

Transcendental Leadership as Exemplar for Educational Leadership

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Abstract

In modern times, the word “education” primarily refers to instruction and teaching, often involving audiovisual aids, computers, and other tools. However, educators serve as more than communicators; they are guardians of enduring values. They should ensure the students’ education in character, that is to say, their growth in good traits such as self-control, trustworthiness, and compassion, alongside academics. Tomas Alvira (1906-1992) was a Spanish scientist and educator: his educational thought emphasized the concept of the “Living Classroom”. In this innovative approach, the classroom becomes a dynamic space where both teacher and students are aware of themselves as individuals and social beings. They relate to one another, forming bonds of kindness and affection. Alvira believed that education should be alive, energetic, and transformative, reaching the heart and intellect of each student. He saw teaching as a way to help students grow, enabling them to become the best versions of themselves and achieve maximum human flourishing. Alvira’s vision aligns with the idea of transcendental leadership, where leaders exercise love, ethical values, and genuine concern for others in their work. This exploratory study reflects on and analyzes the transcendental leadership model as it applies to leaders in educational institutions. It draws out theoretical propositions for the transcendental educational leadership model, by studying educational leadership exemplars who model transcendental leadership..

1. Introduction

There are two different Latin roots of the English word “education.” They are *educare*, which means ‘to train or to mold’ and *educere*, meaning ‘to draw out’. While the two meanings are quite different, they are both represented in our word “education.” Parents and the family have the primary task of educating children. Often, in our days, this task gets replaced by the school. In any case, the educational influence of parents needs to be complemented, prolonged and amplified by that of teachers. Teachers and professors have the task of educating, in the sense of *educere* which means: to elevate, to raise, to refine. Today, due

to a linguistic fraud, the word education refers especially to instruction, to teaching. Investments in education include audiovisual aids, computers and other teaching machines. But educators do not only have a function of communication or transmission of science. Martin Heidegger called them the *shepherds of being*. In reality, they are delegates of permanent values (Sarah, 2019).

Educators have the task of developing the personality of the individuals at an intellectual, volitional, relational, etc. level. Thus we could say that education is part of people’s lives and must become life: the life that builds the building of their personality. The teacher has a nuclear role in his

work, which is in the classroom. It is there where he feels, and is himself, when he places himself in front of his students. Thus, when he prepares himself to be a teacher, he dreams of the classroom, of his classes and his students, to teach them to learn, and to learn many things and be surprised by them. In this view, education must be alive, energetic and must reach the center of the heart and the intellect of man, so that in this way the subject is transformed, loving the very thing that elevates him. This concept of the '*Aula Viva*' (Living Classroom) was in the educational thought of Tomas Alvira (1906-1992), a Spanish scientist and educator, one of the greatest educators of the 20th century, who defined educating as "helping to grow", as forming students to be the best version of themselves, to achieve maximum *human flourishing*, to acquire the virtues.

An educational leader characterized by such traits—having genuine love and concern for the other—can be called a *transcendental leader*, an emerging leadership model where the leader exercises love—a gift of self—in their work and with subordinates. By transcending himself or herself, the human being realizes the ethical values inherent in action: justice, solidarity, service to fellow men and women, friendship, cooperation, self-effacing love, etc. (Racelis, 2017). The educational leaders, thus, have to be formed in such a way as to discover and value the potentialities and capabilities in each teacher and student in order to enable their personal growth. This exploratory study will reflect on and analyze the *transcendental leadership* model as it applies to leaders in educational institutions. It shall also describe a few existing exemplars of *transcendental educational leadership*.

2. Literature Review

The notion of 'education'

To educate, according to the etymology of the Latin verb *educere*, means: to elevate, to raise, to refine the personality. Nowadays, on the other hand, the word education refers especially to instruction, to the teaching that is carried out by means of investments in audiovisual materials and computers (Lozano-Carrasco, 2022). The implication of this view of the verb *to educate* is that the family plays a specially important role in the education of the children. The faithful love between the father and the mother of the child is crucial: once this is broken, the affective education of the child gets broken. Normalcy in the affectivity of the daughter or son is of primary importance. If it is lacking, then there shall be an absence of the foundation upon which to build the education of the intellect and the education of the will, the two faculties of the human soul. Whether or not this affective education in the family has been solidified, the teacher takes over the education of the child in school. The posterior task of the teacher is the formation in *good habits* or *virtues*. Education ought to help the learner develop himself and develop all of his potential with a view, ultimately, to giving of himself in love and service. This educational philosophy views the educational task as a simultaneous learning—on the part of both teacher and student—to grow into better human beings, with special emphasis on interior growth (Racelis, 2022).

Martin Heidegger defined educators as the "shepherds of being" who, in reality, are the delegates of permanent values. To guide the development of people is a laborious, patient and intense task and that is why, at the time of educating, the good educator must help the students

to grow in the volitional, sensitive, intellectual, psychological, spiritual, ethical, religious and relational aspects. These are the traits that, among others, harmoniously integrate the personality (Lozano-Carrasco, 2022). Down through history, in countries all over the world, education has had two great goals: to help young people become smart and to help them become good. Good character is not formed automatically; it is developed over time through a sustained process of teaching, example, learning and practice. It is developed through character education. The intentional teaching of good character is particularly important in today's society since our youth face many opportunities and dangers unknown to earlier generations. They are bombarded with many more negative influences through the media and other external sources prevalent in today's culture. At the same time, there are many more day-to-day pressures impinging on the time that parents and children have together. Tom Lickona, world-renowned character educator, said: A comprehensive model of classroom character education is described in terms of nine components: the teacher as caregiver, model, and mentor; creating a caring classroom environment; moral discipline; creating a democratic classroom environment; teaching values through the curriculum; cooperative learning; the conscience of the craft; ethical reflection; and teaching conflict resolution (Racelis, 2022).

The educational philosophy of Tomas Alvira and colleagues

Tomas Alvira, one of the greatest educators of the 20th century, defines educating as "helping to grow". Consistent and harmonious with this definition, another great educator, Oliveros Fernandez Otero, teaches that education is a process

of improvement, a directed personal transformation, a development of the possibilities of the human being in a gradual approach to what constitutes his own fullness, unique and unrepeatable (Faustino, 2015).

In the works of Tomás Alvira, it is stated that the first educators must help their children to develop the capacities they bring at birth and not any other. This thus requires a deep knowledge of and a respect for the singular personality of each one, and to love the one who is being known. Tomas Alvira always sought not only to teach with vitality but also to help the students to develop their personality in its entirety. Hence, among his many educational tasks, with high school students - a stage where adolescents want to know the environment in which they live - he carried out a leading essay on social pedagogy. Indeed, as Enmanuel Mounier indicates, with respect to communitarian personalism, what is radically important in the person is his capacity to relate to others (Lozano-Carrasco, 2022).

Alvira's life developed, practically, throughout the 20th century. He sought, above all, to raise the educational level of Spanish society, which needed to be improved. On the one hand, due to the consequences of the crossroads of war and, on the other, because of the high rate of illiteracy that still existed in the country. It is understood that he made a symbiosis between some of the pedagogical principles and practices of the Moyano Law, in force at the time, in which a more classical method was observed in the teaching and learning process, along with the Law of Organization of the Baccalaureate by Ruiz Giménez, which sought to organize these studies, and to socially value and promote baccalaureate studies; certain pedagogical, philosophical and educational principles of the

Institución Libre de Enseñanza; certain intuitions of the *New School* promoted by authors from Switzerland, the United States, Italy and Spain; the early work of Víctor García Hoz on *Personalized Education*; plus the decisive influences of his father and Josemaría Escrivá (Lozano-Carrasco, 2023).

In 1963, the educational institution *Fomento de Centros de Enseñanza* ('Promotion of Educational Centers') started up educational centers in order to respond to the interest of many parents who wanted schools for their children according to the Christian humanist ideology, and where the unity between parents, teachers and students was taken into account, in order to achieve more effectively the objective they were aiming for. When he was appointed in 1965 as a founding member of *Fomento de Centros de Enseñanza*, he began to hold several positions such as: being part of the Board of Directors, and being a delegate of the Parents' Associations of the schools (Lozano-Carrasco, 2023).

The result was the harmonization of more classical pedagogical-educational principles with more modern principles. And, in this way, he knew how to elaborate his own pedagogy and give his new approach to education. Hence he gave a more lively sense to the school, in the sense of being more technical, whose clearest expressions were the concept of the 'Aula Viva' (Living Classroom) and the creation of the Laboratory Classroom - which was a concretization of the previous concept. Alvira was in love with education and thus, educating became an essential part of his life: with his own, with his family and with others. He manifested it many times and referred to the fact that the greatest desire of his life was to form human beings. Therefore, if we were to base

ourselves on the eternal idea of education referred to by Krieck, we would quickly realize that Alvira handled this foundation with clairvoyance, because he considered the person to be educated (Lozano-Carrasco, 2023).

Hence, it must be taken for granted that an educator educates because he knows and a man learns because he wants to. The first educators are the parents and on top of this basic education there are other secondary educators who are the teachers, or the students' teachers, although the teachers connect with the education that parents have imparted, when developing the personality of the individuals at an intellectual, volitional, relational, etc. level. And that is why their figure is so important. Thus we could say that education is part of people's lives and must become life: the life that builds the building of their personality (Lozano-Carrasco, 2023).

In the "Living Classroom" view, each of the students that make up the class is considered in a singular way, with his or her own unique life and personality. It is where the teacher develops as a teacher, manages his wisdom and acquires science, but insofar as pedagogy is concerned, becomes art in the didactic process of teaching-learning. It is 'teaching-learning' because educators are forged on the beautiful, arduous and long route of the educational task, or on the path of their professional vocation. A characteristic that builds a teacher as a good teacher is his self-evaluation, together with the research he carries out. A good teacher is constantly looking for ways in which to have an impact on the lives of his students, so that it would permeate their whole being, not only in their intellect, but also encouraging their will, ultimately forming a firm will in them (Lozano-Carrasco, 2023).

The main features of the concept of ‘Living Classroom’ are: In the **first place**, the professor - the teacher, as he liked to call him - must love the knowledge he transmits, because love is life and only life transmits life. A teacher whose students do not notice that he vibrates with the knowledge he transmits can only arouse boredom. **Secondly**, the teacher must have respect and affection for the student. The student must feel known and loved by the teacher, since this is what will make him/her listen to him/her. The student in the classroom must know that he is not just one more, lost in an undifferentiated group, but that he is listening to his teacher and friend. **Thirdly**, the use of dialogic style. He sought to raise some questions in the student, or he would ask him. Not lecture style, but more dialogic, although he never fell into the mere dialogic class, as it often becomes a gibberish and a waste of time. He explained, with the authority naturally granted to him by his great scientific knowledge. **Fourthly**, he always considered that any true theoretical science must be related to practice. Hence his absolute innovation -as far as I know- in Spain (and it did not exist in many countries either) of the Laboratory Classroom, which he inaugurated and put into operation at the Infanta María Teresa School and at the Ramiro de Maeztu Institute, both in Madrid. In the **fifth place**, whenever he could, he took great care of the material layout of the classroom. He thought it was very important that it be bright, simple, but well furnished. Also, whenever possible, he organized field trips, so that the students could have live lessons in contact with nature. And, lastly, as he was a natural scientist, but also a true humanist, this was evident in his classes, in small details that he knew how to introduce with simplicity and elegance, particularly in his references to God and the Christian religion (Lozano-Carrasco, 2023).

The Transcendental Leadership paradigm

The “charismatic leadership” model is one of the traditional leadership models that emphasize notions of leader power to achieve success and specific organizational outcomes. Although this view remains to be important, there is a need to shift to leadership theories that would re-formulate a framework for governance that highlights what makes for a *morally right leader* and how good leaders are formed to govern organizations and institutions. This requires an investigation into the person of the leader, that goes beyond the current theories on leader-member exchanges and those similar to this (Racelis, 2017).

The *Transcendental Leadership* model has emerged recently, to improve on the *transformational leadership* style that may include a ‘dark side’, i.e., a manipulative tendency, in the leadership of the charismatic leader. Transcendental leadership has been defined by a contribution-based exchange relationship. In this relationship, the leader promotes unity by providing fair extrinsic rewards, appealing to the intrinsic motivation of the collaborators, and developing their transcendent motivation. Although the element which defines the type of leadership is the collaborator’s motivation in the relationship, the behavior of the leader is a critical element in relational leadership, as it can significantly affect the motivations that bring the collaborator to start and maintain that relationship with the leader (Racelis, 2017).

The main feature of this strain of transcendental leadership theory is the reality of the transcendence and spirituality of the human persons in the organization. By transcending himself or herself, the human being realizes the ethical values

inherent in action: justice, solidarity, service to fellow men and women, friendship, cooperation, etc. Overarching themes in this leadership model are: Service, respect, happiness, compassion, selflessness, meeting affective needs, and dignity (Racelis, 2017).

In traditional management thought, motives are categorized into extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. But we have to add *transcendent motives*: these refer to a genuine interest in the development and the motives of the other person that goes beyond considering exclusively future effectiveness. These relate to the importance that each person gives to the influence that one's actions and decisions can exert on other people, that is to say, the transcendent motives reflect the value assigned to the repercussions of one's choices on others. In turn, such transcendent motives at work in a leader bring about a transcendental leadership defined by a relationship of personal influence, in which interactions take place through extrinsic, intrinsic, as well as transcendent motives (Racelis, 2017).

The transcendental leadership concept touches upon such essential dimensions as moral integrity, treatment of people, people development, etc., all of which requires a shared value system. An authentic and service-oriented leadership construct is expected to be more humanistic: it should help to develop in organizational members' motives other than economic ones, since human organizations cannot be a direct and exclusive consequence of the forces of the material environment that are purely deterministic, but operate as the result of the actions of specific, boundedly rational human beings who have a sense of purpose and intention (Racelis, 2017).

Transcendental leadership takes into account ethics, values (selfless love, hope/faith, vision), attitudes, and behaviors to intrinsically motivate followers. Thus, it increases the followers' senses of spiritual survival, i.e., calling (life has a meaning, it makes a difference), and membership (interconnection, being understood, being appreciated), and the resulting positive organizational outcomes. Transcendental leadership taps into the fundamental needs of both leader and follower for spiritual survival and aims to improve the spiritual development of both the leader and followers (Racelis, 2017).

Transcendental Leadership as Exemplar of Educational Leadership

An educational leader typically draws authority from both personal and structural sources, making it evident that his authority is agent for the collectivity. In modest doses, charismatic authority occurs repeatedly in education systems. Its role is particularly to help clarify directions of effort and to impel change (Clark, 1983). But educational institutions also ought to actively engage in addressing ethical concerns. Consequently, character education needs to be inserted—or reinserted—into educational institutions. Early on, schools directly addressed character education through disciplinary measures, teacher role modeling, and the daily curriculum. From the 1990s onwards, a renewed focus on character education has emerged, emphasizing the restoration of “good character” to its historical position as the primary desired educational outcome (Lickona, 1993).

The recognition that high-quality leadership is central to educational outcomes has led to the view that training is desirable to develop people with the appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding to

lead schools and colleges in an increasingly global economy (Bush, 2003). For this, transcendental leadership seems poised to tackle the educational crises of our times, as it takes into account ethics, values and character. By focusing on moral integrity, virtues, treatment of people, people development, and the like, transcendental leadership can be presented as an exemplar for educational leadership.

3. Methodology

Employing *grounded theory methodology*, this study draws out theoretical propositions for the transcendental educational leadership model, by studying educational leadership exemplars that model transcendental leadership, specifically of Tomás Alvira. The phenomenon of leadership appears to have a variety of attributes, viz. the emphasis on social, contextual, processual, and relational aspects of leadership, thus the qualitative method is the preferred approach for leadership studies like this one (Kempster & Parry, 2011). In this section, statements and phrases from the educational leaders and their biographers were coded and juxtaposed vis-à-vis the characteristics of transcendental leaders, to draw out some theories about transcendental educational leadership. Grounded theory, thus, provides a methodological way to make sense of and explain the manifestation of transcendental leadership in the educational context.

Apart from reflecting on and analyzing the *transcendental leadership* model as it applies to leaders in educational institutions, this study describes a few existing exemplars of *transcendental educational leadership*, specifically the pedagogy of Tomás Alvira and of Víctor García Hoz. [For details on Tomás Alvira's professional biography and pedagogy, see *APPENDIX*.] The properties

of *transcendental leadership* are juxtaposed alongside the main features of the pedagogy of these exemplars, thus producing a few theoretical statements or proposals about a *transcendental educational leadership*. The reflections and analyses derived can inform future research on educational leadership: it could lead to the eventual formulation of a *transcendental educational leadership scale*, among other implications.

4. Discussion and Implications

One of the essential innovations of Alvira's pedagogical thought was to consider every school, every educational institution, as an *aula viva*, "a living classroom": "A living classroom is one where the teacher/professor does not only hold the memory of his students on the basis of their exams, but rather remembering them as intellect and will; a classroom where you think of each student cultivating his/her own personality and empowering his/her free will. A living classroom is one where the teacher tries to awaken in every student the desire for knowing, the love for knowledge, considering it as a good in itself. The idea is that we do not push the students towards studying because of the prize or through punishment: rather, we get them to feel the desire for knowing. Freedom, autonomy, an eagerness for knowledge: Tomás Alvira's pedagogy was completely opposed to conservatism and rigidity. It was a combination of understanding of and profound respect towards the student, in a perfect balance with being demanding (Lozano-Carrasco, 2023).

Table 1: Characteristics of Transcendental Leadership

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. transcendent motives | 10. compassion |
| 2. justice | 11. selflessness/selfless love |
| 3. solidarity | 12. meeting affective needs |
| 4. service to fellow men and women | 13. human dignity |
| 5. friendship/interconnection | 14. hope |
| 6. cooperation | 15. faith |
| 7. respect | 16. calling / sense of vocation |
| 8. happiness | 17. moral integrity |
| 9. well-being | 18. people development |

On Table 1 (above), we set forth the main themes or characteristics of *Transcendental Leadership*. Then on Table 2 (below), we set forth the theoretical propositions for “Transcendental Educational Leadership”, after juxtaposing the pedagogical contributions of our exemplars with the various characteristics of a *transcendental leader*.

Table 2: Theoretical Propositions for Transcendental Educational Leadership

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|---|
| 1. The educator must have respect and affection for the student. The student must feel known and loved by the educator. |
| 2. A good educational leader uses the dialogic style. He raises some questions in the student, or he would ask him. |
| 3. The teacher always considers that any true theoretical science must be related to practice (“laboratory classroom”). Students should have live lessons in contact with nature. |
| 4. The educator’s multifaceted approach mirrors his identity as both a scientist and a humanist. |

It appears that the most critical competence of transcendental leaders, besides their capacity to negotiate and control transactions, and their capacity to create and communicate a vision, is their integrity and ability to sacrifice themselves in the service of their collaborators, even at the expense of their interests. These competencies are positive habits acquired through interactions between the leader and his collaborators. When educational leaders develop transcendental competencies (negotiation, communication, and integrity), they are more able to create and maintain contribution partnerships, which are the partnerships with the highest added value. For the transcendental educational leader, the capacity for service is a habit acquired by interaction with the others (students, fellow teachers and administrators), with a sense of responsibility for the people whom he or she leads and serves (Racelis, 2017). How would an eventual *transcendental educational leadership scale* best take these distinctive characteristics into account? This can be the subject matter of future education research.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Transcendental leadership emphasizes moral integrity, how people are treated, and their development, relying on a shared value system. It seeks to motivate followers through ethics, selfless love, hope, solidarity, and vision, promoting a sense of spiritual purpose and interconnection, ultimately enhancing organizational outcomes.

An educational leader can take on these characteristics, if they were to be a better leader-educator. Such a teacher embodies a profound passion for the knowledge they impart, recognizing that love breathes life into education. The teacher-student dynamic thrives on a foundation of mutual respect and genuine affection, ensuring that the student feels valued and understood, fostering attentive listening. Employing a dialogic teaching style, the teacher sparks curiosity and engagement by posing thought-provoking questions, steering away from monologues. Additionally, integrating theoretical learning with practical application is crucial, a principle underscored by the introduction of *Laboratory Classrooms*, a pioneering concept employed by Tomás Alvira and Víctor García Hoz in Spain during their time. Thoughtfully curated classroom aesthetics and immersive outdoor experiences further enrich the learning environment. Finally, the teacher's multifaceted approach mirrors their identity as both a natural scientist and a humanist, subtly incorporating references to God and Christianity into their teaching with grace and simplicity.

Tomás Alvira achieved a lot more than the above: he made compatible that demand with that affectionate respect and authentic love for the students. This explains the apparent paradox: a majority of his disciples would highlight his

tenderness, but at the same time would affirm that he was a man of strong character. Fortitude and tenderness: demand and affection: this most likely was his secret... (Lozano-Carrasco, 2023). Just like the exemplars studied in this paper, may we be in love with education, making educating an essential part of our life. May we be *transcendental educational leaders*: possessing moral integrity, compassion and selflessness, a spirit of service to our students and to mankind, utmost respect for the others because of their human dignity, desire for the integral human development and the happiness and human flourishing of the people we teach.

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APPENDIX

Tomás Alvira's Pedagogy: the living and technical concept of the classroom

Tomás Alvira (1906-1992): On November 4, 1933 Alvira began his professional work as an interim assistant at the Institute of Logroño, and on November 6, 1933 as an assistant at the Escuela Superior de Trabajo in the same city. Alvira wanted to continue studying, and that motivated him to move to the Institute of Cervera de Alhama (Zaragoza). Thus, on January 29, 1934, he was put in charge of the course at the Instituto de Enseñanza Media de Cervera; later he was appointed vice-director of the same institute, and in the 1935-36 school year, he was appointed director by unanimous election of the faculty.

The Spanish Civil War took place between July 1936 and April 1939, and during those years, Tomás suffered the vicissitudes of a confrontation. ... On August 3, 1939, Alvira obtained a professorship at the Instituto de Cervera del Río Alhama (BOE, 1939, as cited in Curriculum Vitae, n.d.); and, at the same time, he was appointed head of the natural sciences course at the Instituto de Enseñanza Media Ramiro de Maeztu, located on Serrano Street in Madrid. As Alvira (1992) refers, "The Ramiro de Maeztu opened its doors in the 1939-1940 academic year, after the end of the Civil War" (p. 19). At that time Don José María Albareda was the director of the Institute, and Alvira combined his family tasks with his professional duties between Zaragoza and the capital of Spain.

The Instituto Nacional de Enseñanza Media Ramiro de Maeztu was created by Ministerial Order of April 4, 1939 (BOE, 1939, as cited in Alvira, 1992). Those responsible for this new institute wanted it to have a high educational prestige since the social and cultural circumstances of Spain in the postwar period demanded it urgently. On September 2, 1941, he obtained the position of full professor of high school in Mérida and took possession of it on September 3, 1941; however, he remained in charge of the science course at Ramiro de Maeztu.

Alvira's life developed, practically, throughout the twentieth century. A historical period of pre-war, war and post-war, as has been indicated, where some political regimes such as the monarchy, the second republic, the dictatorship, the technocracy and the transition to democracy succeeded each other. Therefore, all these circumstances marked his personality.

However, even though he was recognized and professionally promoted by the Spanish State under the dictatorship regime in all the institutions mentioned above, he sought, above all, to raise the educational level of Spanish society, which needed to be improved. On the one hand, due to the consequences of the crossroads of war and, on the other hand, because of the high rate of illiteracy that still existed.

Therefore, it can be affirmed that Alvira, even when he assented to some values that emerged from the military regime in which he lived; however, he was always entirely free and integrating, according to what has been exposed. He always knew how to postpone his ideologies, friendship and the cause of education, considered, by him, as that which essentially transformed the lives of men in a society. And, in the same

way, he put his own intellectual preparation and professional qualifications before any influence that could grant him positions of work prestige.

On the other hand, Alvira's personal library contains the works of the authors that have been reviewed, so there is no doubt that he read them and that, therefore, they affected his approaches. Throughout his itinerary he met real characters, men of science and letters, whom he observed carefully for their ingenious ways of doing things. He also observed several scientific, educational and pedagogical institutions of the time, where he worked. And, in more basic terms, he had some fundamental educators of great category, as mentioned in the previous section.

Therefore, it is understood that he made a symbiosis between some of the pedagogical principles and practices of the Moyano Law, in force at the time, in which a more classical method was observed in the teaching and learning process (Ley de Instrucción Pública, 1857), together with the Law of Organization of the Baccalaureate by Ruiz Giménez, which sought to organize these studies, and to socially value and promote baccalaureate studies (LOR, 1953); certain pedagogical, philosophical and educational principles of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza; certain intuitions of the New School promoted by authors from Switzerland, the United States, Italy and Spain; the early work of Víctor García Hoz on Personalized Education; plus the decisive influences of his father and Josemaría Escrivá.

The result was the harmonization of more classical pedagogical-educational principles with more modern principles. And, in this way, he knew how to elaborate his own pedagogy and give his new approach to education. Hence he gave a more

lively sense to the school, in the sense of being more technical, whose clearest expressions were the concept of the 'Aula Viva' (Living Classroom) and the creation of the Laboratory Classroom - which was a concretization of the previous concept.

Alvira was in love with education and, thus, educating became an essential part of his life: with his own, with his family and with others. He manifested it many times and referred to the fact that the greatest desire of his life was to form human beings. Therefore, if we were to base ourselves on the eternal idea of education referred to by Kriek, we would quickly realize that Alvira handled this foundation with clairvoyance, because he considered the person to be educated.

Hence, it must be taken for granted that an educator educates because he knows and a man learns because he wants to. The first educators are the parents and on top of this basic education there are other secondary educators who are the teachers, or the students' teachers, although the teachers connect with the education that parents have imparted, when developing the personality of the individuals at an intellectual, volitional, relational, etc. level. And that is why their figure is so important. Thus we could say that education is part of people's lives and must become life: the life that builds the building of their personality.

This aspect had great relevance in Alvira's pedagogy, because his entire proposal and all of his creation was born from these principles. The teacher has a nuclear role in his work, which is in the classroom. It is there where he feels, and is himself, when he places himself in front of his students. Thus, when he prepares himself to be a teacher, he dreams of the classroom, of his classes and his students, to teach them to learn, and to learn

many things and be surprised by them.

It is in this place where Alvira coined, in the first years of his professional work, the concept of 'Aula Viva' (Living Classroom) as a consequence of the fact that education must be alive, energetic and must reach the center of the heart and the intellect of man, so that in this way the subject is transformed, loving the very thing that elevates him.

Alvira's educational work is best carried out in the classroom and with those who were his students in the different batches. The classroom is the place where the curriculum is best achieved because each of the students that compose it is considered in a singular way (Andrade, 2001). It is where the teacher develops as a teacher, manages his wisdom and acquires science, but insofar as pedagogy becomes art in the didactic process of teaching-learning.

The 'Aula Viva' (Living Classroom), which would be manifested in all his professional work, is the first pedagogical idea of our author that he brings to teachers and to the world of education.

Perhaps, what happened to Alvira happened to many teachers -what Machado would say, that the wayfarer makes the path as he walks (Machado, 1912 as quoted in Ribbans, 2006)-, because they are forged on the beautiful, arduous and long route of the educational task, or, as our author would say, on the path of their professional vocation. Something that he had clearly found, as a new vital approach full of hopes (Alvira, 1992).

This makes us observe a characteristic that builds a teacher as a good teacher: his self-evaluation, together with the research he carries

out. In this case, to be able to realize that his method is static, obsolete and worthy of improvement. In this way, he was looking for a new way of doing, in such a way that he could have an impact on the lives of his students, so that it would permeate their whole being, not only in their understanding but also encouraging their will.

This is what produced in him the dream to improve and innovate. For it is oneself who must have the tools to be excited about the work one does, after one's own observation: to be able to incorporate new resources that produce better results. That is to say, that the dynamic interaction of education must first be *ad intra*, with oneself, and then *ad extra*, towards others; coated with the simplicity and naturalness that gives the category of the wise and the teacher. As referred to (Manjón 1915; 1923) in two of his works that have been alluded to: the teacher who looks inward and the teacher who looks outward.

This is how Alvira puts it in his own words:

The new journey, the new path that was beginning, had a great attraction for me. I began to draw up projects that would separate me from the classroom as a lecture hall, that would distance me from the concept of the classroom as a place where the binomial "explain-examine" takes place, where the teacher could be replaced by tapes or videos. (Alvira, 1992, p. 220).

This observation brought about, as mentioned above, the conception of the Living Classroom - as opposed to a deadened, lifeless classroom with no active involvement of the students - as a major discovery of Alvira:

And I came to the concept of the Living

Classroom, the classroom in which the actions of the teacher and the students would really have life. I thought that man is a person with an internal order and hierarchy: a unique whole in which the cognitive faculties are closely connected with the rest of the spiritual organism. My vocation for the educational task led me to desire to be with my students in the classroom, to relate to them. It is true that it was my obligation, but I did it with pleasure, with affection, naturally. I did not want to be in front of my students, but among my students; perhaps that is why I rarely sat in the teacher's chair and remained between the desks for the duration of the class. Thus I established a relationship that invited cordiality, to facilitate my relationship with my disciples (Alvira, 1992, p. 221).

The concept of 'Living Classroom' was illustrated with several considerations and examples by Alvira to make himself understood and to spread this legacy among those who dedicate themselves to this effort:

I came to the conclusion that the classroom could not be the enclosed space of an individualistic society, like a pile of sand in which each grain has nothing to do with those around it. I was reminded of the knowledge acquired in my scientific studies, according to which a heap of sand has no structure at all. And it is well known that without structure there is no life.

The classroom where I worked had to have structures, it had to have life, it had to have a pleasant, welcoming atmosphere that would help me to achieve the aims, the goals I wanted to reach. For me it was very clear: the essential thing was to point out to myself, in a very concrete way, the ends I wanted to achieve. Then, I would look for the necessary means - the era of the formulation

of objectives had not yet arrived - to achieve those ends. (Alvira, 1992, p. 221).

Two other important elements that he discovers to put into practice in the 'Living Classroom', and that interweave the didactic action, will be: the human and spiritual formation of the students and teaching them to think about the academic contents, without which, this intended interaction, as well as a complete education, would be useless and ineffective.

In another of his works, he would talk about the elements that dialogue should have because he realized that educators had not taught young people to dialogue and, therefore, they did not know how to do it. This allusion serves only as a reference for the relationship that dialogue has with teaching how to think. To know how to dialogue, he said, one idea must be followed by another (Alvira, 1976).

In relation to this educational approach to the classroom, he spoke of other complementary achievements, very pedagogical, and that are derived from this way of teaching classes: teaching to think. This is how he put it:

I considered it essential to achieve other goals. And one, for me necessary, was the human formation of the students, with all their greatness, developing the spiritual values that elevate the life of man. I must also emphasize that other objective which consisted in getting my students to think, and not only to study by heart, even without disdaining the value of this power. Professor Albareda used to say that it was not enough to learn, but that it was necessary to manage what was learned, to become familiar with the knowledge and to give it a vital tone: to assimilate it. It was not easy to achieve this end. The proof is that it is still not achieved, not

only in secondary education, but also at university. And yet, teaching people to think is helping them to be free. Thinking involves analyzing and synthesizing and, in a spiritual sense, having the capacity to interiorize oneself, to hear one's inner voice, to discover one's own conscience and what lies at the bottom of it. Thinking is therefore like listening; as well as, in the spiritual sense, it is to be enraptured by the sublime beauty of Being, and of beings worthy of love, worthy of being loved. It is what we call contemplation (Alvira, 1992, pp. 221-222).

All of Alvira's pedagogy resonates with what David Ausubel (20th century) called meaningful learning by reception, which consists of relating the final material learned with the student's previous knowledge, through substantive and not arbitrary relationships between what is known and what is newly learned. In this way, reality is better understood, taking into account the difference between what the student learns on his own and what he learns through the teacher (Cáliz, 2011).

A characteristic that the teacher must also have is the interest in others, to learn from them and teach them something new that they do not know. The teacher loves culture and wants to generate it around him. A specific place where he has to exercise it is within the body to which he belongs, which is the Magisterium, because it is logical that there his contributions can be echoed more effectively. And he who knows how to love, to know how to go out of himself, to observe, to be realistic, to study the situations and to propose aids that alleviate the arduous, but beautiful, path of teaching and learning. He explained:

I saw that it took time to think, but it was necessary to fix one's attention, and that was a

difficult objective to achieve. [...] It was necessary to make the students feel the desire to know, the only way to make study pleasant; that they did not study for fear of punishment, to achieve a high grade that often carried with it a material prize. They should see that high grade as a reward for the desire to know, for the love they had put into their work. (Alvira, 1992, p. 222).

And within this dynamism and this life that the classroom must contain, Alvira would add this other necessary element for study:

I realized that a good way to awaken the desire to study, to get students to focus their attention, was to strengthen their will. Intelligence leads us to know and we must develop it, but will leads us to want to. If we develop it in our students, we will initiate them to the desire to study, we will help them to make their work pleasant, so that they do not take it as a burden to be borne. (Alvira, 1992, p. 222).

But, without leaving aside the more technical aspect of learning. Because Alvira intended to encourage in his classes the ability, dexterity and industriousness among his students. Because in this way it would be the best way to make life and to make part of life that which is learned and assimilated better from experience. And because, at the same time, what is known (intelligible aspect) and what is experienced (sensitive aspect) promotes wisdom: that which involves all the faculties of the person.

Fostering this technological aspect meant creating experts in the academic sense, but in direct relation to the manual activities performed in life. Training them not only theoretically, but also by creating practical and self-reliant people.

That is why he always wanted the students to have an experience in the manual workshops that he implemented in all the educational centers that depended on him.

Therefore, we have just brought to light some pedagogical-educational elements that Alvira offers, fruit of his professional maturity as a teacher, for the classroom, which is where the teacher usually carries out his work.

In an interview held with one of the author's children, what his father understood when alluding to the 'Living Classroom' was stated, which allows us to have a more exhaustive synthesis of this notion (R. Alvira, personal communication, March 26, 2019):

In the first place, the professor - the teacher, as he liked to call him - must love the knowledge he transmits, because love is life and only life transmits life. A teacher whose students do not notice that he vibrates with the knowledge he transmits can only arouse boredom. Secondly, the teacher must have respect and affection for the student. The student must feel known and loved by the teacher, since this is what will make him/her listen to him/her. The student in the classroom must know that he is not just one more, lost in an undifferentiated group, but that he is listening to his teacher and friend.

Thirdly, the use of dialogic style. He sought to raise some questions in the student, or he would ask him. Not lecture style, but more dialogic, although he never fell into the mere dialogic class, as it often becomes a gibberish and a waste of time. He explained, with the authority naturally granted to him by his great scientific knowledge. Fourthly, he always considered that any true theoretical science must be related to practice. Hence his absolute

innovation -as far as I know- in Spain (and it did not exist in many countries either) of the Laboratory Classroom, which he inaugurated and put into operation at the Infanta María Teresa School and at the Ramiro de Maeztu Institute, both in Madrid.

In the fifth place, whenever he could, he took great care of the material layout of the classroom. He thought it was very important that it be bright, simple, but well furnished. Also, whenever possible, he organized field trips, so that the students could have live lessons in contact with nature. And, lastly, as he was a natural scientist, but also a true humanist, this was evident in his classes, in small details that he knew how to introduce with simplicity and elegance, particularly in his references to God and the Christian religion.

The testimony of Mariano Navarro-Rubio Serres, a former student of Alvira, expresses the result of the 'Living Classroom' that has just been presented. This is how he recalls it:

An ordinary day. The students have entered the classroom. Don Tomás, professor of Natural Sciences, is about to enter the classroom. He opens the door and the boys stand up. Good morning - he says - you may sit down. And he adds, almost in a low voice: Thank you. He always said thank you. And the class begins. He rarely took roll call. With a simple glance around him he would notice who was absent and take an interest in the absentee. We liked Don Tomás. He was not a skeleton, like the one who taught philosophy, nor did his classes allow disorganized bustle, as in the drawing classes. The truth is that with Don Tomás it was hard not to learn natural sciences. He spoke to us with affection about plants, animals..., he took us to his beloved natural science museum, next to the Institute. I still remember that dinosaur with the big black plaster

bones!

Don Tomás exuded great kindness. [...] The most important thing he taught us was not in the syllabus of his subject: he made us better without us realizing it. He spoke with tenderness, with affection. We students were not afraid of him, and yet he commanded great respect. But, if you ask me what was the main sensation that, now after more than forty years, I remember about Don Tomás as a student, I would have to say without a doubt that it was the peace that he instilled in all of us [...]. (Vázquez, 1997, pp. 217-218).

Some of these principles are echoed in one of the recent studies that have been carried out on the traits that educators should have today: to be experts in pedagogy, to be experts in humanity and to develop values. Because an educator who is an expert in humanity is one who seeks to make the universal - the true, good and beautiful of what he or she seeks to live - something concrete and real. How? By embodying it. On the level of knowledge it is called cultivating one's discipline, on the level of action it is called virtue and on the level of beauty it is called having a good style (Lázaro, 2007).

However, these teaching practices would be the most technical part of his personal elaboration; because in the substratum of all this there was an educational thought and an educational intention that consisted in manifesting a living and dynamic sense of education that began in the classroom, transposed to the whole community or educational family (teachers, parents and former students), and sought to transcend to society itself, so that the same human family that forms the social fabric had, increasingly, a more educational conscience. Because all this assembly was based on the values of Christian humanism that determined it and gave

it vigor.

Transplantation of pedagogy and living education that will continue to be perceived in his teaching activities and those of his colleagues, in the context of other stages of his educational work.

Thus, recapitulating the sections of this chapter, it could be said that Alvira's educational ideas were solidified in his first stage of work in Madrid as a teacher, as a researcher and as a pedagogue.

Before, during and after that period he received a series of fundamental educational and pedagogical influences through the relevant people who appeared in his existential journey and who strongly marked his life; as well as through his reading and personal study of different educators and pedagogical movements more or less contemporary, and that would enrich his methodology.