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# Still in defense of education. A reflection on the manifesto six years after its first publication

Still speaking for education. A reflection on the manifesto six years after its first publication

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**Summary:** The Manifesto for Education was, at the time, an attempt to respond to a number of issues that concern education. After a few years of its publication, we return to its foundations and reflect on them in the light of current concerns. In these lines we revisit the manifesto knowing that many of the hopes and objectives of that publication are present today and invite us to continue the fight.

**Keywords:** Manifesto; Education; Pedagogy; Freedom.

**Abstract:** The manifesto for education was, at the time, an attempt to answer a number of issues that concern education. After some years of its publication we return to its foundations and reflect on them in the light of current concerns. In these lines we revisit the manifesto knowing that many of the aims and objectives of that publication are present today and invite us to continue the struggle.

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The manifesto was written in response to two circumstances. Initially, it was a reaction to Jacques Rancière's claim that pedagogy essentially reproduces a certain pattern of domination in society, within the explanatory relationship in which a teacher explains the world to a student. This gives the teacher absolute power over the truth, as well as over time. Second, the manifesto was also written as a reaction to a political and social situation in which schooling was becoming increasingly technocratic, fueled by a neoliberal agenda, transforming schools into places where capital accumulated economic value, in rather than promoting education and democratic participation. In Sweden this happened quickly, driven by a (virtually) unregulated market that arose out of an alliance between liberal and right-wing parties, turning fiscal money into profit for venture capitalists participating in the 'care' market. As a result, the financial sector and human dignity, as well as democratic potential, were successively and effectively emptied. Although Rancière's criticism of technocratic schooling was appreciated

we were also somewhat critical of the way in which education appeared to be (mis) understood by the author. We hinted in the manifesto that education is not technocratic, even if schooling can be. Similarly, we also proposed in other texts that schooling (as an idea) lacks a sense of emancipation, absolutely fundamental to education and,



S / T , linoleography. Dini Calderon

The need to defend education seems to be as important as ever, for the benefit of education itself. What European societies faced after the overflow of neoliberalism began to be relegated they are essentially nationalist authoritarian agendas and policies. These seem to have fed educational policies caught up in the ideals of neuroscience and post-positivism. In such situations, we believe that it is even more important to reconnect with the ideas we are trying to formulate in the manifesto and with the intrinsically radical project that goes with it. Think of education as solutions to identify efficacy or learning difficulties, Or even as an answer for liberal democracy to function smoothly, it is not to give it the importance that it entails in terms of its ability to produce change. The roles of educational change and absolute freedom necessary for democracy, are to feed the force that some called the "constant revolution."

The manifesto was written as a response to two circumstances. Firstly, it was a response to Jacques Rancière's claim that pedagogy inherently reproduces a certain pattern of domination in society when the teacher explains the world to the student leaving the former in absolute power over truth as well as over time. Secondly, the manifesto was also written as a reaction to a social and political situation in which schooling increasingly was becoming technocratic, fed by a neo-liberal agenda, turning schools into sites for capital to accumulate economic value rather than as sites for democratic education and participation. In Sweden this happened

rapidly driven by an unregulated market unleashed by an alliance between liberal and right-wing parties, turning tax money into profit for venture capitalists engaged in the 'care' market. In consequence it successively and effectively emptied the monetary sector and underratec human dignity as well as democratic potentiality.

While we appreciated Rancière's critique of technocratic schooling we were also to the way education seemed to be misunderstood by Rancière. We suggested in the manifesto that education is not technocratic even if schooling can be so. In the same vein we elsewhere suggested that schooling (as an idea) lacks a sense of emancipation absolutely central for education and therefore we promoted ways to bring education back into schooling (as a practice).



Untitled , linoleography. Dini Calderon

The need to speak for education seems still to be important as ever, and not only for the sake of proper education. What European societies faced after the flood of neo-liberalism began to recede, were hard-core nationalistic agendas and political authoritarianism. This seems to have fed educational policies caught in neuro-science and post-positivistic ideals. In such situations it becomes even more important to reconnect the ideas we try to formulate in the manifesto and the inherent radical project this entails. To treat education as ready-made solutions to identify problems of efficiency and learning, or even as solution for liberal democracy to function smoothly, is not giving education credit enough for the power of change it entails.

#### Notes

Translation into Spanish Daniela Solís and Vanessa Venditti (GIEEC-CIMED-UNMDP Group).

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