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La escuela y su entorno en la sociedad del conocimiento. Un estudio focalizado en la Formación Profesional [The school and its environment in the knowledge society. A study focussed on Professional Training]
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En vista del fin excelente: la educación del carácter en las universidades [In view of the excellent goal: Character education in universities].

Aula Magna Proyecto Clave McGraw Hill.
234 pp.

In this work, the crucial importance of universities in the formation of students is presented and questioned. The authors help us reflect on the central role of educators in shaping young people's character in a university environment and on how human flourishing can be achieved through the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. This work stands out for its deeply practical character, since as well as meditating on these topics, it suggests and describes specific measures that can provide great inspiration for higher-education centres.

The first chapter questions the influence of universities on students' flourishing. Universities must not only teach moral virtues but also how to put them into practice to ensure that students become people, citizens, professionals who contribute

to the good of society. As the authors note, "there is a broad gulf between knowing and doing" (p. 29). Human beings need information, but to achieve a fulfilled life, we must put moral virtues into practice through understanding and prudence. The second of these, understood as practical wisdom (*phronesis*), plays a fundamental role, as it represents the capacity to act and decide what is best at each moment. Nonetheless, it is noted how universities, despite being aware that the education that they provide influences the character of young people, focus on knowledge and competences of an economic or professional nature. In other words, they have taken a certain market-based approach: the teachers offer knowledge (a product) while students seem to want nothing other than accreditation so that they can move on in their careers. The authors argue for the central role of universities in the formation of character, something that is sufficiently important that it should not be left to chance. Universities must embody values and encourage their students to propose a committed life for themselves. In particular, in a Catholic university, the

doctrinal foundation must inspire character education and guide what it does and what it teaches. A university is not Catholic because of its name nor because it teaches the doctrine of the Church; what makes it truly Catholic is the use of reason in all facets of university life, in how truth and love are pursued.

The second chapter considers character education in Spain. It is striking that the trend in English-speaking countries of incorporating training of the character, of moral virtues, into school and university educational projects has not taken root in Spain. One possible reason is the legislative framework. From the enactment of the LOECE (Organic Act governing the Status of Educational Centres) in 1980 to the present day with the LOMLOE (Organic Act amending the Organic Education Act), eight education acts and reforms have been passed. When discussing the new challenges facing Spanish universities, the authors rightly argue that ethics, values and virtues are the principle of progress. Therefore, a model that contributes to shaping people's character and identity must be proposed, so that our young people can "come to be someone and not just come to know how to do something" (p. 45).

In chapter three, they summarise the document *Character education in the universities: A framework for flourishing*, from the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues and the Oxford Character Project, the purpose of which is to show universities how to articulate and structure their mission to facilitate the flourishing of students and holistic development of charac-

ter. Universities, whether they set out to or not, shape the character of their students. A good education in advanced studies not only provides people with training in how to do or access a good job, but it must also influence what *they will become* and how they can contribute to society. Therefore, character education must permeate university life: culture, teaching, research, extracurricular activities, vocational guidance services, admissions, etc. In each of these points, the authors, aptly, propose ideas that invite us to reflect and to propose improvement activities. Along with this, specific measures are defined so that all of the staff of the university contribute to putting into practice this *framework for flourishing*.

Closely connected to the above, the need to teach professional ethics is discussed in chapter four. These should not be based on deontological codes or codes of conduct nor on the use of decision-making models. No: professional practice must be incorporated as an intrinsically moral whole including a concept of responsibility that inspires responses from everyone that are in accordance with what is good. The authors argue for replacing the concept of *professional career* with *professional vocation*, in which the person is involved as such in its exercise. It is also in work where the character of the person will be displayed, as *being* will be expressed through *doing*. Professional ethics are not a matter of avoiding evil. They are much more ambitious: they are a case of pursuing good.

Chapters five and six discuss the vocation of educating and of training teachers. The task of the teacher is fascinating. It is

defined as a service vocation that must start with transformation of oneself to become a virtuous educator. It requires serving others through committing oneself. The call to educate is not so much *doing things as living because of something and for someone*. The teacher, consequently, is not only a transmitter of content. Educators shape; through their mere presence, they influence the student, they cannot be neutral. Therefore, it is vital for them to have well-formed characters, as people cannot give what they do not have. So, all people who are considering being teachers must ask themselves if they are really disposed and prepared to do so. The authors identify four elements that people who wish to immerse themselves in the marvellous task of education must make their own: (i) being a *magister*; which is manifested through self-command of one's conduct and knowledge of the subject one delivers; (ii) *ministry*, as teachers must internally return to what they were to be able to recognise the needs of the people they educate and practise empathy; (iii) to act as *pedagogues*, that is to say, as custodians of those who are entrusted to them; (iv) to act as *maieutic* figures, questioning students so that they come to knowledge of truth. These four elements will, undoubtedly, contribute to the preparation of student teachers, although it is necessary to keep them in mind throughout one's career as a teacher.

The study of the relationship between competence and virtues that authors provide in chapter seven is of great interest. After several definitions of *competence*, they distinguish between technical competences (knowledge and skills from the

academic, scientific and technological fields) and personal ones (cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal capacities). To achieve an integral education, the person must acquire techniques and, when exercising them, carry out ethical action. Rather than dividing training into personal competences, there should be a tendency towards an integrating concept; what the authors call *personalisation of the formative process*. In this sense, they establish the following relationship between competences and virtues:

- (i) Justice as the inclination of the will to give to God and to others what is due to him, so that truth and goodness combine with the interpersonal concept of the student. All of the competences with a social dimension, a dimension of reflection and evaluation of decision making, must be inspired by justice.
- (ii) Strength or a firm and constant will-iness in the search for good. This virtue must foster the competences of self-criticism and self-evaluation, constance and patience to achieve a strong determination to seek good.
- (iii) Temperance, which moderates and ensures balance in the use and attraction of material goods. This is related to the competences of time management and self-knowledge.

There is, however, one supreme, master virtue: prudence. As explained above, this guides and directs our emotions, our intentions, and how we work towards what

is good, the end we wish to achieve. In this way, it pushes or drives away behaviours so that they are useful and directed towards the goal. As a master virtue, it helps decide when to apply one virtue or another, or which is most relevant in a given moment. It discerns good and the means for achieving it. As a corollary to this chapter, the authors note the need for the teacher to seek and exercise these four virtues.

Chapter eight starts with a great truth: “We teach what we are”. Education entails a relationship. The educator’s way of being has more influence than we might believe, hence the transcendental importance of what is noted in the previous chapters. In this relationship between the educator and the learner, freedom has a special function. Educating can be understood as teaching to be free, conceived as the student’s capacity to choose and know how to choose. To do so, it is necessary to combine intelligence and will, functionality and affectivity. As a result, a key distinction emerges between authority and authoritarianism, where the former has degenerated, in part because it has turned into the latter, while the latter is a caricature of the former. Authority emerges from the relationship, from feelings, from the desire to belong, but not through the existence of rules. This could be said to be the difference between *auctoritas* and *potestas*. Teachers, through their virtuous lives, their presence in the classroom, must inspire in their students the love of good and of its implementation.

In the last chapter, number nine, the authors present educational practices that

have been carried out in institutions that have opted to focus on an integral education of the student. These practices are of great utility.

We believe this book is essential reading for everyone who has the great fortune of having a vocation (understood as the authors magnificently explain it) for teaching. The way it spells out the concepts and their practical utility is very revealing. Teachers cannot just be transmitters of content; if they were, what would differentiate them from, for example, a *youtuber*? This same thesis is set out masterfully in the novel *La ventana* [*The window*] by Carmen Guaita, where she skilfully depicts the great influence that teachers have on young people. They can never be replaced by a machine, because with their mere presence, they influence the students. This book does a wonderful job of inspiring this influence to be for the good of the students and for the teachers to become better as people and so as teachers.

Gonzalo Moreno-Ochoa ■

Ahedo, J. & Arteaga-Martínez, B. (Eds.) (2023).

El tetraedro de la amistad. Estudiante, familia, escuela y sociedad [*The tetrahedron of friendship. Student, family, school and society*].

Círculo Rojo. 130 pp.

The work *El tetraedro de la amistad. Estudiante, familia, escuela y sociedad* starts with a powerful metaphor that presents friendship as a tetrahedral structure comprising four equilateral triangles in perfect

harmony: society, school, family, and individual. From this perspective, it sets itself the challenging aim of exploring the concept of *friendship* from the educational sphere. This task is tackled through the professional experiences of the different authors, who, chapter by chapter, offer the reader a series of guidelines for understanding how to lead young children in discovering and cultivating the value of friendship.

In the introduction, Pablo Rodríguez, Professor of Molecular Biochemistry and Biology at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, offers a scientific analysis of the nature of friendship. He explores how this bond displays itself among primates, where it has been shown to be an essential component for the survival of certain groups. He also examines the evolution of the human species and how this shaped the social structures that permit the formation of bonds of friendship. He concludes that having a solid and balanced social network was crucial for survival in the past and remains a fundamental pillar for social and psychological well-being at present.

In chapter one, Pedro Concejero, a teacher and foster parent, considers two outstanding works of Spanish literature: *Don Quixote* and *El Abencerraje y la hermosa Jarifa* [*The Abencerraje and the Lovely Jarifa*], which consider the topic of friendship. As he progresses, he gradually intertwines his personal experience in the field of fostering with the concept of *friendship* and draws meaningful lessons from his own life. In this way, he offers an enriching reflection on the importance of friendship, without neglecting the chal-

lenges and hardships that must be overcome if this relationship is to flourish.

The second chapter offers a detailed analysis of the existing academic literature on the construction of friendship from the perspective of attention to diversity. The authors, Jesús Conde-Jiménez and Ángela Martín-Gutiérrez, set out a wide variety of strategies for boosting personal skills that enable the construction of friendship from diversity.

Tania García-Bermejo and Isabel da Mota have written a third chapter that combines the experience of the school environment with university knowledge. To do so, they explore the socio-affective relations that emerge in *casa de niños* preschools. These settings, designed in accordance with the Montessori methodology, can be regarded as microsocieties which, while focussing on individual development, provide a favourable environment for interpersonal development. Through a series of specific experiences, they provide practical illustrations of the content of their study.

The fourth chapter examines how, in a setting where interpersonal dynamics are undergoing a paradigm shift, literature for children and young people can play a crucial role in fostering meaningful relations. So, the authors Sandra Sánchez and María Carmen Torrecilla propose using it as a tool for socio-educational intervention in class, with the aim of promoting competences and critical and reflexive thinking in students while at the same time stimulating dialogue and strengthening their concept of friendship.

In chapter five, David Blanco, a scientific writer and communicator, provides a journey through the most emblematic friendships in the field of science. He explores the relationships between notable scientists, such as Darwin and Wallace or Einstein and Grossman, among others, to show how these friendships not only entailed a personal interchange between these figures, but also how they acted as facilitators of their professional achievements. In this way, he introduces the possibility of integrating, through the study of these friendships, a social dimension that enriches science and makes it more appealing for our students.

Chapter six analyses the method of literacy through photography, which uses photography as a catalyst to consider social relations in more depth. Alfonso Da Silva and Daniela Reyes describe in detail how it can be applied and to what extent it can help students to experience friendship. They also offer a detailed list of guidelines that can help us in this process.

In chapter seven, Silvia Morcillo, a counsellor and educational psychologist, proposes a detailed analysis of the nature and manifestation of friendship in the early stages of life. Instead of adopting simplistic positions that only centre on an egocentric conception of this stage, Morcillo presents multiple pieces of evidence to prove the existence of friendship in these ages. She underlines the crucial importance of these moments in constructing future friendships, as it is during early childhood that we start to internalise values and form our identity,

fundamental aspects for building bonds in the future. To conclude, the chapter proposes a series of guidelines designed to support the development of friendship in these early stages.

María José Bautista-Cerro and María José Díaz explore the importance for our planet of cooperation in chapter eight. In a context of socio-ecological crisis, they underline how the values of sustainability and friendship can be fundamental for creating alternative spaces that foster a more sustainable society in both social and ecological terms. In this sense, they offer guidelines that can be implemented in educational centres and which can, ultimately, contribute to strengthening the social fabric.

In chapter nine, Paola Perochena analyses the crucial role of school counselling in values education. From a perspective of educational psychology, she explores the development of values and friendship and translates the theoretical postulates from the literature into concrete strategies. These strategies guide the reader to promote the development of solid friendships and healthy social relations that help young people to experience true friendship.

The book concludes with a provocative chapter by Josu Ahedo, who poses a fascinating question: what does learning to love a friend mean? Through a detailed analysis of the challenges and opportunities that friendship affords us, Ahedo offers a series of guidelines that facilitate the comprehension of friendship from

three fundamental perspectives: affectivity, the human essence, and personal being.

As a whole, *El tetraedro de la friendship. Estudiante, familia, escuela y sociedad* provides an in-depth, multidisciplinary exploration of the value and nature of friendship from various academic and practical perspectives. The collaboration between professionals and academics provides a wealth of focusses from theory to practical implementation in educational and social settings. Accordingly, the book not only invites us to reflect on the importance of friendship in the life of individuals and in society in general, but it also provides valuable tools to approach it effectively in different contexts. From scientific analysis to practical strategies, each chapter offers ideas and suggestions that enable readers to reconsider how they can cultivate meaningful relations of friendship and foster values such as cooperation, solidarity and sustainability.

This work also stands out for the variety of focusses and the depth with which it approaches the topic, which make it unmissable reading for researchers, educators, parents, and anyone with an interest in understanding and promoting friendship as a fundamental pillar of human development. *El tetraedro de la amistad* not only challenges us to reflect on our own concepts and our perceptions about friendship, but it also provides us with a practical guide to foster more significant and enriching relationships in our lives and communities.

Laura Guerrero-Puerta ■

Martín-Gutiérrez, Á. (2020).

La escuela y su entorno en la sociedad del conocimiento. Un estudio focalizado en la Formación Profesional [The school and its environment in the knowledge society. A study focussed on Professional Training]. Octaedro. 180 pp.

Contemporary education is in a constant process of adaptation and reconfiguration in response to the challenges of a society that is undergoing a rapid transformation. The author of this pedagogical work, *La escuela y su entorno en la sociedad del conocimiento. Un estudio focalizado en la Professional Training*, tackles these challenges from the perspective of Professional Training (PT) in Andalusia, Spain. The book contains an in-depth examination of the crucial relationship between PT educational centres and their surroundings, and underlines the importance of social capital and interdisciplinary collaboration for meeting current work demands and promoting an education that is attuned to the needs of the knowledge society.

Through a detailed analysis, Martín-Gutiérrez examines the dynamics of collaboration that characterise PT centres and identifies their strengths and areas for improvement. In this context, the work presents a consistent theoretical framework, backed by up-to-date and relevant studies. It also proposes a methodological design for evaluating the current collaboration practices in these centres. Its pages take the reader on an in-depth exploration of PT, from its historical and regulatory roots to its current challenges

and proposals for improvement, all of this enriched with empirical data and critical reflections. This review offers an overview of the principal topics and findings presented in the eight chapters of the book. Its aim is to provide a general overview of their content and their relevance in the field of education.

The first chapter develops the approach and rationale of the research. It explains how new demands in the educational sphere emerge from the rapid changes that society currently faces. In this context, participation and cooperation are key elements for improving educational institutions. The author focuses on analysing the relationships of collaboration that PT centres establish with their surroundings, as these ties are fundamental for meeting current employment demands. So, the principal objective of the study is to identify the relations of collaboration that Andalusian PT centre maintain with their surroundings from the perspective of the members of the management team.

The second chapter presents the conceptual framework of the theory of social capital and its link to the knowledge society. Social capital refers to the networks, norms and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Similarly, the origins of the concept through authors such as Hanifan, Jacobs, Bourdieu, and Putnam are described. Different types of social capital are also listed, such as bonding, bridging and institutional. Finally, there is a reflection on the role of education and PT in generating social capital, at an individual and a communi-

ty level. Through theoretical contributions and analysis, it is concluded that it is necessary to create networks between educational institutions, communities and businesses to promote the development of educational centres.

The third chapter of the work tackles the concept of *educational collaboration* and its importance for improving institutions. It distinguishes between internal and external or inter-institutional collaboration. Within this latter category, different fields are described, such as families, businesses, unions, and employment or counselling services or associations, among others, and the role of management teams in establishing these relations is emphasised. Similarly, concepts such as *learning communities*, *networks* and *centres' openness to their surroundings* are analysed. From all of them, it is deduced that collaboration networks are key to fostering a harmonious environment in the educational centre. Also that teachers can perform effectively in their instructional management and so offer a quality educational service.

Chapter four analyses the development of PT in the European, Spanish and Andalusian context. It reviews regulatory benchmarks such as the LOGSE (Organic Act regarding the General Organisation of the Educational System), LOCFP (Organic Act regarding Qualifications and Professional Training), LOE (Organic Education Act), and LOMCE (Organic Act Regarding the Improvement of the Quality of Education). It also describes initiatives for European participation in PT. Moreover, this chapter explains that PT seeks to link

itself more to the productive environment and the job market. This requires closer collaboration between the centres and other agents such as businesses, unions, employment services, etc. Finally, the laws of autonomous regions such as the LEA (Andalusian Employment Act) and the Andalusian PT act are also analysed, which underline the need to adapt the offer to the local demands and to tighten links between the centres and their settings.

Chapter five presents the methodological design of the study. The phases of reflection, planning, execution, analysis and dissemination are described. The research population comprised 383 PT education centres in Andalusia, from which a stratified random sample of 193 centres was obtained.

A closed questionnaire was administered to the management teams. Its content was validated through expert judgement, and its construct through factor analysis. The questionnaire covered the relevance, agents, characteristics, consequences, and prospects of the relationships of collaboration. The reliability, calculated using Cronbach's alpha, was 0.964.

The results of the questionnaire form part of chapter six. To calculate them, a descriptive analysis of frequencies and percentages was performed. From this, it should be noted that 98% of the management teams placed importance on relations of collaboration, which are principally established with workplace training companies, external companies, local institutions, and other educational centres. In

these spaces for collaboration, objectives relating to students and to links with the productive environment are prioritised. Coordination by the management team facilitates these relations. As consequences, they identified the improvement in students' competences and the building of bridges between professional training and the reality of professional practice. Almost all of them consider it necessary to dynamise the relationships of collaboration.

In chapter seven, Andalusia's professional training centres are classified into four models depending on how developed their collaborative relationships with their surroundings are. Through quantitative techniques, clusters are identified, from incipient collaborations (model A) to consolidated networks (model D). While it is positive that all of the models value this collaboration as crucial, only 2.11% achieve the most advanced stage. This suggests that building solid ties with the surroundings continues to be a challenge. It is important to analyse what organisational or cultural barriers hinder development between models. Another contribution is the proposal of strategies to strengthen collaboration, both internally (training, joint projects) and externally (agreements, networks). Research into its real impact is required to facilitate the transition between stages.

In summary, the diagnosis of the collaborative models is an important contribution. However, it is necessary to consider in depth the obstacles that most centres face in consolidating these relations and determining effective strategies to promote their continued development. Only in this way

can professional training respond flexibly to the demands of society and the productive sector (Rodríguez *et al.*, 2022).

Chapter eight sets out the study's conclusions. These underline the importance that management teams place on collaborative relationships, their principal characteristics, the need to dynamize them, and the models identified. Theoretical, methodological, and practical implications are then proposed. Guidelines are also offered for strengthening relations between the government, management teams, and actors from the surrounding area. Finally, future lines of research are suggested, such as studying other perspectives, analysing PT-business relations, and the role of networks and ICT.

In conclusion, each of the chapters relates to the approach and theoretical framework of the research. Throughout this book, the importance of collabora-

tive relations between PT centres and their surroundings are underlined and the methodological aspects, results, discussion, and conclusions of the research are considered. Furthermore, there is an overview of collaborative relations in Andalusian PT centres, their characteristics, and the prevailing models.

This review synthesises the principal findings and makes it possible to develop an understanding of the content and contributions of the study.

Ángel-Freddy Rodríguez-Torres ■

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