

Introduction: Cultivating intelligence in adolescence

Ortega y Gasset said that the excellent man is one who makes great demands on himself, and we should also note that school is where most people when starting out in life learn to make demands on themselves as it is where we start to discover that we are not princes of the world nor riotous people on whom the Graces always smile. However, schools are not unaffected by the social environment in which they operate, and nowadays it is clear that we live in an atmosphere of egalitarianism, in which excellence tends to be frowned upon and of sentimentalism, to the extent that arranging a lecture warning of the bad consequences of drugs becomes a risk, lest a student who is the child of a drugs lord who is currently in prison has their feelings hurt. In addition, society is no longer interested in truth and veracity, so that post-truth and lies run free and what is truly dominant is not knowledge but money, or, at least, welfare guaranteed by the state, even if this leads to generalised mediocrity or a reduction in civil liberties.

The harmful effects of this ideological trend are devastating, especially for people growing up in levels of society with little interest in culture. There is no doubt that confronting dominant forces is not a simple task but nobody with a vocation to educate should shrug their shoulders; instead they must ask themselves what to do so that new generations do not make these mistakes. This question is especially relevant for those with the greatest connection to adolescents as the period between the ages of 12 and 18 is very important in shaping the personality.

This monographic issue of the **revista española de pedagogía** presents works that reflect on the content of the most important lessons at these ages, offering guidance on how to teach in a way that promotes the cultivation of intelligence, that does not ignore the cultivation of memory in favour of rote learning, as we stand on the shoulders of

giants, something that enables us to advance knowledge and also facilitate social mobility by obtaining qualifications.

Indeed, T. S. Eliot, in some well-known verses, said: “Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?” There is an urgent need to fight the easy temptation to stick to memorising data, without considering reality in all its depth. Millán-Puelles noted that human beings ask about the what of things, and this should not be answered by saying that we will understand it when we see them. Indeed, seeing is a first step, but we want to advance and understand the most profound nature of things by using intelligence, which some describe as the ability to *intus-legere*, to read the interior of what we see.

Therefore, this monographic issue considers the cultivation of intelligence from a wide range of focusses, including cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, moral, religious, sex education, physical education and more, and does not limit itself to education at school but also considers the responsibilities of the family. It could be said that it complies with the objective of offering a broad and diverse outlook on the subject, analysing and scrutinising it in detail, casting pedagogical light on its different dimensions, and opening up new perspectives for educational research and action. At the same time, it is worth noting that the 17 authors involved, who work in nine different educational institutions, do not shy away from tackling difficult questions that merit debate, relating to both the academic sphere and to the characteristics of a democratic society. Therefore, in their many voices, we as editors have endeavoured to address some of the most notable challenges that pedagogy can currently pose, the study of which is unlikely to result in *the one best solution*.

This issue starts with an article by Joseph Renzulli, who provides the theoretical underpinnings of and develops various practical ideas relating to *Enrichment Clusters* in schools. He defines these as spaces centred on an inductive and investigative learning process, characterised by being highly demanding, which result in a high level of learning and confronting relevant current real problems. His proposal stands in contrast to a context in which various factors have led to excessively prescriptive classes, stifling both the creativity of the teachers and the flame of self-discovery and the excitement of the search in the students. This professor from the University of Connecticut understands that intellectual development cannot be based solely on the transfer of content decided by educational authorities and its evaluation through traditional exams, but that, without disregarding these activities, it must be balanced with other types of action that enable teachers and students to express themselves and show initiative in such a way that their own judgement becomes relevant. Questions such as ones about the very democratic way of life of our societies, Renzulli claims, will only be possible if schools, particularly ones located in areas with fewer cultural and economic resources, cultivate these types

of capacities, which are linked to creativity, innovation, initiative, and individual and collaborative enterprise, and which enable the formation of a significant number of citizens from different social classes who are capable of leading their own communities.

This first article, which advises on the criteria that should be present in any teaching, is followed by ten works set out analogically following the traditional order of classical education. And so this issue continues with a work on teaching philosophy and the cultivation of intelligence. Its author, José Antonio Ibáñez-Martín, introduced the concepts of critical thinking and indoctrination to the world of education in Spain, and now presents a new work from an innovative position.

Luis Arenal, the Head of Baccalaureate at the Colegio Tajamar in Madrid, provides an original work in which he explores the causes of the gradual disappearance of classical Greco-Latin languages and cultures from the curriculum, something that, in his view, is not unconnected to the greater importance given to the context over the text, which thus confuses means and ends. In effect, while many people tend to praise the classics in public, this author notes that few of them actually read them, and many of those who do seem not to discern the profound values that have made these particular works merit the title of lasting and timeless classics. History and grammar are not the main lessons the classics can offer us, according to Arenal. Instead these are only the means or tools that enable us to discover the meanings underlying them and so avoid misreadings, and so it does not make sense to fall short in studying them, thus restricting the immense depth of the potential lessons in these works. In accordance with this starting point, he proposes a plan for gradual, reflexive reading with clear objectives and the necessary strategies for students to be able to access the texts. And this access will be easier and more sustainable over time when we are able to present relevant meanings that are can be meaningful to adolescents, beyond the simplistic memorisation of names and dates. The author has long experience of how adolescents from all social settings are enraptured by classical texts, when they are well taught.

Fernando Blasco, from the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, considers the capacity of mathematics for fostering thought, reasoning, and problem solving in an article that suggests innovative, motivational, and interdisciplinary ideas for the mathematics classroom. In human curiosity he discerns the impulse to solve problems understood in the broad sense, which encompass different areas and do not always have one single solution. He sets out the educational interest of what he describes as recreational mathematics, as well as making various proposals aimed at gifted and talented students aged between 6 and 18 that link this discipline to others of a more artistic nature and to situations in everyday life that also require communicative, instrumental, or, we could say, *performative* capacities. The heart of the question raised by this author is also the cornerstone of reasoning, of enquiry into the reasons that explain mathemat-

ical enigmas, that must accompany the entertaining, mysterious, and magical component of the teaching activity.

Next, Juan Luis Fuentes, from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, suggests that we conceive awe as a classical emotion that can make important contributions to current education and, more specifically to the path to accessing wisdom. After defining concepts, the author explains some pre-conditions for awe to be possible in a context where the capacity to be surprised is challenged, as everything tends to be presented as expected thanks to technological advances. These conditions direct us to a necessary attitude of humility, to exercise of gratitude, to careful observation of surroundings, or to discovery of the value within the self, avoiding instrumentalisation and narrow visions of utility. Finally, he proposes three lines of action that invite people to discover what is good, beautiful, and true, a different, more profound and calm view of natural surroundings, and an adaptation of vital rhythms, especially in the most important areas for human existence, including education.

Alberto Campo Baeza, an Academician of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando and architect who is recognised in all international forums, proposes a manifesto for beauty in the educational system. Without it, he categorically and clearly states, life loses its value to the point that is not worth living. This raises the question of who has the chance to access beauty, to which he responds that this privilege is available to everyone in a wide variety of ways, in very different times and very varied places. At the same time, he defends the ability of the fine arts, poetry, music, painting, philosophy, as field that exceptionally possess beauty, to cultivate the intelligence of children and young people, whom we must enable to immerse themselves fully in this activity, when they write a poem, when they sing with enthusiasm, when they draw and think with their hands, or when they understand a philosophical truth intrinsically linked to beauty.

For their part, Rafael Bisquerra and Èlia López-Cassà from the Universidad de Barcelona, focus on the intersection between intelligence and emotions. Delving deeper into the line of a long tradition of study of emotional intelligence, and after the first sections, which are dedicated to conceptual delimitation and to distinguishing related areas, the authors consider the place of moral emotions in secondary education, within emotional education. As they note, these emotions motivate moral action, and it is precisely in adolescence, owing to the explosion of emotions in the individuals and their peers of the same age, that the greatest attention is needed from educators to facilitate their correct development. In addition, their reflections on the emotional dimension of moral education are of special interest, as they leave behind the excessively rationalist focus of the 20th century, making way for a new perspective in which *felt values* have a special place as they are a mechanism that enables consistency between conduct and thought. In the

last part, they make some practical recommendations with a significant connection to the position of teachers as role models in this sphere: the reinforcement of empathy, especially in diverse settings, the moral elevation produced by admiring acts of high value, and the systematisation of this process in three steps, namely, re-evaluation, imagination, and the decision to follow admirable moral behaviours.

David Reyero considers an area that is as important and delicate as it is necessary in integral education, namely studying the sexual dimension of the person. The rigour with which he approaches this complex issue and the depth with which he evaluates some current responses to this topic that are more politically correct than actually correct is laudable. One especially interesting idea he poses is the impossibility of providing a real education that starts from the dominant philosophies of suspicion and mistrust, as in the case of a certain critical pedagogy in the educational sphere, which holds that rules are no more than an illegitimate attempt at external domination and control, the result of which would automatically be an oppressive relationship, in view of which it would only be possible to admire what is original or identify errors in any proposal made, without any hope of finding something of value for leading a good life. This professor from the Universidad Complutense also explains how the lack of a teleological focus on the human being that includes, as is logical, the sexual life, pushes young people into an exclusively biological, superficial, and instrumentalising sexuality that is unable to comprehend the relational, communicative, reproductive, and intimate character of this human dimension. The complexity of this matter means it cannot be approached from a perspective that could be classed as puritanical, in the sense of being simplistic, banal, and based exclusively on abstinence, nor in the sense of unwanted consequences, but that it involves deeper elements of human affect and the meaning of sexuality that disciplines such as evolutionary psychology are incapable of understanding. Finally, the article proposes using a *substantive ethics* as a reference point that enables human beings to interpret themselves in reference frameworks that guide them towards a good life and which incorporate a language with a greater anthropological density.

The next article considers the contributions that the teaching of Christianity can make to intelligence, which inevitably involves considering that following Jesus is much more than just following a set of moral rules. Ramiro Pellitero, from the Universidad de Navarra, argues for the importance of intellectual capacities in knowledge of good and of God and their necessary harmony with other dimensions of the person, such as volitional, relational, and transcendental ones. On these lines, he shows the need to establish dialogues between faith, reason, ethics, and culture, as aspects that not only contradict one another but also feed back into each other: a lived, non-individualistic faith, linked to love; an expanded reason open to all of reality and to the big questions, which is not reduced to the experimental; an ethics that can support religion in the correct interpretation of the good of people; and a culture that refers to the wisdom of tradition and of

the community. In the second part of the article, he champions the role of theology in transdisciplinary knowledge and in practical wisdom, where its social function stands out, something that should be compatible with a religious teaching that is attractive owing to the beauty of its content, while at the same time being clear and adapted to the particular circumstances of the students.

The article by M. del Rosario González Martín, Gonzalo Jover, and Alba Torrego, from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, analyses language as a vehicle for knowledge and for expressing reality, and more specifically its transformation owing to technological mediation in the stage of adolescence and in three distinct spaces, namely the private setting of the home, the school, and the public space of the city. At home, language makes it possible to shape habits and cultivate interiority, through the cultivation of a language that inhabits the home and social media, that is shared with all of the members of the family, where adolescents relate to older people in a space where they feel more comfortable, which, at the same time, rejuvenates the adults. In school, the authors underline the learning of the configuration of a larger us, in which the young person is one more person, where they learn order, systematisation, reasoning, and communication. And thirdly, they highlight participation in other forums, ones that are not part of the close settings, many of them digital, that help outline the adolescent's identity and foster social participation, despite some contradictory and homogenising effects from virtual settings.

Finally, the team from the Universidad de Jaén comprising Alberto Ruiz-Ariza, Sara Suárez-Manzano, Sebastián López-Serrano, and Emilio J. Martínez-López studies physical activity and its relationship with the promotion of intelligence. This vindicatory and propositional article describes different didactic possibilities for intellectual development through physical exercise, which will undoubtedly be of interest for teachers in secondary education. Starting from the peripatetic experience of the Aristotelian school and the schools of other great philosophers, as well as from research done in recent decades, they claim that corporal movement is a stimulus for the general exercise of intellectual capacities, such as attention, concentration, information processing, memory, creativity, and ultimately learning, and also of specific capacities linked to certain subjects. Consequently, they propose an integral vision of physical education classes, where transversality and the hybridisation of content from different subjects, take precedence, transcending the organisation of content into sealed units; promotion of physical activity prior to the school day linked with active travel to the school; turning breaks, especially recess, into active periods that significantly disrupt the sedentariness of the classes; introducing physical activities into the ordinary classroom, as they regard corporal expression as contributing to learning and containing an important motivating power. These are interesting proposals that might entail a review of current curriculum designs.

With the **revista española de pedagogía** on the threshold of becoming an octogenarian publication, we would sincerely like to thank all of the authors and reviewers for their participation in this monographic issue, in particular those who, while their teaching and research is not normally in the field of pedagogy, have dedicated their time and work to create a multidisciplinary issue that we trust will be of interest to our habitual readers and for whom, even if they are not from the sphere of the university, work with passion and dedication every day to cultivate their students' intelligence, along with other human dimensions.

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