

## A quarter of a century of curriculum reforms in Spain

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Curriculum reforms in Spain have been closely related to political changes in recent history. After the death of Franco in 1975, transition from his dictatorship to democracy entailed also a transformation of the educational system. This reform movement was contemporary to the NCTM's call in its 1980's *An Agenda for Action* in the USA to focus mathematics education on problem solving, as well as the recommendations made in the Cockcroft Report in the UK. These foreign influences found fertile soil in the underground work carried out during the dictatorship by groups of mathematics teachers - who proposed to teach mathematical concepts and processes by means of modelling real world situations - as well as in a previous tradition of heuristic didactics. Problem solving thus became a central point of the new mathematics curriculum, which was designed during the Socialist Party's term in office and was finally established by law at the beginning of the 1990s. This new mathematics curriculum was part and parcel of a new school curriculum, whose design had an explicit statement of the psychological and pedagogical principles it was based on. The school curriculum also provided a precise descriptive framework to cover all subjects, broadly defining content in all of them to include concepts, facts, principles, procedures, attitudes, values, and norms.

The rule of a right wing political party from 1996 to 2004 brought a counter-reform of the school curriculum that stressed "quality" and the "culture of effort", which roughly speaking meant a "back to basics" movement in the mathematics curriculum. The return of the Socialist Party to government has resulted in a new curriculum, stated in terms of competencies, and in which problem solving is conceived anew as the centre of mathematical activity.