

Research Center

The principal objective of the MANES Research Center is to facilitate the study of school textbooks produced in Spain, Portugal and Latin America between 1806 and 1990.

Fulfilling this objective involves working in several different areas:

- Putting together the most complete catalog possible of textbooks published during this period.
- Compiling and analyzing all legislation having to do with school textbooks.
- Recreating the history of the preeminent textbook publishers.
- Carrying out a bibliometric study of editorial .
- Identifying pedagogical, political and ideological features of these textbooks and analyzing them from different thematic and chronological perspectives.

Within this broad array of tasks, the specific short and mid-range objectives of the MANES project are:

- To start a line of investigation on the history of school textbooks in the universities participating in the project. For this purpose, the Department of History of Education and Comparative Education of the UNED established a higher education program which has been in place since the 1993-1994 academic year and which has served as the basis for several doctoral theses on specific aspects relating to the MANES project.
- To catalog the school textbooks published during the period mentioned, including a complete bibliographical file of each one, which is then to be incorporated into the MANES database by means of the program CDS/ISIS of

the Unesco (MANES DATABASE).

- To undertake a bibliometric study of the registered editorial production, using as our main variables educational stages, academic subjects and didactic and textual genres.
- To compile information on legislation dealing with textbooks, for the purpose of carrying out a critical analysis of regulations affecting them and of study plans, surveys and programs, along with an examination of ideological contexts and educational policies.
- To encourage further studies on the historical evolution of curricula in primary and secondary education.
- To publish all works relevant to the project's research topics and having to do with Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American education (MANES PUBLICATIONS).
- To assemble and put at the disposition of researchers a collection of school textbooks, acquired through purchase, donation, or bequeathment and available at the Central Library of the UNED (MANES LIBRARY).
- To host a variety of congresses, symposiums, seminars and encounters, as a way of encouraging contact between researchers in this field and of sharing with the academic community the results of studies carried out in the framework of the MANES Project.

There are two facets to the MANES Project: that of an instrumental nature (historical-documentary), and one more focused on research *per se*. The first of these has as its chief objective the elaboration of a catalog of all school textbooks published between 1808 and 1990, each with a bibliographical file stored in the MANES database. This is complemented with a systematic compilation of an array of documents – legislative norms, study plans, school questionnaires – that may also be of use to researchers.

The second facet of the MANES project has to do with the varied research and historical analyses carried out on myriad

aspects of the textbooks, including their bibliometric, editorial, political-pedagogical and curricular features. The diverse lines of research undertaken focus fundamentally on the history of education, cultural history and the history of the curriculum. We should keep in mind that in the activities of the MANES Project these two facets are intertwined and need not be thought of as representing a sequence.

In its **instrumental** facet, the project's work follows a three-pronged orientation:

- The search for libraries and archives – both public and private – with relevant, valuable collections of school textbooks published in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- The cataloguing of textbooks published between 1808 and 1990 and the creation of a bibliometric file for each, to then be incorporated into the MANES database.
- The compilation of legal texts dealing with textbooks, study plans, programs and questionnaires from primary and secondary education beginning in 1808.

In its **research** facet, the Project's work reaches in several complementary directions:

- Studying relationships between the pedagogical orientations of different study plans, programs and questionnaires and those reflected in the textbooks.
- Selecting the most outstanding and representative textbooks in different subjects and analyzing their curricular content. This includes examining the evolution of didactic and scientific tendencies in these subjects as it is reflected in these books.
- Studying the correspondence between the curricular content of the textbooks and educational policies as well as more general political policy during the period under consideration.
- Studying the different types of conditioning appearing in the textbooks from different perspectives (political,

sociological, religious, cultural, etc.).

The work methods used in the MANES Project are those associated with the disciplines practiced by the different participating researchers.

The **instrumental** facet of the project relies on methods and techniques from the domain of library science and archiving. The first stage involves a search for written sources, in particular, legislative texts and school textbooks. This search can at times present the researcher with considerable difficulties, especially as we go further back in time, due to the large number of documentary units and their geographical and institutional dispersion.

The compiling of sources is followed by their classification and cataloguing by subject. The main variables used for this process are grade level, subject matter, didactic and textual genre and geographical origin.

The **research** facet of the project encompasses methods that vary according to the specific objectives and the realm of investigation. In the case of bibliometric or content analysis, quantitative methods may be resorted to, whereas in other contexts what is known as the historical method may prevail.

Additional information about the MANES Research Center.

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UNED Central Library

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