

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 380 462

SP 035 864

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 TITLE An Overview of the Spanish Educational Reform and Teachers' Work.
 PUB DATE 94
 NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 4-8, 1994).
 PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Historical Materials (060)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Cooperation; *Curriculum Design; Decision Making; Democracy; *Educational Change; *Educational Legislation; Elementary School Teachers; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Institutional Autonomy; Instructional Leadership; Personal Autonomy; Political Influences; *Politics of Education; Principals; Secondary School Teachers; *Teacher Role

IDENTIFIERS Professionalization of Teaching; *Reform Efforts; *Spain

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the general features of educational reform in Spain that emphasize increased school autonomy and teacher collaboration and professionalization and have been initiated since 1978 when a new constitution was democratically approved. The first section which offers background to the reforms describes the general impact of the new constitution, general education law from 1979 to 1990, and incorporation into the European Community in 1986. The second section looks at teachers in Spain and their generally low social and historical status and the challenges to teacher professionalization. The education reform's aims and structure are described as being for personal education, parent participation, equity between the sexes, development of critical and creative capacities, encouragement of democratic habits, school autonomy, and professional development for teachers. The current curriculum development is described as coherent with a tradition of centralization of curricular decisions. The next section describes the new requirement that teachers in schools collaborate to specify and complement the curriculum through a curricular project. This requirement is a new and challenging demand for teachers who have traditionally worked in isolation. A discussion of school leadership under reform describes principals' election by local school boards and the effects of this change. A final section discusses the changing concept of the teacher under reform. Contains 12 references. (JB)

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AN OVERVIEW OF THE SPANISH EDUCATIONAL REFORM AND TEACHERS' WORK

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ED 380 462

Paper presented at the Symposium "Educational Reform in Spain: Changing Curriculum, Teaching and Teacher Education" of the A.E.R.A., New Orleans, 1994.

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1. Background of the Spanish educational reform

Political changes

The Reform of the Educational System, in development in Spain now, has been a process that has been being gestated for eight years. Nevertheless, it has been the important changes, which have taken place in the sociological, economical, political and cultural fields in Spain in the last fifteen years, those that have justified the proposal of a deep Reform of the Educational System.

The most significant event in the recent Spanish history has undoubtedly been the approval of the Constitution in 1978. This Constitution, which was approved by the first democratic Parliament since 1939, confirms the main freedoms, and define Spain as "*a social and democratic State of Right, which defends as superior values of its legal ordering, freedom, justice, equality, and political variety*".

It is from this date on, when a process of political evolution tending to be on a level with the countries of its environment is produced. This creation of democracy is a process that step by step has been pervading all the institutions of the Spanish State. So, the defence of the values of equality, began to be requested from all the areas and powers of the State. The beginning of this autonomy has meant an organization of the Spanish State into 17 Autonomous Communities, from which five have the capacity to cast bills in relation to specific fields, especially to the educational ambit which is one we are interested in now.

Concerning education, the Spanish Constitution warrants the right to education, freedom of teaching and professorship, freedom to create schools, the right to receive moral and religious education according to everyone's beliefs, recognizes parents, teachers, and students' rights about the management of the schools.

General Law of Education (1979-1990)

Now that we have briefly shown some key aspects of the recent Spanish history, it is appropriate to get over some precedents of the Educational Reform we are having. Up to the development of the new Educational Reform in 1990, the Spanish Educational system has been ruled by the General Educational Law approved in 1970.

This law was created during Franco's dictatorship. Political and ideological control became a clear component in the educational system. It is through education that dictatorship tries to have an influence on the mind of citizens. So, it was stated in the text of the General Educational Law that "*education will find inspiration, at all its levels, in the Christian idea of life (...) and in the principle of the National Movement*"¹

¹The "National Movement" was the ideological platform that supported Franco's regime

The General Educational Law has been identified by some people as a democratic law that established compulsory and free education from age six to fourteen. It assumes a comprehensive approach to education. Many authors have cited that the population explosion, industrialization, and the appearance of new social classes were the main reasons for the application of a general education system for all the pupils in our country.

From a curricular point of view, the General Educational Law meant the introduction of the first notions of curriculum technology and rationalization. This Law continues with the principle of centralization of educational decisions, and of the division of duties in the curricular design and development. The elaboration of the curriculum is the experts' job, who designs, with a high level of specification, the aims to achieve in teaching. Textbooks and teachers' guides were the main instruments to make the teacher's work easier. Spanish teachers developed a tendency to "*receive instructions*" either from textbooks or from the Educational Administration.

The curriculum was understood as the technical instrument to control teaching activity. The inspection and control of the educational system was carried out by the Inspectors. There is a group of specialist professionals, and experts in teaching whose duty consists of controlling and maintaining the legal normative.

Incorporation of Spain into the European Community

After requesting for many years, Spain finally became a member of the European Community in 1986. It implies the European recognition of the democratization process carried out in our country. Being a member of the European Community has had good and bad influences on different fields of the national life: Industry, agriculture, trade, culture, etc. From an educational point of view, being a member of the European Community has had an influence on the length of time of the compulsory schooling. Sixteen years of age is the minimum age requested to work in the European Community. As I said above, with the General Educational Law, compulsory schooling ended at the age of 14. So it was necessary to review this law, to conform it to the European trend, extending the period of compulsory schooling up to sixteen years old.

From the educational point of view, being a member of the European Community has brought other changes which we will describe later such as including International Relationships into the general curriculum. "*Transverse*" contents such as health education, educating consumption, education for peace, coed education, languages, musical education, and physical education appear (with the new Educational Reform) as compulsory now. Furthermore, the interrelation between students of different countries of the European Community is encouraged, for it certainly has an effect on the greater knowledge and understanding of our neighbouring countries.

Apple (1990) has recently advised us that any analysis of teaching as a profession has to incorporate a special attention to the analysis of the historical context and development of the profession itself. In this article, which we are referring to, Apple does exactly this in relation to the teaching profession in the USA, and its different phases, emphasizing its progressive feminization in relation to the economical and political evolution of that country.

To be compliant with Apple's recommendation we look to the contradictions of the teaching profession in our country in this century. We are going to refer to two works published by Ortega (1987) and Ortega and Velasco (1991). The last two says that "*the job as teacher in the Spanish society has been, for a long time, the result of the convergence between two factors. On the one hand, a project designed by the urban bourgeoisie; on the other hand, a social practice developed in rural environments*" (p. 11).

According to these authors, to talk about teachers in Spain, until a few years ago, means to talk about teachers of rural places. This is for several reasons: first, because most of the teachers are from a rural place; second because teachers, independently of the places they are from, have socialized professionally in rural schools, which have been their first destinations and for a long time they have stayed in this environment. In this context, the teacher has had to coexist and compete with another institution whose hegemony in education was never questioned: the catholic church. So, Spanish teachers became secondary agents of socialization, controlled very directly in the moral and ethical questions by the catholic church.

Besides the social origin of teachers in our country -the middle-lower class- and the deficient education they received, as well as the minimum qualifications required from the start, it is resulting in the low incomes they receive. Ortega and Velasco state that "*teachers depended on the rural communities for their livelihood, which is to say that they were in local party bosses' hands. Afterwards, once the State assumes (in 1902) the responsibility for paying them, it doesn't do it completely, but one third of the payment is to be given by the students' parents*" (1991, p. 19).

It seems necessary to emphasize an aspect, not widely known, that for a long time (about the end of the 19th century), teachers' incomes were paid by the town hall. This meant incomes inferior to those of a labourer. This situation introduces some connotations of hegemony and control over teachers. It is interesting to understand this, due to the present reactions of the State in relation to the demands of professional autonomy and social prestige that teachers are demanding.

Ortega (1987) says that it is not until the Second Republic (1931-1939) that a noticeable increase in the income, and a growing opinion of teachers in the social thought is produced. This will be noticed in the improvement of the teacher education curriculum, what "*is still nowadays the most coherent plan of all those which have been undertaken in the Spanish society to increase cultural and professional qualification of teachers*" (Ortega, 1987:27). Finally, the beginning of Franco's dictatorship implied a new recession in the wage, and high ideology in teachers' education and practice. Again the marriage between the *Catholic Church and the State* turns teachers into preachers of the Movement' Principle, and of the Catholic moral and values.

2. Teachers in Spain. A historic perspective

The social origin of teachers is still the lower-middle class, with scarce integration in their work place, difficult material conditions, and a high presence of women above all in elementary teaching. This creates the belief that teaching is one of a second rate profession. The present report from the Centre of Research, Documentation and Evaluation about the Spanish Educational System (1991), informs that in the academic year 1987-88, kindergarten teachers were 93.5% women, and in elementary schools, teachers were 63.2% women.

But the historical characterization of the teaching profession should not only be limited to the analysis of the more or less emphasized sociological features. The historical analysis of the role teachers have played is very interesting in the different curricular proposal. There has been a clear mistrust in the teachers' capacity to take decisions about important aspects of their professional activity, in respect how and what they teach. According to the analysis of several educational laws, we can conclude that the dominant power worries about controlling even the smallest field of decision. So, the law of Elementary Education of 1945 established, that there was only one reading book for the Spanish pupils: *The Book of Spain*. They selected the subject-matter which was to be learnt, and the activities and exercises to be done by pupils termly and monthly. This worry about the control over the curricular content has been a constant until the Educational Reform, including the General Law of Education in 1970. Clearly this bureaucratic control has appeared through the control over the textbooks, with the Educational Inspection in charge of enforcing compliance of the rules in the schools and of sanctioning those who deviate from them.

As we can see, the recent history of our country offers us some keys for a better understanding of the difficult evolutionary conditions of teachers' professionalization. One which has just recently started to evolve through, the political proposal of the Educational Reform, that undoubtedly increased the possibilities of teachers' action and autonomy in relation to the curriculum.

3. Spanish Educational Reform. Aims and Structure of the new educational system

We have previously described some aspects we think to be important to understand the reasons for which a Reform of the Educational system has begun in our country. Now we are going to concentrate on describing shortly the educational aims which the Educational Reform expects to achieve, as well as the changes it introduces at the level of structure and management of the Educational System. The second article of the Law for the Educational Reform affirms that the educational activity will be developed according to the following assumptions:

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- a) Personal education, which favours an integral education about students' knowledge, skills and moral values of all the fields, of a personal, familiar, social and professional life.
 - b) Parents' participation and collaboration to contribute to a better attainment of the educational aims.
 - c) Effective equality of rights between sexes, and the respect for every culture, and the rejection of all sorts of discrimination
 - d) Development of creative capacities as well as the critical mind.
 - e) Encouragement of democratic habits of behavior.
 - f) Pedagogical autonomy of the schools within the limits established by the laws, and teachers' research activity starting from their teaching practice.
 - g) Psicopedagogical attention as well as educational and professional guidance
-

These are some general principles that reveal how the values of collaboration, activity, equality, and autonomy, etc., Included in the Constitution of 1978, is represented in the new Law of the Educational Reform. These principles are made specific, such as the choice taken in relation to the extension of the years of compulsory teaching from six to 16 years old. The principle of comprehensive education is then assumed again, where in every student must attend elementary education (from six to 12 years old) and secondary education (from 13 to 16 years old). It is from 16 years old when students can choose between a Higher Certificate (Arts, Natural and Health Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Technology), or Professional training. This principle about equal education for everybody, involves the establishment of a necessary mechanism. One which makes sure that students who are under the standard intellectual capacity, receive the necessary support to be able to carry out the secondary education, and get the minimum educational goals.

4. Conception of the Curriculum in the Spanish Educational Reform

The concept of the curriculum has just recently been introduced in the pedagogical discourse in Spain. Before, the terms programming, or planning were used to refer to the contents to be learnt by all the pupils in the country. We must to remember that Spain, similar to other Mediterranean countries, has an extensive centralised tradition according to the process of curriculum design and development. This tradition, as we said before, has generated a certain attitude of dependence in teachers in relation to the proposals of the central or autonomous administration.

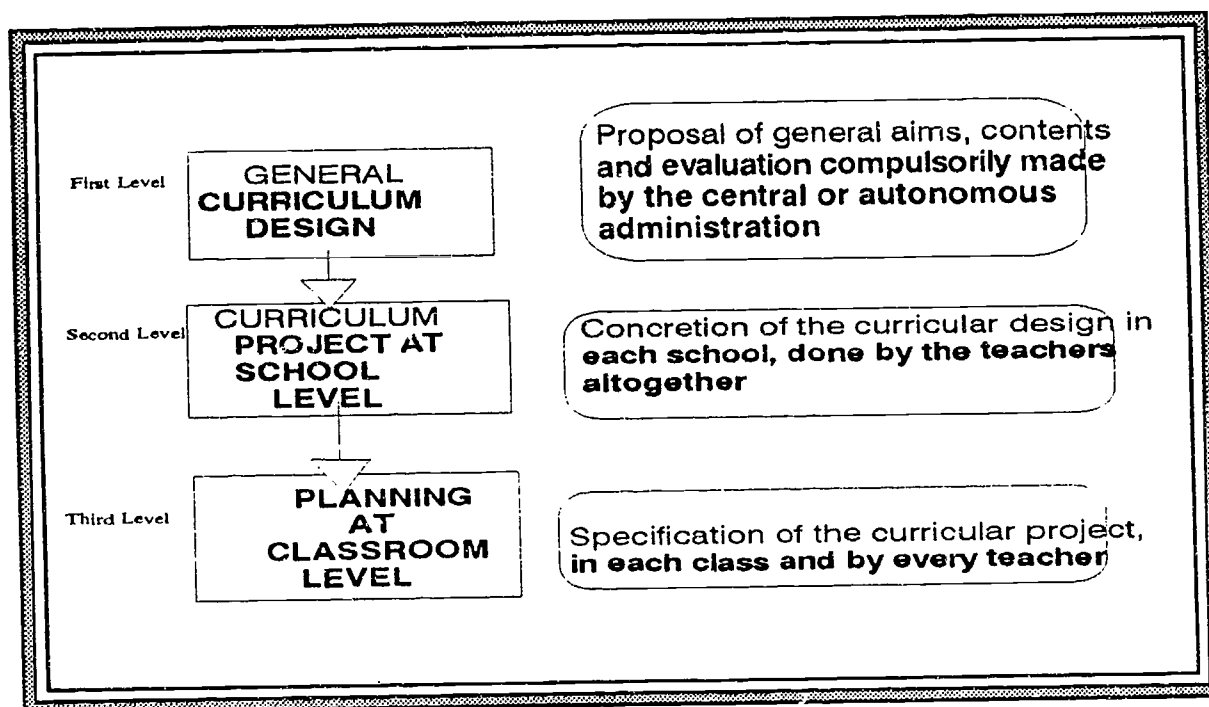
The definition of the curriculum adopted is "*The group of aims, contents, pedagogical methods and evaluation that must to control the educational practice*". This

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definition is coherent with the tradition of centralization of curricular decisions, since the curriculum is understood to be a group of prescriptions which guide the teaching practice. This concept is in line of the technological rationalism of the curriculum theory, and remind us of Tyler's contributions, of establishing that the key questions about the curriculum are: *What to teach?, When to teach?, How to teach?, What, how and when to evaluate?* (MEC, 1989:21).

This technological discourse in relation to the concept and elements of the curriculum, is combined with a relative autonomy of teachers' and schools to design, develop and evaluate the curriculum.

FIGURE 1. Three Levels of Curriculum Design



In Figure 1 we have shown the three levels of concretion in the curricular design. It's said, as we can read in the mentioned Figure, that it is the central or autonomous Administration's job to take decisions in relation to the aims, contents, methodological, and evaluative aspects, corresponding to what we could call a "core-curriculum". This first level of curricular concretion includes the declaration of general aims for each teaching level (preschool, primary and secondary education), and every one of the subject-matters in the curriculum.

The aims are consequently exposed to a high level of generalization, such as those we have chosen below in relation to primary education:

² Previously we have shortly described that from the approval of the Spanish Constitution in 1978 on, there are some regions that can take home decisions in the educational fields. They have the same responsibilities as the central government. This regions are Catalonia, Vasc Country, Galicia, Andalucia and Canary Island.

"To understand and reproduce oral and written Spanish messages, in the proper language of the autonomous community, paying attention to the different intentions and contexts of communication, likewise to understand and produce easy and contextual oral and written messages in a Foreign language"

"To identify and pose questions and problems beginning with the everyday experience. To use the knowledge and available material resources as other people collaborate to sort them out in a creative way"

Besides an amplitude and generality in relation to the educational aims, it is introducing a novelty with regards to the contents. The prescribed contents in the proposal of the basic or general curriculum include three areas: one *concepts, facts and principles*; two, *procedures, skills and strategies*, and three *attitudes, values and rules*. Here is a more specific example:

FACTS, CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES:

1. To know the systems of relationships, nutrition and reproduction: identification and location of the main organs.
2. To know basics functions of relationships, nutrition (digestion, circulation, breath), and reproduction...

PROCEDURES AND SKILLS:

1. Exploration of objects and situations using all the senses and to process the received information.
2. To collect and elaborate the information about uses and customs of body care.

ATTITUDES, VALUES AND RULES

1. Sensitivity to the body care and cleaning
2. Evaluation and adoption of habits of care, cleaning and health.

The example we have selected above illustrates the idea of introducing in a prescribed way the curriculum contents, that should not only reflect students' acquisition of knowledge, but promote the acquisition of skills as well as attitudes and values.

Besides these prescribed aims and contents, proposals that recommend a teaching practice based on significant learning, are in the direction of constructivist theories of learning. Finally, in relation to students' evaluation it is recommended that the evaluation should be global, continuous and formative.

5. The Second Level of Curricular concretion: The elaboration of school curriculum projects

Perhaps one of the most important innovations that the Educational Reform in Spain has introduced, has been to establish the obligatory nature of doing a curriculum project by the teachers in the schools. Starting from the principle of autonomy and decentralization of the curricular decisions, concretion and sequence of contents is beginning to be established in every school and by the involved teachers. So, it is asserted that *"teaching institutions will specify and complement the curriculum through the elaboration of curricular project, whose aims, contents, methodology and evaluative approaches should respond to students' needs"*, and to the contextual features of each school. It is also posed, that curricular projects should include *"the necessary guidance to introduce moral and civic education, education for peace, equality between the sexes, environmental, sexual, health, consumer, and traffic education"*. In the same way, the School Curricular Project has to include the organization of school guidance, curricular adaptation for disable pupils, materials and didactic resources to be used, and the criteria for the evaluation of the teaching and learning processes.

The elaboration of the School Curricular Project represents a demanding task for the Spanish teachers, due to the traditional lack of collaboration among them in our schools. The school culture in Spanish schools is characterized by the individualism and isolation (Hargreaves, 1991). But the design of the School Curriculum Projects is also creating a demand from a technical and professional point of view. From the technical point of view, there are very few examples and models for the teachers to know the "hows" of the School Curricular Project design. In a few words, the teachers feel they don't have enough knowledge about how to develop a curriculum design. We could say that the Spanish teachers are very much concerned with receiving information. According to CBAM Model this step is represented in the very beginning of the process of teacher change (Hall and Hord, 1987). From a professional point of view, the opportunity to design and develop a curricular project for each school begins to present a clear possibility for the increase of professionalism in teachers. This is a good opportunity to bring the curricular decisions into the school.

The Educational Administration is trying to combine the principles of school autonomy with the control and accountability of the educational process at school level. There is a tendency in the Spanish Educational Policy to the ambivalence. In one sense, there are existing policies that are trying to decentralize the curricular decision at school level, and in another, we are having some regulations that are seriously restricting the school autonomy. As an example we have selected a regulation of the Ministry of Education related to the school timetable. In next schedule we can see the regulation of the time that has to be invested weekly in each subject matter in elementary school. It establishes the exact hours for each content. The school and teachers' autonomy is reduced to distribute the weekly timetable in a daily schedule.

Elementary School

Subject matters	First Cycle (6-8 years) hours/week	Second Cycle (8-10 years) hours/week	Third Cycle (10-12 years) hours/week
Knowledge about the Environment	5	4	4
Arts Education	3	3	4
Physical Education	3	3	3
Spanish Language and Literature	6	4	4
Foreign Language	-	3	3
Math	4	4	4
Religi6n/Ethic s	1,5	1,5	1,5
Break/Recess	2,5	2,5	2,5
Total	25	25	25

6. Leadership in school: The role of principal

The Educational Reform in Spain, as we are describing, is emphasizing the curriculum contextualization, and recognizing the importance of schoolteachers' curriculum work. Team work is considered to be one of the most important innovations. But collaboration in schools, needs more than a legal regulation. Research on *school improvement* had emphasized the necessity of certain conditions to facilitate the development of a collaborative culture in school. Lieberman and Miller (1986) reviewed these conditions, and we selected the following: "*working with people rather than working on people; providing time to learn; building collaboration and cooperation; sharing leadership functions as a team, so that people can provide complementary skills and get experience in role taking*" (108).

Lieberman and Miller (1986) emphasized the importance of leadership as an impulse to the process of school evaluation and improvement. The school principal plays a very important role in the process of curricular innovation and organizational development.

It has been decided in Spain since 1985 that the school principals are to be elected by the School Board. The composition of the School Board is modified according to the number of classrooms in the school. In the case of a school with nine or more classrooms its composition is the following: principal, Town Hall representative, four teachers elected by the staff, four parents and the secretary.

The democratic election of the school principal has had and is having positive and negative consequences on the daily functioning of the schools. One positive aspect we can think about is the introduction of a mechanism to control how well the school principalship is functioning. Furthermore, we can presume that the school principal has more interpersonal and leadership influence since he/she has been elected by his/her colleagues in the school.

From another point of view, this democratization of principal, has implied that any teacher can perform the role of principal without having to undergo any specific

training. This has been a problem detected in several researches and one which has been tried to be overcome through courses of specialization addressed to the principals who are on active service. Furthermore, up until now, there have been scarce economical incentives to encourage teachers to perform the principalship. Almost half of the schools have principals designated by the Educational Administration because no teachers wish to stand as a candidate to become principal. This situation therefore produces a design of the School Curriculum Projects, in most cases, without the pedagogical leadership that the principal should stand for.

7. The concept of teacher

The conception of the teacher has also been changing as the proposals of the Educational Reform have been being concreted. The Educational Administration's discourse has cleverly collected the most progressive and actual trends that are being used to refer to teachers and their training in the academic field. These are some statements that are being used:

"The desirable profile of a teacher should be that of a professional who can analyse the context in which his/her activity is developed and to plan it... to know how to work integrated in a team on a school project".

" The teaching practice should become a process of reflection about actions, in this process, the teacher analyzes his/her practical knowledge, and puts into effect some formal and academic theories about the process of teaching and learning" (MEC, 1989:105-6).

This model of teacher, comes to assume the topic that authors such as Schön (1987) or Liston and Zeichner (1991) have been reiterating in their recent publications: The image of the teacher as a professional who learns through the reflection.

In coherence with this conception of teachers, the organization of teacher development is changing in Spain as my colleagues Estebaranz and Mingorance will inform in their paper. A model of teacher development around curriculum problems, centered in practical aspects of teaching and learning, and with a contextual emphasis.

8 Conclusions

We have described shortly some general aspects about the Educational Reform in Spain. The papers of my colleagues will further to elaborate this description, focusing in several aspects of the Educational Reform. Now, some final comments:

Research on educational innovation and school change has shown us, that change in education is a very complex business. Different factors are influential in the success or failures of this change, and most of them are difficult to handle for the innovators. It becomes more and more complex when we try to develop a Reform of the total

educational system. And it is more problematic when the rhythm of the Educational Administration doesn't respect the rhythm of schools and the teacher' learning (Miles, 1992; Fullan, 1991).

Educational Reform actually in progress in Spain is a good example of the contradiction and the ambivalence of the political discourse in education. Together with a favourable discourse for the school autonomy and decentralization in developing the curriculum, there is a concern towards the control and the bureaucratic accountability. Together with an interest to enhance the importance of the role of the teachers, we can observe a lack of attention for the working condition of the teachers.

Spain, as many other countries is in an economical recession. This recession is highly obstructing the implementation of the Educational Reform. In the years before the recession, the Ministry of Education invested a high bill in staff development - consisting mostly of workshop training. Nevertheless, the main opinion is that the teachers see themselves as "not ready yet" to undergo an Educational Reform. It becomes clear that the centralist tradition in Spain has produced in the teachers, a mental tendency towards dependence: "they are waiting for instructions". In time we are certain to see, to what extent these changes occur, and how important is, the progress of change

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