts

Shortly after I watched *Waiting for “Superman,”* one of the two documentaries discussed in the introductory chapters, I viewed a movie documenting the role of music in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement over five decades ago. I started pondering over one of the songs featured in this film, *what side are you on, boys? What*

side are you on? Immediately and unintentionally, I realized that this song's lyrics were offering me a unique compass to articulate my deep discontent with the messages conveyed in the two documentaries. Back in the day, this song was chanted in the streets as an unapologetic appeal to bystanders to join the marching through the streets. As I listened to this song and thought about the fate of public education, I understood that Guggenheim, the director, was willingly leaving his status as passive spectator to enlist in the crusade for public education. My already fragile appreciation for his public pledge to education, however, was short-lived as I became particularly aware through this song of the ideological differences that shape our current responses to pressing current social issues such as the very survival of public education. As I interpreted it, the appeal of the song to take sides was not an appeal to choose between those in the streets and those on the sidewalks. History has legitimated the latter as the only proposition morally right. Rather, it was to decide between a commitment to publicly work with others toward the creation of a society that no longer needed marches to claim democratic rights and the belief that democracy is not a matter of public struggle. It was here where I parted company with Guggenheim and with all the market-based reformers that claim to advocate for public education while undermining the public role of this institution. For me, *to be on the side* of public education is to advocate for its *publicness*, not only as the institution that articulates our public dreams but, paraphrasing Meier (2002), as the social space where we can make sure that such dreams remain public. For Guggenheim and other market-based reformers, however, it is to dismantle public education and to replace it with private visions of the public good.

While revisiting this song and the context in which it became an icon in the struggle for civil rights, I was reminded that, when it comes to the rights of "others," we are always faced with the moral obligation to take a side. As someone who rejects the ideological propositions of neoliberalism, this obligation has to be fulfilled by ferociously defending the notion of schools as public spaces where we can publicly debate society's visions of education. Better yet, by advocating for public schools as places saturated by social and historical complexities but which have, nevertheless, the responsibility of developing educational projects that are not only socially responsible but that also expand our democratic imagination. In this regard, I believe that advocacy for public education should always involve the need to constantly engage with the democratic questions that current educational policies are all too happy to disregard such as: "What is education for? What is its purpose? ... both here and now and looking to the future? What should be its fundamental values and ethics? What do we mean by knowledge and learning? What is our concept of education? What is our image of the child, the teacher, the school? Who is responsible for education? and What does it mean to be responsible?" (Fielding and Moss 2011, p. 18).

The notion of public schools as *publicly imagined* hardly answers any of these questions. Indeed, it makes this task even more complicated by challenging us to think what it means to *publicly* imagine visions of education in the concreteness of schools' everyday life when education is faced with new social inequalities such as the ones derived from the current technological divide that dispossesses many students of crucial symbolic tools in global societies, the ones created by the political

irresponsibility of placing many poor communities at the mercy of man-made ecological disasters, or those visions we fear will come from the increasing poverty in the world that would increase the number of the dispossessed while decreasing their political representation. As it is represented in the 11 schools featured in this edited collection, the understanding of public schools as *publicly imagined* contends that the individual educational futures of the students whom schools serve are critically linked to society's commitment to place disenfranchised communities at the core of our democratic hopes and, therefore, to our willingness to work for the public good. To this end, these schools are submitted as texts of hope and as a reminder that, paraphrasing Hargreaves (2011), the educational visions to achieve this public good should never be *rented* from the private but must be *owned* by the public.

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