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REVIEW / RESEÑA / RESENHA

Alonso-Cano, C., y Herrera-Urizar, G. (2025). *Jóvenes y teléfonos móviles en las aulas. Discursos y dinámicas de prohibición, promoción e indeterminación.* Octaedro

Jesús Acevedo-Borrega *

There are books that arrive once the debate is already aflame and, rather than making the flames rise higher, offer something more valuable: context, nuance, and a way of thinking about the problem without retreating into trenches. The volume edited by Cristina Alonso Cano and Gustavo Herrera Urizar emerges precisely at that point, where the mobile phone has become a symbol of many things at once (distraction, risk, opportunity, conflict, modernization...) and where quick answers tend to be as reassuring as they are educationally impoverished.

The book reads as a guided journey. It does not seek to deliver a verdict, but to accompany the reader through the phenomenon's multiple layers. It begins where so much of this conversation begins: with the narratives we tell ourselves about the phone. The opening chapter introduces a simple yet powerful premise: before deciding what to do, it is worth understanding what we are projecting onto the device and why the classroom has become the stage for this cultural dispute. From there, the text shifts register at a welcome pace. The contributors move the discussion into the normative domain, showing how rules are not neutral: they organize school life, certainly, but they also reveal which fears, expectations, and priorities have taken hold in the educational agenda. And as the lens widens further, the phone appears as an object shaped by interests and discourses that extend beyond the school itself: politics, consultancy, industry, promises of innovation, and logics of control coexist on the same board.

What is most compelling, then, is that the book does not remain at the level of the «noise» produced by certain vested interests in the debate. At a key moment, it pauses to ask: what does the scientific evidence allow us to claim, and what does it not? In an era of headlines and instant solutions, placing research at the center operates as a necessary brake, enabling educational discussion to recover both composure and depth.

From there, the focus shifts toward the everyday life of schooling. The middle chapters successfully connect the mobile phone to media literacy and citizenship: the issue is not merely classroom management, but education within a culture of attention, information, and influence. They also show how the framing adopted by traditional media conditions the broader social climate around the issue: when public debate turns moralizing or alarmist, schools find it harder to sustain calm, pedagogically grounded decisions.

The final section is likely the manuscript's most human dimension because it incorporates voices. On the one hand, it engages with the real dilemmas faced by teachers and institutions: regulations, coherence with the school's educational project, tensions between coexistence and innovation, and the fatigue of maintaining decisions in a polarized environment. On the other hand, the book makes room for those who often appear as a «topic» rather than as interlocutors: families, students, and teachers. Here, the reader encounters what rarely surfaces in corridor debates, ambivalent positions, legitimate concerns, and, above all, an implicit demand for educational accompaniment rather than mere prohibition or permissiveness.

The closing chapter provides a coherent culmination of the journey. It neither idealizes technology nor embraces the easy solution. It leaves the reader with a line that functions as an ethical compass for the present moment: «when we prohibit, (...) we stop educating.» At its core, this idea encapsulates the book's contribution: the question of mobile phone use is not «resolved» by a yes or a no, but through an educational project, critical literacy, and institutions capable of deliberating without delegating their formative responsibility to a decree or to social impulse. Just as justice should not be swayed by contagion when a case becomes media-driven, education should not be governed solely by popularity.

This is a recommended read for researchers in Educational Technology and for university lecturers involved in teacher education: it offers not only arguments, but a more mature way of sustaining the conversation about mobile phones in classrooms, restoring what is often missing from the debate, pedagogical perspective, critical thinking, and educational purpose. It would also be advisable for educational decision-makers to engage in a careful and timely reading before making public policy decisions in education.

Read in perspective, the book, available open access, also emerges as one of the outcomes of the US'MOV project: a serious attempt to understand why the mobile phone has come to occupy the center of so many school-based tensions. This is no minor detail, insofar as it supports dialogue grounded in arguments rather than impulses. Ultimately, it leaves a clear insight: we are not debating a device; we are debating the educational function in the face of the digital.