

Transforming Education

01.

## **Focusing on the Objective**

*40 Considerations for Educational Change*





## **Transforming Education**

Collection directed by Xavier Aragay

Book

**01**

Title

**Focusing on the Objective. 40 Considerations for Educational Change**

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Transforming Education

**01.**

## **Focusing on the Objective**

*40 Considerations for Educational Change*

# Authors

The team that authored this collection is composed of:



## **Xavier Aragay**

is an economist and, since 2009, the General Director of Jesuïtes Educació. With his broad professional and life experience and his calling to service, he is at the head of the *Horitzó 2020* project. Those who know him personally say he is a visionary, open to dialogue, demanding and tenacious. He loves making diagrams, playing with words and enjoying nature, often climbing the most unexpected of peaks.



## **Jonquera Arnó**

is a teacher, and she joined the team in 1993. Since then, she has brought heart to the JE educational project. Trained in the humanities and with a profound spiritual life, she always works for and with others (according to her, she can't help it, since she came into this world accompanied by her twin sister). She is currently the Director of the Technical Office of Jesuïtes Educació. She is also in love with the sea.



## **Pere Borràs**

is a Jesuit (he will soon be celebrating the 50th anniversary of his commitment to the Society of Jesus), and is currently the JE network's Counselor. Always willing to help others, he has served as a professor, novice master, Provincial and President of the Foundation. He is an expert in Ignatian spirituality and in accompanying youth and adults. With his strong, direct personality, he enjoys life, comics and *Barça*.



## **Mauro Cavaller**

has a Licentiate in Philosophy, and is a coach specialized in writers. He is the Editor of the *Transforming Education* series, managing the collection as a whole and lending unity to the different books. As an artisan of ideas, he listens, empathizes, and brings together the different elements of the topics we discuss. He very much enjoys going to the movies.



**Daniel Iniesta**

has a degree in Labor Relations and has been the Director of Human Resources at JE since 2011. Always learning, he has served in especially delicate areas of the public sector, such as the judiciary minors, adoptions and cooperation. Passionate about everything he does, he always seeks the development of individuals. He likes swimming, jogging and reading (normally about the period 1914-1945).



**Pepe Menéndez**

has a Licentiate in Informatics, and since 2009 has been Assistant Director of JE. He has a broad knowledge of both the classroom and the management of educational institutions (he served as Director of the Joan XXIII school). In 2004 he helped draft the *Pacte Nacional per l'Educació*. He blogs and organizes debates in his own home, which are generally accompanied by fantastic meals that he himself prepares.



**Pol Riera**

has a degree in Business Science and is the Manager of the JE network. His long and varied experience and his ample training have bestowed him with good organizational skills and a wonderful sense of pragmatism. He enjoys working as part of a team and always does so with a great deal of optimism. He is a self-made man, and he is extremely enthusiastic about sports (he plays almost all of them) and motorcycles.



**Lluís Tarín**

has a licentiate in Pedagogy, and specializes in educational technology and executive development. At Jesuïtes Educació, he is the Adviser on Leadership and Strategy. As any good sage would, he constantly observes, reads and searches for clues to help understand the world. He always accompanies his analyses with an emotional aspect; it's safe to say he is a man of heart.



**Lluís Ylla**

is an agronomist, and at Jesuïtes Educació he dedicates himself to planning and quality systems. He organized the workings of *Horitzó 2020*, and through reflection and practice has also contributed to the development of a pedagogy of interiority. He has been the Assistant Director of JE since the Foundation was created in 2000. He is an avid reader who greatly enjoys going for walks and writing.





*Ite inflamate omnia (Go and give life to everything).*

**Saint Ignatius**

*It is not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves.*

**Edmund Hillary**

*Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive. The only way of facing an adaptive challenge is to modify the priorities, beliefs, challenges, habits and loyalties of individuals. In order to advance, we need to go beyond any expert knowledge, so as to promote discovery, abandon certain entrenched habits, tolerate losses and generate a new ability to continue to thrive.*

**Ronald Heifetz**

*I am sure that in the future, education will be very different from how it is now. Learning will take place primarily through digital means, online, at home or in the park. The applications and programs will be of a high quality, and because of this the role of teachers will be closer to that of a coach or an assistant, and they will not be the didactic presenters of information they are now. It's not very likely that students will continue to go to school from first thing in the morning until the afternoon, and it's even less likely that they will all go to one single building called «school». But we'll still need to socialize individuals; young people will want to be with other young people, parents will have to work, and society will want youth to have models of good behavior. We will need to find an answer to these needs, which are currently fulfilled by the school.*

**Howard Gardner**

# Prologue

In march of 2012 I had the opportunity to visit Barcelona for the first time. I had been invited to speak on the challenges of our age from the point of view of Jesuit education. I prepared my presentation, excited to visit a city that had played such a significant role in the history of the Society. Still, I have to admit I was also nervous to speak before a new audience.

But God, the same God that transformed St. Ignatius in Manresa and later led him to Barcelona, had a big surprise in store for me: there, I met a group of educators in love with the Ignatian mission of education, and committed to educational renovation as a spiritual path for answering the challenges of our time.

I've had the privilege of following the process of renovation of Jesuïtes Educació's schools, embodied by Hortizó 2020, from afar. It's a serious, professional and profoundly Jesuit project that has become an act of faith in education as a privileged apostolate for carrying out the mission of the Society of Jesus: the service of faith, the promotion of justice and care for the environment. A mission that nowadays has to be

carried out through networking, an open dialogue with the pedagogical sciences and the care for the values that new generations offer to the world.

But *Horitzó 2020* is also a way of creatively updating the Society of Jesus' educational tradition, a tradition that encourages us to use our imagination and be brave enough to innovate in the constantly changing context of our societies and students according to the call of Father Adolfo Nicolás, General of the Society of Jesus: «True creativity is an active, dynamic process that aims at providing answers to real questions, seeking for alternatives to a miserable world that seems to be walking on paths over which nobody has control», (Mexico, 2010).

*Horitzó 2020* goes beyond Catalonia, because it's an inspiration for many of our other schools and networks engaged in similar projects. Without a doubt, it's a valuable contribution in weaving the web of Ignatian education, which today aims to continue its tradition of forming men and women for others and with others, providing a well-rounded education to make individuals who are competent, conscious, compassionate and committed, who become local and global citizens for a

better life for everyone. This is why we enthusiastically celebrate the publication of this series of books. There's no question that they will be a significant contribution to the process of renovating the Society of Jesus throughout the world.

**José Alberto Mesa**

*Jesuit. Secretary of Education. Society of Jesus. Rome*



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# Introduction

Well, we've done it. We're underway. Today, the most important part of our experience in transforming education is that together, we've moved from good intentions, from words, to actions and deeds. Therefore, transforming the education is possible.

In this first volume of the *Transforming Education* series, we offer a series of considerations that frame our plan for the future. It's our starting point, our way of focusing on our objective. It's what we're doing, and why.

The educational revolution that's just around the corner will be extremely profound. You can bet that in five or ten years, school will have gone through a radical transformation.

We don't want to be left behind; we want to be protagonists in preschools, primary and secondary schools (professional training included!). This is where we're gathering experience and centering our efforts.

In keeping with the spirit of the Society of Jesus, we need to incorporate the scientific and methodological innovations the modern world is offering us so that, through possibilism and eclecticism, we can profoundly transform our educational model once again. In other

words, we will most likely need to update and reformulate the *Ratio Studiorum* for the 21st Century.

Our proposal for educational renovation, then, comes from many different sources and is rooted in the Ignatian spirit that we draw from the Spiritual Exercises. We aren't worried about the originality of our proposal; we care more about how it will be applied and whether it is viable and effective. Because of this, in the inevitably condensed and abridged considerations that follow, there are very few bibliographical references.

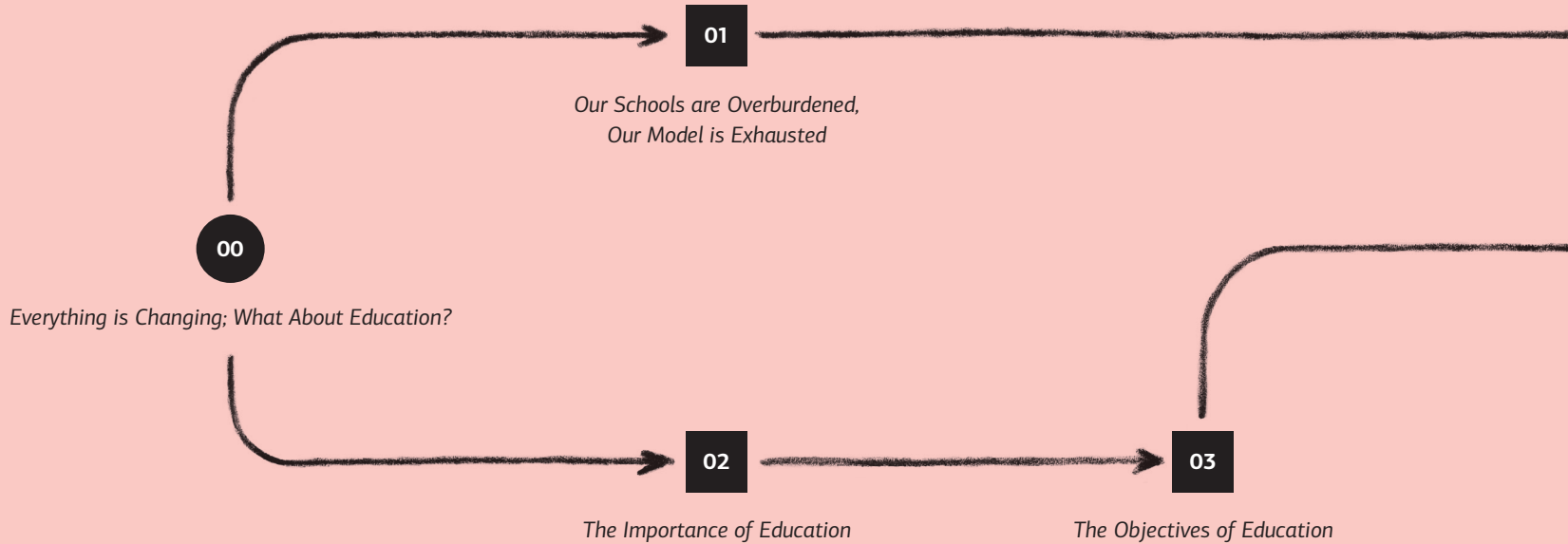
Nevertheless, we are very conscious of our references, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of them for their contribution. This new collection that starts today stems from the one published in July, 1977, called *Papers de Pedagogia Ignasiana* (Papers on Ignatian Pedagogy). In the introduction of the first volume, the Jesuit Ignasi Salat stated: «We are heirs and protagonists of a living heritage. We are not asked to guard a hidden treasure but to make the Ignatian intuition of education in the school available today».

This is our humble contribution. We trust that this book will inspire and motivate, just as we have been inspired and motivated by other experiences and individuals.

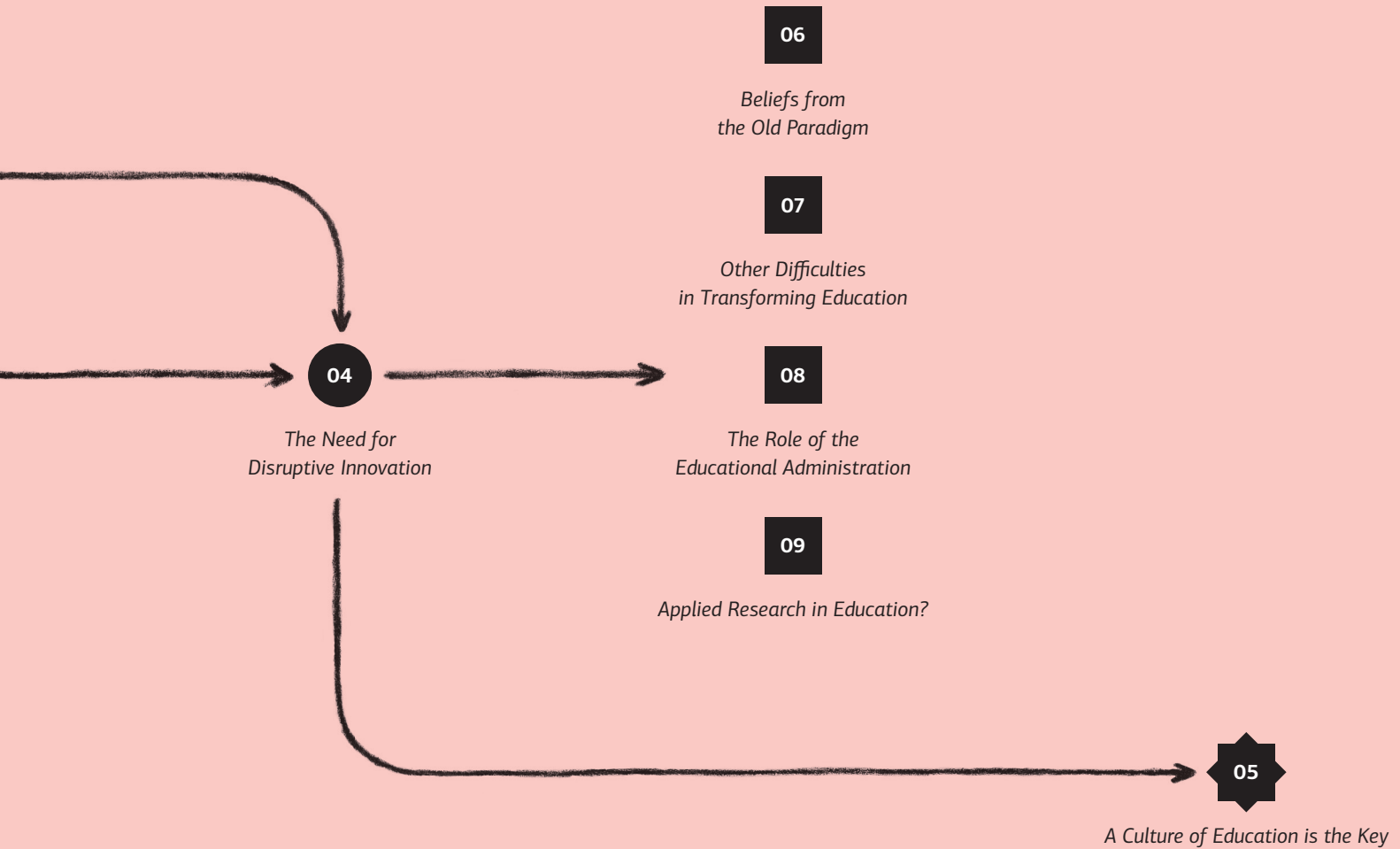
**Xavier Aragay**

*Director of the Transforming Education series  
and General Director of Jesuïtes Educació*

## I. From Up on the Balcony







**01. Transforming Education.** Focusing on the Objective

# 00.

## *Everything is Changing; What About Education?*

We're living in a time of change; there's no doubt about it. In just a few years, the world has been transformed substantially and rapidly. Just a few generations ago, it took a whole lifetime to notice significant changes, and now it only takes a decade to notice that our lifestyles are substantially different.

All of this goes without saying. In every area of life, new challenges appear; it's what is referred to as a change in the paradigm. We could make a long list with elements of politics, the economy or society, and we would most certainly arrive at the same conclusion: the decline of the analog world and the appearance of a new digital world.

We're no longer condemned to simply receive information passively; today, we all have the chance to participate in all aspects of life as emitters. Does it make sense, then, for us to simply view students as empty vessels to be filled?

In the reflections that follow, we will see the impact of this change in the education paradigm, its characteristics, its scope and consequences. We want

to know how modern schools are receiving the changes that are knocking urgently on their door.

# 01.

## *Our Schools are Overburdened, Our Model is Exhausted*

Our schools are burdened with all sorts of new responsibilities, and yet they remain the same, with the same structure they've always had. It's true that new technologies and methodologies have found space in the classroom, but the profound changes we have witnessed haven't yet penetrated the center of our schools' educational systems.

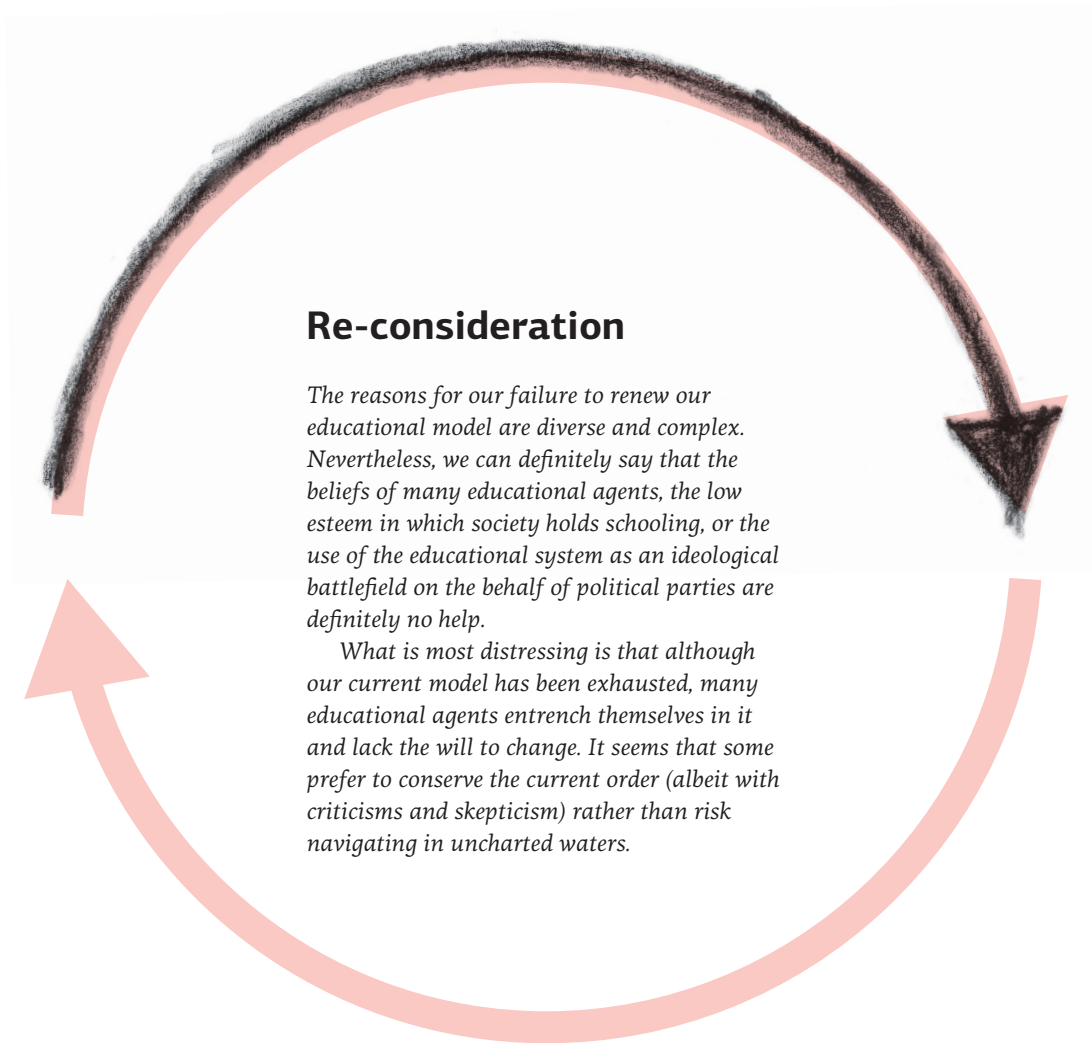
We have to acknowledge that schools have incorporated many new activities over the past twenty years, but there still haven't been substantial changes to our educational system in over fifty years. The innovations we've incorporated have basically consisted of mixing the new ideas of a handful of teachers with the old habits of many others.

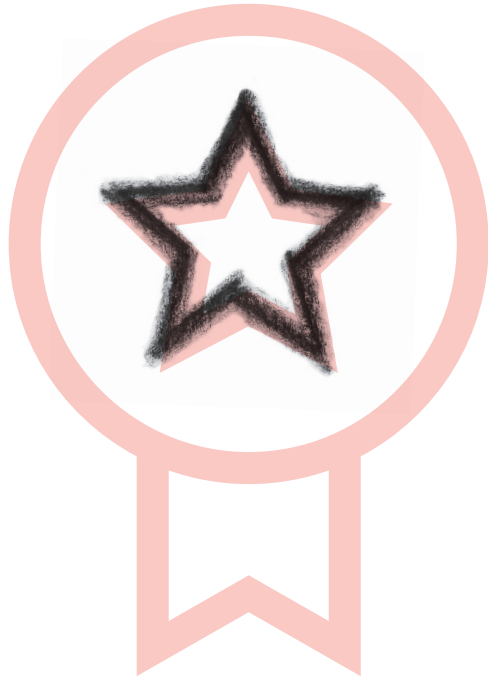
Our current system is no longer valid because experience has shown us that the changes that have been introduced have consistently been dissolved in existing practices. Although they may have brought about some minor improvements in our results, they haven't resulted in stable, successful and lasting transformations.

The rigidity of our system is extremely durable, and generally brings things back to the way they were. As a result, we see that large numbers of teachers are exhausted and concerned by a model that is incapable of providing them with effective and sustainable solutions.

In addition, our school buildings are essentially built and organized just as they were in the 19th century. Classrooms are organized practically in the same manner, and the distribution of class time and breaks is also frozen in time; a bell even sounds to mark recess periods, as if we were workers in a factory.

In this context, small changes and adjustments are gradually introduced, but nevertheless today's schools will soon have exhausted their possibilities for improvement. Through small adjustments, we'll never manage to renew our basic conceptions of education and adapt ourselves to our new paradigm. What we need is a systematic change.





## Re-consideration

*Unfortunately, it seems that we aren't sufficiently aware of the importance of education. The truth is that individuals tend not to commit themselves to education and schools unless they are directly involved as the parents of students. Why don't our social and economic drives, as well as the society as a whole, commit themselves firmly to education?*

## 02.

# *The Importance of Education*

Some may say «All right, we haven't turned our schools upside down, but why should we?». As a response, we can't just call upon being coherent with the present; we need to point out everything that's hanging in the balance.

The importance of education makes this change absolutely necessary, as we will try to explain shortly.

Unlike in other animals, when our children are born, they enter a symbolic world. In order to join life in our cultural reality, instinct isn't enough. This is where education comes into play as the collection of measures taken to ensure that younger generations can have full access to human society and can realize themselves fully develop themselves in this context.

Throughout history, depending on the particular needs of each age, this function has taken different forms. Education is a task for everyone. Parents and teachers aren't the only ones with this responsibility; it belongs to society as a whole.

If we focus on the present, we can say that, today, education needs to solve two essential questions. First, the creation of well-rounded individuals who are capable of living with others and building a more just society, and second, the acquisition of the knowledge and abilities needed for a highly technological society.

This transmittal of information and values should allow us to pass the torch on to our youth so that they can lead the society of the future as competent, free and responsible citizens. Ideally, we should pass on the best of each generation to the next, so that it can face its own challenges with the cumulative experience it has been given.

## 03.

### *The Objectives of Education*

If we take a closer look at education in modern society, we see that it has the function of simultaneously attempting to fulfill two requirements: equity and excellence.

Although some give priority to one or the other, the truth is that education needs to concentrate on both, since they are essential for the future of a society. If one or the other is neglected, we will inevitably fail to bring about the transformation of education that we want.

For us, equity means giving to each according to their possibilities. By taking into consideration the needs of individuals, we should be able to correct inequality and achieve greater social unity. This is what is referred to as equal opportunity. In this sense, it could be said that school is an institution that promotes social justice.

Excellence is an equally important challenge. Schools need to help each individual reach their maximum potential. We need to increase the potential of our students so that in the future they can live out

their life projects and use their expertise and their qualifications to serve society.

We cannot move exclusively towards any of the two basic requirements of education. In other words, education is a tool for social transformation and, considering that we want competent societies (capable of facing the particular challenges of each age), we need to commit ourselves to excellence and equity, meaning that we work to advance as a society and that we all row in the same direction.



## 04.

# *The Need for Disruptive Innovation*

If our world is changing its paradigm, it has come time for a profound renovation of education, to leave behind our old, exhausted models and work energetically and enthusiastically for the future. We need to rethink and put into practice a new learning and teaching process focusing on the student.

We need to rethink the way we plan and organize educational actions and the way we monitor student progress; we can't lock ourselves in the tower of our current school structure while battles are fought in the day-to-day events of each classroom.

This is a radical leap forward. We need to rethink, without limitations, everything that needs to be changed, while creating a new context to move towards a different kind of education. Thus, we are faced with the challenge of disruptive innovation.

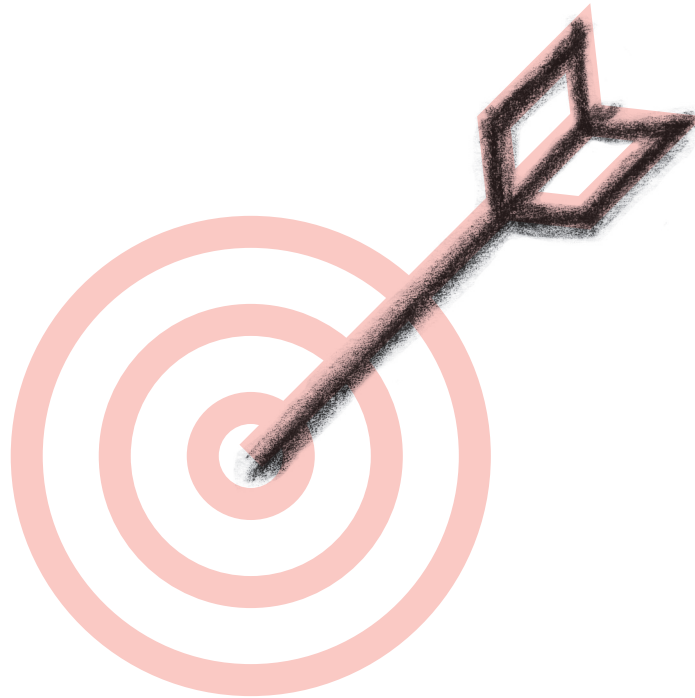
At JE, we are questioning every aspect of the roles of the members of our educational community (especially teachers and students), the way schools are organized, the way schedules are organized, the makeup of spaces and the way they are furnished, the role of the

administrative staff, teaching materials, subjects and departments; in other words, the entirety of school life.

The scope of this project is so broad that it is difficult to change one of these elements without modifying the others. In order to take on the system, we need a comprehensive approach, a point of view that includes all aspects of school, and systematic change.

In this renovation, we need to reach the very center of the learning and teaching process and associate the innovations in the field of knowledge and competencies with evaluation. This way, we'll breach the most important bastion of resistance to change and the biggest stumbling block for any educational law.

In summary, we need to go from a model that obstructs and impedes innovation and change to a system that encourages and facilitates it and that is more in accordance with the developed societies' way of learning. However, we think it prudent to say that in order to bring about this change, we first need to make our current models much more flexible and question the beliefs or myths that have been immovable up to now.



## **Re-consideration**

*Many authors refer to a school that learns, meaning a school that has incorporated a culture where all members of the community learn and teach, work together and promote individual and group leaderships in order to drive profound change.*

## 05.

# *A Culture of Education is the Key*

Before we focus on the details and the specific aspects that need to change, we should be aware of the roots of this transformation. We need to keep in mind that the effort and the resources we dedicate to improving schooling will be of little use if we don't change educational culture.

We're referring to the need to question beliefs, principles, practice and procedures that because of their antiquity, seem natural to us. The things we don't feel the need to justify, the things we take for granted—these are difficult to change and even harder to see.

We need to question and rethink ideas, concepts, mental maps, methodologies, learning strategies and ways of working in the classroom. Only by doing so will we be able to overcome dogmatism and the ideology that some sectors of the educational community fiercely defend.

This change also requires individual reflection, based on the calling and the life projects of our educators. We don't claim that this is easy, but we do feel that it is

necessary. Without all of this, we won't be able to get our schools up-to-date because, as we have said, what we need to change is our paradigm.

We need to leave behind our old style of education, based on a teacher who teaches passive learners, in order to move towards a new educational paradigm where students learn through their own actions.

Besides the basic objectives of education, which remain the same over the centuries, we are living in an age that demands that we radically rethink our beliefs on the meaning of education, on what the population needs to learn and on what the role of the teachers—and by extension, the school—is.

## 06.

### *Beliefs from the Old Paradigm*

Many educational professionals believe that what gives meaning to their task and ensures its success is their work as an individual in the classroom, not realizing the importance of the notion of the educational process, teamwork or networking.

We need to reverse this way of thinking because of everything that is at stake; this is the origin of relativism in educational leadership, contempt for management, the neglect of the individual artistic aspect of teaching and the lack of attention for other economical or social aspects.

With school as an organization for knowledge, we need to search for a balance between individual contributions and the effectiveness of teamwork. This brings out a curious paradox: although school is one of the places where teamwork is most emphasized, it is also where it is least brought into practice.

Nowadays, the scales are clearly tipped in favor of individual contributions. A clear example of this is the survival of the myth of academic liberty, which instead of being understood specifically as freedom of belief

or thought is often used in a radically individualist manner to defend certain practices in the classroom.

To offer support and to personalize education is our main goal but today this is no longer possible starting from a number of individual contributions that are more or less coordinated. There is the need for a deep restructuring of the teaching and learning process that involves the educators participating as a whole and as a team. If we are seeking for a change in the system, it's because we want to achieve it.

On the structural level, we find a similar belief: the view of the staff meeting as the supreme authority over the teacher's participation, in other words, the preference of democratic participation as opposed to professional participation. Professional participation is essential in organizations of learning and it has to be boosted. Democratic participation is an element of society in general, and need not be applied in exactly in the same manner in schools.

## 07.

### *Other Difficulties in Transforming Education*

On the one hand, and considering participation and titularity, if we still believe that school is for everyone to live it and requires everyone's collaboration, who will give each school its distinctive character? We need a definite ownership (both in public and private schools) in order to bring about solid, distinct educational projects and to be able to take risks and the initiative.

Right now, we need to be brave and dare to begin debating without the victimization or theoretical positions that serve to hide corporative interests. We need to change our educational culture in order to introduce new elements in favor of student learning. On the other hand, the great deal of inertia that schools have also needs to be considered. This is what ensures their stability and continuity since it helps them operate, like clockwork, from Monday to Friday, ten months a year.

However, the downside is that this inertia is also an impediment to any disruptive innovations, preventing any moves towards a profound and systemic change.

It's not easy to keep a school running day in and day out while trying to organize a radical revision that, practically overnight, will modify the way schools work. It's somewhat like trying to change the tires of a moving car.

Besides the inertia, there are other obstacles in this glass cage. We all know how difficult it can be to move out of our comfort zone.

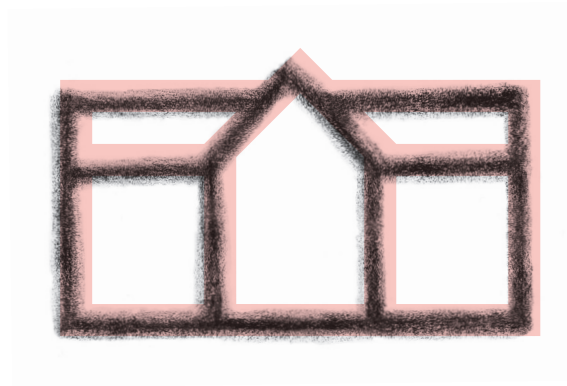
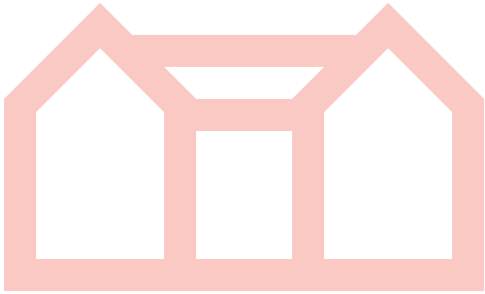
It's hard, but not impossible, to profoundly change education. We need a project, leadership, persistence, and a strong network, all to get the change rolling and to maintain it.

The first thing we need is to create the conditions necessary for change; then, we need to define this change as a group and get to work. We can't just depend on volunteers, and the initiative and good intentions of a few professionals isn't enough. In order to be successful, we need a systematic and global perspective on change.

## Re-consideration

*As proof that the impediments to change that this inertia brings about can be overcome, we can turn to many experiences of educational renovation in schools like the Col·legi Montserrat in Barcelona, the Institut Jacint Verdaguer in Sant Sadurní, or the rural school in the town of Santa Eulàlia de Riuprimer. Yes, it is possible. Shall we give it a try?*





## 08.

### *The Role of the Educational Administration*

It seems reasonable to say that everyone considers the progress made in universalizing education a good thing. The recognition of the right to universal education is a recent development in our history, as is the idea that the State should take on this responsibility.

Since World War II, educational politics and the public funding that goes with it have conveyed the interest of the population as a whole for education as an instrument of social cohesion and advancement.

With the restoration of democracy, in our country the central and regional governments have stayed loyal to this tendency, with special concern for all the details.

Now, we need to admit that we've gone too far. From a total lack of guarantees, lately we've come to an excessive obsession for controlling the educational world and, in some cases, management has become more important than the task of education. The administration imposes strict regulations, describes the curriculum in great detail, and intervenes directly in the learning and teaching process. We wonder if this should continue to be the State's role in a new educational model.

The new structures are more horizontal. In this context, the richness of civil society should translate into a diversity of educational choices, each with their own character. When faced with the homogeneity of a vertical model, we should instead opt to represent the diversity that is already present in society.

The educational administration should focus on requirements that structure education and actions that help improve it (quality of the results). We also need a commitment to maintain a stable legal base for education, free from circumstantial party interests.

In this new framework, distinct educational projects will have much more freedom of movement, and the ownership or administration of semi-private schools will have more freedom to improve their institutions.

In summary, the educational administration should create the general framework, ensure funding and establish systems to effectively control of the results, while encouraging the autonomy of private and semi-private schools so that they can offer distinctive learning and teaching processes.



## 09.

# *Applied Research in Education?*

We need change, a profound change that will inevitably be faced with fierce resistance. This brings us to ask: Who can help us in this task? Can we count on help from scientific pedagogy?

In spite of the progress made, we need to recognize that educational research has not been able to effectively transmit its discoveries to the educational system in general and the teachers in particular.

Investigation in education is too often closed in an ivory tower, far away from the reality of teachers' educational tasks. Proof of this isolation and lack of impact is that administrative and political authorities often look down on the pedagogical contributions of science.

This separation is furthered by governments' political interests, the lack of transparency of the administration in sharing educational results, and the lack of a trustworthy criteria for mapping data so that it can be properly analyzed.

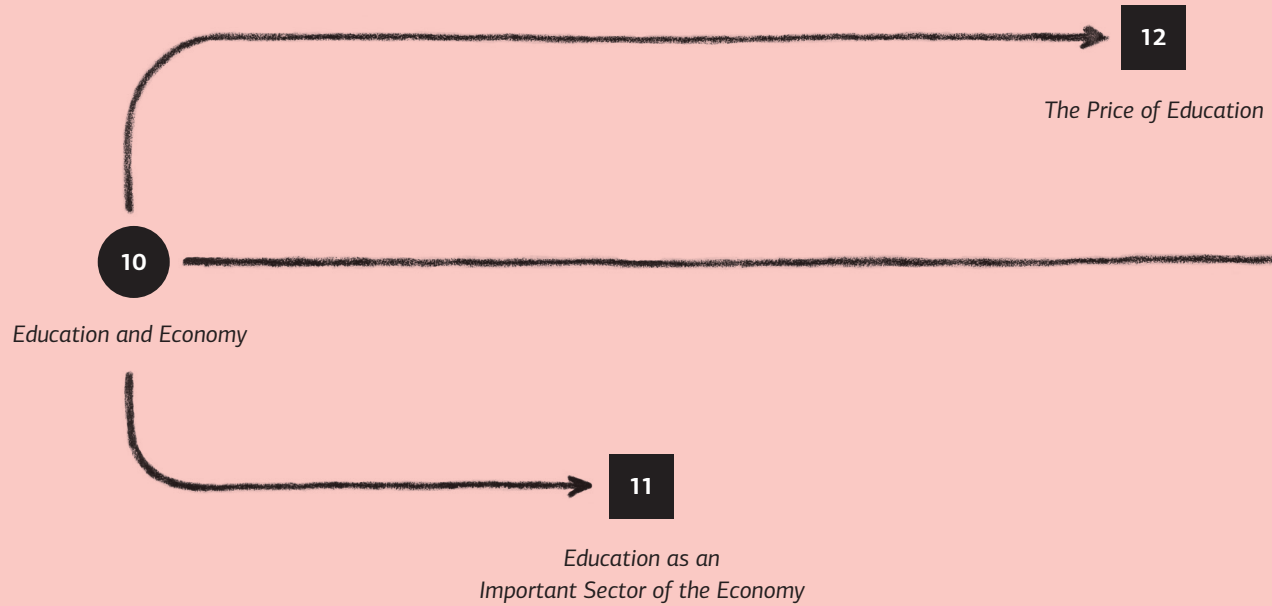
The present and future of educational research should be associated with solving practical problems.

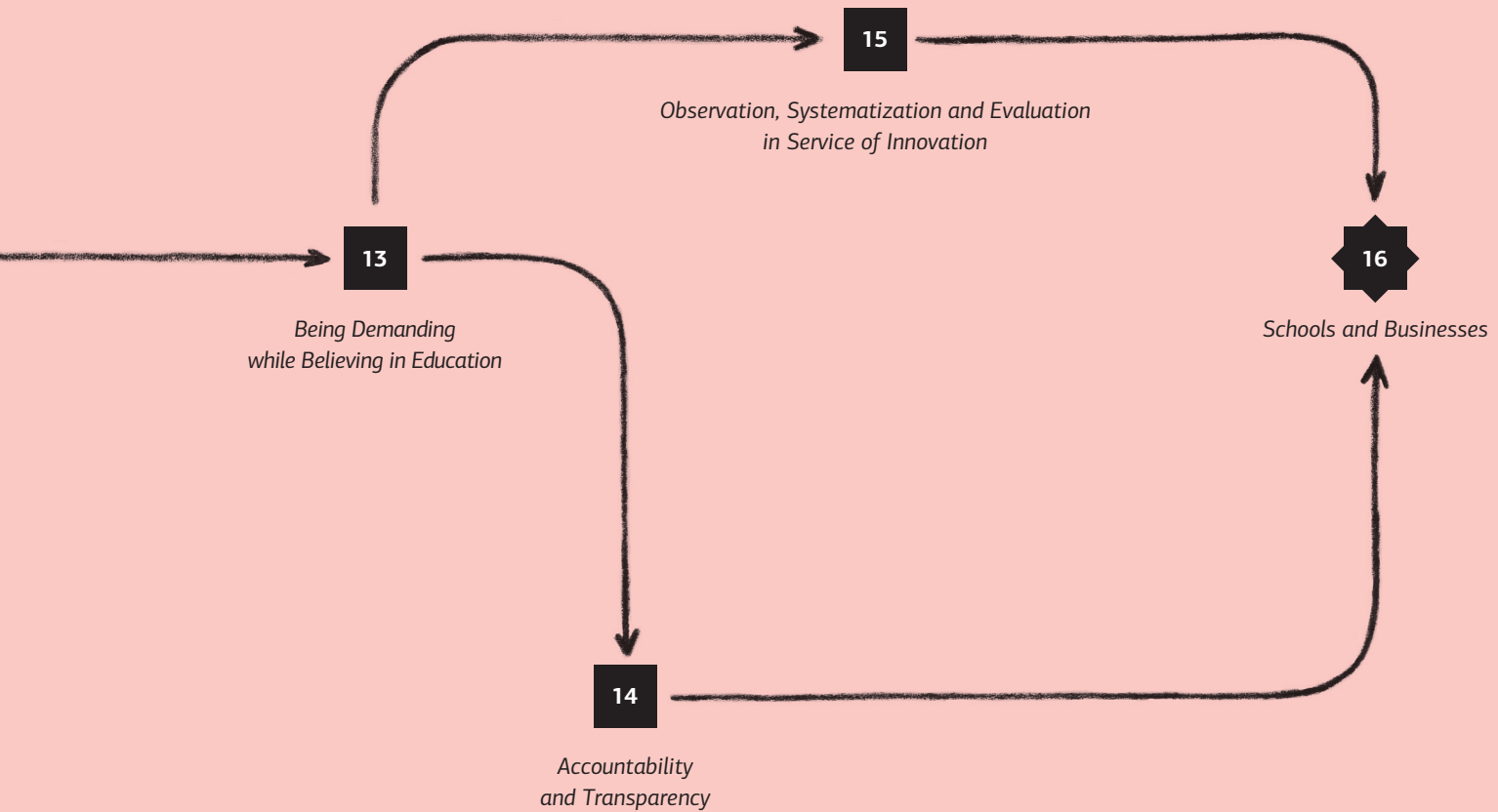
Experimental pedagogy should be much closer to schools and educational professionals; what we need is a new space where the two sides can interact. Applied research is also key in changing schools' educational culture, especially in regards to teachers.

It is absolutely necessary that we carry out research in such a way that it is contextualized, agreed upon, and carried out by the members of the educational community: administrators, teachers, students, and parents, in close collaboration with any university professors who are willing to participate.

We also need the firm support of political powers, greater trust in the tasks that universities can carry out in collaboration with schools, and more funding for research and development. In order to make this possible, once again, we need to abandon the ideological prejudices that taint education and get to work creating new networks.

## II. A New Look at Our Sector





**01. Transforming Education.** Focusing on the Objective

# 10.

## *Education and Economy*

For most of the educational community, economy and education live in complete separation. There is a deeply rooted belief that the economy pursues a series of interests that are completely opposed to those of education.

However, it was precisely an economic organization, the OECD, that placed the evaluation of some of the system's objectives and their effectiveness at the center of the educational world's attention.

We want to give priority to the learning and teaching process in the school we're building, and we hope to do so efficiently. In doing so, the economy's point of view can be very enriching.

To this end, we can ask ourselves questions such as: How much does education cost? How should we fund our investments? How can we measure the results? How can we establish a minimal relationship between costs and results in order to continually improve the learning and teaching processes?

Unfortunately, we need to recognize that the last thirty years haven't helped to clarify these questions

through peaceful dialogue. As a matter of fact, the educational administration has preferred not to make the costs of education public.

Economic resources are a necessary tool for any project to work. The logic of funding in education ever since the 19th century has meant that the economy has taken on an increasingly strategic role in the analysis of the possibilities of an educational system.

In order to guarantee equity and excellence, we need economic resources, but it's just as important that we be capable of doing things differently. In other words, we need to be capable of imagining a new learning and teaching process, one that uses the resources we have in a more efficient manner and improves their impact.

A different result and impact will be difficult to achieve if we carry on doing the same things.





## Re-consideration

*Let's tell it like it is. We have plenty of evidence to show that investing more money in education doesn't always improve educational results. It's just as easy to show that without sufficient resources, educational quality is impossible.*

*There's no way around it. The transformation of educational culture is key, but in order to bring about this transformation, we need concrete changes that require economic support. Renovation, inversion and efficiency seem to be the vectors of our new school.*

# 11.

## *Education as an Important Sector of the Economy*

As has been said, ever since World War II, education has become a priority for the State. Investments in this area are part of social policies in favor of equal opportunities for all. With this in mind, it can be said that education is an investment from which social profit can be made.

If, as has been done in the past, we were to think about education in industrial terms, this sector produces wealth in the form of academic degrees and workforce training. Teachers, students, administrators and investigators are all participants.

The welfare state continued to increase spending in education throughout the second half of the 20th century; in most countries, it is second only to the health system in the funds it receives.

If this is true, it's because of the great importance of education. It bears repeating: education is decisive in building the future of a society and in ensuring social cohesion. We shouldn't forget that economic development in any country is closely related to the quality of the educational system; professional training

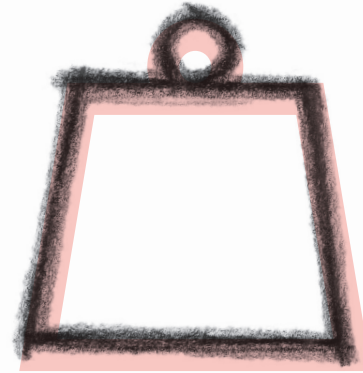
is essential for the growth of industry or the creation of a knowledge society.

In fact, all the studies point out that a qualified individual gives back to society, in economic terms, much more than what society has invested on them. Or from another point of view, the best way to avoid further assistential spendings is to invest in education for all the social strata.

It must also be noted that in Catalonia, education has become one of the foremost industries in terms of human investment. A study by the CETEI (*Centre de Tecnologies Ituarte*) showed that in 2009, education was the fourth strongest sector in terms of contribution to the GDP, behind construction, tourism and health.

No matter how you look at it, education is an extremely important element of our society and, if education is to be transformed greatly, the society as a whole should contribute to this process of changing... This is how it works with other sectors of the society, isn't it? What are we waiting for?





## Re-consideration

*We must also add that the education sector isn't just made up of schools and universities. It also includes technology businesses, publishing houses, educational recreation and educational television, to name a few. Both formal and informal education drive initiatives with significant economic weight.*

# 12.

## *The Price of Education*

Society has fought to make education universal, pushing for ever-greater investment from the state; this has eventually resulted in education being a free service. While this is extremely important for equity, it also carries some risks.

Unfortunately, modern society tends to equate «free of charge» with «without value».

The insistence on education being free has lost its original meaning and has driven many citizens to forget that it does, in fact, cost the public money which is funded by all of us.

Since the large investment the State makes in education with taxpayers' money is largely invisible, many are under the impression that the paternalistic state is bound to supply the services it offers without limits.

Opacity, ignorance and complaints do nothing to bring about the change we want.

And so, we pose the question: Why should education be completely free when, in this day and age, practically no other service is?

As far as income is concerned, asking families to help shoulder the cost of education (combined with an effective policy of scholarships for those families who are unable to do so) could not be more efficient than a completely free education?

With regard to spending, we should also work for implication, co-responsibility and improvement. To this end, it seems convenient to establish a program/contract, both for public and semi-public schools, which associates hard work, creativity and educational results, according to the sociocultural level of each, with the contribution of funds. Wouldn't this be an efficient way of continuously contributing to the improvement of the learning and teaching process?

These strategies are aimed at encouraging innovation and excellence while also guaranteeing equal opportunities, or 'equity', as we have referred to it. We need to make sure that our investments contribute in educational terms in all schools.

# 13.

## *Being Demanding while Believing in Education*

Society needs to believe in schooling, but must also be demanding of it. The strategic importance of this sector, along with the large quantity of resources allotted to it, mean that we can't be passive about the quality of education.

The transformation we want in education needs both of these attitudes and is the only way that change will be profound and successful. By being demanding, we avoid conformity, and through trust we have the strength to move forward.

In this context, teachers will feel driven towards change while at the same time having a reasonable margin for innovation. We can't suffocate educational renovation by being too impatient or by changing educational laws during every legislature. We need to respect the time and space needed to harvest the fruits of education.

On the other hand, although schools are at the center of it all, we also need the commitment and the participation of other social agents, since innovation can't just come from within the system.

We need to be aware, then, that if the educational world doesn't open to an interactive relationship with its surroundings, there can't be any real transformation. Our schools also need to be demanding while believing in society.

All in all, why don't we work together towards a better education?

# 14.

## *Accountability and Transparency*

In order to respond to the demand for quality education, we need to evaluate the results of any actions taken. Fortunately, today, in spite of resistance and misunderstandings, a culture of both internal and external evaluation is slowly taking root.

However, we still have a ways to go. We need to advance much further towards a common culture and language of the strategic objectives of education in order to create a system of accountability for the educational community as a whole and for society itself, which finances education through taxes.

On the other hand, in order to realize this task we need an exhaustive collection of data. We need a wide variety of evaluation indicators that measure the complexity of what we call 'educational values' in a holistic way.

It is, then, essential that we escape from the opacity in which we often live. We can't use education for political confrontation; nor can we consider the work done by our teachers as artistic, individual tasks, restricted to the classroom and impossible to evaluate.

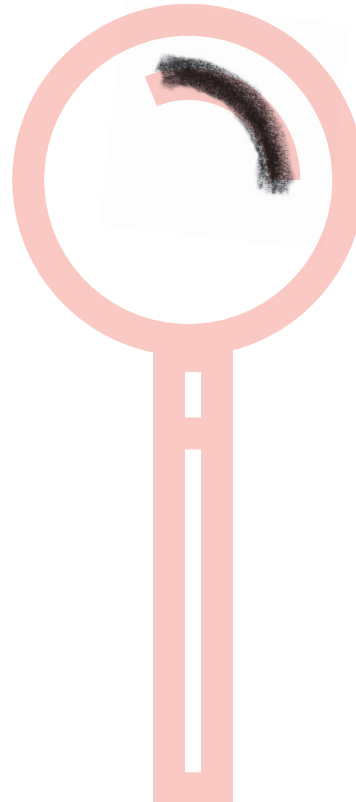
What's more, it should be the public administration that leads the way in promoting a policy of transparency, offering schools, families and university investigators the data they need in order to understand and improve the educational system.

The educational community has much to win from this. If we understood education as a work in progress carried out as a team, the teachers themselves would realize the benefits of evaluation and accountability. We can take the initiative and post the results of our own actions on the Internet as a sign of transparency for our families and society.

## Re-consideration

*The lack of rigor with which the available data tends to be read becomes evident when we see the closed-minded (as if there were no other tests or reports), often politically biased interpretation of the PISA and OECD reports.*

*The governments that have understood these results as a way of encouraging their educational community have achieved significant improvements. On the other hand, states that have branded them as weapons in the battle between different ways of understanding education have made a great deal of fuss without taking any concrete steps toward improvements.*



# 15.

## *Observation, Systematization and Evaluation in Service of Innovation*

Depending on the educational project and the methodology used, it's essential to first decide what observations and data we should collect. After organizing and evaluating our results, we reach conclusions.

This procedure should allow us to innovate, meaning that we can make changes that are proven to be successful and that allow us to improve the processes.

We need to reject the belief that educational results are only visible in the long term and are impossible to measure. We need to encourage an inquisitive mindset of observation, data collection and analysis of the efficiency of our actions.

A first important distinction to consider is the one that differentiates resources and activities in the teaching and learning process from the results and impact. These four concepts are often blurred, not distinguished from one another neither measured individually.

In many schools, the processes for quality certification are useful, but it should be acknowledged that in most cases, the school's inertia doesn't permit institutionalized innovation based on data analysis.

We often find practices and procedures that are repeated year after year, without analysing their repercussions. In most cases, innovation is an individual activity carried out by the teacher in their classroom.

We need to broaden our horizons and associate innovation with a group effort on the part of the teaching staff with improving students' results and with obtaining a systematic register of data on the learning and teaching process including its impact.

A lack of time and resources shouldn't be an excuse. Beginning with management, innovation should be the protagonist in transforming education and should be part of the school. We need to be brave and boost teamwork and the changes that have proven—through experience—to be useful. Technology and the Internet should help us make these new practices systematic.

The fact that we lack a tradition of establishing protocols and taking advantage of the analysis and data should make us see how important they are. We need to professionalize our processes; we need to validate the know-how of our system and help it grow.

# 16.

## *Schools and Businesses*

By itself, school can't educate or form individuals who, as adults, will carry out their lives in surroundings with different ways of working. Schools need businesses and institutions (NGO's, public administration, etc.), just as they need schools as a source for qualified personnel. This is as good an example as any of symbiosis.

If we want young people that are prepared to commit themselves to society with competency and values, we need school to be a sponge with the criteria to work and allow the motors of the social and economic system to intervene (as long as they fit with the educational objectives).

The other side should also take steps to encourage teamwork; businesses should bring themselves closer to schools. Though an understanding already exists in professional training, we need a clear effort (especially on the part of businesses) to work towards strategic collaboration.

However, some of the difficulties that arise in experiences of work-linked training (such as dual

training) demonstrate the lack of such a necessary strategic vision in the current world.

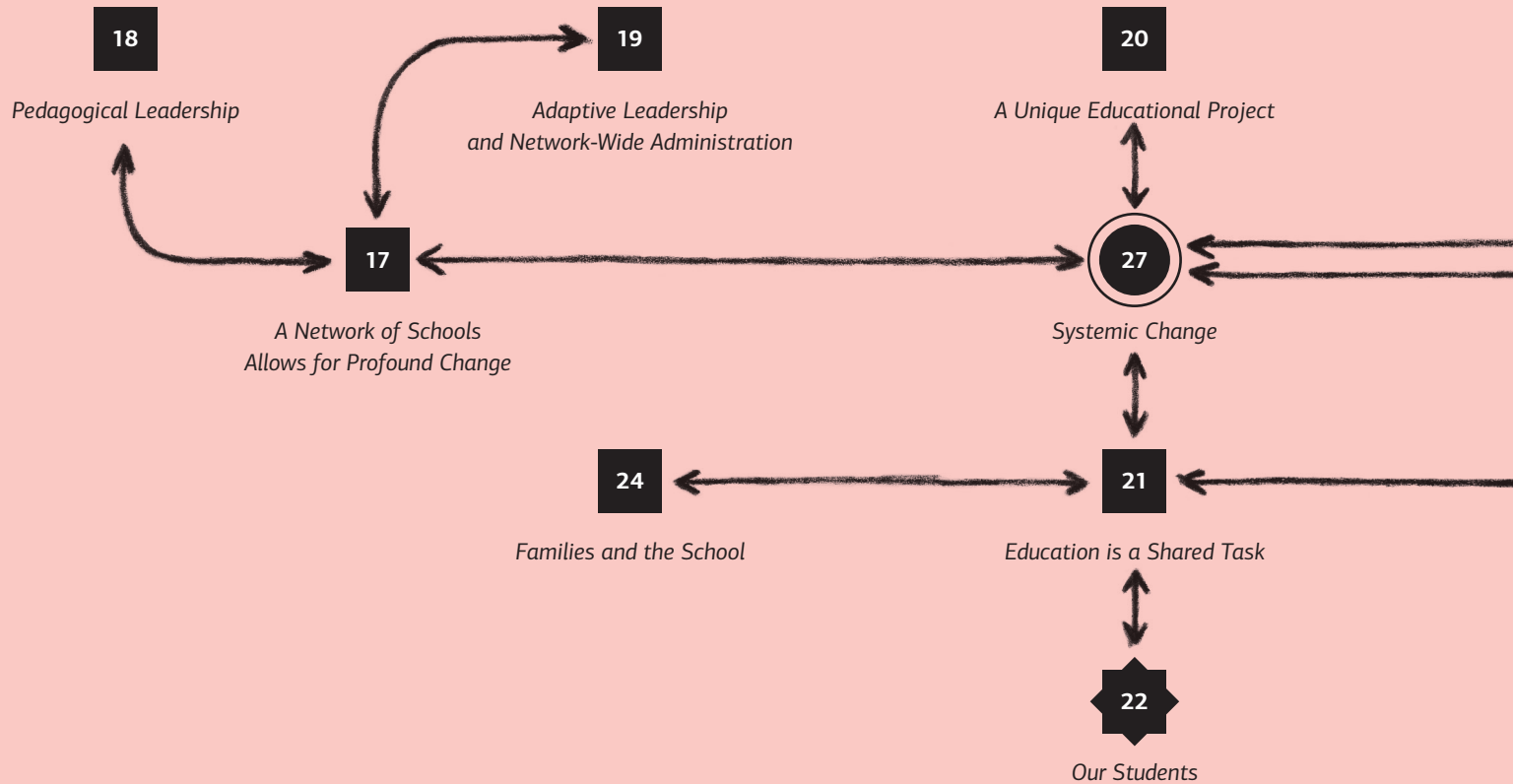
In some cases, the desire to utilize these experiences politically tends to dominate; in other cases, they are perverted by the mean, short-sighted vision of businesses accustomed to taking advantage of anything that can be gotten from the public sector.

It seems clear that businesses need open schools that educate in contact with the real world that students will be met with when they finish their education. It's also clear that in the process of improving education, businesses have a great deal to contribute and to win.

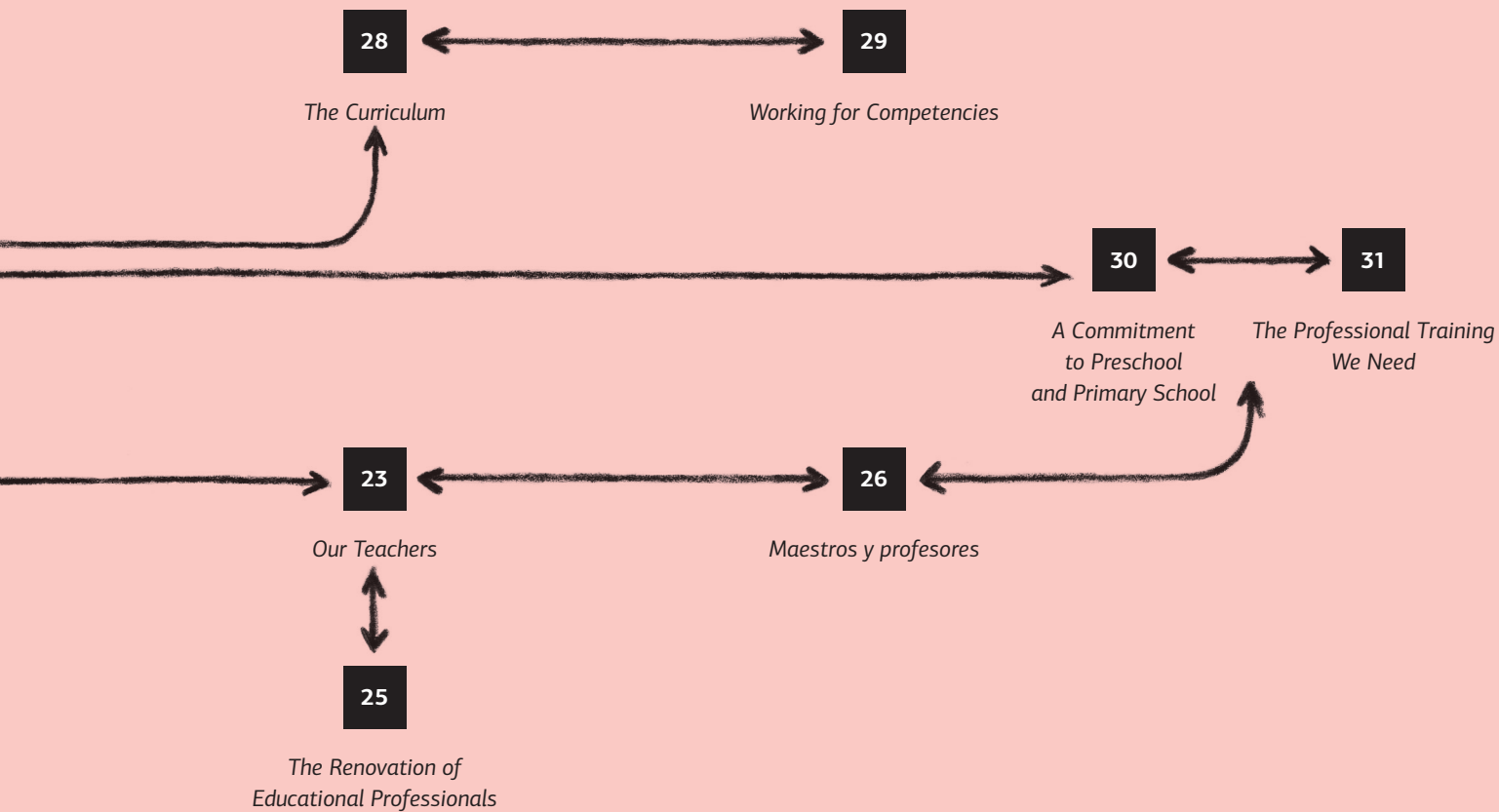
There's no doubt about it: schools aren't just businesses, and businesses aren't just schools. Both, however, can and must work together in favor of society.

This is why we need a new social pact between schools and businesses in order to improve and change education. In the end, we're all responsible.

### III. A New Way of Looking at School







**01. Transforming Education.** Focusing on the Objective

# 17.

## *A Network of Schools Allows for Profound Change*

It's hard for a single school to face the challenge of profoundly transforming education. We need to combat the individualization and promote collaborative synergy.

Until just a few generations ago, the healthcare field was also dominated by the solitary doctor who took care of «his patients». Today, however, things have changed. Health professionals are able to work much more efficiently as part of a network, thanks to a change in mentality and new protocols of action. Setting protocols of action properly as a team can help obtain better results and impact without translating into a depersonalization of the process.

Today, networks are proving to be decisive for innovation and the development of any field of human activity. Networking allows for cooperation, interaction, reciprocity and shared implication.

To treat the knowledge and expertise of so many teachers as a product for quick consumption is certainly unproductive; the time for teachers to work on their own has come to a close. For the same reason, it makes no sense for schools to work on their own without

sharing their knowledge and good practices so as to improve the educational level of our society.

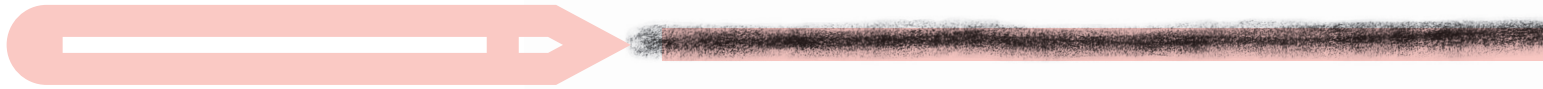
The opportunity to apply the benefits of scale economies to pedagogy requires that we work with discipline and perseverance in order to share, hybridize and grow together, moving beyond a simple network of multiple schools.

Networking means assuming a different way of working as a school. It means shifting towards a less pyramidal dynamic, one that's more participative, communicative and transparent.

We need to learn from the problems of working as a closed ecosystem. At the same time, we need to know how to collaborate and compete, so that schools do more than just explain their way of working to one another. In a true network of schools, administration and leadership is done through the network, and schools make common decisions together.

In summary, it can be said that in the creation of a true network of schools, sharing a common objective of change is key to initiating the transformation of education, both in public and private schools.

**01. Transforming Education.** Focusing on the Objective



## Re-consideration

*Coordinated work among schools is a new aspect of education in our century. It can be observed in schools belonging to a single religious order, to a single organization, or in some public initiatives—in northern Europe, for example—where small public schools in the same area work together.*

*We would like to add that the creation of Jesuïtes Educació in 2000 is an answer to this need to educate as part of a network. At the moment, our foundation is made up of eight schools in Catalonia, and we believe in the great potential of the worldwide network of Jesuit schools we aim to create.*



## 18. *Pedagogical Leadership*

In transforming education, we will need to count on the benefits of a network, but also on strong leadership. Although it might not be apparent, both notions complement one another. In order to function successfully as a horizontal network, we need a guide to point us in the right direction.

Of course, we need to give priority to pedagogical leadership, not bureaucratic leadership. We need to concentrate on improving students' learning and the results and impact of our schools. These—not administrative matters—should be our objectives.

If the teaching tasks carried out by our teachers are what relate most directly to our students' learning, directors should create the conditions for teachers to do their job in the best way possible. In this new focus, the administrative task adds value and will need to have room to maneuver.

In recent years, several worldwide organizations have placed emphasis on the strategic importance of this task (the OECD, for example, recently organized a worldwide congress on learning leadership). These

initiatives have had quite a bit of resonance in the English-speaking world.

In Catalonia, school directors have increasingly realized the need to formalize their roles as such, and to receive training in order to carry out a task that is clearly different from that of a teacher in the classroom.

In spite of this tendency, we are still faced with the difficulty of defining what pedagogical leadership means and of overcoming the strong resistance that this term elicits in many areas of the educational community.

Once again, existing beliefs block the way forward. Ideas like teaching as an individual task or as a solely artistic profession rear their heads once more, along with the lack of importance given to organizational or economic aspects of administration.

At times, it appears that the educational community doesn't believe that what works in other organizations associated with service to individuals can also work in education.

«Education» should mean integrating the art of teaching into a more collective process, where each individual's strengths define their place in the team; we could all benefit from such a practice.

Corporative interests and individualistic points of view often foil initiatives meant to better define the role of administrative teams in order to implement a correct leadership for learning.

Finally, we would like to add that pedagogical leadership also means entering the classroom and composing tools to observe and evaluate teachers in a way that can help them improve. How can we guide the educational community of a school if we don't intervene at the base of the learning-teaching process with persistence and conviction?

# 19.

## *Adaptive Leadership and Network-Wide Administration*

The profound renovation of education isn't a technical matter; it's a question of adaptation. We need to realize this to know where to invest effort, time and money.

The immense majority of recent initiatives for pedagogical change have failed because they've focused on technical innovations. We've all seen, for example, how computers and other new technologies have been introduced into the classroom without provoking serious changes to the learning and teaching model.

What we need, then, is to mobilize individuals so that they can face difficult challenges and come out successful. *This* is adaptive leadership. It's essential to sway people's deepest beliefs and push them towards the limits of their comfort zone until they are permanently open to change.

Fortunately, in this day and age, we have teams of teachers and administrators who are both well-prepared and passionate about trying new projects. Leadership sets the horizon and allows us to focus and decide, at each step, which way to go (in adaptive challenges, there is no one clear path towards a solution).

We need to go beyond the reigning individualism where each teacher offers their own diagnostic and their own prescription for improvement. In the present moment, management generally offers no real assignments to teachers.

The role of management needs to be to give assignments to teachers in keeping with a pedagogical project. This way, they will be more directly involved in a global project.

To this end, we can only be sure that we will all row in the same direction if we all agree on our destination. We need to welcome a style of professional organization that prioritizes, assigns, follows up on and evaluates the steps that need to be taken by the educational community.

We've already stated that, in the new paradigm, teamwork and professional participation are key in order to bring about the transformation we want. Working in a network of schools means promoting a network-wide administration based on collaborative culture and adaptive or transformational leadership.



## 20.

### *A Unique Educational Project*

Networking and leadership are only useful if we are capable of putting a distinct project into action with the participation and commitment of the entire educational community.

In order to achieve this we need an agreement, a meeting point for the different parties that can serve as a compass and a horizon. In any adventure, it's important to decide where we want to go; in our case, we need to decide what kind of change we want for education.

This unique project needs to go beyond simply obeying regulations. It's not about explaining everything we do, or compiling all the theory that justifies our model and our way of doing things. It also shouldn't be understood as a set of internal rules of operation.

The function of this project is much more ambitious. It should orient and give structure to the many actions that need to take place in order to make this transformation a reality. In this context, when we refer to a project, we mean a project for the future, an

educational project for change, and we're referring to the horizon we'll be reaching for in the coming years of transformation.

At the same time, defining the ideology and the mission of a school is a way of going beyond individuality into the plane of collaboration.

We need to involve the whole of the educational community in the creation of this project, and we also need to present this new identity in a clear and detailed manner to the parents who are looking for a school for their children.

This is the only way that teachers and administrators on the one hand and parents on the other can form a true team, committed and sure of the educational future they want to build together.

In addition, the horizon we choose will allow us to establish the evaluation procedures and accountability that are essential to any evolution.

**01. Transforming Education.** Focusing on the Objective





## Re-consideration

*The educational project is a concept that became very widespread at the end of the 1970s as a result of the wave of political changes that swept our society.*

*Semiprivate schools understood the educational project as a business card outlining their uniqueness. Public schools also made an effort to integrate this concept.*

*In the years that followed, however, the educational project became a simple formality required by the administration and eventually became empty rhetoric, going from the definition of a school's methodological and educational proposals to a simple requirement with no real pedagogical content.*

*We need to return the educational project to its rightful place as a key element in the cohesion and efficiency of a school and to maintain it as a living, changing part of our institutions.*

# 21.

## *Education is a Shared Task*

Often, educational professionals feel that they are the only ones worried about the younger generation; some even feel they are playing the part of a savior.

Of course, it is true that teachers accompany (in the most important sense of the word) the true protagonists of this story: the students.

Education needs to be understood and undertaken together with the students; we need to be open to their participation so that we can arrive at an agreement that will ensure a positive mindset and hard work on their part. We need to listen to them, and we need to involve them.

Once this is achieved, we still have to work with another group that also plays a crucial role: the parents, without whom success is impossible.

Still, there are other actors to keep in mind: psychologists, managers, social workers, the public administration, local communities, businesses, and society as a whole. It's what has been referred to as educating cities, of which Barcelona is a pioneer.

If we don't all work together, anomalies will arise in the development of our children and young adults. We need the collaboration of all of these actors in order to reach our destination safely.

Finally, we would like to add that each actor needs to be clear on the role they are playing. We need to respect each individual's personal and professional fields, with the understanding that education is a team effort and a shared responsibility.

## 22.

### *Our Students*

In education, the verb that gives meaning to our actions should be learn, not teach. It is true that we're constantly referring to the learning and teaching process, but by this assertion we mean to highlight what is most important to us: that our students learn, not that our teachers teach.

Students need to stop being notaries; they need to stop being the passive subject of their education and take on a more conscious, active role, thereby becoming protagonists of the educational process. Too often, our students learn by heart what they know the teacher will ask them without really seeing the big picture of the unit or asking the questions that would help them grow.

We need to go from learning based on theoretical knowledge to teaching based on experiential learning and emotional education. We need to shake off the notion that once a teacher transmits knowledge to a student through language, the student has learned.

Schools need to give priority to curiosity, hard work, challenges, play, study and creativity in our

protagonists, the students. It's what we refer to as leading to empower the student.

This change in paradigm shows us the results of horizontality. The traditional top-down model is inverted, becoming bottom-up (where, just like seeds, students grow from the bottom up).

The fact of working for learning brings us to work through projects, to analyze and study concrete situations and propose solutions to problems. But we need to do so by incorporating and accompanying students' emotions and connecting deeply with them.

When work is done in a group, students participate by exchanging experiences and opinions with their classmates. These active, conscious students are the ones that best develop their potential. To put it one way, we can see how autonomy, critical thinking and a willingness to collaborate increase in the students along with abilities and technical skills.

We need to change whatever is necessary in order to make students the real protagonists of education.

## 23.

### *Our Teachers*

Of course, the verb *teach* is also essential to the learning and teaching process. Without educators—teachers, managers, and the other professionals that make up schools—education isn't possible. It could be said that they are necessary players, but insufficient in and of themselves.

We need to keep in mind that in our world, the ability to transmit information or acquire abilities is more accessible to our students with every day that passes, all through the Internet. Far from being a danger, this fact allows us to expand the role of the teacher (as we have seen, this renovation is not technical, but adaptive or transformational).

As a matter of fact, we need to work towards a new role for the teacher, a role centered on accompanying students as they acquire values and attitudes or the habits that will allow them to become well-rounded, happy and committed individuals. This is the true role of school: to stimulate and guide learning and form individuals.

Nowadays, educators have the great responsibility of fully taking on this role, changing and incorporating

the other members of the educational community to the process of profoundly transforming education.

Giving students the lead role and encouraging them to become proactive radically breaks with the traditional conception of education. Changing this culture, as difficult as it may be, is a challenge that we can't flee from or postpone.

In order to accomplish this, we need to go beyond the individual, artisanal task of the teacher in the classroom. Collaboration and teamwork among professionals is essential, even in designing the curriculum (less atomization and more integration of knowledge).

In summary, teachers become the key element in the classroom, but only if they are able to respond to students' needs both in terms of their personal and academic progress.

Educators will only be essential if they are capable of continuously learning and orienting themselves towards fulfilling the educational responsibility they have been given and making the students their priority.

## 24.

### *Families and the School*

No one would question the idea that parents play a critical role in education. As far as the relationship between families and school goes, it could be said that we still have room for improvement.

Over the past twenty years, the crisis in this relationship has been one of the culprits of our educational system's poor results. Several recent studies confirm this relationship.

Our schools need to take the initiative once again, and steer away from the one-sided relationship that often emerges. We need to open our doors in order to bring our families closer—both physically and symbolically—to our schools, their content, way of operating and their relationships.

It's very important that parents take part in the learning and teaching process instead of feeling that they are simply clients of the school. We aren't just asking that they attend the traditional back-to-school nights convened by the schools, which tend to be dominated by excessive formality and one-sidedness, and which parents generally attend without great expectations.

In this sense, the most optimistic statistics say that some 3% of families participate in the elections to schools' governing councils. A greater number of parents attend the back-to-school night at the beginning of the school year, but these gatherings are informative, with few opportunities for them to participate. Attendance is best for individual parent-teacher meetings.

Some of the experiences that have had best results are at schools that convene meetings to explain the learning process and the methodology used by teachers in detail and that give guidelines to parents on ways they can help their children in that school year. It's as simple as dedicating the meeting to the school's specific professional task and incorporating families in the process.

As has been shown, what we need is a profound renovation of the relationship between families and schools. The Jaume Bofill Foundation's *Families, escola i èxit* report (2011) shows that this new connection needs to be based on «interdependence, equity and building academic success together». We would like to add the idea of a life project to the mix.

## 25.

### *The Renovation of Educational Professionals*

As we have seen, the new paradigm invites us to go beyond the simple transmission of information from expert to student.

Today, school is much more than a place for receiving knowledge.

This change places the educational role at the center of the school and turns the subjects that make up the curriculum into instruments at the service of our youths' personal growth.

As we will explain, to educate is to accompany students in living and building their personal life projects. And, of course, this new perspective also affects educational professionals.

Therefore, it is essential that our teachers reconnect in a profound way with their calling and their own life projects. This is an opportunity not just to reconsider the task of teaching, but, principally to reconsider what drives educators' actions.

In a few words, since we can't transmit what we don't have, our teachers need to have their own life projects. It isn't possible to transform education if those

who are to lead it aren't connected with what inspires them and aren't prepared to transmit it.

Revisiting and encouraging our calling is, at the same time, the first step in provoking change. Only by doing so can we knock over the first domino in the process of change, the passion for living in communion with our own emotions and projects. Because school is for individuals who impact and inspire one another.



## 26.

### *Primary and Secondary School Teachers*

The new generation of educational professionals needs to be connected with their calling. Educating from a life project allows us to reformulate educational action, emphasizing what is essential to them and what tools they have at their disposal.

Curricular content is important, of course, but it can't monopolize our time and our attention. To this end, we need to promote cross-sectoral activity.

As educational professionals, we need to collaborate with one another and work as a team, especially if we keep in mind that the learning and teaching process is an operation (not an individual intervention in the classroom) where different actors intervene.

We need to recognize that in general terms, primary school teachers are closer to this way of understanding education than secondary school teachers. Their training is based on pedagogical tools, psychology and neuroscience and, in a few words, they know that their task is to educate.

Some secondary school teachers, however, tend to give priority to conceptual aspects of the curriculum,

and in many cases they trust their students will learn other aspects from "the school of life".

This is an antiquated vision that should be abandoned. In this day and age, we need to strive to be experts in accompanying and teaching (and, to a lesser degree, in our respective academic fields). We need to be points of reference. In this sense, we are all primary school teachers.

And so, both primary and secondary school teachers need to have ample and continued training, making them capable of guiding students in their development as well-rounded individuals and competent professionals.

School is a reference for students; we need to take advantage of this fact and, as part of the educational community, we need to awaken a passion for life.

## 27. *Systemic Change*

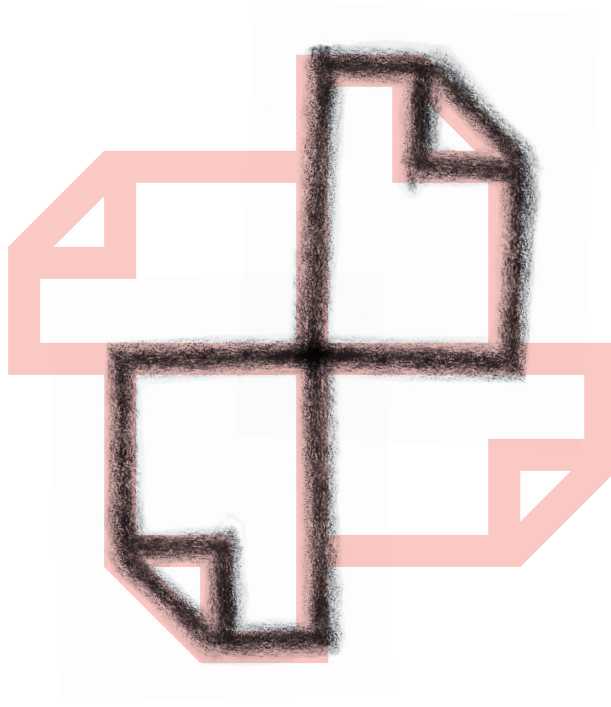
At this point, one of the characteristics we mentioned at the beginning of this book has become clear: educational transformation will either be systemic or it won't be anything at all. There are so many aspects to modify that we can't change things in a linear, sequential manner, no matter how well we plan.

We need to create the conditions for change with conviction and plenty of time. We need to take our time to prepare the terrain for it, both in our beliefs and in the educational model we want. With what we accomplish at this stage, we should then be able to apply our proposal in all areas at once.

We need to do so because it makes no sense, for example, to encourage a teacher to change their teaching model if we maintain the same classroom arrangement. How can we try new methodologies if we are restricted by the rigid timetables we have been subject to up until now? Does anyone really believe we will get anywhere if we don't rethink the relationship between parents and the school?

Change needs to take place in a comprehensive manner. At the same time, however, we can't fall victims to perfectionism.

We know that we'll need to adapt and improve our initial proposal, but we can only do so if we try it out in the field. In order to improve, we need to move forward and be brave enough to immerse ourselves in our new program so that, once we're in, we can see the results and try to move forward.



## Re-consideration

*It also needs to be said that there's no single solution or model for changing paradigms. This is why we are calling for a unique project. The entity that operates the school in question, with the participation of professionals and parents, should be the one to determine the educational project that will make an innovative, unique project of educational renovation possible. This is the value of systemic change.*

## 28.

### *The Curriculum*

Our roots are in encyclopedism. This enlightened tradition fathered the Modern School in the 19th century. Whether we are aware of it or not, the objective of gathering all knowledge is one of the basic ideas of our current educational system.

Over the last fifty years, it could be said that the curriculum has grown so much that it has essentially doubled in volume. Today, there is so much content to teach that it has become unwieldy.

Therefore, it's come time to halt this tendency, which is rooted in academic areas and causes a great deal of stress to students and teachers. In addition, this tendency to hyperconcentrate information often makes it impossible to interrelate different pieces of information.

The need to change our course becomes even more evident when we realize that information in and of itself is no help (as a matter of fact, it can be overwhelming), and besides, it can easily be obtained from the Internet. It's clear that at the present moment, it makes no sense to continue accumulating

information in a disorderly fashion. So, then, what should we learn in the classroom?

Firstly, in order to create a new curriculum, each school (or school network) should define its own project. To us, the goal of providing a well-rounded education to students offers a criteria for prioritizing content.

This way, the curriculum we propose for our new paradigm aims, on the one hand, to consolidate basic knowledge, and on the other, to win space for transversality and the ripening of both the person and of the acquired knowledge.

What we mean is this: Our proposal is to retain the essential aspects of each subject and work on comprehensive understanding. In history, for example, it is of very little use to have students memorize the stages, dates and names of the protagonists of the French Revolution, if afterward they aren't capable of understanding its importance to world history. The value of memory isn't in the ability to memorize lists of names.

Transversality will allow us to create significant links between knowledge from different areas; the type of things the Internet can't provide us (this activity depends on the subject). As we have said, Wikipedia (among others) already serves as a container for facts.

Finally, we acknowledge that allowing time for the content to ripen in our students is simply a way of respecting the pace of our schools' protagonists. We give priority, then, to the fundamental aspects of the official curriculum, and we dedicate ourselves to accompanying our students' growth with all our resources.

Today, we can't expect students to learn everything they need to know in school. In a changing world, education is never-ending; what's most important is that we learn how to learn and that we continue to do so throughout our lives.



## Re-consideration

*It's not easy to make these objectives a reality. Once again, existing beliefs block our way forward (how can our students not know where the Volga river is?), and we are met with the need for a systemic change; we need to adjust all elements of school in order to make our proposal viable.*

## 29.

### *Working for Competencies*

The renovation of our curriculum has a direct consequence: if concepts are no longer the most relevant element of our work in the classroom, what should we give preference to? The answer is *competencies*.

As we have said, we don't teach for the accumulation of information, but rather strive towards personal and professional development. Modern life doesn't allow us to work with recipes; the liquid nature of our age forces us to be flexible and to continue to learn.

In this sense, we celebrate that the educational administration is promoting a curriculum based on competencies over a curriculum that simply focuses on conceptual content.

Still, how do we define competencies? They are abilities like initiative, teamwork, leadership, communication, empathy or care for order and quality— knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that allow us to successfully take on any challenge.

Regarding working for competencies, we need to place special emphasis on learning to learn. This

competency is closely linked to the rapid changes of our world. What our students learn about how to use computers in 7th grade, for instance, is very different from what they will actually use when they enter the labor force.

It is therefore essential that we work on the ability to learn any content in any context or for any application. One of the challenges of any school is to prepare students for the versatile nature of our world (if we live in a liquid world, in order to live fully we need to learn to swim).

## 30.

### *A Commitment to Preschool and Primary School*

In our school of the future, we'll pay special attention to preschool and elementary school. This is key. With a good foundation, many of the problems that arise in secondary school can be avoided. To this end, two essential actions at these stages are early stimulation and personalized detection of dysfunctions and difficulties.

Socialization, communication and reasoning are the pillars of everything else, and in this regard it's especially important to awaken curiosity and encourage the manifestation of this curiosity from a very young age. Language and math should be the backbone of our content.

In addition, in our current educational system we feel there is a black hole between primary and secondary school. Among other things, students experience an abrupt change in methodology when, in most cases, they still haven't matured.

In addition, primary and secondary school teachers associate very little with one another, both in semi-public and in public schools, where students go to an

entirely new school when they graduate. How can this transition go smoothly if there isn't a proper transfer with follow-up?

Many students who quit school in secondary school (either compulsory or post-compulsory) do so because of prior problems that were never solved. We need to turn the existing pyramid upside down; primary school, not the baccalaureate, needs to be at the top.

Although we always look for excellence in school professionals, this is especially important in the initial phases of education since they influence all the stages that follow.



# 31.

## *The Professional Training We Need*

In terms of post-compulsory education, professional training needs to be totally reconsidered. We should follow the example of Germany, France and Great Britain, where professional training obtains very positive results.

If we follow their example here at home, a new manifestation of professional training should have closer ties to the business world. As has been said, schools and businesses should work together to train competent professionals for the productive fabric of our country.

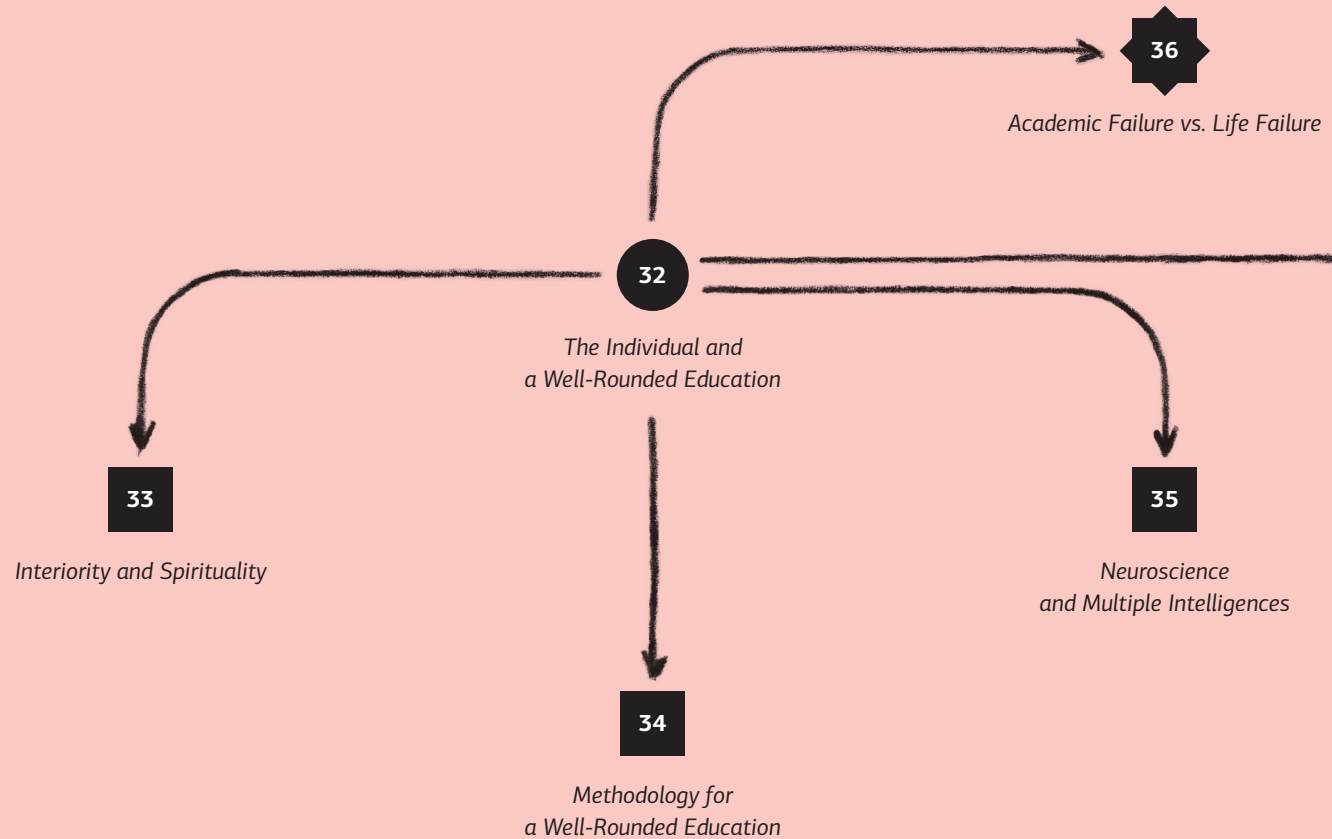
When we refer to competent professionals, however, we don't just mean technically competent. We're referring to forming well-rounded individuals with a clear life project, who are able to incorporate themselves into businesses with abilities, knowledge, competency and values in order to contribute to their mission.

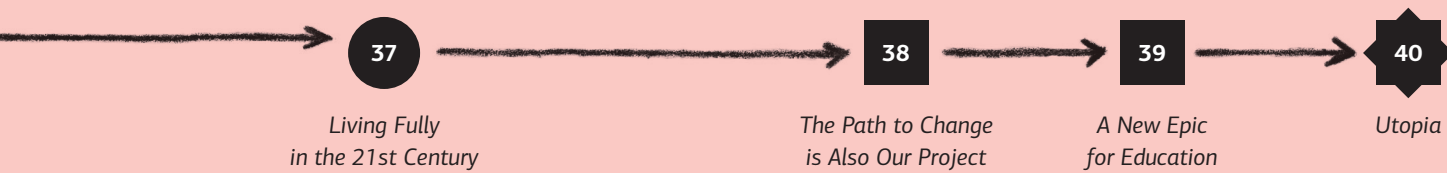
Someone needs to point out that high numbers of university graduates are of no use if the labor market can't absorb them all. However, it would seem to make

sense for the educational world to try and satisfy the growing demand for individuals with qualified technical profiles.

This is why we need to commit ourselves more firmly to a dual model (which, here in Catalonia, is only unevenly put into practice). Only through commitment, co-responsibility and mutual trust between businesses, schools and the educational administration will we be able to create professional training that's truly useful and prestigious.

## IV. A New Look at the Individual





**01. Transforming Education.** Focusing on the Objective

## 32.

### *The Individual and a Well-Rounded Education*

We shouldn't be afraid to say it: to educate is to help others grow. We don't believe that neutral education exists; in any learning and teaching process, there are implicit elements that come from our view of the world.

In these last few pages, we aim to acknowledge this reality. What new way of looking at the individual will structure our educational project?

This brings us to what we call the 4 Cs: we want to transform our students (while also transforming ourselves) into competent, conscious, compassionate and committed individuals. This is the challenge we aim to meet.

As we have said, it's not a matter of insisting on a curriculum packed with content. A well-rounded education includes, besides knowledge, abilities, competencies and attitudes (values).

In our case, educating for life means encouraging flexible individuals who are open to change; who are autonomous and capable of working as part of a team or a network; who are global and multilingual; who are multicultural, systemic and digital; who are capable of

integrating complex realities and evolving with them; and who are spiritual and capable of directing their own lives.

In other words, our commitment is to educate in close collaboration with families, so that our students discover all of their own potential and develop their life project in the age in which they live.

# 33.

## *Interiority and Spirituality*

The key phrase here is *life project*. An educational transformation that makes the student the protagonist and aims to make school a space for discovery and the adoption of a personal life project.

In order to reach this ambitious objective, we need to cultivate both interiority and spirituality, as we will explain.

Interiority is the relationship each person develops with themselves. It's a private, intimate space, a space for silence and dialogue with oneself. It's practically impossible to define a life project if we are always focused on the exterior, caring only for the constant stimuli of the outside world.

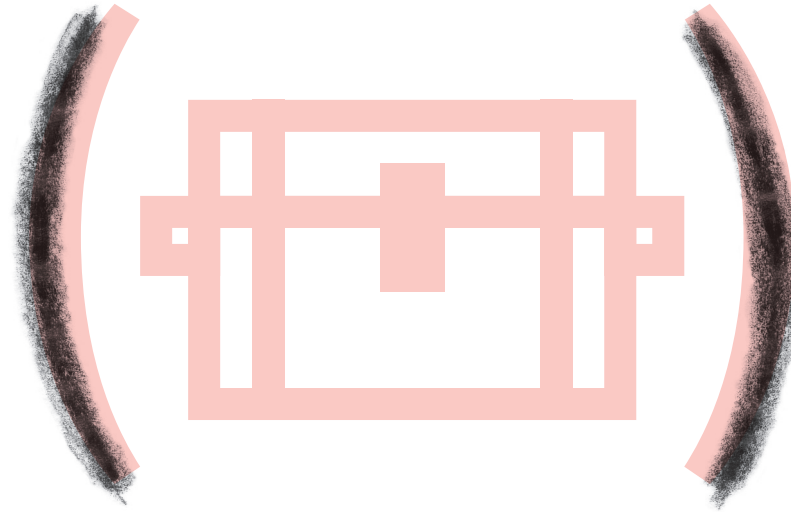
In this day and age (with stress and hyperstimulation so prevalent) this interior dimension is more necessary than ever. Only by observing and carefully listening to ourselves will we be able to connect with our dreams and desires.

We need to figure out what gives meaning to our lives. Without interior life, we simply vegetate, moving aimlessly from one place to the next. We can pass

tests, get university degrees and develop a professional career, of course, but this assures us of nothing; we can appear to be successful but feel immensely empty because we can't find a meaning to our lives.

Spirituality is a step further, just beyond interiority; it's the ability to direct one's own life from a reality that goes beyond the self and that results in a set of values which give sense to our life. Materialism focused on the egocentric desire is left behind while we are led by our vocation and will to offer values to the others. It's the process of moving from living for ourselves to living for others. We believe in a spirituality that opens us towards transcendence and that offers a pedagogy to reach God. Spirituality grows and is developed on a basis of a well-prepared interiority.

Interiority and spirituality are aimed both at ourselves and at society. The positive elements that surround us while having a lucid idea of what needs to be transformed in order to live in a more just and more humane world. In other words, we need to help transform reality while we also transform ourselves.



## Re-consideration

*There are many different kinds of spirituality. In spite of our invitation to live one of these (the Gospel of Jesus) in particular, we firmly believe in the need to explore and fully live out this human dimension.*

## 34.

### *Methodology for a Well-Rounded Education*

As we said before, no one can transmit what they don't possess. The methodology for a well-rounded education, then, is based on the practice of the well-rounded individual.

Educational professionals should live their life projects firsthand. It makes no sense for the teacher to focus on the content and ignore what is most essential, which is accompanying each student in the creation of their personal identities.

In our schools, we need professionals who are sure of their task, with a life project that allows them to live passionately. They need to be, to put it one way, the best example of what we want to promote in our students.

In order to avoid misunderstandings, it needs to be said that we are all different. It's not a question of us all liking the same things; what we need to work on is precisely our uniqueness. We need to discover what is crucial for ourselves, what we each feel that needs to be done in the best way possible.

We can all discover the activity or service that gives meaning to our life. What we need is time in order

to figure out what that is and how we can live with intensity.

That being said, we could add that the methodology for a well-rounded education should be open, flexible, personalized and with a great deal of variety. The students are the protagonists; they are the ones that learn and educate themselves. We need to allow them to take the field, to give them the opportunity to play (as teachers, we should take our place on the sidelines).

There's no way around it: we learn by doing. Students need to be able to take risks, stop writing down every word the teacher utters, and step into action. Yes, they'll make mistakes, but that shouldn't worry us; it means they're learning, through their own initiative and experiences.

Education, then, is helping integrate knowledge, affection, a meaning for life, the value of others, and everything that enriches our own life projects. What we need is a teacher who is constantly renewing these dimensions so that they can transmit them in a natural way.



## 35.

### *Neuroscience and Multiple Intelligences*

School needs to be open to society and to the innovations science offers us. In order to bring about the transformation we want in the educational world, we need to team up with the scientific community.

What can we do, then, from learning psychology?

This is probably not the place for a detailed analysis of our sources. We will simply mention that authors like Skinner, Piaget, Vigotski, Bruner and Ausubel are cornerstones of our pedagogical model.

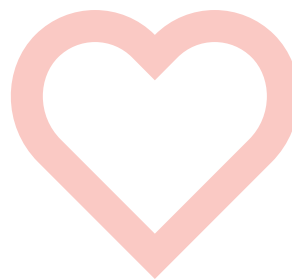
We do feel, however, that we should make special mention of neuroscience and multiple intelligences.

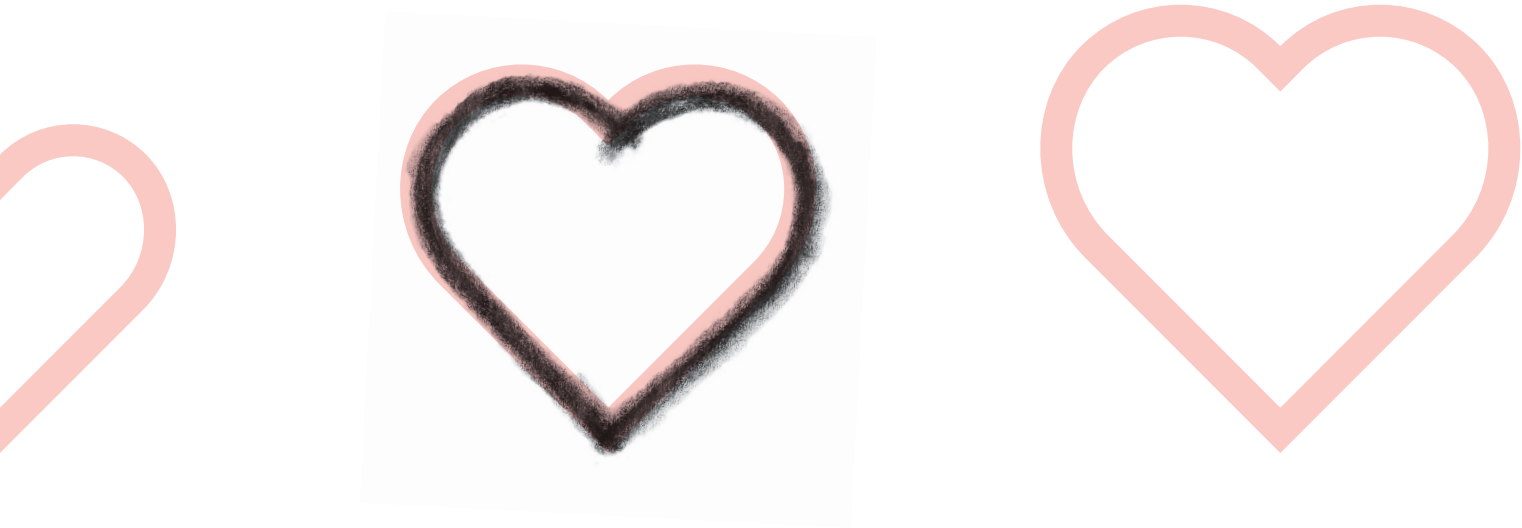
It has been demonstrated that the brain is an organ that is modified by experience and which evolves with age as a result of its activity.

Neuroscience also acknowledges that there are periods in infancy in which the brain is more malleable. In this sense, early stimulation is important in developing the nervous system and supporting neural connections.

Psychologist Howard Gardner has rethought the idea of intelligence, considering it «a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture».

Teaching and evaluation can no longer limit themselves to linguistic and mathematical intelligences; our pedagogical model also needs to incorporate the other six intelligences: visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical-rhythmic and naturalistic.





## Re-consideration

*The following are a few of the pedagogical implications of these contributions (it should be mentioned that neuroscience has located each of the eight intelligences in a different area of the brain):*

- *They help us discover our students' strengths, encourage them and help them increase their self-esteem (we shouldn't look for a single standard).*
- *They allow us to define appropriate curricular and extracurricular proposals.*
- *They force us to introduce activities that have to do with the different intelligences in our classrooms and especially in our work through projects.*
- *There is a close relationship between the eight basic competencies and multiple intelligences.*

## 36.

### *Academic Failure vs. Life Failure*

We have certain existing academic standards, and we often refer to academic failure in reference to students who haven't acquired basic knowledge. Academic failure has already been identified, and certain objectives and programs have been established in an attempt to reduce it.

Life failure, on the other hand, is much more worrying. We can identify life failure in the student body that fails to acquire the abilities and competencies they need in order to develop themselves as well-rounded individuals in the world they inhabit. This is most certainly what we should give the most importance to when we refer to results and impact.

Why are there students with brilliant academic records who aren't capable of getting their bearings once they finish school? This generally has to do with the disappointment of finding out that the world they were educated for doesn't exist. How can we measure this failure? How can we prevent it?

We need to clearly define the basic structures of education, giving priority to the construction of life

projects through each individual's capacities and options while placing conceptual content in its proper place.

School can't become a bubble, a paradise; it needs to be a laboratory that is as close as possible to the real world, where students can learn to live and overcome any academic or personal difficulties they find along the way.

This change in perspective will allow us to live better on an individual level, and on a social level it will allow us to create a more just, sustainable, inclusive and humane world with more solidarity.

## 37.

### *Living Fully in the 21st Century*

In order to ensure success in life, schools need to be in constant dialogue with the present, with the reality in which we live.

We need to remember that the objective of education is to pass the torch on to the younger generation; in other words, we need to pass on our values and our knowledge to our youth so that society can continue to progress when they are adults.

It makes no sense for us to educate according to the reality of the 20th century. The globalization of the economy, politics and society have defined a new playing field for education. Nowadays, life takes place in a setting full of challenges and opportunities. As we said in the beginning, we can't allow ourselves to fall behind.

Today, living a full life means promoting an entrepreneurial attitude, making ourselves responsible for our own lives and acquiring efficient abilities in our liquid reality; in short, taking on our own life projects.

In this new way of living in the world, we discover essential elements like interiority, the management

of emotions, leadership, language, an understanding of our own culture as well as the cultures of others, and the ability to manage complex situations or new technologies.

We can no longer continue to educate in the same manner as before. We need new ways of learning, new capabilities and competencies in order to adapt ourselves and make the world a more just, sustainable place with more solidarity. We need to educate individuals who are capable of living fully in the 21st century.

## 38.

### *The Path to Change is Also Our Project*

The wise man knows that an objective isn't just about arriving at a destination; it's also about the journey. Too often, we only pay attention to the objectives we establish for ourselves and consider everything we do along the way a simple means towards an end. Our proposal is just the opposite.

In the words of a certain poet, the horizon is for walking. While it may be true that we need a point of reference, we always experience reality in the present, in the work we do in the day-to-day of our schools, taking one step after another.

The path towards shared change is now a part of our project, since it allows us to move individuals and question basic elements of our own cultures.

Therefore, we need to change the individualism, perfectionism and volunteerism that currently predominate in the culture of our schools for a holistic vision of the process of change. We need passion and professional participation, and we need to work together to respond to our shared diagnosis and move forward together.

We can't be sure where we'll end up; we are just sure that in order to transform education, we need to take action, all of us at once, with a common horizon. Through leadership and teamwork, we'll define our objective, and as we go along our project will define itself.

Starting now, welcome to the path towards change, towards profound transformation.

## 39.

### *A New Epic for Education*

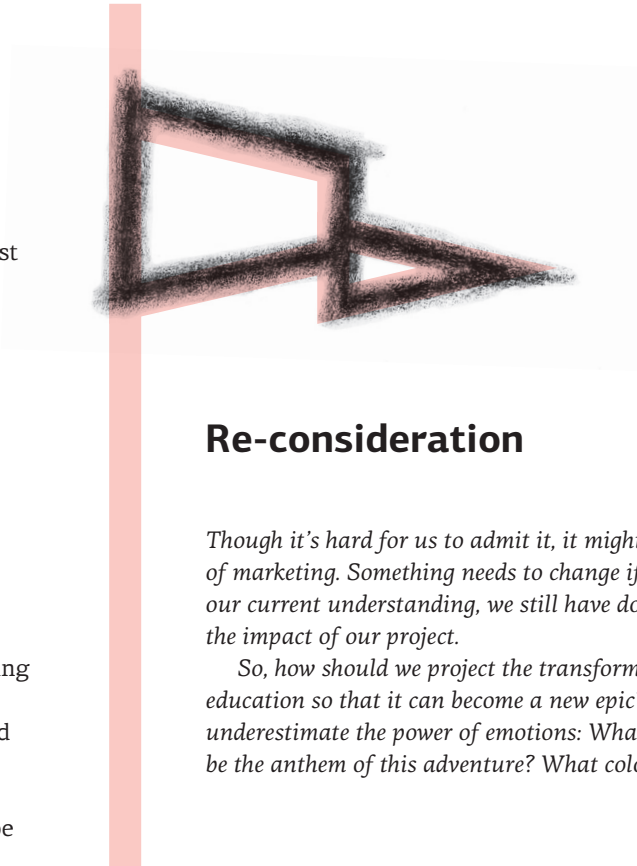
In our country, in the past century the epic battle of education was in favor of school for all and against illiteracy. Fortunately, at least here, that battle was won.

Today, when we talk about school, we have to acknowledge that we no longer have such an ambitious project to fight for.

In other fields, like healthcare, they do have one: everyone (professionals, patients, and society as a whole) agrees that saving lives is a worthy task.

In education, in order to mobilize our students, our families, the educational communities and everyone else that plays a part, we need a new epic. We need an epic that goes beyond simply transmitting the necessary knowledge and techniques.

We need to educate in order to form well-rounded individuals who are prepared for success in life and in the professional world, so that they can live with both feet in the modern world. Shouldn't that be enough? Isn't that an exciting goal?



### **Re-consideration**

*Though it's hard for us to admit it, it might be a question of marketing. Something needs to change if, in spite of our current understanding, we still have doubts about the impact of our project.*

*So, how should we project the transformation of education so that it can become a new epic? We shouldn't underestimate the power of emotions: What song should be the anthem of this adventure? What colors? What flag?*

## 40. *Utopia*

Do you dare to dream? A utopia is a shared dream, a greater common purpose that allows us to wake up every day thinking that it's worthwhile, that together, we're building a better world. Utopias help us to get moving.

It should be said that both education and utopia are generally understood in relationship with the future. Nevertheless, this formula doesn't completely fit the modern age; it seems more fitting with the paradigm we're trying to shake off.

Of course, we know the story of the utopias of the 20th century; we know what the real impact of the great historical struggles for emancipation were. In most cases, the present is sacrificed in order to build a more certain future (how many wasted sacrifices were made on all sides?).

We need a new way of looking at things; that's why, in this book, we focus on the dream of transforming education so that we can live out the reality of this task.

Utopia is precisely living out the reality of this task, focusing on our dream.

Isn't that the path that our changes in the paradigm seem to indicate? We need to vindicate the here and now, the experiences, sharing, school life, the richness of a school community struggling to combine with the best in each person and bring about a different future.

To do so is to bring heaven down to earth, to do our job as well as we can, and celebrate the glory of each moment. We mobilize ourselves and commit ourselves to the transformation of education in favor of a more just society, one that's more sustainable and more full of solidarity. But we don't want it tomorrow; we want it today, in our interior, in our life projects, in our every action.

Because even though—as the song goes—we need to go past the fallen trees that imprison us and even further to find new paths full of experiences and knowledge. The only real thing is the present.

The real utopia is making every moment a unique experience; that's what we're working on doing. Loving and serving in all things; this is the Ignatian way. Now, we need to work together to make our dream a reality.

Let's talk about it!





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All of our educators, both Jesuits and laypeople, who have served before us in the Society's schools, for having blazed the path of innovation.

All of Jesuïtes Educació's educators, for their enthusiasm and commitment to finding new answers to the challenges of the present every day.

All the students of the eight schools in our network, for their ideas, their spontaneity and energy; together, we're transforming reality.

All of our families, for their trust, support and participation. Only by working as a team can we move forward.

Ignatius of Loyola and the Society of Jesus which he founded, for the spirit and strength that inspire us to turn our educational task into a life serving others.



Works published in this collection:

**01.**

**Focusing on the Objective**

*40 Considerations for Educational Change*

**02.**

**Paving the Way**

*35 Keys to Bringing About Educational Change*

**03.**

**Defining the Horizon**

*37 Milestones in Dreaming up Educational Change*

**04.**

**Taking Action**

*35 Steps to Living Educational Change*

Note: The first four books in this series were written from April to November, 2014. Since we began writing with our project already underway, at some points in this first book we anticipate ideas that were not initially visible but which have appeared as a result of the application of the process.

## **This Book**

This first volume is a collection of 40 things to consider in changing the focus of modern education. These reflections have been a starting point for us, allowing us to ground ourselves and understand the current state of things. They've also allowed us to understand the meaning of the experiences we will continue to implement until 2020, which are the basis of our work now and in the future. Making sure we have the proper focus is a good way of ensuring that we can implement a successful project.

## **Our Project**

In Jesuïtes Educació schools, we've been working on a project since 2009 meant to renew education on a broad scale, which we call *Horitzó 2020*. We've eagerly been working hands-on, as a team, to create a new way of understanding education in the 21st century.

## **The Collection**

In order to fulfill our objective, we need to take the time to stop and think, to analyze our experiences so that we can act more effectively in the future. That is the aim of this collection, which is the work of different authors under the direction of Xavier Aragay. With the Transforming Education collection, we want to consolidate our successes and share our experiences so that we can continue improving together with all of the individuals who are committed to this essential task. This is our humble contribution, our way of helping bring about the change that's needed in education. We all need to move forward together, sharing our passion, our inspirations and our experiences.



For more information, visit our website at <http://h2020.fje.edu>

You'll find videos, newsletters and all of the volumes in this collection available in Catalan, Spanish and English, as well as a space for participation where you can send us your contributions. We hope to hear from you! Thanks in advance!