



Book reviews

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[Screen-addicts. How to educate your children successfully in a world full of screens]
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Por una educación humanista. Un desafío contemporáneo
[In favour of humanistic education. A contemporary challenge]
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La educación en red. Una perspectiva multidimensional
[Networked learning. A multidimensional perspective]
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Empantallados. Cómo educar con éxito a tus hijos en un mundo lleno de pantallas [Screen-addicts. How to educate your children successfully in a world full of screens]. Vergara. 255 pp.

An idea that is engraved in stone, and that we all have, is that technology is here to stay. Although until 2019 we could clearly see its importance in our everyday lives, since the COVID-19 pandemic it has become obvious that now, not only is it important, it is necessary. Rick Howard, vice president of research at the technology consultancy Gartner, indicates that “while pandemic-related challenges will continue for some time, technological trends have emerged that present critical challenges” (Howard et al., 2021).

However, embracing digital devices with their wide range of options and their role in the education of our young people still raises numerous questions. Parents’ and educators’ intuition and common sense in this case cannot rely on the support of the experience of previous generations, as this

digital world has only just come into existence. Our young people are the first in history to have such powerful devices and we are the first generation of parents and educators to face the challenge of education with screens as the special guests. This is a challenge with a capital “C”: not only to educate *with* these omnipresent screens, but also to do so *in* this new environment of personal, social, educational and professional performance. “Digital education is nothing more than a new arena in which we can put everything that makes us who we are into practice” (p. 250).

We frequently receive contradictory messages regarding screens and their use in the education and upbringing of children. On one hand, the pandemic has led us to the discovery that screens are a great ally against distancing and isolation, whether social, professional or educational. On the other hand, there is a constant stream of reports and studies that describe the potentially negative effects of exposure to these devices. Only a few days ago, the Italian Ministry of Education issued a notice prohibiting the use of “mobile telephones and other

electronic devices during educational activities” in classrooms (Ministero dell’Istruzione e del Merito, 2022). As regards the family environment, the authors suggest that:

Screens have been blindly embraced in many cases, as we initially thought that these devices always represent an improvement to the family’s quality of life and comfort (p. 12). (...) But we have also realised that it is now more necessary than ever to stop and think about what role we wish screens to play in our lives and those of our children. (p. 9)

In this context of the certainty of their presence and the uncertainty surrounding their possibilities, challenges and dangers, *Empantallados. Cómo educar con éxito a tus hijos en un mundo lleno de pantallas* is a timely alert for parents, educators and specialists, and a thought-provoking source of ideas for researchers. Faced with this panorama, we could become overwhelmed by fear of the unknown, however, “We cannot undertake the education of our children out of fear, as fear offers nothing” (p. 250).

From the first page, it is written in a style that is optimistic, creative, hopeful, thought-provoking and realistic, created as a reference manual and without using a strictly academic tone: a companion to take on the journey of educating our children and students. This book is designed to be consulted (and used) in combination with the resources that the working group has collected and created, and which are available on the *Empantallados* website. It is the result of countless sessions, workshops, studies and conversations with families that mostly live in Spain. It has also

involved collaboration from INCIBE (Instituto Nacional de Ciberseguridad - the Spanish National Cybersecurity Institute), the social research consultancy GAD3 and a wide range of professionals in the fields of education and technology. *Empantallados. Cómo educar con éxito a tus hijos en un mundo lleno de pantallas* was born as an initiative of the educational group Fomento de Centros de Enseñanza (Promotion of Educational Centres), which has 60 years’ experience in educating young people. The group includes 35 schools, 20 nursery schools and a university centre.

The context that the authors describe in the first section, “Educar en una montaña rusa de emociones” (Education on an emotional roller coaster), relating to the society in which young people are going to move in is detailed and precise: a society ready for instant gratification, with difficulties in managing abundance, a preference for the superficial, a short attention-span and an addiction to emotions. Within this context, it provides a snapshot of our young people’s generation in an optimistically realistic way, whilst identifying the risks posed by its specific characteristics: The risks and opportunities of immediacy; from self-esteem based on “likes” to digital adolescence. The guidelines included, beginning with the introduction, ensure that we will gain in-depth knowledge of the reality that we are going to encounter and the right position to adopt in facing this challenge: a proactive attitude, leading us from feeling worried to taking action.

Once this context has been described, the book goes on to address the character-

istics of the different stages of young people's development and maturity, providing recommendations based on the evidence. Subsequently, it analyses the role of parents and educators, tackling such complex issues as the balance between the use we make of technology, as adults, for work and managing household chores, and the example we set and the attention that we should give to our children: "There is a great difference between paying attention to our children and not paying attention to them at a certain point in time" (p. 109).

The second part of the book, "Construyendo una cultura digital propia" (Building our own digital culture), addresses the tremendous opportunities that technology and digital devices can provide for family projects in terms of variety, depth and strength: the potential for a holiday that has been planned by everyone together, the safeguarding of special moments to be treasured, the planning of shared screen time, and how everything can and should be included in the raising and education of children — the combination of traditional games, video games, cinema, reading, hobbies, music, etc. It also provides a firm basis for the need to respect sleep and protect rest time, mealtimes as a platform for family gatherings to get to know each other and learn to love each other, family moments, etc.

In the third section, "Las doce preguntas más frecuentes sobre pantallas de los padres y madres" (The twelve most frequent questions that parents have about screens), it delves even deeper into the everyday lives of families and the situations

that, as adults, we frequently have to negotiate without being sure of having the right answers: when is the time to give them their first mobile phone; the significance of parental control; how to know whether our children's relationship with screens is healthy or not; if it is not, how to act; how to know if they are in safe environments; how to protect them, how to help them; how to survive in the school Whatsapp group, etc. It is also to be welcomed that the authors enlighten parents about our children's dreams of becoming *youtubers*, *influencers*, *tiktokers*, *gamers*, etc.

Lastly, the authors dedicate the fourth part, "El futuro profesional de tus hijos y la tecnología" (Your children's professional future and technology) to an analysis of the opportunities that will be available in the future in the world of technology, which is changing at great speed. It is interesting that their perspective does not focus on this future but rather on the children, on discovering who they are, what their interests are and creating a synergy with the possibilities that these devices offer to foster children's knowledge, abilities and skills. At the same time, several studies insist on the necessity of continuing to work on specifically human skills and value systems (Unicef, 2020).

Before the end, the book provides an important reflection that gives meaning to everything we have read in it regarding freedom. During their education, young people go from a state of total dependence to personal autonomy, as part of a gradual process. In this process, children should be helped to adopt their own set of principles

and values that will govern how they act in the world:

Our work does not define us and it can change over time, but we remain the same and we have the ability to choose between what makes us grow, be better people and think of others generously, considering the social impact of our actions; or to focus solely on certain aspects of life, such as professional success and money; or to withdraw into ourselves, seeking only our own interest and isolating ourselves. (p. 236)

And the education that we have always sought to give young people remains unchanged, but new environments have come into existence, such as the digital, in which we need to teach them how to retain their identity and give the best of themselves. This book is, without a doubt, an extremely useful map to help us to avoid drifting through this *New World*.

Ezequiel Delgado-Martín ■

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Nasarre, E. (Ed.) (2022).

Por una educación humanista. Un desafío contemporáneo [In favour of humanistic education. A contemporary challenge]. Narcea. 212 pp.

I remember a phrase I heard once. It was something like: "in the sciences we build the world, whereas in the arts you just write about how we do it". The truth is that it is a sign of great ignorance not only to lack knowledge of something but also to not even understand the influence (and therefore the power) that this knowledge can have. Maybe, if we alter it in the following way, the phrase above may be more truthful: "those in the arts state how the world is (or will be) and those in the sciences build it in accordance with these statements"¹.

In the book reviewed here, we catch a glimpse of what humanistic education has to offer and the urgent need for it. As it makes clear, this type of education does not aim to save the humanities, but rather aims to save us. In this way, the book is structured in nine chapters, written by leading authors in the areas of education, psychology and Spanish-speaking culture.

The introduction, compiled by the editor of the book Eugenio Nasarre, explains, by citing Jacques Maritain, that the problem with modern education lies in the subordination of the ends to the means. Therefore, we should discover the purpose of education; because, if we do not, it could be used for other ends that infringe upon personal freedoms, as several sections of the book demonstrate. To paraphrase

Píndaro, “there is nothing more important for each of us, and nothing more difficult, than to become a man” (p. 10). Therefore, the most noble purpose that education can pursue is to help us become more human.

Chapter one, written by Gregorio Luri, begins with a short anecdote that modern pedagogy would approve without a qualm, explaining that in this way the child is learning about the world around them (undoubtedly, a person outside this field would be able to determine that the child is amusing themselves and would clearly say so). At present, and particularly in education, after the marks left by constructivism, society has retained an impression of ruthless criticism of schools and terms such as “authority”, “discipline” or “effort”, among other similar terms. Thus, in a gradual way and in the interest of equality, we have achieved an educational system based on rights that, in the words of Alessandro Baricco, “paralyses growth, enthusiasm, hope, any possibility of change” (p. 30); given that, when the criteria for progress at school cease to be one’s worth and effort, these are replaced by others, such as a family’s sociocultural or economic level. On the other hand, although school is an imperfect institution with defects, it is also a noble cause, as Maeztu said: “Human thought owes infinitely more to the institutions that force us to think than to the mere permission to think” (p. 45).

The following chapter, written by Miguel Herrero de Jáuregui, answers the question: why is humanistic education necessary in the twenty-first century?

Humanities, despite the criticism they receive from the different political extremes — regarded as unproductive knowledge by the utilitarian right wing or as education for the élite by the left (p. 48) — are and always will be present in people’s lives. Therefore, the underlying question and *raison d’être* of this chapter is how to use the humanities to make ourselves freer. Because, although music, literature or philosophy may be maintained, in each of these fields there will be all manner of examples and those which have not been approved are the ones that are worth discovering. If schools do not undertake to teach the humanities — by presenting quality examples from different currents — these subjects will be left to the whims of fashion and even the influence of other institutions, with less transparent purposes than schools, which could be used to manipulate the humanities in a biased way.

Later, in the third chapter, the author, Carmen Guaita Fernández, raises the question of the teacher’s role in a world where machines are increasingly emerging in environments where they had been unthinkable until now, claiming to be more effective and precise. In contrast, the teacher-student relationship should offer that which is more human and which machines are not able to provide: dialogue, beliefs, expectations, sense and will. Out of all these, the author particularly emphasises dialogue, both between people and with oneself. On the other hand, in the face of the immediacy of technology — which conceals the processes and only shows the results — we find that everything that is human requires time, such as the cultiva-

tion of the virtues that, in Guaita's words, are "the real and only progress made by humanity" (p. 76).

Chapter four addresses the teacher's authority. Juan Antonio Gómez Trinidad, who writes this chapter, states that without authority there can be no education and, therefore, there is no sense in questioning it in the field of education. Nevertheless, the problem at present does not lie in the debate surrounding authority but rather in taking for granted that it should not exist. This crisis of authority is due to several causes: the weakness of modern society, which is demonstrated by the lack of exemplariness and by the excess granted to emotions — which, in contrast to reasons, with their hierarchy, are all equally valid; the concept of authority that the new pedagogy has attributed to it, as a threat to the child's autonomy; and the abusive practices applied to it. Lastly, the chapter describes the course to take in recovering authority, as, when it is not exercised, "this hierarchy does not disappear, but rather is replaced by another, normally of a hegemonic and despotic nature" (p. 85).

In the following chapter, Agustín Dosil Maceira suggests a way, based on several disciplines, to "achieve the highest levels of personal growth and development — wisdom and happiness — and thereby contribute to building a more human future" (p. 99). Furthermore, he presents some of the current situations that represent an obstacle to personal growth, such as the blurring of the different roles that the various educational stakeholders should hold

— by undertaking tasks that are not their responsibility or vice versa — and the utilitarian notion that causes variations in what is considered to be valuable: something is of value today but perhaps it will not be tomorrow. Finally, he explains the consequences for development of the use and abuse of technology.

Chapter six addresses the learning of virtue and is written by Agustín Domingo Moratalla. Here, he speaks about the importance of virtue and its indispensable role — despite the fact that it is not part of educational approaches — as, without it, moral education will fail. Throughout this chapter, he defends this concept as enabling the balance between nature and culture; it acts as a mediator between values — which is necessary in a pluricultural society; and, in contrast to rules, it is not bound by required minimums, but rather it offers maximums for a good life. In addition, and in line with input by MacIntyre, he presents several outlooks for virtue in modern society, reaching the understanding that it strengthens the resolve for good.

The seventh chapter, written by Xavier Pericay Hosta, begins with several anecdotes that portray the forced and frequently absurd use of language to avoid offending anybody. As will be shown further on, changing language effects a change in other, deeper realities. Furthermore, and by paraphrasing Hannah Arendt, the author explains that education requires authority and tradition, a transmission of the culture of our past. However, due to the terminology that the LOGSE (Spanish Ed-

ucation Law of 1990) began to enforce in the field of education — although hints of this could already be glimpsed in the 1970 education law — authority and tradition have decreased in value, to the detriment of education.

In chapter eight, José María Martínez-Val Pañalosa retraces the route taken by the development of scientific truth, from its beginnings as a concept in which only the tangible and that which was composed of penetrable material could be studied scientifically, to the contribution of quantum physics that enables us to understand without penetration. He ends the chapter by revealing that intelligence is that which causes us to identify scientific truth, although a greater intelligence is required to identify our own objectives, since knowledge brings with it great power that needs to be used well, as it can produce monsters such as the atomic bomb.

The last chapter, compiled by Gregorio Robles Martínez and Jesús Moreno León, presents the mutual adaptation of human beings and technology. As a metaphor, he uses the relationship that exists between the protagonists of the novel by Cervantes, which shows how Don Quixote acquires Sancho's traits and at the same time Sancho becomes *quixotised*. Thus, we human beings undergo change as a result of our relationship with technology but we also try to give it human features. In order to humanise technology, we will certainly have to learn about everything involved in being human and in this, the study of humanities plays a significant role.

Whilst reading the book, one perceives a sense of thirsting to seek the truth that even questions some aspects of the dogmatism that surrounds *political correctness*, by offering a broader vision. Lastly, it is important to note that humanistic education has been explained by and for different areas: personal, social, scientific and pedagogical. The authors come from different fields of knowledge, ranging from philosophy to engineering, including teachers of several educational stages, which has provided a holistic conception of the contribution of the humanities. Thus, the very structure of this book demonstrates what it advocates: that humanness can mean broadness, greatness, diversity and harmony.

Note

¹ Note here the similarity of this idea with the Biblical story of creation in which the word was first, what God said, and, afterwards, it came into existence. "And God said, 'Let there be light.' And there was light." (Gen. 1.3).

Clara Ramírez-Torres ■

Santos-Rego, M. A., Lorenzo-Moledo, M., & García-Álvarez, J. (Eds.) (2023).

La educación en red. Una perspectiva multidimensional [Networked learning. A multidimensional perspective].

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In seeking to understand the role of education in modern society, it is necessary to consider the present and past times in which it has evolved. These days, education is affected by the dramatic changes wrought by globalisation, understood as a process of interconnection and interdependence between countries and

regions around the world. This has led to the significant transformation of the educational scene, by expanding boundaries beyond the known borders, where information is plentiful both within and outside schools, and creating different ways of learning and redesigning a new cognitive map.

Globalisation has produced unprecedented opportunities for access to education, as it is now possible to learn from anywhere in the world and at any time as a result of connectivity, creating a different relationship with knowledge, given that learning is no longer limited to the classroom, but has spread into everyday life, work, sociocultural contexts, into all aspects of life. The educational process is, therefore, continuous and permanent, and enables the acquisition of new abilities and skills for the adaptation to a constantly changing world using the numerous and varied possibilities that different sources of information can provide.

In this sense, the use of technologies and internet has become extremely common and is increasingly affordable for a growing number of students. It has led to greater accessibility, flexibility and personalisation in learning, and has made remote learning possible all over the world. For this reason, the concept of 'network' is now a frequently-used term relating to the rapid changes produced by economic globalisation and technology (Santos-Rego et al., 2023), causing people to confuse the terms *networked learning* and *online* or *digital learning*, or use them indistinctly, and this should not be the case.

Defining networked learning requires a multidimensional perspective in order to understand it. For this reason, the work edited by Miguel Ángel Santos-Rego, Mar Lorenzo-Moledo and Jesús García-Álvarez comes at the right time. In fact, the book reveals that networked learning represents connection and that it is based on the principle of co-operation, meaning that it can encourage participation and interaction with other stakeholders, by promoting the development of knowledge and skills in a collaborative learning environment, in both its formal and informal dimensions, at the social and community level.

In order to provide continuity, from the challenges and approaches involved through to the development of different contexts related to networked learning, the work is in two sections. The first is entitled "El desafío de la educación en red: algunos posicionamientos" (The challenge facing networked learning: some approaches) and over the course of six chapters it addresses different perspectives on the subject. The second section is called 'Universidad, desarrollo profesional y acción educativa en red' (The university, professional development and actions for networked learning) and the five chapters describe how networked learning functions and what to expect from it in the context of higher education.

The first chapter of the first section addresses the importance of overcoming the individualistic view of education and coming to appreciate a more integrative perspective of entrepreneurship educa-

tion. For this reason, the book invites us to discover the characteristics of entrepreneurs and connections with the context by means of systemic entrepreneurship education focusing on the individual, taking into account the notion of the 'entrepreneurship education ecosystem (EEE)'.

In the second chapter, the authors begin by describing trends in the training of education professionals and the importance of considering a paradigmatic change in higher education, which mainly features the abandonment of the traditional model of university education and the emergence of an interest in quality, from the perspective of sustainability and the in-depth approach to educating networked professionals that specifically uses networked learning.

However, when speaking of networked learning it is impossible to avoid mentioning the relationship with technology. For this reason, in the third chapter, the authors explain that the fact of technologies having grown exponentially has enabled significant generation of knowledge. Thus, there has been an increase in the challenges involved in education, as the relevant teaching processes require, among other elements, the acquisition of new skills, both for those who teach and those who learn.

In the fourth chapter, the author states that in order to improve education, specific actions are required of the communities of practice, using what they know and what is known, through knowledge management and collaborative work between profes-

sional and institutional networks in order to address the complexity and dynamism of current reality.

In the fifth chapter of this book, the authors concentrate, from a perspective of education for life, on providing some key points regarding the origin and evolution of non-formal education and the underlying relationship with work networks, through the use of social capital, taking into account the possibilities that this offers in terms of transformation and social equity to improve collaboration in social and community contexts.

In the last chapter of the first part, the authors claim that networks are not a new thing and have existed throughout history. For this reason, they approach the concept of relationship networks in the pre-electronic era offered by pedagogues Rafael Ramírez, Rabindranath Tagore and Jiddu Krishnamurti through the different methods of publicising or disseminating their speeches, which they used to impart their knowledge before the existence of electronic media, thus ending the first section of the book.

The second section of the work by Santos-Rego et al. (2023) begins with the seventh chapter and the author talks about the change and transformation that universities have undergone, revealing significant pointers on how to foresee the future, major university policy, the guiding principles that would help to explain what university is for, and how these elements are connected to lifelong networked learning.

In the eighth chapter, the author refers to the role that the university plays in building a better world, by reimagining the functions of research and teaching and how they are extended through the creation of networks with different institutions in the communities of which the contemporary university is a part, in order to meet the challenges of our times.

The authors of the ninth chapter present a case study, analysing the professional development of university teaching staff from the perspective of learning ecologies (LE), as this provides relevant information on how learning occurs in the current digital reality, leading to an understanding of how teachers acquire their skills and build their identity.

The tenth chapter establishes the connections between entrepreneurship, vocational training for employment and European co-operation networks and the specific actions they implement through development programmes. This study issues an invitation to learn about the Europe of co-operation, synergies, transnationality, mobility and convergence.

Finally, the eleventh chapter presents the main findings of a case study on the

importance of creating links between the university and the community for work networks to succeed and on how service-learning (SL) could be a vital methodology to establish collaborative relationships between the different stakeholders and educational centres.

In short, education has become an essential part of people, as they are constantly learning and developing new skills to stay up to date in a constantly changing world. With the arrival of internet, there is greater access to information than ever before. For this reason, this work extends an invitation to explore the exciting possibilities that networked learning can offer. It provides information about the latest tendencies related to the capacity for promoting interaction and collaboration between stakeholders in social and community areas. It also highlights experiences of the use of networked learning in systemic entrepreneurship education or professional development. With detailed case studies and real-life examples, this book depicts a multidimensional vision of networked learning and it is recommended reading for anybody interested in taking education to the next level.

Marisol Galdames-Calderón ■