

Interview with Luis Porter

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To commemorate the fruitful life of the great Latin American pedagogue, Paulo Freire, this article/interview is dedicated to one of his followers, Dr. Luis Porter, a Mexican educational researcher who had the opportunity to study with Freire in Boston, Massachusetts. He went on to follow his philosophy, values, and principles throughout his career.

Introduction

As *Urbana: Urban Affairs & Public Policy* celebrates Paulo Freire's 101 years with this 2022 Special Edition, we are pleased to invite Dr. Luis Porter to a series of interviews. During these, he talked about his relationship with and what he learned under Paulo Freire, and by an outstanding group of scholars and researchers, most of them interested in Latin America. The fact that Dr. Porter was originally an architect and urban planner, who became a leader in education and strategic thinking in his adopted country, Mexico, makes his case one of special interest for us. We believe in the importance of education as it enables us to anticipate the increasing changes happening in our cultural framework. Dr. Porter is recently retired from his position as researcher and professor at the *Metropolitan Autonomous University, Campus Xochimilco (UAM-X)* in Mexico City. We invited him to talk about his career path, in the context of his relationship with Freire starting during the 80's at MIT and Harvard universities.

The idea of the "project" or "plan" is significant in all the writings and theoretical essays written by Porter. What he calls "project capacity" is one of his main indicators when facing and evaluating a situation. According to Porter, what gives direction and meaning to life is a project, whether it is fulfilled or not. The reality is that very few projects are fulfilled, but another reality that is also true is that having one or not having one makes a big difference. This article is structured in five parts that are in turn projects that correspond to decades in time. The first is called, "Being educated in the best universities" and covers the decade from 1980 to 1990. The second, "Combining a political career with an academic career" (1990-2000), the third, "Knowing our public universities" (2000-2010), the fourth, "Studying youth, the Zero-twenty network" (2010-2020) the last one, "An Imagined Conversation with Paulo Freire" (2020-?)

Project 1. Being Educated at the Best Universities (1980-1990)

After completing a master's degree in Urban Planning (Urbanismo), at the School of Architecture of UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México) (1970-1974) Luis Porter became one of the founders of the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (UAM) Xochimilco, a multicampus new university, created in Mexico in 1974. Xochimilco was a Laboratory for educational innovations. The project, whose premises are still considered advanced to date, was possible in the context of the changes that the country had experienced since 1968. The project arose from approaches that strengthened a practical conception of higher education as a pole of reflection and social criticism. During the 1980's and as a result of the changes in the country's government, the proposed goals were not achieved. In any case Xochimilco has been a benchmark for other universities and

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institutions of higher education and a flagship for those who, like Luis Porter, made this project called “sistema modular” his life-time project.

Dr. Porter was appointed at UAM as coordinator of an interdisciplinary team to develop what became the first undergraduate program for urban planners in Mexico consisting in the integration of an innovative pedagogical system, known as the “Sistema Modular”. This revolutionary pedagogical method was implemented exclusively at the Xochimilco Campus, which by then took advantage of the freedoms provided by the political changes that reigned during those times. From 1975 to 1980 Dr. Porter was the coordinator of the program at the Design Division of UAM (CYAD). In 1980, he took his first sabbatical leave, and applied to become a Fellow at the Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies (SPURS²). After his experience at MIT, he moved to Harvard University where he earned a Ph.D. at The Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE³). At MIT his tutor was Dr. Donald Schön, while at Harvard his tutor was Dr. Noel McGinn.

Dr. Porter met Paulo Freire in 1982, taking advantage of “cross-registering” (a system allowing students at one university to take courses for credit at another institution or faculty, typically within the same geographic region⁴). Using this provision, he studied under Henry Giroux at Boston University (BU), with Nathan Glazer, and William Doebele at the Graduate School of Design, (Gund Hall), and at the Harvard/MIT Joint Center of Urban Studies with Lisa Peattie. He also studied with Freire at Boston College (BC) in Chestnut Hill, Boston, among other relevant personalities.

Dr. Porter’s doctoral studies marked a path of transition from architecture and urban planning towards the field of education. He had to choose at least four courses each semester within four years, among a large number of options, subjects and professors. He chose to work with researchers interested and experienced in Latin American problems. He was soon introduced to The Harvard-MIT Joint Center of Urban Studies, (JCHS), a Center created in 1959 by the Corporacion Venezolana de Guayana (CVG) which sought advice for the planning and design of a new city. The resulting group was comprised of twenty-one scholars, and the project was considered an outstanding example of practical problem-solving. The main point of interest for the project was to build the capacity of grassroots organizations to effect change - an approach first started in Berkeley, California, by John Friedman⁵, the well-known author of *Planning in the Public Domain*.

During the end of the sixties the first book by Paulo Freire, (1965) *Educação como Prática da Liberdade (Education as the Practice of Freedom)* was the result of the April 1, 1964, military coup [supported by the CIA] to overthrow the Joao Goulart administration, Freire was discharged from his position, and all of Freire’s teaching materials were confiscated. Freire was subjected to a series of interrogations and accused of being a communist. He spent 75 days in jail, where he began to write. The new military regime deemed Freire’s literacy project as subversive and stopped the funding for the project. Freire and his family were exiled from Brazil from 1964 to 1980. They first lived in Bolivia, then in Chile, where Freire continued his literacy project with Chilean farmers. During the early seventies professors at Cambridge gradually became aware of the work of Freire. He had collaborated with Miles Horton, the father of the Civil Rights Movement in the

² <https://dusp.mit.edu/idg/project/special-program-urban-and-regional-studies-spurs>

³ <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/doctorate/doctor-philosophy-education>

⁴ The Boston area has 62 universities, 12 are public, and 50 are private. Harvard, BU, BC, are private institutions.

⁵ **John Friedmann** (1926 – 2017) School of Community and Regional Planning at the Univ. of British Columbia, in Vancouver, Canada, and Professor Emeritus in the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs. He was the founding professor of the Program for Urban Planning in the Graduate School of Architecture and Planning at UCLA (1969 and 1996.)

United States. One of the main subjects discussed at the Joint Center was “community education,” connecting theory to specific pedagogies that would allow one to thoughtfully choose particular practices in a community to effect change. Project Guayana lasted from 1961 until 1966. In 1969, Paulo Freire was invited by Harvard to spend a year at HGSE. He spent most of that time writing *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. The book was published the following year in Spanish and English, vastly expanding his fame.

Ten years later, in August 1980, Porter arrived in Cambridge and was welcomed by the director of the SPURS program Lloyd Rodwin, as well as other members of the faculty, among them, the well-known anthropologist, Lisa Peattie and his assigned tutor, Dr. Donald Schön. Donald Schön was a perfect example of a wise man. A German Jew, with a fine figure, always playing an instrument, sometimes smoking a pipe that gave off a fragrance of tabaco with a hint of cocoa, behind a smile that invited conversation. He was a placid man, whose office stood out for its diffuse light that reflected peace and tranquility. A meeting with Schön was like being lost in the woods and finding the ranger, he was the embodiment of the ideal guide, the person to trust and listen to. So, after evaluating the broad array of options and his expectations, Dr. Porter chose to take courses with those members of the faculty with artistic and creative attributes.

During the academic year of 1980-1981, Porter contributed with his experience on the “modular system” as his main subject. Soon he included other activities that would broaden his perspective: art, design, and form, including poetry and literature. With that purpose in mind, he visited the MIT Center for Advanced Visual Studies led by the environmental artist, Otto Piene, who created the first graduate degree program in the arts. His practice included “sky art” (flags, inflatables), and environmental art. He became a constant visitor of the Harvard School of Design at Gund Hall and experienced firsthand the split at the School of Design at Harvard when the planning program under John Kain became part of the Kennedy School of Government. He also experienced the birth of the Urban Design Program under Professor Dean McCue. During his first year he enrolled in the course "*The importance of Metaphor in Design*" that Donald Schön taught with Professor Jeanne Bamberger⁶.

Continued transition, assessment, and evaluation were the signs of his second year in Cambridge. Completion and dedication to education was much clearer to him and marked the awakening of new dreams and new goals. From architecture he went on to planning, humanities, and social sciences. He strengthened ties between his chosen MIT's academic courses and Harvard academic, extracurricular, and administrative programs, including the visual and performing arts. Therefore his first stage in Cambridge was the best introduction possible to the following graduate studies and assignments that kept Porter in Cambridge during the rest of the decade.

MIT is located one kilometer from Harvard. Or we should rather say, Harvard is located one kilometer from MIT, as Harvard is the old institution, and MIT the young. They are connected by a main urban avenue. MIT was designed applying a “modern” departmental criterion, its plan is similar to a factory or a hospital: long corridors that in a linear path join different fields of knowledge. Harvard, on the contrary, is a conglomerate of separate splendid schools, designed by different architects, strategically distributed in the open areas of a lavish orchard, (instead of a campus), that resembles the ideal city of knowledge. A visitor's tour of each institution will basically have a different and contrasting experience. MIT is organized around a main, longitudinal axis, with a monumental entrance on Massachusetts Avenue, which along a kilometer or more

⁶Professor **Jeanne Bamberger Shapiro**, (11-02-1924) with whom Porter is still in contact (2022), is 97 years of age!... in 1980/81 he was the American Professor Emerita of Music and Urban Education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and later as Adjunct Professor of Music at the University of California, Berkeley. She did research with Donald Schön in "cognitive development" and designing software in the incipient electronic language that was inaugurated in those years, development of teaching, etc.

leads to an exit located at a subway station. We could affirm that whoever enters through one door, when leaving through the other, he or she will feel transformed and enriched. This is due to the presence of a wide array of exhibits, invitations to events, free happenings, seminars, lectures or meetings, open to the public throughout the long and internal route. In the case of Harvard, one becomes a passerby citizen who looks out at different settings or neighborhoods, where a multitude of things happen, all of them interesting, attractive and formative. To live close to these two institutions is to grow and develop as a person. But if instead of being a visitor, you become part of the community as an inhabitant, your ID card becomes the passport that opens all doors, at all hours of all days. Your experience will be even more significant if you have full time to live and study with a scholarship granted by your government.

Porter had several scholarships, the main one by Conacyt (Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología) from México, as well as support from his institution (UAM) and from OEA (Organization of American States) MIT and Harvard for Porter was a single unit, adding one to the other their differences and similarities. Both, the SPURS program and HGSE, were aimed at mature people, who understood English and were at "mid-career", that is, people who have already reached a moment in their lives which requires a "reinforcement", like "boosters" are for vaccines. HGSE is a school created for the experienced teachers. This helped Dr. Porter, then 44 years old, to feel as comfortable as he did at SPURS MIT a non-degree program for officials and grown up participants. The faculties of both institutions are closely linked. Many professors work together, as Donald Schon (MIT) did with Chris Argyris from HGSE, Lisa Peattie with Martin Rein or Will Doebele, at the Joint Center, and thus there are repeated pairs or groups that work under what they call the same umbrella.

The change of mentorship from Donald Schön to Noel McGinn, was also seamless. Noel is a sensitive humanist, interested in raising awareness in his students. Porter's interest in planning made McGinn to introduce him to one of the most important Latin American planners of the time, Carlos Matus Romo, a Chilean planner, former Minister of Planning in the Salvador Allende government of Chile. McGinn, who collaborated with Matus during the early 1980s at Harvard, through his teaching material, papers, and books, introduced Porter to his philosophy of planning, called "Strategic Situational Planning" (PES its acronym in Spanish). This was the last factor to change the focus of his studies from urban planning to educational planning. From the different choices HGSE offer, Porter chose the program known as APSP (Administration Planning and Social Policies). He took courses with masters of masters, such as Richard Katz, Carol Gilligan, (the Author of the book "In a different Voice" which focused Porter's interest in gender), and Howard Gardner. This meant a broad exposure to multiple perspectives in education.

Paulo Freire at Boston College

In the Summer of 1982 Paulo Freire taught a course at Boston College (BC), a prestigious Catholic university. Freire, of Christian tradition, was a regular guest at that institution. Dr. Porter attended his course and started a relationship that led to an intellectual friendship. Freire taught his summer course mostly in clear and simple English, and when he made use of Brazilian Portuguese, he did it in such a clear way that simultaneous translation was fluid and understandable. On July 5, 1982, when his summer course began, it was not common to tape-record a class, and even less common to photograph it. However, Porter took notes and made drawings which turned into a text that although not yet published is preserved.

The course consisted broadly of the following: sessions were during the evening, divided into two parts with a small interval in between. A limited group of 30 students was in attendance.

The first session was dedicated to his introduction where he related childhood memories. Within the following sessions he spoke about awareness, and he clarified that it had been a misused concept and denatured from its true meaning. He recommended the need to be clear about what in English the concept was understood as: *consciousness*, which implies giving intentionality to reality, *conscience*, the moral meaning of the term. In Portuguese, he said, it is distinguished within the context: a man of conscience, or as it is said: "his conscience is not clear". From there Freire took us through philosophical reflections. He explored idealism, subjective idealism, the era before Hegel, going onwards towards materialism-dialectic, and along that path he clarified that it was not a matter of heart, of loving one's neighbor. He explained that raising awareness of this type was not like changing people's profiles, rather changing reality. Hence it is something that does not happen in your heart nor your head, but historically. He continued to clarify this concept admirably.

Another important topic that he dealt with in that course was that of problem-posing, as an important capacity for the theory of knowledge. In this he agreed with, and also diverged from, Donald Schön as we will see later when answering the following questions. An enlightening concept was to ask about the *raison d'être* of things, or to know where they originated. In the following sessions he dealt with dialogue as part of the nature of human beings, as a fundamental dimension of the act of knowing. He said that antagonists do not dialogue. He posed these questions, "What are the conditions or the pre-conditions for dialogue to take place? Why do we want dialogue? For whom? What kind of dialogue?" And he answered those questions with the relationship between teacher and student.

Another theme that touched me was that of "codifying and decoding". He posed it as the adventure of getting into the objective, the code being the adventure, because it forces people to be creative. In education, the great mistake of those who defend dictation and memorization (the parrot that repeats) is only fixed in the description of the object, without knowing it. Freire contends that education is for everybody. Teachers need to know how to reach each student. Even though the relationship between Porter and Freire was limited to that summer of 1982, they developed a spontaneous friendship that lasted forever. Freire and his then wife Elza, accepted more than once, to have dinner at Porter's house with such friends and guests as Henry Giroux and Noel McGinn. Social coexistence was common in the scholarly city of Cambridge in Massachusetts. Professors extended invitations to their homes often, and in this case, mature students as Porter had the initiative, It is interesting to note how students are treated by their professors as equals.

The theoretical guidance of Freire can be summed up in one key word: "conscientization." In the words of Freire "conscientization comes when students are the subjects of the program, not the objects." In this sense, "consciousness" led to philosophical reflections, such as "subjective idealism" or "dialectical materialism." As theorized by Freire, idealism, or conscience, is a product of magical understanding. It is a matter of heart, of love. Under this conception, in order to change the profile of people, we have to make them sensitive. But in Freire's terms, sensitivity is not enough to transform reality. Change does not happen in your heart or in your head, but in history. Consciousness is to be aware of yourself, and to have the strength to transform reality. Human beings are conscious beings. How to cross the fields of subjectivity and objectivity, is a historical, ideological reality. Our tendency as Judeo-Christians, as Freire pointed out, is to fall into subjectivism. It is a dangerous tendency that leads us to fatalism and determinism: as if God is the one who makes our history. It is impossible to understand the concept of awareness if I am objective or subjective. The condition of becoming free exists in relation to the possibility of seeing the

limits in which we find ourselves. Awareness is impossible without praxis. The awareness process needs a critical understanding of how society works, and for this, it needs to be related to the ongoing process of transformation.

Freire used to talk in very personal terms. In Porter's notes of his conversations with Freire, he found this quotation: "Awareness has nothing to do with subjectivity, it has to do with theory and practice. We can talk about love because it has to do with one's ability to love the oppressed. The ruling class only leaves power when the dominated take it from them. If we talk about education for the oppressors, we give the impression that we can convince them or change them. "I don't believe in it," Freire would say. "I believe in individual conversion. Marx was a great intellectual, but Engels was the son of a rich man from Manchester. Individually, it is possible to change, but not as a social class. I personally am a pacifist, I do not pick a flower, I prefer to look at it." An anecdote Freire told during the course was the following: Once, when cooking a meal in Chile, I remember that a chicken was saved; it was released because of my own fragility. Elza said to me, 'what kind of a revolutionary do you pretend to be?' Violence is always initiated by those who are against it. The oppressed, not the oppressors, are called *violent*. The inadequate distribution of food, or racism, classism, is that not violence? We cannot change history with flowers or with words. We must reduce the social costs in the transformation process. Conflict is the husband of awareness. Intellectuals tend to see reality through reading descriptions about it and not reality itself. They make us think: if one is only reading the text where the concepts are explained, the concrete remains far away, and reality is not related to concepts. Observe your own awareness in the present, as you see it in your own context.

Freire's basic concepts are:

- 1) Empowerment. How to educate people to empower others, how to make it possible for people to see the needs of the community as a whole, how to help people see their inner power;
- 2) Awareness. To distinguish institutions where the status quo is supported, respecting different ideologies but moving towards the causes, in order to promote changes, in Freire's conception, strengthening is a consequence of "awareness";
- 3) Dialogue. To promote a sense of community, of "colectivos" where is possible to apply practical techniques to create community gatherings, fighting against authoritarian structures.

His concern was to promote education for social justice, global awareness growth, consumer education, education for community organization, and to find active contradictions, institutional and community values, act as an educator, a social leader, following the right idea of being a politician.

Donald Schön as a Tutor

Schön refers to and supports *Metaphors we Live By*, (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) with the idea of teaching through metaphor and imagination. Architects/urban planners have been educated in a project workshop model, which reproduces a model based on inequality, and under an education that is more of an imposition, far from the concern of contributing to the inner liberation of the student. Let's say that Donald Schön moved within an MIT/Harvard vision, within an apparently functional democratic world, while Freire lived under the consciousness of the political repression to which Brazil was subjected, and his concern was broader and more socially oriented.

The article by Helena Webster (2008), director of the Oxford School of Architecture is worth noting. In this article she⁷ affirms and demonstrates that the pedagogy of the urban planner (sequel to that of the architect) which is clearly expressed in the project workshop does nothing but reproduce a teacher-apprentice relationship, typical of the Middle Ages, which on the other hand has its new contemporary version in the architect-employee relationship, common in offices, companies, or architectural firms, we speak then of the workshop as a tradition. Architectural schools imitate a commercial pattern where production takes the lead over a global design concept that turns its back on reality and works with scale simulations, where "teaching" takes the role of "design watchmen and fashion agents", as Webster says. She refers to Donald Schön, very critically, as a "reproducer" of this pedagogy.

The dominant dynamic in design schools (even today), occurs under the strict supervision of the teacher assumed as a corrector and guide. It is a common view that this teacher has been hired, and hence has the authority to teach, based on professional practice, as if that were enough to grant them the ability to train and prepare new generations of professionals. To make the situation worse, the student in addition to using the method of trial and error (reflection/action) is educated to believe or assume that he will find an optimal response to a certain design situation, as if there were only one solution, without assuming that there are infinite solutions. The simulation workshop - Webster says quite rightly - places the teacher-architect, as the only one who knows what is right and what is wrong, what is beautiful, and what is not beautiful, what works and what does not work.

This model moves away from the freedom that Freire promoted, although freedom must be articulated within the limits imposed by discipline, so how to harmonize freedom with discipline? If to exercise freedom you need to master the use of tools, the handling of languages, mathematics, science, history, a condition to be free, the so much needed sense of agency, and an expert/novice approach are not clearly established nor work systematically. But systematic work does not mean a loss of freedom. For the enemies of freedom, "learning by force", or learning by "method". For defenders of freedom, "learn through happiness". Freire spoke about these emotions. Schön was more circumspect; perhaps acting more like a rabbi, or liturgical cantor at a synagogue. Freire acted more like a pastor who played the flute. The ideas of these two great educators and philosophers are still valid and have been a guide in my daily work, an inspiration that I appreciate very much. The new university must make room for new models closer to learning by doing where everyone contributes, participates, acts, seeking to achieve the seemingly impossible; education for all and not for a few. This remains the ideal or the fundamental goal of education at all levels, an education that, freed from all alienating traits, constitutes a facilitating force for change that serves as an impulse towards freedom. Only in education can true human societies be born, and no man is separate from this.

The choice lies between an education for domestication, which is alienating, or an education for freedom, which is emancipatory. This has been the credo of the great Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. The dilemma is education for the being/object or education for the being/subject. In short, everything in education must cement the path to the inner liberation of the student, of the individual. If the role of the teacher is to free the student, then he or she herself must have gone through the same process, which is continuous and never-ending. This means that on the road to liberation they go hand in hand with student and teacher. Like Schön and Freire go hand in hand,

⁷ This school located in England, is one of the top 50 in the QS World University Rankings of 2015. Helena Webster's teaching has been awarded as "best practice" and her example has been followed by other schools). To learn more about this case, see: <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/person/ms-helena-webster#sthash.HCIRkHIH.dpuf>

freedom is the product of the awareness of equality that is instilled in us. In college we are all the same because we are all human beings.

After completing two more years of study at HGSE, Porter wrote in 1986 his “Qualifying Paper”, a requirement that precedes the final thesis project. He had several ideas for his final research. At the end he was inclined to study universities as institutions, their organizational models, main actors, different pedagogies, idiosyncrasies, history, needs, and vocation. He figured out a dream in his head: future universities would have their own form, educational project and specific contents, taking into account their cultural contexts. As an urban planner, he could picture different physical conceptions of idealistic universities. In his mind he was able to visualize different forms for future universities. He took the whole year of 1986 to visit all public universities in Mexico, and during 1987 and 1988, he was able to integrate his ideas about planning with an artistic dimension. He imagined a system of decentralized “rural-urban” universities, aimed at educating while working in real projects, resolving real social problems, in this way the spirit of the “modular system” was part of his final work at Cambridge. In winter 1988 he was back to resume his academic position at Xochimilco.

Project 2. Combining a Political Career with an Academic Career (1990-2000)

In our interviews with Dr. Porter, we asked how after eight years living abroad affected his reinsertion into his country and institution. The subject “from the Anglo-Saxon to the Latin world” could become an entirely separate book. On one side, you have to go through what is called, the “cultural shock”, and on the other, you have to assume the political implications of your new status. A Ph.D. puts you in front of two directions: a) you can participate towards administrative positions, or b) you can produce texts to be published, while you teach students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. These two options (one administrative the other academic) ought to be balanced. But it is not what happens in Mexican institutions of higher education. Both options are in opposition, and only very exceptionally we find profiles of scholars that include a good proportion of both.

Porter chose the academic path, to be one of those who do teaching, writing, as well as participating as closely as possible in the decision-making process done by officials. His idea was to live in reality what he had studied in printed words and in his visits to public universities during 1986. He looked to start a research project, using the “action research” method, in the central offices of SEP (Secretaría de Educación Pública). With that purpose, he participated as an advisor for the National System for Permanent Planning of Higher Education (SINAPPES) and later in the National Commission for the Evaluation of Higher Education (CONAEVA), offices located at the Ministry of Education, un periods from 1988 to 1996. This collaboration allowed Porter to have a closer look at critical structural problems of higher education. He witnessed the formulation of the prevailing planning model, whose principles were very different from what he believed and learned from Carlos Matus, or Noel McGinn. He also was part of the staff in the application of the Modernization Fund for Higher Education (FOMES), and the National Program for Higher Education, PRONAES. The assignation of funds through FOMES, meant annual institutional evaluations of projects presented by the 32 public universities that Mexico had by then. There he witnessed the lack of projects as well as the strengths and weaknesses, of public universities in Mexico. This first-hand knowledge served as a guide for his new research project called “Administration, Planning and social policies in Higher Education” (APPSUP). Working as a researcher within the government, gave him the contents to write a book about how Higher Education is governed from the central offices. The book was titled *La Universidad de Papel (The Paper University)*

The book is arranged into eight essays which reflect Porter's planning vision, experiences and specific problems. It is illustrated by the complex reality of public universities in Mexico through a criticism of the way in which higher education is governed, the substitution of a real planning process with filling forms and complying with rules, that bureaucratizes the entire system, increasing the administration and weakening the pedagogical and research power. The idea of "paper" refers to the bureaucratic procedures to comply, forms to fill, taking the place of ideas and projects to achieve. The lack of planning at a federal level and the lack of project at the institutional level characterizes public universities and explains the application of evaluation policies looking for control rather than direction. According to Porter, our worn-out planning culture, while living through the present difficult moment of historical transition, was facing a most uncertain future, because of the lack of federal policies for institutional planning. This lasted since the 80's, 36 years of an economic model known as "neo-liberalismo". This situation is currently (2022) still active, while a new government tries to change. Living within the consequences of those policies, includes corruption brought by discretionary uses of the resources by those in charge.

Inertia and reluctance to apply radical policies to concrete changes, to maintain a "vertical planning culture" to impose a homogenized vision of university tasks which affects the institutions' ability to design their own futures is problematic. This is exactly the opposite of what Freire recommends, which is to build a horizontal way of working together. Being close to the government, allowed Porter to directly experience the decision-making process, and to make an analytical critique of the policy called "modernization". This approach was made of non-democratic planning policies and observations of policy formulation at central offices, imported from international agencies, as OECD, The World Bank, Carnegie Foundation, and others. The criteria was to preserve the separation between thinking and acting, (discourse and facts), far from a reflection upon action that can facilitate a real transformation of educational institutions.

The Paper University is a book that deals in detail about this. As a consequence Porter was included on the map of the main educational researchers. *La Universidad de Papel* (2003) is a critique of the authoritarian, vertical, decree-by-decree way of governing that is applied in Mexico and in many places. Porter included the teachings of Donald Schön and Chris Argyris, which started from two questions: (1) which of the things we do today are already obsolete and out of time? (2) What we do today we do wrong? The thoughts of these two authors, together with that of Martin Rein, particularly "Frame Reflection: Toward the Resolution of Intractable Policy Controversies" (plus the teachings on negotiation by Lawrence Suskind), confirmed the lessons learned from the Chilean planner Carlos Matus. *The Paper University* (Porter, 2003) summarizes these teachings, and the second version, in 2013, 10 years later, confirms through the views of guests and editors who are invited to rewrite each chapter, that in 10 years things had not changed, and that universities continue to follow the mandates of the OECD, and the World Bank. A tragedy. Reviews of Porter (2003) *The Paper University*: An effective way to understand this book is to transcribe some of the reports written by members of the community of educational researchers. Arturo Guillaumin (2004). Institute of Higher Economic and Social Research and Studies of the Veracruzana University (2004)⁸:

"Luis Porter's book is an intelligent critique of the current state of university planning, which provides us with the double vision of the macro, that is, the field of educational policy, and the micro, that is, the efforts of change undertaken within the public universities themselves.... it is not an organizational or political study, or anthropological, or pedagogical or literary. It is a text that articulates all these perspectives in a fluid way and that, together, brings us closer to the

⁸ RMIE, Jul.-Sep. 2004, Vol. 9, #. 22, PP. 693-697

*transdisciplinary: that attitude that allows us to see reality in its problematic unit, instead of finding our specialized monoculture plot. Luis Porter is a transgressor of disciplinary limits and crosses the plots protected by signs that clearly warn trespassers will be shot (the sign should be written in English), which means "the intruders will be shot". The notions, ideas and concepts that accompany the author on his journey clandestinely travel through the customs of the sciences, humanities and arts (the author turned into a kind of intellectual. Contrary to the widespread idea that a notion has no relevance except in the disciplinary field where it was born, certain migratory notions fertilize a new field where they will take root, even at the cost of a contradiction. Mandelbrot, the "father" of fractal geometry, tells us "...one of the most powerful tools of science, the only universal one, is the contradiction manipulated by a talented researcher." I would prefer to say, then, that Luis Porter is a talented transgressor, a promoter of cross-pollination between different fields of knowledge. The author uses knowledge produced by the disciplines to articulate and put them in concert; the same of literature as of architecture or the theory of organizations, to present us with a fresh vision of topics that seemed trite or exhausted. Sometimes we have the impression of being faced with new problems when, in reality, a different and atypical look is what produces that feeling of novelty. But it is not the novelty that should be highlighted in The Paper University, but its quality not of "getting to the heart of the matter" (since that does not exist), but of discovering the different threads that make up the complex university skein researcher. Porter does not adopt the pose of the expert who from the chair tells us what we should know about the reality that surrounds us. He is a colleague who talks with us and who accompanies us on his journey of discovery. It is a text that touches us, moves us and discovers things and, nevertheless, constantly refers us to lived, known situations. It is the novelty and surprise of the familiar and the close: a *deja vu* revisited and enriched... Luis Porter invites us to resist everything that can undermine our human quality as university students: to resist the single thought; resist continuing to perpetuate the fragmentation of knowledge and the gap between the sciences, humanities and arts; resist globalization as neocolonialism and compliance with policies designed in consulting firms; resist reducing the complexity and richness of educational activity to facts, figures and products; resist the logic of the market that turns everything into a commodity, including knowledge and education; resist the political centralism that imposes on us from programs to a prison architecture."*

Isabel Arcudia Garcia⁹ (2004): Profesora de Ciencias Sociales en la UACJ (Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez)¹⁰

1. *Dr. Porter invites self-criticism. He uses metaphors to teach architects and urban planners.*
2. *He clearly systematizes and explains creative processes and elements within the planning process for students to understand.*
3. *He seeks logic.*
4. *He proposes a socially constructed mind-set.*
5. *His is reflective practice in action.*
6. *He supports the personal growth of students.*
7. *He also proposes a less competitive environment favoring a more collaborative one.*
8. *He explores different ways of knowing.*

German Soprano (2014)¹¹ Universidad de Quilmes, Argentina:

⁹ (ICSA, Scientific Educational Investigation Institute, Mexico)

¹⁰ <http://www3.uaci.mx/DGDCDC/SP/Documents/avances/Documents/2004/Avances%2064.%20Isabel%20Arcudia.pdf>

¹¹ Revista Argentina de Educacion Vol. 6, (9) <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6526914>

*“The third edition of the book *The Paper University* is a living book, which has been growing and reformulating in the three editions that it has been published, counting for it not only with the revisions and new reflections introduced by the author but also with the participation and dialogue that these and other colleagues were producing with him. Mexico is decidedly dominated by the affirmation of bureaucratic and centralizing logics disseminated from the highest levels of its government, and that impact on its universities in the form of management plans and programs... And, on the other hand, recognizing that those logics that have the effect of producing an illusory representation of the university – hence the invocation of the expression of a “paper university” – in which the substantive functions of universities – which are the production and teaching of critical knowledge – end up being overwhelmingly displaced by the efforts of academics and university authorities to respond formally to the bureaucratic demands of the system. For Luis Porter there is no inevitability in the imposition of these logics and social practices. Its weight is hard and enormous, but its reproduction is a consequence of its acceptance socially legitimate by the dominated social actors, starting, of course, by the academics themselves...of bureaucracy and academia. From the beginning, the book focuses its analysis of the Mexican higher education system, its government at the federal and institutional level, highlighting how the legal-bureaucratic prescriptions of the “paper university” and its realization in the behaviors of the different social actors of the higher education system, negatively result in the fulfillment of the substantive functions of the university. At the same time, it shows how permanent attempts to introduce institutional changes or reforms from the top of the government and administration of the system are not only questionable by their bureaucratic orientation, but by the equally bureaucratic means they employ – with varying success – to carry them out. It also deals with alternative forms of production and teaching of knowledge at the university. (It) reflects and tries to deal with the conceptual oppositions that confront as externalities in the classic debate of social theory and in the study of higher education systems in particular, such as the options for the micro approach versus the macro-analysis, the emphasis on social determinations versus individual free choice; seeking possible alternatives to deal with them and, in the best of cases, reach some mediation or resolution. It also recovers the importance of artistic knowledge as a legitimate resource to produce, teach and disseminate knowledge and make creative and totalizing academics, questioning the intellectual discipline and fragmentation resulting from the segmentation of knowledge into watertight compartments and, consequently, its institutional correlate in universities -which we know well first-hand- in the form of chairs, departments, institutes and faculties that turn the university project into an aggregate of corporations and disciplinary interests. Particular attention should be paid to university evaluation systems which, according to abstract and general models, do not allow the identification of institutional singularities and specific university actors; while recognizing that the latter behave in front of those responding to requirements as automatons or instrumentalizing their devices in order to offer the formally expected responses (a behavior tacitly accepted by the universities and by the government of the system which, in short, is the very negation of critical reflection and the power of self-criticism expected of academic knowledge.*

Project 3. Knowing our Public Universities CEIICH - UNAM - UAM (2000-2010)

During the first decade of the new century, 2000-2010, a well-known anthropologist, Dr. Daniel Cazés Menache was appointed as the new director of the prestigious Center of Research CEIICH, at UNAM, (The National University of Mexico) created by the well known intellectual, Don Pablo Casanova. Cazes, invited his friend Luis Porter to be in charge of a new line of research called “Estudios en Educación Superior”. Porter invited his colleague of UAM Iztapalapa, the well-

known researcher Eduardo Ibarra Colado. The three of them did an important work, during ten consecutive years, that on the last years took the form of “Institutional Self-Studies”. The idea was to invite members of all public universities of the country to talk about their experiences in planning and government, and to present studies about themselves as institutions. Porter, Ibarra and Cazes, later in 2007, created the “Interinstitutional Group of Studies on the Future of the University” (GIEFSU) as a parallel line of thoughts. The three had the idea that didn’t make sense and was not useful to keep doing educational research to condemn or denounce, not to be heard or taken into account by those who made decisions, the politicians. As an alternative they invited well-known researchers from all over the country, to participate in meetings following the idea of knowing themselves better. This was considered, due to the political circumstances the country was experiencing, “a therapeutic project to keep our minds clear and to survive”. The idea was simple, to create a seminar and conceive “an ideal university, under an ideal government”. So they asked their well known colleagues to work together and to join the project. At the beginning most of them were not comfortable with the idea of using the imagination and no hard data. They needed to start with numbers based in reality: statistics, projections, what is known as “variables” “indicators”, and the like. Not surprised by the excess of “rationality” of some of the colleagues, they went directly to invite those more inclined to sensitivity, rather than rationality. A kind of researcher, not very common, inclined on dreams rather than on cost-benefit analysis, on poetry and literature, rather than rational decision making, people deeply engaged with their themes and their students.

The “Utopic Group” was formed by eight well known scholars: Arturo Guillaumin, Lourdes Pacheco Ladron de Guevara, Javier Ortiz, Raquel Glazman, Lilian Alvarez, and the three partners, Porter/Ibarra/Cazes. They started the project with a preparatory seminar entitled "Rigorous imagination: a methodology to visualize future scenarios of the University", coordinated by Dr. Riel Miller, a Canadian, based in Paris, as a leading global strategic foresight designer and practitioner, one of the world’s leading authorities on the theory and practice of using the future to change what people see and do. Starting from the idea that it was preferable to fall into utopias, than to delineate “something possible limited by what exists and we don’t like”. The eight members approached the future as an artistic exercise, based on free imagination.

As eight writers working together in a text is something hard to manage, they created an entirely peculiar and novel method: starting individual by individual, one by one, in a linear fashion. A first draft made by Porter/Ibarra/Cazes, was presented and passed to the next person interested in being the first to make a new version. Each had to appropriate the version received, with total freedom to erase, add, change, and do his or her own version, to be pass to the next interested in follow. Freedom to write over, aside, on top, bottom or in between, with permission to remove and add to what they thought was better. This manuscript, always alive and in transformation, was passed to each participant, following those rules, in some way similar to that of the so-called “Exquisite Corpse”, in two rounds. As in Mexico the government periods are of six years, the group had enough time to work on the manuscript, and to have meetings to talk about their advances. After two years of work, the result was a collective text in which it was easy and at the same time not easy, to identify the ideas of one or the other, since everyone was the final author of the final draft, in particular, as each author assumed them as his own. This is how a unique book was shaped, with a circular index, far from the classical academic essay and close to the narrative. This book was the pinnacle and posthumous work of Ibarra Colado, who fell ill and suddenly left us.

Based on the teachings of the Modular System, the result was a book entitled: *El Libro de la Universidad Imaginada. Hacia una Universidad Situada en el Mejor Lugar y en Ningún Lugar,*

(*The Book of the Imagined University. Towards a University Located Between the Good Place and Nowhere*). The sub-title: “Between the Good Place and no Place”, by no means is a mere play on words. On the contrary, those who go through the complete reading of the book can find that the place between the good place and no place is the product of a well-founded collective reflection. "Utopia" is a key term if you want to understand what a place between the good place and no place refers to. Utopia is understood in the work as the aspiration to create, from the imagination, a desired future, even if it is not achieved in its entirety. It is a meta fiction that inspires action, without avoiding reality, but denying it in order to get rid of the straitjacket of the present and the tyranny of the probable. This book was written together by 8 authors, coordinated by Luis Porter and Eduardo Ibarra Colado. The idea was to create a therapeutic exercise, decided when a new neoliberal president of Mexico took power that guaranteed that things would go from bad to worse, as it happened.

The Book of the Imagined University. Towards a University Located Between the Good Place and Nowhere, is a book written after the appointment by President Felipe Calderón, (2006) a politician with no knowledge or preparation to re-shape the educational system of Mexico. It was a frustrating repetition that happened during six presidential terms (6 years each). No educational leaders arrived to the Ministry of Education of México, only the same politicians ready to follow mandates from above.

Up to this point, the report focuses on macro aspects of a broad spectrum, related to the principles of planning, seen in its broadest sense, and applied to national higher education policies, as a result of his professional activities as an advisor. In the central offices of the Ministry of Education our interest is to describe the life of an academic, the details of his educational career, in terms of his most outstanding points of reference, such as his relationship with Paulo Freire, as well as with his professors and professors, and their assigned mentors or advisors. This has to include those aspects of the micro dimension, that are relevant, such as pedagogical contributions, his studies on university students, as well as the role art can or should play in higher education, all of this supported and subject of a prolific bibliography, which follows his first book *The Paper University* and concludes with a book written as a farewell to the university called *Lessons to Myself (Lecciones a Mi Mismo)*, a book that its author, with a tone of irony, says was made by adding his sabbatical reports. For Porter, university reality is expressed more clearly and fully during the sabbatical. According to Porter, the true academic is known on his sabbatical, because he is not fulfilling the commitments acquired in a contract, nor is he enslaved by teaching that consumes much more time than research. The academic shows in his sabbatical a capacity to which Porter gives great importance and which he calls "project capacity". According to Porter, those who do not have a personal project of their own, which in English is known as “having a life”, then they are condemned to adopt the project of their institution. What the academic without a personal project does is join the institutional project and make it his own. This is not necessarily bad but requires the institution to have a project. The policies of evaluation and efficiency, the policy of papers to be filled out, have replaced the institutional project with “plans of development” that are generally requirements to be met and do not express a direction motivated by real objectives and goals. Just as the institutional project has been diluted in a series of worn out and relaxed uses and customs, subject to many levels and degrees of corruption, from the well known “estafa maestra” (the “master scam”) to attend to small groups of students for short times, screening the big amount of applicants to accept an infinitesimal group, manipulating the funds that the government grants to universities with trusts, and a long list of misconduct reflected in the behavior of most academics ending up being a faithful result of the institution that pretends to have a project

that it lacks. Such an employee will never leave the institution, not to enjoy a generous gift such as a sabbatical leave, much less to think about retiring. In the book *Lessons to Myself*, Porter transforms his sabbatical reports, in chapters, making them useful, as they are never used for anything, that is, they are nothing more than a formality. That's why Porter puts them to use. His sabbatical reports are made up of dozens of pages, "as thick as a lawyer's file" Porter likes to say. For Porter they are a way to preserve the memory of what he did during those months of intellectual freedom. The sabbaticals allowed Porter to establish circuits and networks, from Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, through Brazil, Mexico, the United States and Canada, communicating with groups of academics, personalities, and artists.

In the book the final chapters are devoted to facing the paradoxical decision to quit and retire. For Porter, retiring is a vital step that implies an important closure of the cycle between the different stages of life. It is far from being the end of life. For retirement to be what the word indicates, "scream for joy" and not become what people fear, it is necessary to have prepared. What allows him to put an end to a life project based on the non-existent project of his institution, which served for a long time as his "Plan A", is having built and maintained a personal life of his own, which we could understand as "Plan B". Possessing other projects or alternative paths makes retirement come as a prize, that is, it is an expected moment. Retirement can and should be a period of fullness of life, an amazing awakening "in the libertarian, luminous and fragrant space of sweet doing nothing" (*dolce far niente*). If we decide to see this period as a space of total freedom, we will be giving ourselves the right to enjoy apparently very simple activities such as sitting and looking out the window. Looking out the window is a pure and simple way to make our minds aware of the sensible. The sensitive opens the imagination and allows us to perceive and enjoy beauty. Retirement can place us in a space free from the interference of reason and thought. To see it like this, we would be very close to the healthy exercise of meditation. However, this is not the only or the best way to see retirement, it is just an illustration of a contemplative type. The options are endless and may include following what Rilke said to a young poet: "And even if you were in a prison, whose walls did not allow any of the world's sounds to penetrate to your senses, would not you still have your life?" childhood, that precious and regal wealth, that dressing room that keeps the treasures of memory? Turn your attention to her. Try to resurface the immersed sensations of that vast past." And that is exactly what Luis Porter did after retirement. He decided to get closer to literature and wrote a book of memories: *The Streets and the River*, weaving together memories and creating a "plan B" that took the form of a story of that childhood that led him to be who he is. We could keep writing about his achievements. A few weeks ago, in March 2022, at the Book Fair "FIL-Minería", a new book was presented, delayed by the pandemics, called: *Juventud Actual y Universidad Futura* (2022) (Current Youth and the Future University).

Project 4. Studying Youth-Zero-Twenty Network (2010-2020)

In July 2006, Porter participated in the Fourth International Conference "Imagination and Education" at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada. There he presented a paper entitled *The Reinvention of the Student, a Co-teaching Experience*. The call was aimed at teachers with alternative, innovative or particularly original projects. The atmosphere of that congress was unconventional, it brought together teachers with experimental or alternative educational projects. The paper presented details of modalities that allow a high degree of freedom in teaching. This draws the attention of a group of researchers from Brazil coordinated by the prestigious Ana Angélica Albano, professor emeritus at the School of Education of the University of Campinas, Brazil (Unicamp) and director of the research group entitled "Laborarte". The confluence of several factors

allowed to conceive the idea of a research that, in addition to relating disciplines, articulates educational levels, in this case the basic and preschool level with the higher education level. The relationship with the University of Campinas, through the Laborarte Group, gave access to trainers of trainers, specialized in handling artistic languages at the initial and primary education levels. With this, the teaching work of Porter was enriched through autobiographical introspection for students, going through several stages, until reaching the one that addresses the role that the body plays in these processes of adaptation, permanence, and graduation at the university. It was in Vancouver, together with Dr. Albano and her team of art teachers in basic and preschool education, where the inter-institutional project entitled "Zero-Twenty" was created. The International Network of Researchers "Zero-Twenty" (RII-0/20), based on CYAD-UAM-X; is integrated with members of the Faculty of Psychology of the Autonomous University of Colima; the Graduate School of Social Sciences at the University of Sonora (Unison); the Basic Cycle Unit, of the University of Buenos Aires (UBA) and the Postgraduate Unit of the Tres de Febrero University, (UNTREF), as the basic nucleus. At the end of August, Unicamp's Laborarte group organized the 2nd International Seminar on Aesthetic Education: "Between places of the body and art", where Porter is invited to give the opening conference, which the *Pro-posicoes* Magazine publishes. in advance, under the title: "The Embodied Word."

During those years, Porter traveled often from Mexico to Sao Paulo. His new theme was "Autobiography and Self-Portrait". The Basic idea was to reaffirm the university student's identity, through research into their own past, basically their first years of life. In that same year, he participated in a workshop for Laborarte advisers, seeking to learn about experiences in teaching art; the book, *Entrelugares do Corpo e da Arte* is presented. Weeks later he is invited by the Ministry of Education of the state of Chiapas, together with Dr. Albano, as keynote speakers at the Second Ibero-American Meeting on Education entitled: "The Value of Educating in the 21st Century". This intervention was published by the Network of Researchers in Higher Education, RISEU-UNAM, under the article, "Didactics of the Poetic Reason. During 2012 the Zero-Twenty network meets at the Universidad Tres de Febrero, Buenos Aires (UNTREF) with members of Unicamp and professors of the introductory course at the Faculty of Architecture and Design of the UBA (Viviana Miglioli, Flavia Goldenstein), in a seminar dedicated to the analysis of the "Zero-Twenty" project by a group of Argentine psychologists and pedagogues. The event is entitled "Biographical Determinants of Entry, Permanence and Success in University Studies. An Approach from Different Perspectives and Research Results". It was a three-day seminar at the Postgraduate Headquarters in Untref, Bs. As., coordinated by Lidia M. Fernández and Dr. Norberto Fernández Lamarra, Unitref's postgraduate director. In that same year the work is disclosed in an intervention entitled: "Zero to twenty in an Imagined Xochimilco: our modular experience", presented at the Research Seminar Meeting Point, Identity, Culture and Education, of the Department of Creative Synthesis of CyAD UAMX.

In May 2013, on the occasion, of the beginning of the construction of the Art Museum in Unicamp, the seminar "Eros and Education" is generated within the Zero-Twenty Network. In the mentioned seminar it is argued that the museum was erected in the university to balance reason with artistic sensibility, promoter of aesthetic pleasure, affection and freedom. The congress was entitled: "University Art Museums and Education, Interdisciplinary and Collective Participation". Advances of the "Zero-Twenty" are presented at the XVIII International Meeting on Educational Research, Childhood, Education and Subjectivity, at the University Center for Social Sciences and Humanities, of the University of Guadalajara, within the framework of the FIL (International Book Fair).

In the year 2015, "Childhood and Cultural Consumption as Factors of Integration into University Life" is published in the Weekly of the Institutional Analysis Laboratory of the Mexican University System (LAISUM), and an introductory course on design is experimented with by videoconference, with professors from the University of Buenos Aires, using accessible and free cybernetic programs, of CYAD-UAMX. The three-month event is entitled "Design for the First Time". This experience was published in the Proceedings of the First International Forum Design, Pedagogy and Knowledge: Challenges and Realities (2015-UAM-X). The next year, at the "Ciranda de Narrativas" Colloquium, organized by the Fluminense Federal University (UFF) Porter presented a paper on training, education, art and the teachings of Paulo Freire. This happened in the Postgraduate Program in Education, Niteroi, Rio de Janeiro. On that same visit, he participated in the Symposium "Handmade, Aesthetic Education and Narratives in Teacher-Training" at the VII International Congress of (Auto) Biographical Research, organized by the Brazilian Association of Autobiographical Research, at the Federal University from Mato Grosso. Finally, on May 18 and 19 of 2017, at the meeting at the *Centre de Recherche Inter-universitaire sur la Formation et la Profession Enseignante* (CRIFPE), (Center for Inter-university Research and Teacher Preparation) of the University of Montreal, the exchange was dedicated to giving conclusions and findings of the Zero Twenty Network, and thus give a happy ending to ten years of inter-institutional collaboration, Mexico, Brazil and Argentina. The integration of art and education was a mature experience in which Ana Angélica Albano, her group of researchers, all of them teachers of art in Brazil, sealed a Professional friendship for good, with Porter and the virtual presence of Freire.

Their ideas are converged with the fact that art has been segregated from education as a world apart or a world dedicated to a privileged few or to the contemplation of the public that is not considered artists but people who need to be educated to admire artists. This is considered by Albano/Porter team, as a wrong attitude. The idea that art is only produced by exceptional talented persons, took us to the remarkable lack of interest and curiosity of the capacities of the university students and much of the academic plant, for their own artistic manifestations. The traditional curricula lacks content in literature, poetry, painting, music. The question to be answered is even more basic, doesn't talk about art: What are the causes that inhibit or cancel in the student and in many of his teachers, the habit of reading and writing? Because the sad reality is that very few of the entire university faculty, (not to talk about the students) have the habit to read... and let alone write! And what could we say about the reading and writing habits of politicians, officials and decision-makers? Once again it is the product of a fragmented and broken education that feeds this widespread apathy. As Humberto Maturana use to say: "They don't know that they don't know" (*no saben que no saben*).

Art comes into action when we discover that this insensitivity, which opposes an excess of rationality (practical or technical as Schön said), is the result of a pedagogical vision that has marginalized the artistic and creative capacity that encloses the work of intellectual reflection, and gave free passage to other competences more related to the practical application of a know-how, (competitions call you!) fruit of a technical rationality typical of other areas of knowledge. We could also relate the lack of intellectuality, with a particular form of deafness or blindness typical of a knowledge divided into compartments that ignores the enriching relationships between art, the sciences, and the humanities. Who, among us teachers, have been able to relate our specific themes, with philosophical concerns or with the universality of poetry and literature? It would seem that for a professor of chemistry, veterinary or engineering to stop to talk about art or poetry with the students would be betraying a tacit agreement concluded with his discipline, breaking a pact of submission and resignation to his specific language, of which, on the other hand, he boasts.

Much is said about trans, inter, multi, discipline, while maintaining a permanent disciplinary marginalization that forces us to renounce the best I could offer as a teacher, which is the development of a broad and sensitive vision that includes and promotes the consideration of our greatest creators. Consider, for example, to incorporate into our care, whatever it is or is, the thought of a Juan Rulfo, or an Octavio Paz, or the art of a Picasso, or the sensibility of a Robert Schuman or Prokofiev, as an indispensable part of any "bibliography", what would happen if in each subject, in each course or seminar, will the teacher in charge incorporate a space for reading a poem? That is what Porter mean by the integration of art into the curriculum, be careful, not confuse art with with visits to the museum, a concert hall, or plasticine workshops. Culture and art must come out of the walls, or the enclosures closed to specialized public, and stop thinking that it is artists only those who have certain talents. We are all artists.

To that extent, Porter considers it necessary and important for university students from all walks of life and career interests to have an education that includes poetry in all its programs, not far from our own liberal arts programs in North American Universities. Porter likes to say poetry, instead of art. During our frequent conversations, Dr. Porter explained how he understand or interpret the word "poetry" in every program. It is not to know and read the work of others, but to learn to think-as-poets, looking for the potential capacities we all have. In that sense he wants to recreate in our pedagogy, the need to learn the art of interpreting a poem, including to memorize at least one long poem, and declaim it in loud voice, to develop the skill of recall, and discover the compatibilities within our musicality and the music of the poem. He also recommends that all students learn the basics on music theory, to understand how a song it is shaped, interpreted, and appreciated. In the same way, as part of a well-rounded education, students in all fields should be able to create, analyze, understand, and interpret a personal literary piece, as well as those of classic and contemporary writers. He insists on allowing students to explore the potential artists they are, in its multiple forms. Porter believes that exploring the inner self will broaden their perspectives and strengthen their knowledge base. He says that art is not those works created by others, but their own potential to Think-Art and be artists themselves in their own daily work-lives. Hailing from a family of artists and publishers himself, his father, Julio Porter was a theater and movie writer and director, his mother Margarita Galetar a poet and engraver, and his sister, Liliana Porter a well-known visual artist. His grandfather owned one of the most re-known printing workshops in Argentina. Dr. Porter contends that art, metaphors, and humor have spiced up his own existence. In so doing, he continues to take part in groups that gather educational researchers based at several state public universities of México, and Latin America, as the University of Buenos Aires in Argentina (UBA), The University of Campina (Unicamp) in Brasil, as well as others in his own country, Mexico.

One of his most cited articles of this stage of his life, is the one Porter wrote with Juan Carlos Tedesco, (later Ministry of Education of Argentina) under the title "*Políticas de Subjetividad para la Igualdad de Oportunidades Educativas: Un dialogo entre Juan Carlos Tedesco y Luis Porter*" is easy to find it in Internet¹². The article seeks to answer a basic question: Is it possible to include the excluded? Understanding the excluded as new social sectors, which are different from those we describe as marginal or poor. Rather, these sectors are formed by the large and growing groups of people, in age of receiving higher education, who are rejected by the system, and that contemporary society, as well as the short proportion of students accepted by the

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https://www.researchgate.net/publication/28109132_Políticas_de_subjetividad_para_la_igualdad_de_oportunidades_educativas_Un_dialogo_entre_Juan_Carlos_Tedesco_y_Luis_Porter

university, seems able to ignore. The article starts by analyzing what this new social condition implies to decision makers and raises new questions. Do we want to live in a society that excludes a very high percentage% of its more needy population? Are we capable of learning to “live together”, as international experts ask in reports as the one by UNESCO? The ethical dilemma implied by these questions leads to a reflection on the technical-political dimension of inequality with regards to education. Tedesco and Porter open a dialogue that departs from a macro vision (including the use of new technology and the opening of new fields in educational policies) and goes into the micro dimension of specific contexts.

During the presentation of his recent book called “Juventud actual, Universidad Futura” (Today’s Youth and the University of Tomorrow), held at the International Bookfair (FIL) in Mexico City on March 31, 2022, one of the commentators, Sonia Orozco, said the following:

“As a teacher and promoter of the modular system created in Xochimilco, added to his constant interaction with young people, Porter specialized in the study of university youth as well as the public university as an institution. The architect and urban planner from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) has promoted reading and writing as the basic skills of the university student and considers the use of literary narrative and autobiography as fundamental tools to strengthen the identity of both students and teachers. Public institutions of higher education, including the Xochimilco Unit of the Autonomous Metropolitan University (UAM), “have lost their initial project, due to policies applied during the critical period of the 80’s, the era of evaluation and payment by productivity, rules of the game which exacerbated the individualism and the quantitative aspects of academia driving the university, putting aside teaching and simulating research. And this can be applied to the rest of the country, which has lost its unity and become fragmented, very affected, moved by the inertia of customs, the repetition of bureaucratic protocols and the fulfillment of requirements that take the form of indicators, supplied original and local problems that were the main reason to create a University in a still rural area like Xochimilco” said Dr. Victor Luis Porter Galetar.”

Project 5. An Imagined Conversation with Paulo Freire (2020- ?)

I often talk to Freire, and he always answer me. I like to do it, he too, although he likes to take different identities, sometimes he appears as Noel McGinn, sometimes as Donald Schön, and sometimes as the possibility or the idea of an essay or a poem. If we must follow the signs of the present, give direction to what we see and hear, we must have a vision about what is possible. We need to plan for a desirable future that integrates both universes the virtual and the real, and turns them into one, and operate with greater art, encouragement, and movement. The pandemic provokes visions that can inspire innovative interventions, approaches to how we think the educational mission should be transformed, together with the way to carry it out. In short, the pandemic pushes towards a renewal of the pedagogical mission, which faces the challenges and demands that the pandemic situation has made evident, which goes much further than the cultural and instrumental problem of the use of tics. What I have read so far leaves me with the idea that we are taking a timid, fearful step as a kind of "conservative revolution". There is talk of change, but the archaic and obsolete formats are maintained, which require an urgent transformation. Although technology already plays an important role in education, it is not possible to stop going towards the central axis of the problem that lies in the stagnation of an obsolete educational system that continues to function by inertia towards its gradual extinction.

I believe that we are living in a moment that forces us to rethink the meaning of the school institution and the formal curriculum, of the disciplinary contents far from reality, of the hegemonic teaching practices, and of the academic-administrative management tied to obsolete regulations. We are going to have to change the entire education system and see it as an urban/rural spatial set that starts from ground zero of the COVID-19 pandemic. The school system plays an important role in urban dynamics. Educational facilities are centers of community, human innovation, and ingenuity. Today we must use that ingenuity to readjust the way we live and educate. We must relate and rebuild our social interaction and therefore, our habitat, our cities. It is time to rethink and reshape the urban world, of which education is a constituent factor. In short, the new educational public policies must be spaces of construction of meaning that cannot be reduced to planned technological strategies. Once the utopia in education was "teaching everything to everyone" today the utopia is: "every house a school, every city a university".

What can we say Paulo, about our ideas about education. Is there a way to "help" our fellow teachers who are younger than us? Do not interrupt me, do it only with gestures, I'll try to establish principles in a clear and never-ending list, let's start with the round number of **ten** of them:

1. **Do not teach what you know or think you know.** Talk to your students about what you don't know and would like to know. The student will be pleased that you have the same doubts that they have, or that you inspire in them doubts that they did not have. Try to learn with them in a relationship between horizontal and oblique. In other words, form shapes with them that surprise them. Don't be obvious or predictable. Be, if possible, funny.
2. In this sense, I suggest **starting by knowing your students** and help them to know themselves. The best Way is going back to their childhood, reconstruct it, to assert themselves for who they are currently, to move forward gaining confidence as they make progress towards the present. By doing this, you and they will be able to visualize their future, set goals for themselves and move onward within a higher sense of awareness and a more positive perspective.
3. **Teach with examples**, help your student use their memory. Memorizing, imitating, is essential in education. Each and every one of your students should not pass through your teaching without memorizing a long poem. It could be *Piedra de Sol*, by Octavio Paz, but it could also be *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, whatever, but long. In his theory of *Mimesis*, Plato says that all art is mimetic by nature; art is an imitation of life. The idea is not the ultimate reality. Art imitates the idea and therefore it is an imitation of reality. Come up with exercises where your students learn music through words and incorporate to your dialogue student reinterpretations.
4. **Teach your student to tell lies.** The exercise of the student going back to their childhood and reconstruct it, requires the use of his or her imagination, which includes his or her fantasies, even when the raw material he uses will be his memories or dreams. A main rule for this exercise is to "give permission" to "invent" you past. "You have to say, you have permission to invent a past or imagine a childhood that you did not live". The method allows you to tell us about events that never happened, and by writing those vague or subsumed memories, your past will surface with more fluidity and realism than if you had sought to relate something "true", something real, documented with empirical evidence (a scientific approach that is unnecessary). The teacher who promotes reading and writing in his students, has to invent "rules of the game" whose objective is to reduce insecurity, fear, inhibition, shyness, fear of disappointment and disappointment and suffer because of that disagreement or encounter with what what they fear Let the student Talk with him or herself: — "When that moment arrives that I don't want to feel, that I can't feel, that I still don't feel, I have permission to change it for another, I can change it for my own feeling, the one I don't fear because it doesn't threaten me... and that's it!". Thus, in this way, by gradually removing

the shadows that stopped your student before the blank page, that wrapped and hid his memories, that is, his words, they emerge from the gloom to which they had been condemned, and in the deep interior of that young man, from that young woman, thus arises a new capacity to accept and see oneself, herself.

5. Being able to lie, to fantasize, **helps the student to be authentic.** Authenticity is fundamental for the student, as well for the adult to become a good teacher. Do not underestimate the poet in you, or the poet in your student, as opposed to looking for it. Let them know that there is beauty. Knowing that Beauty exists, is a generator of happiness, and also that happiness exists that they should not fear their emotions, on the contrary, that everything I wish them, is that they be true to themselves. Teachers need to be bold and free. They should wish the best to their students who look up to them, who value their presence and are influenced by their professor.

6. **Tell stories.** Telling stories, narrating, recounting stories, is the oldest form of human thought. It is an impulse that leads us to share a certain event with others and, incidentally, also share it with ourselves. Many times we tell something to understand what happened, because as we tell, we reconstruct those meanings in which our experiences acquire meaning. By applying it we are exercising a self-taught way of learning, we ask ourselves questions and answer them to elucidate a certain concern or doubt. Stories, also known as narratives, have been basic to the development of human intelligence and memory. William Calvin, knowledge scientist, explains our ability to design and plan, as a product of the stories or tales that we were told or read in our childhood. According to this author, it is through stories that the child or the young person learns to "imagine" a course of action, the effect of one event on another, and decide what to do or not to do.

7. Another important piece of advice is to **train the student to use public libraries.** Avoid and correct the false idea of transforming your room in a personal library. Is too expensive, is not practical, the book of the library becomes symbolic items, and at the end, a real burden. Teach your students to preserve only inherited books, and only those who he or she will be reading once and again. In order to achieve this wise advice, teach your student to become friends with the blank page and write his or her own books. In order to be able to write books from an early age, is necessary to do it without worrying about the rules, the formats, the protocols. Every writing is a draft. Learn to read your drafts, review them and see who was right and more helpful, us, the model to follow, or the Grammar book. Let's produce texts like the tropical storm produces rain that falls and forks into a multitude of streams, traces of the sudden deluge that trickles down the ditches and runs through the ditches. Let's write for the shredder and not the bookbinder. Let's be humble, and at the same time pious with ourselves, the ink and the paper.

8. In general, I **recommend everyone to learn, to laugh, to refine their sense of humor, to think and act from a position of freedom.** This allows us for example, to whistle while walking. The act, the action of whistling in the street, is a sign of freedom and truth. Being who we are, without insecurities or fears is like getting up on stage and showing the audience the truth. It is an act of dignity that shows brilliant mental health. After all, a good education is a result of the individual reconciling himself as his own best friend.

9. While you whistle, **try to be friends with your students,** without losing your investiture of authority (do not confuse authority with authoritarianism). Learn to see the difference that our ways of communicating in the academy would have (going to the front, giving a lecture, raising your hand, writing a paper, dialogue, company), if any of it happened "from friendship" and not as it usually happens, from suspicion or animosity or peer evaluation the goal will be achieved. "Of all the conversations we have with others, say Dr. Liliana Weinberg, the freest of all is the one

that takes place in friendship around a coffee table." Later, she declared: "Friendship occurs in a free conversation where no one wants to seize the voice of the other". This statement directly questions any meeting organized under a hierarchical scheme (stage-podium-seats) or where power is distributed unequally as in the classroom (desk-blackboard-stage).

This challenges us to understand the meaning of the "coffee table" metaphor. When Dr. Weinberg suggests that we should communicate with the public "from the friendship that finds its place on a coffee table", it is necessary to emphasize that it is not knowledge that is at stake, but the feeling of being among friends. Those of us who work in education - suggests Dr. Liliana Weinberg - should always place ourselves in the space of friendship for a fundamental reason: trust allows us to speak freely about what we do not know.

Trust has to do with the permission that we talked about earlier. It will not be hard for us to venture to improvise, like jazz musicians, without nervousness, naturally, complying with a creative social practice, born of sensitive inspiration, technical knowledge, artistic skill, which is the creative attitude that only comes from reflection, similar to the mood with which we arrive at a coffee table. At the café we don't know what we're going to talk about, but we know that we have a lot to say even if we don't arrive with a paper to read or an agenda to follow.

10. Always pay homage to creativity.

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