

# Presentation

## Notes for a future biography of *Innovación Educativa*

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After years of uninterrupted publication of an academic journal, beneath the surface we find stories, promises, dreams, the commitment to knowledge, rigorous work that often goes unperceived, and most notably, the desire to construct a bridge of communication between research and society. This desire stimulates the initiation of a journal. A beginning that may be accompanied by uncertainty. But nothing surpasses the passion and magnetism present when an editorial project of this kind is begun and sustained against the vast test of time. Is it possible to communicate this magnetism? And if so, how can it be conveyed in notes for a future biography of *Innovación Educativa*, with a special reference to the work of so many people who have collaborated in its making? The value of a periodical publication is not measured only by the number of years it accumulates, nor by the indexes in which it is included, but by its social impact, its contribution to knowledge, its transcendence to shape a better world, and above all, its dialogue with its times.

It is very probable that in the future someone can write a complete biography of *Innovación Educativa*, which has today reached 15 years of publication and 70 issues. For this reason in these pages I will only outline some points, tinged with a search for meaning and a passage through memory. Through memory frozen in ink, time in silence, the rhythmic echoes of the dialogue between words and reader, between listening to and seeing the stories held in typography, papers, ink and designs, we can critically see what guides us: content. Understanding the place of an academic publication and its contents is a way of valuing its meaning in contemporary societies and the way in which knowledge is created and managed.

If we can observe something in the biography of a periodical publication, it is its correspondence with the times. Through its tables of contents, topics, collaborators and editors, a journal reflects a rhythm that flows in cycles of opening and closing; its pages become a form of *istor*, because they are witnesses of social changes, of events, of the educational dynamic and economic activities. In these cycles and in their portrayal, the complexity of the character of each journal is defined. If we observe this rhythm of cycles we can find a presence in the words that crowd each

page. The cycle opens and closes with a constant presence that alone defines the years of the journal's existence: the passion that lies in the ideas, words, knowledge created and the consideration of every detail in the editorial process. If in a journal, or rather in the teams that direct and create it, this passion is lost, then what has been conquered with words become a thing of the past, a mere procedure, a routine.

Inhabiting the pages of each issue means to live its ideas and give rise to a dialogue with the times. Dialoguing with various interlocutors has been an objective we have consistently demonstrated in the pages of *Innovación Educativa*. Inhabiting the ink, the paper and the ideas therein becomes a calling that transcends academic titles. This calling—that of editor—expresses itself in each issue as possibility, always possibility. The possibility for what? For building a bridge between the comings and goings of the writer and the reader, between the researcher and society, between the world as it is and as we dream it to be. Inhabiting the words and making this act a calling are two great tasks of editorial work, teetering at the start of the process, energetic at the end of each issue. I will confess that, for a few moments, upon seeing the published issue, the possibility exists that the finished work contains everything that was planned, that everything is in its place, and that the ideal has been attained. But without notice, like lightning, the issue is not perfect, a terrific error is found or the ideas do not sound the same on paper as in the mind and heart. It is inevitable to scrutinize and be suspicious of each issue off the press; something is always missing, even if it seems everything is there. So the next issue becomes the ideal, the most important; once again it becomes possible that the printed work coincide with the ideal.

The feeling that something has not yet arrived accompanies this possibility and stimulates the hunger for the pursuit... something escapes in every published issue, or perhaps this is the aspiration to grasp the ungraspable. If there is something for *Innovación Educativa* to celebrate upon reaching a decade and a half of publication, it is that its purpose still lies in the pursuit, in possibility and in freedom. The latter must be conquered on a daily basis, on every page, in every issue, every article, every topic, year after year. This freedom is the pursuit amongst suffocating bureaucracies and narrow visions. But freedom is both demanding and simple, and it must also be earned. In these fifteen years *Innovación Educativa* has achieved certain things: it has earned its liberty, it is possibility and it is driven by the continuous search that shapes us today.

A dialogue with the times imbues the three eras of the journal; begun in 2001, *Innovación Educativa* is a child of our century, and its three eras have been constructed by groups of committed people—the people named in the list of the editorial

team that many do not read. Below I will mention these names, which are the substance and color of the journal's pages.

The journal *Innovación Educativa* initiated in 2001 as a bi-monthly publication with nine sections, co-published by the Office of Academic Affairs and the General Coordination of Social Communication and Outreach of the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN). For this reason, its first focus was to publish news, excerpts of institutional or federal documents related to educational policy, already published articles, texts on the educational model of the IPN, summaries and essays written by instructors at the institution. The tremendous initial work was done by the first editor, María Luisa Erreguerena Albaitero. She acquired the first registration from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and as editor she synchronized legality with design and a brilliant content. This first project grew upon a foundation of editorial quality. The work of María Luisa flourished and today it is a young tree branching out. Without this initial effort, without her endeavor, today we would not be celebrating the fifteen years of the journal.

A few years later, in 2004, *Innovación Educativa* expanded and grew: the second era began by incorporating structural elements, such as an Editorial Committee comprised of eleven scholars and more images. The figure of the director of the journal gradually become honorary, as it remains today, mostly due to the numerous tasks and commitments that a director of academic affairs of the IPN has. But there were brilliant and lucid exceptions. In 2006, the publication became the responsibility solely of the Office of Academic Affairs and a relevant structure was incorporated that constitutes one of the foundations of the growth of academic journals: the Arbitration Committee, separate from the Editorial Committee, and the first records in Latindex and CLASE. Finally in 2008, *Innovación Educativa* became a quarterly publication. Tremendous work permeated its pages during this second era; the names of the people who made each issue and maintained the editorial commitment with their work are found in the directories, among them Alicia Lepre Larrosa, Xóchitl de Luna Bonilla, Julieta Arredondo, Juan Carlos Sepúlveda and a diversified Editorial Committee that also grew.

In these last fifteen years, we have built, along with all the collaborators of *Innovación Educativa*, a mechanism that connects realities, areas of knowledge, linguistic constructions and ways of connecting research with the academic environment. Now, after this long period we can say that we are still building. The third era has been nourished by an ambrosia: renewal. Renewal does not only mean presenting something new; it requires recognizing what already exists, the wealth that is raised by everyday work and the commitment of all those who came before us. Thus in 2012, *Educational Innovation* began its third era with the verb *renew*. The editorial and arbitration committees were

reconstructed in order to expand the reach of the journal to three continents: some of its new members are from Germany, France, India, Kenya, the United Kingdom and Singapore. The focus on blind arbitration in pairs required a great effort that we can maintain today thanks to the dedication and professionalism of each member of these committees. This kind of evaluation is a priority that allows the journal to maintain objectivity in the production and management of scientific knowledge, even amongst daily clashes and individual pressures. The tasks of this third era have been demanding, but we are now enjoying its fruits: *Innovación Educativa* is an international journal, found in various national and international databases, such as the Thomas Reuters Web of Science and, most recently, Conacyt, Mexico and the SciELO Citation Index.

Renewal also took place throughout the journal's thematic structure. There are now four sections that make up this editorial project, versus the nine sections that existed in its beginnings: *Aleph*, *Innovus*, *A dos tintas* and *Exlibris*. The section *Innovus*, for example, is a space that transcends monothematic restrictions. The term *innovus* bears an invitation to observe the same object twice, to perceive differently what has always been present but needs to be heard in another language, felt with another touch, glimpsed with another vision, through something shared by all the senses: marvel. The capacity to be marveled feeds innovation, and the ineffable urge to innovate is what demands that we renew ourselves. These thematic sections are a roadmap of topics to research, a sequence that sets the stage to reconstruct an argument and restructure the possible approaches to contemporary educational problems. If this roadmap is observed in retrospect, a biography would realize that in its table of contents *Innovación Educativa* has put forth hints, proposals, solutions, reflections on problems that concern us today in the educational field.

The third era received the signature of writing, clarity and argumentation of Daffny Rosado in the editorial, who understood the need for and relevance of academic journals in the life of higher education institutions. Xóchitl de Luna continued contributing with her enthusiasm and analysis during the first year of this stage; then the editorial team was renewed with Raquel Ruiz Avalos, who nourished dreams and new projects. Pedro Molineiro's professionalism is clear in the precision of the details that went into every issue, as well as in his disposition to listen to every observation and suggestion sent to him, and in his indescribable ability to translate concepts into images. The collaborative efforts to construct the journal also imply the style correction of Kena Bastien, whose care and expert skills in correction are indispensable talents, as well as the translations by Sanam Esfahani, among other translators. Just as crucial are the suppliers, the librarians who receive and make the journal available, the

readers—instructors, researchers, education professionals, post-graduate students and the public in general—and all the young people who follow the journal and the different products and events associated with the Editorial Coordination of the IPN. And one exceptional young student of our institution have been doing his social service internships with us, demonstrating great commitment and enthusiasm: Antonio de Jesús Cruz who are now part of the history of the journal. I give thanks to all the collaborators who have offered their time to the growth of *Innovación Educativa*.

Now at the start of 2016, I pause to contemplate the directory and staff list, Miguel Ángel Álvarez Gómez, Secretario Académico of the IPN; Beatriz Arroyo Sánchez, Ricardo Quintero Reyes and Juan Jesús Sánchez. The sense of commitment found in Beatriz Arroyo Sánchez—whose precise and exemplary work sustains the administrative organization—allows her to transcend quotidian challenges and promotes the continuous improvement of our work; her exceptional commitment enliven not only the journal's team, but the whole Editorial Coordination and its various products. Juan Jesús Sánchez has learned from the editorial team that is guiding his learning process. And with great commitment, Ricardo Quintero Reyes has rebuilt the journal's distribution relationships; with acute intelligence, he initiates dialogue with other institutions and finds distribution and promotional solutions that are in tune with the times. The three are an example of virtue in dialogue, openness and continuous exchange between our institution and the rest of the world: an institution that we renew everyday and that shelters us like a generous tree, full of life, branching out naturally, hindered by nothing.

Issue 58 was the first of the third era. What did it mean? The message of renewal was not only a change in format and design; it also implied a series of actions resulting from an extensive analysis of the publications of the IPN, with a specific purpose: to communicate how academic publications of this kind are more than mere printed material because they build a dynamic structure of relationships, internationalization and experiences. There is a wealth—though not always evident—that results from the publication of these journals. This latent wealth is a kind of added value that we transformed into ten new projects created in the Editorial Coordination, which are described below.

The Educational Innovation Essay Contest, directed at youth; the workshop Writing for Publishing, for students working on their theses at the IPN; the Paideia Siglo XXI collection of books, which will end its cycle this year; the series of co-editions and translations done in collaboration with national and international institutions, whose topics have received little attention in the field of engineering but are necessary in today's world. There are also the Program for the Promotion of Writing Scientific Articles,

which has advised instructors in publishing; the Census of Periodical Publications of the IPN 2013-2015, which provided assistance to various periodical publications of the IPN, in order to establish a roadmap that allows them to grow. The digital marketing project to promote published works to diverse groups of readers has been a priority since it incorporates the combination of free software and social network tools to facilitate and benefit the academic community.

The thematic seminars and annual colloquium are two projects to promote the discussion of ideas and outreach that lets us create relationships with other institutions and countries in which the journal is distributed. The organization of the annual colloquium has implied openness to criticism and the coming together of diverse scholars from other latitudes and cultures.

Another systematic but necessary project has been the promotion of our published materials through presentations, colloquia, panel discussions and seminars, among others. The final project on this list is that which we have called “More than ink and paper,” a digital effort to provide open access to everything we publish: it connects articles, full journal articles, chapters, books, video translations, interviews, download of materials, electronic books and an information thematic newsletter intended as a pedagogical tool that condenses, in one page, academic materials using diverse languages for heterogeneous audiences.

The basis of these ten projects, all growing and diversifying today, has been the strengthening of a central axis, the journal *Innovación Educativa*. I mention them because it is still very common even today to find opinions that consider the editorial work of indexed and arbitrated academic journals to be a mere task of correcting spelling. The narrow vision of these perspectives must change in Mexico. The country has an enormous task in terms of indexed and arbitrated research journals: it is necessary to give them the place they deserve and to generate a culture of educational administration that promotes them. This is a task that is important not only for academic work; it also contributes to social equality at the moment when this knowledge—resulting from research financed by public funds—is provided to the public. This generates an economic difference within countries.

And here I begin to wind down these thoughts. The experiences that can renew a journal project and its message make us reflect on ourselves in two aspects: our relevance as an academic project and the way we renew ourselves. This very reflection implies an exercise in renewal that, as such, requires self-examination. Self-reflection is implicit in renewal, and this reaches beyond the fifteen years of publication of *Innovación Educativa* to the eight decades of existence of the IPN because there is no growth if we do not recognize the wealth we already possess. Renewal is becoming aware of that which has stayed behind but remains;

it intertwines with the present and thrusts us into an awareness of time and that which we have lost. The renewal of a journal, an institution, a person, of ourselves also requires the ability to listen to the passage of time without falling into the vertigo of its three forms, past present and future. Renewal is an act of courage because through courage we can recover the original meaning of something, even when this means suffering, nostalgia and the endeavor to recognize that which hinders our growth. These are invaluable lessons of editorial work, derived from an unquenchable thirst, a pursuit of fulfillment, of the complete page, an intuition close to freedom and a continuous return to the beginning. Renewal is changing without ceasing to exist, without losing one's identity. This is the reason why the idea of renewal and momentum has defined these past fifteen years of *Innovación Educativa*

We renewed an editorial project without abandoning the collaborative pursuit of all that can improve education. This is the spirit and the original intention of the journal that the reader has had and has in his or her hands. In this mixture of experiences flourish not only discrepancies, but also virtues: both allow the best we have within us to shine. *Innovación Educativa* is above all a journal of the IPN, and it is also the collective result of work that is renewed in every issue, that springs forth from the inexhaustible source of transformation and knowledge that is the National Polytechnic Institute.