

PRESENTATION

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This monographic issue responds to an exceptional event: the death of the dictator Francisco Franco in 1975 fifty years ago. It is not a trivial or inconsequential event, but marks the acceleration of the process of change towards democracy in Spain. It should be remembered that it was not possible to remove him from power before his death and that he even signed five death sentences a few weeks before his death, despite social pressures in Spain and the request for clemency from a large number of European and American leaders.

The aim of the different chapters is to point out the changes that have taken place in these 50 years, or 55 if the General Education Law of 1970 is included, in various dimensions of education. The main purpose of all of them is to offer a broad and diverse overview of the advances, difficulties and challenges that Spanish education has faced and continues to face. All the texts presented deserve to be included in this issue, but not all the significant topics have been included. The limitation of the number of articles, the decision to ensure gender parity among authors and the availability of specialists in the different topics have played an important role in the organization of the monograph. Perhaps the most notable absence is that referring to the activities and conditions of the teaching staff in these years. The final option has been to incorporate these changes in different chapters: the requirements in the qualifications and training necessary to teach in the chapter dedicated to legislation; the average number of students per classroom and the expenditure per teacher in the chapter on educational statistics; and the changes in the teaching competencies required in teaching in the chapters on the curriculum and on educational support for students with special needs.

The transformation of Spanish education over these 50/55 years has been highly relevant and positive as can be seen throughout this monographic issue. But it would not be appropriate to consider the progress in education without establishing a close relationship with other important changes in politics, economics, society and culture. It has not been possible to address the interactions between them, but it is necessary to record their existence in order to fully understand educational progress in these decades.

The first article offers a brief summary of most of the educational laws passed since 1970. Special attention is given to the laws that extended

compulsory and free education: the General Education Law (LGE) of 1970 and the Organic Law on the General Organization of the Educational System (LOGSE) of 1990, without forgetting other laws in force in the 21st century. The meaning of the constitutional agreement on education is also analyzed. The selected data show very relevant progress in public spending on education, in student enrollment across all educational stages and in the reduction of school dropout rates. Progress has been rather more modest in the area of educational inequalities, so different initiatives are proposed to improve equity.

Enrique Roca's article shows the most significant changes in the main indicators of Spanish education over the last 50 years. It includes indicators related to context, financing, schooling and results. All of them reflect the enormous transformations undergone by Spanish education, which in these five decades has moved from a notable educational lag in all indicators to achievements that place it at the average levels of the OECD and the EU, and even at higher levels in early childhood education and higher education. The selected data on the demographic and economic context point to their relationship with educational progress in these five decades.

The changes in the University in these 50 years are analyzed by María Fernández Mellizo-Soto. The article highlights the depth of these changes, which have led to progress from a centralized university model to a decentralized and more dynamic one. Of particular importance is the University Reform Law of 1983, which transferred a large part of the competences to the Autonomous Communities and granted greater autonomy to universities. In addition to commenting on other subsequent laws, the article analyzes four key issues: the extension of university education, the reorganization of academic programs, the financing of its studies, and study grants and scholarships to promote equal opportunities. Finally, it points out future challenges for university policy.

The transformation of Vocational Education and Training (VET) during these years is the core of the article by Isabel Fernández Solo de Zaldívar. Her main thesis is that VET has evolved from being an undervalued alternative to becoming a strategic option for the education system and the labor market. The text reviews the most important changes during this time due to the influence of European models and the recommendations of international organizations. The consequences of these changes can be seen in the reduction of school dropout rates and in the improvement of young people's qualifications. The article concludes by identifying strategies that

need to be promoted to ensure that vocational training becomes a high-quality and prestigious option.

Alejandro Tiana develops in his text the construction of a decentralized educational system from the approval of the 1978 Constitution, which established the bases for the distribution of competences in education, to the present day. His exposition is organized in two key stages to understand the educational decentralization: 1978-1994 and 1994-2000. Subsequently, he analyzes some positive changes that have taken place in recent years, such as territorial coordination and cooperation programs, and describes the tensions between recentralizing and decentralizing movements. Finally, it evaluates positively the growing convergence between autonomous communities, largely due to the decentralized management of education.

César Coll and Elena Martín analyze the curricular change in Spain from LOGSE to LOMLOE. First, they address the key elements necessary for the analysis and evaluation of the curriculum: the levels and actors involved, the process of specifying educational intentions, the criteria used to select basic learning, the socio-constructivist perspective that guides this process, and the policies and actions planned for the development and revision of established curricula. Subsequently, they evaluate the processes of curricular change and their complex relationships with student learning assessments, as well as the impact of the curriculum on teaching practice.

Progress in an inclusive response to students with special educational needs over the past five decades is the main focus of the article by Climent Giné. It addresses the changes in society, in Spanish culture, in legislation, in educational management, in community commitment and in educational practices towards a greater recognition of diversity and educational inclusion. The conclusions highlight the enormous progress achieved over the past 50 years, moving from the complete absence of students integrated into mainstream schools in 1975 to 84% in the 2022–2023 school year. However, it also point out that students with special educational needs are still largely excluded from the community.

School leadership is the subject developed by Francisco López Rupérez. The article start with the importance of the professionalization of school leadership and its value in the functioning of schools and in the improvement of the quality of education. His analysis is based on the review and comparison of the different laws that have dealt with this subject, practically all those passed since 1970. In order to conduct a rigorous

comparison, he uses three criteria to analyse each law: access to school leadership, professional practice and professional development. The analysis and evaluation of current legislation based on the proposed model allows the author to point out future lines of action for strengthening school leadership.

The article by Consuelo Vélaz de Medrano reflects on the process of implementation of educational guidance over the past 55 years, on its objectives and on the different organizational models. It analyzes the innovative proposals of the 1970 General Education Law (LGE) on educational guidance and the changes introduced by the 1985 project for educational inclusion of students and by the 1990 LOGSE, which led to the development of guidance teams and departments in all schools. The text also addresses the main advances and risks of the legislation and programs in the 21st century. Finally, the remaining challenges in vocational guidance and psycho-pedagogical counseling and evaluation are outlined.

The evolution of textbooks over the last 50 years is the topic of the article written by Gabriela Ossenbach, Kira Mahamud and Miguel Beas. The authors analyze the changes they have undergone during these years influenced by curricular transformations, by the progressive liberalization of their administrative control, by the organization of large publishing groups, by the evolution of their authorship towards work teams and by the modifications of their editorial design to favor more dynamic learning. The article highlights the remarkable adaptability of textbooks during these decades. Their perspective of reaching the greatest number of students must be accompanied by the competence of the teacher to adapt them to the characteristics of each school and to the diversity of the student.

Two final remarks to conclude the presentation of this issue. First, the *Revista de Educación* is right to address in a monograph the evolution of education in Spain over the last 50 years. The second is the confirmation, after reading the full Monograph, of a statement about education expressed in the first article: any time in the past was worse.