

Book reviews

Pérez García, A., Feijoo Fernández, B. & López Martínez, A. (eds.). (2023).

Los menores ante las redes sociales. Pensamiento crítico y reflexión ética [Children and Social Networks: Critical Thinking and Ethical Reflection].

Tirant Humanidades. 216 pp.

The book “Los menores ante las redes sociales, pensamiento crítico y reflexión ética” addresses the study of digital, media, and computer literacy and the ability of minors to evaluate critically the content they consume on social networks. This joint work, edited by Álvaro Pérez García, Beatriz Feijoo Fernández, and Adela López Martínez, is the direct result of a research project funded by the Universidad Internacional de la Rioja called “El pensamiento crítico como competencia digital del S.XXI: Análisis de la capacidad de los menores para identificar y reconocer la procedencia e intencionalidad de contenidos informativos, divulgativos y persuasivos en redes sociales” (Critical Thinking as a Digital Competence in the 21st Century: Analysis of the Ability of Minors to Identify and Recognise the Intentionality of Informative, Promotional, and Persuasive Content on Social Networks).

This work comprises 10 chapters in three thematic sections, the first relating to ethical reflections on the use of social networks, a second addressing pedagogical considerations, and a third on practical questions in the fields of education and advertising. The development of young people’s critical thinking is the main focus of this work. The different chapters demonstrate the importance of media and informational literacy to foster in young people’s critical thinking and their ability to produce meanings creatively meanings after analysing and evaluating information to avoid ethical hazards such as fake news and media biases.

The first chapter analyses the ethical challenges of social networks from an anthropological perspective. A variety of changes that have been brought about by the emergence of social networks are analysed: the configuration of the self in a connected society; questions young people’s identity in virtual spaces; modifications to the structure of attention; and the solitude that isolation from the social milieu can provoke. It also includes reflection on how these changes can inhibit reasoning, in-depth reflection, and ethics.

The second chapter reflects on the limitations of the development of critical thinking in adolescents, as while it can prepare them to use social networks appropriately, it is not sufficient in itself as in addition to critical thinking it is necessary develop intellectual habits that are acquired through practice and are based on the intellect and synderesis. It also highlights the importance of prudence, a practical question of reason that helps define what it is or is not

appropriate to do. This chapter illustrates the importance of education in prudence, its relation to critical thinking, and the development of basic intellectual skills.

Chapter three introduces the pedagogical considerations, starting with education for social networks, showing how young people relate to them, and proposing working formulas from the field of education to control and improve how they relate to them. An analysis of how young people use social networks is performed, considering the time they spend using them and how they construct their identity. The dangers and risks associated with their use are also underlined, such as the risk of infringements of data protection, honour, privacy, and personal image. Likewise, the potential benefits of social networks in education are shown, as these can facilitate communication and collaboration, access to information, promotion of digital literacy, and personalised learning. Finally, an overview of research and studies on adolescents and social networks is provided, analysing the most recent ones.

Emotional intelligence is the backbone of chapter four, which presents research into how this relates to social networks and young people. A descriptive analysis is made of the relationship between emotional intelligence and young people's communicative processes, as well as the trends in interactions. The relationship between emotional, intrapersonal, and interpersonal intelligence in communication is also explored, with the way these last two types of intelligence form the first being of special interest, underlining their importance and the risks of using social networks at an early age.

Chapter five addresses the question of parental digital mediation in adolescents, identifying the different styles and strategies used by families as well as young people's own perceptions of parental mediation. The types of mediation identified, such as enabling, restrictive, and technical mediation, are considered in depth as are the factors that influence their use. Moreover, the analysis of mediation centred on young people is of interest, which holds that mediation is not a unidirectional question but rather is one where context matters and that it fosters creativity and cognitive development and encourages interpersonal relationships among young people.

Chapter six reflects on the implementation of digital technologies in schools, the types of digital gap, and how these aspects can affect young people's digital literacy. This work is based on a qualitative study with primary school teachers, which examines their discourse to analyse how they use devices in class as well as how this shapes young people's digital literacy as well as the impact of teachers' and families' digital competence on the teaching-learning process.

Chapter seven presents a methodological proposal for the development of critical thinking in social networks aimed at secondary school students. A critical thinking work approach is based on the Paul-Elder model is proposed as well as an instrument for evaluating this method based on the bidimensional taxonomy table of Krathwohl and Bloom's taxonomy. This procedure centres on analysis of the elements of thinking –point of view, purpose, question at issue, information, interpretation and inference, concepts, assumptions, implications, and consequences– and the standards of quality of the thinking. This work shows that it is possible to develop critical competences in the field of education thanks to the proposed methodology for analysing information on social networks.

Chapter eight analyses the possibilities of the streaming platform Twitch as an educational tool for improving young people's critical thinking. This platform is explored as a virtual learning community, analysing how young people use it and the options it provides for developing basic and higher cognitive processes. The options Twitch offers for discussing and analysing information, as well as for interacting with content creators enables the development of critical and creative thinking. Chapter nine presents a comparative study of young people's advertising literacy in Spain and Slovakia when faced with influencer marketing. Young people's behaviour based on advertising literacy and the critical behaviour towards the marketing strategies of the influencers are analysed. This study identifies the differences among the participating minors and the need for action regarding advertising literacy from the field of education to develop critical thinking towards commercial media content.

Finally, chapter ten addresses the minors' ethical considerations about the consumption of content created by influencers. This study highlights how minors are influenced for

commercial ends and want to become influencers. Consequently, there is an urgent need to strengthen advertising literacy in digital environments.

In conclusion, this monograph provides an overview of the use of social networks from the philosophical and pedagogical sphere, identifying the need for media, informational, digital, and advertising literacy, as well as the vital importance of developing critical thinking in minors to foster their teaching–learning process and development for life.

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Martín-Ezpeleta, A. & Echegoyen-Sanz, Y. (eds.). (2022).

El Giro Transdisciplinar. Integración de contenidos en torno a fenómenos y ámbitos [The Transdisciplinary Turn: Integrating Content about Phenomena and Fields].

Tirant Humanidades. 200 pp.

Antonio Martín and Yolanda Echegoyen from the Universitat de València present *El Giro Transdisciplinar. Integración de contenidos en torno a fenómenos y ámbitos*, a multi-author book that, as is explained in some “Palabras liminares” (Liminal words), starts from the propositions of competence-based learning and their expression in concepts such as transdisciplinarity, problem-based learning, phenomena, or contexts to illustrate all of this by presenting didactic proposals designed or implemented in the context of teacher training. Many of the book’s collaborators are from the “Science and Letters” interdisciplinary innovation group at the Universitat de València.

The pithy “Liminal words” contain a reflection on the abuse of the compartmentalisation of content into disciplines or areas, and advocate for a reflection that puts the basic competences that all subjects share at the heart of the debate. The next section of the book, “Del currículo académico-científico a la educación holística y transdisciplinar” (From the Academic-Scientific Curriculum to Holistic and Transdisciplinary Education), contributes to this reflection, with Professor Pilar Martínez-Agut laying the theoretical foundations of the concept of transdisciplinarity, relating it to contextualised methodologies, and using education for sustainability as a practical case.

The next chapter, “El proyecto Ciencias y Letras. Aprendizaje basado en fenómenos” (The Science and Letters Project: Phenomenon-Based Learning), starts from the selection of anthropological, cultural, or social phenomena or problems to construct a competence-based learning that is not incompatible with mixing disciplines and knowledges that are traditionally separated into one world of sciences and another of humanities that here are reconciled in a single one. It is a matter of showing the design of didactic sequences cut through by this theoretical-methodological focus, some of them designed and implemented by the “Science and Letters” innovation project that has been working on these tasks since 2017.

This provides a stimulating reflection on competence-based and transdisciplinary learning that invites us to imagine a flexible curriculum based on phenomena, rather than the traditional introduction to the scientific-academic disciplines with content that is often decontextualised from the reality or interests of the students.

This way of proceeding, which has clear overlaps with problem-based learning, is a way of teaching–learning that is in no way infrequent in early childhood and primary schools, but the authors throw down the gauntlet and call for experimentation in secondary education, given that they have done so with notable results in higher education. The fact that they have implemented this in the context of teacher training means that they also understand that it fulfils other objectives, as students are no longer only being trained in competences and content, but rather a didactic transposition of everything that incorporates self-evaluation of the process of how they have learnt is also being promoted.

The second section contains various transdisciplinary didactic sequences based on the phenomena of scientific travellers, the essay as a genre, science fiction, dystopia, and ecocriticism. In the chapter “Aprender y enseñar a partir del fenómeno de los viajeros científicos. (Learning and Teaching Based on the Phenomenon of Scientific Travellers: Darwin’s Diaries in an Educational Experience with Pre-Service Primary and Early Childhood Teachers), Yolanda Echegoyen and Antonio Martín start from Darwin’s voyage of the Beagle and his diaries to design an itinerary that entwines the sciences and humanities, information about Darwin’s scientific discoveries and Darwin himself with the more humanistic analysis of the genre of travel diaries and literary analysis of fragments from Darwin’s *Diaries*. All of this is accompanied by tasks done by pre-service teachers that display the aforementioned didactic transposition and which also derive from their reflections, from the design of didactic materials for students that they have elaborated following the structuring key of the phenomenon of scientific travellers.

In “El ensayo divulgativo transdisciplinar. El caso de *Sapiens. De animales a dioses* y sus oportunidades didácticas con docentes en formación” (The Transdisciplinary Informative Essay: The case of *Sapiens: from Animals to Gods* and its Didactic Opportunities with Pre-Service Teachers), Juan Carlos Colomer and Carlos Fuster set out the design of a didactic sequence based around reading the book *Sapiens* by Yuval Noah Harari, demonstrating that a work as ambitious as this one highlights the unity of academically separate content (from archaeology, sociology, anthropology, history...) and how easy and necessary it is to connect it all to teach–learn better.

Carlos Gómez, José Javier Verdugo, and Enric Ortega, for their part, tackle the phenomenon of science fiction in “*La guerra de las galaxias* contra las ideas alternativas de la ciencia” (*Star Wars* against the Alternative Ideas of Science), and with their didactic proposal astutely attempt to hook students of the experimental sciences through analysis of science fiction films. While watching these films, students are challenged to detect the many scientific errors in them, as well as to banish the alternative ideas that impede the comprehension of scientific knowledge.

In contrast, Álvaro Francisco Morote tackles the phenomenon of dystopia in “La transdisciplinariedad de los problemas ambientales. La sequía como tema de estudio” (The Transdisciplinarity of Environmental Problems: Drought as a Topic of Study), which starts from a reading of *The Drought* by J. G. Ballard to consider droughts, one of the main natural hazards in the current world. Through this proposal, he seeks to raise students’ awareness of and sensitivity towards the use of water, as well as how the negative effects of climate change, that many authors such as Ballard, have anticipated in apocalyptic terms. The result, of course, involves becoming aware of the imbalances to which the planet is being subjected.

Next, it is the turn of the phenomenon of ecocriticism, which is developed based on two different didactic sequences. Matilde Portalés, in “*A pleno Sol*. Narrativas multimodales en el aula de Plástica: Arte, Literatura y Naturaleza” (*Plein Soleil*: Multimodal Narratives in the Art Class: Art, Literature, and Nature), analyses the album *Plein Soleil* by Antoine Guilloppé, to develop the concept of multiliteracy, underlining the importance of the text–illustration symbiosis as well as the difficulty of the symbolic apprehension of the image. In contrast, in “Pedagogía del decrecimiento: estrategias para incorporar cuestiones ecosociales en el aula de español como lengua extranjera” (Pedagogy of Degrowth: Strategies for Incorporating Ecosocial Questions in the Spanish as a Foreign Language Classroom), Luis Prádanos sets out the pedagogy of degrowth as a framework for questioning the current dynamic and constructing different social imaginaries, something that involves changing how we think and relate to each other. The first of his didactic proposals revolves around unlearning, encouraging people to question the existing educational materials and incorporate ecological works and ecocriticism essays. The second seeks to move away from economic growth and achieve social cohesion, environmental regeneration, and a decent life for all people and living beings, for which he proposes appropriate readings to convey all in the context of the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language.

Finally, the book includes a third section, “Mestizajes disciplinares y educación por ámbitos” (Disciplinary Mixing and Education by Fields), which includes four chapters with proposals similar to what was previously explained. The first of them, by María Alcantud and Elia

Saneleuterio, revolves around the “Objetivos de desarrollo sostenible (ODS) en la clase de ILE/ EFL” (Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in the EFL Classroom) and consists of a magnificent proposal based on reflective learning that has as its connecting thread the international days of the United Nations, that act to introduce the SDGs. All of this is related to the design of specific didactic materials without forgetting the inclusion of monitoring and evaluation instruments.

In “El paisaje sonoro como contexto educativo interdisciplinar y transversal en la formación de docentes” (The Sonic Landscape as Interdisciplinary and Transversal Educational Context in the Training of Teachers) Amparo Hurtado and Ana Botella explain an educational innovation project that starts with the concept of the sonic landscape to examine in greater depth the relationship established between music, nature, and health, from a sequence that promotes awareness of cognitive skills that facilitate learning.

Meanwhile, in “Patrimonio y creación audiovisual para la integración curricular en la formación del profesorado de Primaria” (Patrimony and Audiovisual Creation for Curricular Integration in the Training of Primary Teachers) Paula Jardón makes an interesting and motivating didactic proposal to cover geography and history in the primary classroom. These are two types of content that, this time, are traditionally more related, but the innovation here is that they are connected to other content that is not usually as present in primary education, such as archaeology and its projection in the cultural heritage. This starts with selecting a social or environmental problem and formulating it as a question, which involves the activation of content and competences, notably creativity. Finally, making a short film that integrates elements of Valencian heritage and that can be interpreted as didactic material is proposed.

The last chapter is “El trabajo en el ámbito lingüístico y social en 1.º de ESO” (Work in the Linguistic and Social Field in Year One of Compulsory Secondary Education) by Alcía Martí and Pilar García, who present in their didactic proposal active methodologies and multimodal resources that are fully aligned with the integrated treatment of language and content. This contribution is of interest for observing the potential of context based learning, the promotion of which has been hindered by the lack of appropriate didactic materials.

The book closes with an “Epilogue” that is valuable both for its critical reflections and for the great emotion caused by the news that its author, Professor Ana Díaz-Plaja, always linked to the Universitat de Barcelona, has passed away and that these are the last pages she has written. She leaves us yet more adrift, in the image that structures her reflection in the epigraph “Aviso a navegantes” (A Warning to Seafarers), which warns of the dangers of “being shipwrecked in a bibliography” and the stormy waters of educational innovation that sometimes sells us “modernly dated” things, not to speak of the fear caused by the fact that “educating is not teaching to think, but teaching that we have to think”. However, the author values these new educational focuses, which she skilfully links to projects as seemingly unconnected as the instructions of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza (Free Teaching Institution), underlining in detail the ideas and materials from the book glossed here that she judges are best. All of this is again accompanied by her argument for of a teaching profession with “technical reflection, like the one I recognise in the chapters of this book, [which] will be the best lifeline for the brave sailors of the educational oceans, but above all for the castaways”. May these lines serve as a heartfelt homage to one of the few truly wise people there have been in this world.

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Herrán Gascón, A. Xu, R. (2023).

El Tao en la enseñanza: un enfoque radical e inclusivo [Tao in Teaching: A Radical and Inclusive Focus].

Spain, Hiares, 104 pp.

The book “El Tao en la enseñanza: un enfoque radical e inclusivo”, by Agustín de la Herrán Gascón and Ruitian Xu, published in 2023 by Hiares, provides a vehement and very

necessary criticism of current educational paradigms. This work denounces the superficiality, egocentrism, and lack of depth that characterise contemporary Western education, and it proposes an educational methodology inspired by Taoism that seeks a genuine and meaningful transformation.

From the start, the authors do not hold back in their criticism of the Socratic method. They describe this method, which has been the backbone of Western education for centuries, as superficial and limiting. According to the authors, Socrates' influence has established a philosophical foundation that is insufficient for an effective and transformational education. This analysis underlines the urgent need to reconsider and abandon traditional educational practices that have been accepted without sufficient questioning.

Beyond the specific criticism of the Socratic method, this work more broadly addresses the lack of depth in Western education. The authors argue that the current education system is too focussed on the accumulation of superficial knowledge, and does not foster true inner transformation in the students. Instead of promoting an integral development of the being, Western education focusses on metrics and competences that often lack deeper meaning. De la Herrán Gascón and Xu argue for the inclusion of meditative practices and a holistic focus on the being, arguing that only through these methods can we achieve truly full and conscious education.

As well as criticising the Western educational focus, the authors also underline the predominance of Eurocentrism in the current education system. This bias has led to the omission and underestimation of valuable Asian perspectives, such as the teachings of Laozi and Gautama Buddha. According to the authors, this exclusion has resulted in an education and a society that lack complexity and depth, and are limited by an egocentric and biased vision. Excluding these perspectives not only impoverishes education, but it also perpetuates a limited and partial comprehension of the world.

In terms of solutions, "El Tao en la enseñanza" does not only criticise but also proposes concrete alternatives. The authors argue for implementing didactic methodologies based on Taoism that promote lucidity and the awakening to a conscious life. They emphasise practices such as wushu, taijiquan, and qigong as powerful tools for a teaching based on consciousness and integral well-being. They also argue for teaching without words that is based on the example, following the teachings of Laozi and his disciples. They argue that true knowledge transcends human language and that observation of the natural development of each student and respect for his or her individuality are fundamental for an effective education.

One key aspect of the authors' proposal is the need for a radical and authentic change in the attitude of educators. They insist that educators should embrace humility as the cornerstone of the practice. They note that excess abundance and arrogance are significant obstacles for developing a true conscience and comprehension. Just as a full glass cannot hold any more water, arrogant people's minds reject what is new. In contrast, people who follow the Tao value modesty and humility, recognising that true power lies in being below, like the water that fertilises the ground. This humility, symbolised by the vastness of a valley, is essential in education, as it enables educators to recognise their limitations and errors, so that they can guide their students towards an integral and meaningful development.

The authors also underline the importance of emptiness and uselessness, Taoist concepts that challenge the predominant utilitarian assumptions of contemporary education. They argue that emptiness should not be seen as idleness, but rather as a process of comprehensive renovation that eliminates useless and egocentric knowledge. Similarly, the "usefulness of the useless" is presented as a critique of extreme pragmatism and an invitation to value aspects of education that are often ignored as they have no immediate practical benefit.

In conclusion, "El Tao en la enseñanza: un enfoque radical e inclusivo" is a provocative and radical call to attention for all educators. It invites in-depth reflection on and questioning of established focuses, proposing an education that not only informs, but that also significantly transforms individuals and societies. This book is essential for those who seek to challenge the limits of conventional pedagogy and open themselves to new ways of understanding and

practising education. By combining the principles of Taoism with pedagogy, the authors offer an integral perspective that invites educators to reconsider their focus and to adopt a more conscious, inclusive, and transformational education.

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Carrasco Pons, S. (ed.) (2024).

Migración, movilidad y educación. Estrategias familiares y respuestas escolares [Migration, Mobility and Education: Family Strategies and School Responses].

Editorial Síntesis. 237 pp

Stereotyped images of the exotic, of others, of foreigners, permeate our outlook when we address the phenomenon of immigration. The bias against what is strange, different, or foreign means we view the migrant population as temporary visitors, protagonists of an unusual situation that will pass, while the history of humankind teaches us that migration has always been a permanent and unceasing activity. For decades, the mobility of migrant families with school-age children has been a normal situation in European societies. However, our education system has generally continued to function as though immigration were a trivial or fortuitous event: no special attention is paid to immigrant students, the solutions that are applied, if any are applied, are stopgap and provisional. There is no organised response to the characteristics of the structural phenomenon that currently –in a context of widespread economic precarity– shape migratory movements.

Migración, movilidad y educación. Estrategias familiares y respuestas escolares is a collection of thirteen studies done as part of an R&D project that has lasted ten years and has addressed different aspects relating to how the growing mobility of students, forced by economic, employment, or family circumstances, affects their schooling, both directly –provoking school disengagement, early school leaving, and the risk of social exclusion– and indirectly in the pedagogical and school organisation strategies implemented, which are too often based on the prejudice of immigration as an anomaly and staying in school as the norm.

The director of the project, Silvia Carrasco Pons, who is an Associate Professor in the Department of Social Anthropology at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and an expert in migration and education, identifies in the prologue a pressing need for research initiatives in this area to fill the gaps in knowledge around the connections between the mobility forced by neoliberal capitalism and its consequences for the educational reality of our schools and the lives of thousands of minors. She also identifies the paradox that the project had to face when it encountered an inverse situation of forced immobility caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The studies in this publication were done in six primary and secondary schools from the metropolitan area of the city of Barcelona, using mixed methodological methods, including both qualitative and quantitative ones. The experts responsible for them are mainly professionals from the field of social anthropology who do research in connection to education, pedagogy, and young people. The book also includes three doctoral theses.

Some of the main objectives of the project that are reflected in this work are: to understand more precisely the effects of mobility on the academic trajectory of migrant students; to evaluate the school mechanisms applied to reception and participation; to identify and evaluate school accompaniment policies for students and their families; to explore the consequences of a context of high mobility for students' affective and relational development; and to evaluate the role of association movements and the local community in these impacts.

The research works –even though they are all linked by the interest in increasing our knowledge of the relations between migration, mobility, and education, as the book's title reflects– were done from a wide variety of perspectives: organisational strategies, taken-for-granted discourses, personal experiences of mobile students, the role and experiences

of families, connections with school coexistence, social imaginaries that are shared and are transmitted through the media etcetera. The range and depth of the studies included in this compilation facilitates a highly informative profile of the educational panorama in relation to its approach to the needs and challenges posed by the ever larger and more mobile presence of migrant students in our education system.

Several chapters include selections of testimonies from students, teaching staff, and families that formed a crucial part of the evidence used for the studies. Being able to read transcripts of some of these testimonies is in line with the work's attempt to familiarise us with the reality of migration and its impact on the school world. The words and voices of the people involved – students, teachers, mothers, etcetera – are especially illuminating for understanding the phenomenon addressed.

The analyses presented and the conclusions reached in these works provide important keys with which to understand the different responses that are set in motion from an education system that tends to function as though school immobility were the sole definitive situation. These key points signal a profound need for educational policies that take into account the social reality they face and for information and training for teaching staff in this subject, to replace the distorted image of immobility as the norm with a consideration of migrations and school mobility as not only a present and growing fact but, also, as an opportunity for human enrichment for schools and education. Seeing school mobility as a threat for the students involved produces an effect of surrender that helps the prophecy become fulfilled: if we work with a negative, erroneous, and stereotyped idea of these students and their families, we contribute to inaction and scepticism continuing and so will perpetuate the situation, and even help worsen it.

An interest in adapting pedagogical strategies to new social realities has always been viewed as essential for achieving equitable educational action. From this work, coordinated by Silvia Carrasco, there derives a pressing need to explore and develop this adaptive capacity, understanding and evaluating the situations that result from the phenomenon of migration and especially school mobility. From the studies presented, it can also be deduced that this knowledge will provide educational institutions and the teaching profession with positive resources and strategies both for teaching-learning processes and for school coexistence.

To continue inquiring in such an urgent matter, this project's work could be synthesised in a series of questions: How should the education system respond to the needs of a society where mobility is one of the fundamental conditioning factors of the life of a large part of its population? How will the school have to contribute to guaranteeing social rights in the current socioeconomic context?

Migración, movilidad y educación offers many more questions that follow from the previous ones and an important compilation of possible useful responses for schools to be, in real educational practice, setting that foster social justice.

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