In Spain, many aspects of educational reform began with the social movements arising in the 1960s. By the end of the 1970s, as the first democratic local elections were held, psychologists, educators, and social workers began to work toward schools that would compensate for the social and individual disadvantages of many students. These efforts also included collaboration with the local teachers to work on improving the quality of schooling. Teachers' Centers were founded in 1984 with the aim of being places where teachers could decide and manage areas and topics of their own interest in inservice education. The Ministry of Education also began offering grants for research on topics related to school improvement, where teachers and researchers could work together collaboratively. In 1986, further political change led the Ministry of Education to stop top-down reform and initiate a debate about a new law to regulate the educational system. This law, passed in 1990, required a national curriculum. Teachers were required to write lesson plans that specified a sequence of content, and many sought advice from researchers regarding these and other aspects of implementing the new law, resulting in more collaborative efforts. Finally, a journal was created that brings together researchers and practitioners in a joint publication effort. (JLS)
The history of the relationship between researchers and practitioners is linked with the recent history of education in Spain. Regarding this symposium I paid attention to four relevant moments of this history, where the relation adopted a new strategy and developed a different educational and political aim.

**Collaboration for democracy: Collaboration for the quality of schooling**

This history could start at the end of the sixties. It was a time to fight for democracy, a time to fight for the improvement of the quality of the public schooling. Many Primary and Secondary teachers started a self-organized movement to change the conditions of their school practices. They adopted some of the ideas and experiences of relevant figures, particularly from the twenties and the thirties when, in Spain, education was written in capital letters, and being a teacher meant being “the first citizen of the Republic”.

These teachers started to study the ideas of the New School movement, which has emerged in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. This reformist movement exerted an important influence, particularly in Catalonia, where the process of industrialization and its social, political and economic consequences was reflected in the ideas by educators such as Ferrer i Guardia (founder and director of the rationalist Modern School, 1901-1906), Pau Vila (founder and principal of the Horaciam School, 1905-1912), Rosa Sensat,.. amongst some others.

They also paid attention to the ideas of *La Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (The Free Teaching Institution) founded in 1876 in Madrid by a group of liberal and democratic intellectuals, under the management of Francisco Giner de los Ríos. The aims of the Institution were initially close to The Free University of Brussels, where “new” human beings could be educated with no ideological constraints from the State or the Catholic Church. Ethic rigor and individual austerity were the main characteristics of this regenerative movement, aimed at the promotion of personal moral criteria versus dogmatic values.

They also looked beyond the Spanish borders and created a network with such people as Neil (Summerhill) Illich and others whose views were against authoritarianism and schooling. These school teachers started a self-education process to exchange and build new knowledge about schooling, the conception of child, and classroom practices. In this context the ideas of
Freinet, who was the inspiration of the magazine Kikiriki (Cooperación Educativa) founders, were very influential. His ideas and teaching techniques led some Spanish teachers to establish connections of examples to open their schools and join children from different environments and locations.

At that time, school and university teachers started to co-operate amongst themselves to improve the knowledge from the past and to readapt to the present circumstances. They worked together in Summer Schools, seminars and in the education sessions held by communist and anarchist-oriented political parties and unions. As a consequence of this social and educational mobilization the year 1975 was a significant starting point. General Franco (Spain’s dictatorship from 1939 to 1975) died and hence an important transition towards democracy was started. Several monthly educational magazines began to be published, containing researchers’ and teachers’ experiences, discussions and issues of common interest. The Journals names were Perspectiva Escolar, Guix (Chalk) and Cuadernos de Pedagogía. All of them are still being published.

Cuadernos de Pedagogía, the most well known of these magazines, not only in Spain, but also in Latin America, has about of 15,000 subscribers. I wrote down some ideas from the first editorial of this publication to show the social and educational atmosphere in Spain at that time. In the first issue the editors explained the aims and intentions of the journal in the following terms:

"to make public the ambitions of school and social renovation; give the educators the opportunity to learn about reflections and worries from all teaching professionals; put our thoughts (both individual and group) to find a common ground and to transform them into collaborative action. Theoretical reflection and practical experiences begin to join together to find a balance between the difficulties of practitioners to write about their experiences in a reflective way and those of academics to connect with the daily teachers’ worries."

And such was the starting point of the history of collaboration between teachers and researchers in the recent Spanish history.

**Piaget at school: teaching as a research process**

I located the second moment of this summarized history in 1970, when Piaget was appointed Doctor Honoris by the University of Barcelona. Around the purposes of genetic epistemology a new movement of collaboration was started, initially located at the Institute of Research of Education Applied Psychology, which belonged to Barcelona’s Municipality. Its aim was to introduce Piaget’s ideas into school practices.

One of the results of this intention was the interest many primary schools teachers developed towards research. The movement’s motto was to improve schooling, from the view that is the child the one to discover knowledge by him or herself. Practitioners and researchers worked together so as to understand the relationship between the process of teaching and children’s development on learning.

These ideas paid attention to the cognitive aspects of development and their influences on schooling through all the publications mentioned above as well as through seminars, conferences and teaching education activities.

At the end of the 70’s, at the same time as the first democratic elections for the municipalities were held, psychologists, educators and social workers began to work at schools in order to try to compensate all the social and individual disadvantages of many pupils. They also collaborated...
with the teachers at these schools so as to improve the quality of schooling. But this is a
different aspect within this history of collaboration.

**Action research: finding a research problem together**

In 1982 the Socialist Party won the general elections with absolute majority. The new Minister
of Education wanted to promote a national reform based on the innovative experiences of all
these teachers who, at that time, were organized in a network of regional Pedagogical
Renovation Movements. Most of these experiences started as part of a research process, and
took a question as the initial point for searching information. It was a process in which both
pupils and teachers worked together. This process had its roots in Decroly's “interest centers”.
Teacher educators and practitioners were working together to improve the scientific quality of
the materials and to adapt the research process to the advances of the research, particularly in the
curriculum areas of Natural and Social Sciences, Maths and Languages.

Between 1983 and 1986 the Ministry collected and assessed some of these experiences as
examples for this rising reform. At that time the influence of Lawrence Stenhouse's ideas and
the strategy of action research were an important point of confluence where the interests of
innovative teachers and progressive scholars found a new common field for collaboration.

They also worked together at the Teachers' Centers, founded in 1984, with the aim of being a
place where teachers could decide and manage areas and topics of their own interest in their
inservice education. In the beginning, these centers were run by teachers whose ideas were close
to the Pedagogical Renovation Movements. They asked teacher educators and scholars to take
part in work-groups and seminars on topics chosen by themselves. At that time, the Ministry of
Education started offering grants to do research on topics connected with the school
improvement, where teachers and researchers were able to work collaboratively, too.

**Advising as a form of collaboration**

In 1986, after a second Socialist victory in the general elections, and due to a series of
circumstances, the Ministry of Education decided to stop the down-top reform and to initiate a
debate about a new Law to regulate the Educational System. This Law was passed in 1990 and
included a National Curriculum, with the particularity that it took Constructivism and Merrill's
and Reigelouth's Elaboration Theory as the references to explain the process of learning and
to organize the planning of teaching. Educational psychologists and specialists on the subject
were the protagonists of this curriculum movement. They had to inform teachers about the
content and the psychological terms used in the Curriculum Reform. Teachers had to write a
school planning with the sequence of content they intended to teach.

Regarding this Curriculum Reform, many schools and individuals started to ask researchers
and scholars to advise them on how to incorporate the specifications of new Law into their
school organization and class practices. Some asked their advisers to develop innovative
initiatives, and to support research projects based on school necessities. They also fixed the
content of the in-service education programs to develop at schools or at Teachers' Centers.

The last process of collaboration allows us to fix the history of our relationship with the Journal
Kikiriki (Cooperación Educativa). Initially they asked us to write articles about the topic of their
own interest. Later, we started a collaboration in order to decide the main subject of each issue.
Now we are trying to create a foundation where teachers, researchers and scholars can decide
together not only the issues, but the management and the political orientation of this journal.
This process is not hierarchic or based on power. We, researchers, know that practitioners have an important background to anticipate the necessities and the topics might be able to explore. They are also well informed people eager to learn the new issues on educational research. Finally, they are innovative teachers in their school practices. We, as researchers and scholars, do not want to have the feeling of separating school reality and our own interests. We also work together analyzing the problems and circumstances of schooling and teaching practices, particularly because it is exactly the same task we usually do at our own lesson at the University.

We work in different institutions. However, we, are all teachers, with similar political interests, willing to learn from each other. Now a days this is the foundation of our collaboration.
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