

# Introduction: Mastering time and personal and social development

*Dost thou love life?*, asked Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), immediately continuing, *Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of*. Life is time, and time, life; so those who love life make good use of time because life is the time they have (Pérez Ibarra, 2016)<sup>1</sup>.

Nothing is as personal or egalitarian as time, because we all have the same amount — 24 hours a day — contrary to what happens with personal talents or material goods, which generate stark differences between human beings.

Seneca addressed the perceived shortness of life, noting that it is not that we have a short amount of time, but rather that we waste it more often than we should, and asserting that life is long enough to achieve the most important things if time is used wisely, concluding that, *we are not given a short life but we make it short, and we are not ill-supplied but wasteful of it*.

Everyday expressions like "killing time", "don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today", "time is money", "wasting time", "time flies", "time heals all wounds", "any time in the past was better", "giving it time", "not having time" and "I'll do it when I have more time" all speak of the implicit meaning given to time, loaded with nuances linked to the levity and fragility of past, present and future eras.

The roots of this monograph lie in a realistic paradigm that is, however, full of positivity. Professionals in the field of education have the valuable task of providing guidance in making life decisions that are consistent with the optimisation of time management, which must be based on a firm belief in the finitude of life, a matter that helps us mature as individuals and increases the chances of giving more worth

to and having more appreciation for one of the most necessary assets: our time (Savater, 2007)<sup>2</sup>.

The volume opens with an inspirational contribution by professors Bernal, Valdemoros and Jiménez-Eguizábal, who take a hermeneutical approach to the critical analysis of the perspective of time as a coordinate of personal and social experience as well as prevailing patterns that explain and justify the connections between time, power and education. They conclude that rethinking time and education entails a reconsideration of political decisions about education, in which they simultaneously observe obstacles and innovative possibilities.

The monograph continues with an essay written by professor Caride entitled "Educating and educating ourselves in time, pedagogically and socially", in which he identifies and integrates a broad range of epistemological, theoretical and conceptual, methodological and empirical approaches referred to in studies on time, asserting and defending the importance of time in educational and social research, in educational policies and in the daily lives of citizens, reflecting their achievements in ideas and practices that extend the learning to the entire life cycle.

Leisure time and inter-generational relationships provide the foundations for the proposal by research professors Alonso, Sáenz de Jubera and Sanz, who present their findings from a comprehensive analysis that places the focus of educational and social attention on leisure time spent by grandparents with grandchildren before the pandemic and the perception that the children have of the personal development that takes place during those moments shared with their grandparents, thus opening up new paths for reflection and action that call for social and family intervention geared toward facilitating, stimulating and rebuilding time shared between grandparents and grandchildren to foster two-way personal development among both generations.

Professors Codina, Valenzuela and Pestana have chosen in their research to combine diverse aspects of daily life, such as time features of work and co-existence conditions, with two attitudinal manifestations that are highly involved in human development: time orientation and procrastination. They provide interesting findings that help facilitate the potential in people to master or control time.

Then there is an article on an imperative and timely subject matter, authored by Muñoz-Rodríguez, Torrijos, Serrate and Murciano, who take a qualitative approach to analysing time management and the perception of hyper-connected time among young people. They confirm that a young person's identity construction is like a continuum criss-crossed with different virtual and in-person times and spaces and that those young-

sters with less parental control in managing time need to have stronger mechanisms of self-management and self-regulation. The authors support a pedagogical discourse focusing on designing and bolstering activities that help establish healthy inter-personal relationships, social and communication skills and time management in scenarios that afford long-lasting benefits beyond mere entertainment.

The monograph ends with an article by professors De-Juanas, García-Castilla and Ponce de León, who examine time and the way it is experienced from a social-educational perspective, identifying how young people in difficult social situations use and manage their time, based on the information provided by the professionals entrusted with their care, custody, mentoring and education, as well as identifying the social-educational intervention actions that optimise the management of their time. This topic is essential in helping young people in difficult social settings live a full life, with legitimate opportunities and aspirations.

Education, power, identity, leisure, politics, inter-generationality, management, action, vulnerability and procrastination are some of the concepts present in this monograph, tracing an intriguing constellation of reflections on the past and present, which are bound to lead to highly valuable pedagogical actions in the future.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Pérez Ibarra, A. J. (2016). La administración del tiempo: una prioridad en la vida. *Revista de la Universidad de la Salle*, 69, 193-205.

<sup>2</sup> Savater, F. (2007). *El valor de educar*. Barcelona: Ariel.