

# Review of: "Tackling Tradition in Education"

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In the article 'Tackling Tradition in Education', Rosemary Sage critically questions tradition, culture, and heritage in educational settings. The main argument opposes traditional education to progressive education, analyzing more than 4,000 years of trends in education worldwide.

My comments regard the need to overcome this opposition as education needs both sides of the coin. The tension between tradition and innovation has always been inside the 'grammar of schooling' (Tyack & Tobin, 1994) and ensures both emancipation and regulation in education. On the other hand, sometimes education needs tradition and some movements called innovative are more conservative, conceptually speaking, than the ones called traditional. For instance, in Portugal, one of the first countries in the world to declare the public school, two subjects were introduced in teachers' training for primary schools around 1942: Pedagogy and General Didactics and Special Didactics. These subjects were grounded on the methods of the New School Movement (Decroly, Claparède, Montessori, among others) with the appropriation of Salazar's pedagogy of an ideal, that of the integral formation of the youth, although now interpreted in a conservative and religious framework (Pintassilgo & Pedro, 2012). The authors call it tradition in innovation as it represents a conciliation of progressive pedagogy without a social transformation project.

It seems *that we always need to look to ideology and see what's behind some of the proposals*. For this I would recommend looking to the knowledge capital theory (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2015) and its connections to the official knowledge present in national curriculum all over different countries. It is, in fact, a measurable knowledge that regards performance, competition and choice, which will deepen inequalities and is mainly worried with labor market. And, in this context, the concepts of skills and competence, and sometimes competency, are instruments of this theory.

It can be understood that Sage argues education purposes rely on raising performance and matching students needs to society demands. I could not disagree more as students should not be taken as objects, but as subjects who need to connect with themselves and to the world. One also can argue that in this fluid and liquid times we live in (Bauman, 2007), education needs some stability and some sustenance to provide support for facing the difficulties of encountering resistance, reality, the other and the otherness of ourselves (Biesta, 2013).

## References

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