



ISBN: 979-13-87863-16-6

Received: 9 de marzo 2026
Accepted: 11 de marzo 2026

* Author's address:

Departamento de Pedagogía.
Facultad de Formación del
Profesorado y Educación.
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.
C/ Francisco Tomás y Valiente, 3,
Fuencarral-El Pardo, 28049 Madrid
(Spain)

E-mail / ORCID:

joaquin.paredes@uam.es

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2294-9121>

REVIEW / RESEÑA / RESENHA

Ballesta Pagán, J. (2025). *Una mirada a la educación*. Graó.

Joaquín Paredes-Labra *

Reading Javier Ballesta in this work brings to mind others from a Spanish tradition of teachers collaborating with the media. They did so on topics related to educational reality and life in the community, denouncing problems or proposing changes, with sensible proposals for a fairer society. In these works there was a desire to engage in «public pedagogy.» They also belonged to a period in which Spain was transitioning to democracy. At that time, the construction of coexistence was important. That task is perhaps one of the most cherished by teachers in the development of their work. And it was something the country needed. José Manuel Esteve, Miguel Ángel Santos, and Jesús Asensi— all linked, incidentally, to the south—set themselves to this task in their works. Let us now welcome the renewal of that desire to bring good sense and coexistence.

In this reflection on the everyday life of the school and its relationship with the community, there are a great many themes, as Javier Ballesta shows in his collaboration with a column in a widely circulated regional newspaper, which is the source of this work. Despite its immediacy, it offers an urgent and timeless review of educational reality.

The book is structured in five parts: «Realities and Challenges,» «The Educational Debate,» «Teachers Are Indispensable,» «The Pandemic That Changed Our Lives,» and «At Street Level.»

«Realities and Challenges» analyses problems of great educational and social importance, such as the deterioration of reading comprehension, gender-based violence, grade repetition, online harassment, the analysis of PISA test data, and external assessment exams.

«The Educational Debate» humorously assesses recent non-university education laws.

«Teachers Are Indispensable» denounces the limited social recognition of their work, while at the same time acknowledging their perseverance and responsibility in educational outcomes.

«The Pandemic That Changed Our Lives» analyses educational reality during that terrible period and what it meant for students and teachers.

«University Discontent» analyses the widespread demotivation within the university community, the mismatch between educational provision and labour-market demand, the increasing precariousness of teaching staff, the lack of digital connectivity, the flight of talent abroad, and the changing of university laws with each legislative term.

The sixth and final part examines, «At Street Level,» realities such as poverty and youth unemployment, issues that are all constitutive of the strenuous efforts made by schools.

Although it may appear to be a work of interest only to education professionals, its themes have the pulse of social debates that go far beyond that sphere. They speak of the consequences of educational organisation in the lives of millions of children and young people, of its professionals—a very broad collective—and of their families. For example, learning to read, surviving the education system and its meritocratic traps, building a kind and dialogic society rather than one that hides behind anonymity, and providing tools to preserve dignity as women and as people are all tasks involved in becoming full citizens. And the work is

committed to the social implications of the everyday action of schools in the pursuit of better citizenship and a better society.

In all of this, it offers a critical and close perspective on educational problems of enormous significance. Not surprisingly, the author is seasoned in all levels of education and has carried out relevant research. Seeking to capture the public's attention, we find ourselves before a fast-paced, vibrant, and political work.

Now, as during Spain's democratic transition, this work is timely, at a moment when particularly unjust situations are recurring in the world, where tolerance and understanding of others' points of view can seem like a distant horizon. In the face of the painful fractures caused by sometimes absurd political statements, Ballesta feels the need to push us toward the moral obligation not to remain silent, to hold up a mirror to the shames into which citizens are being dragged, to denounce social oppression, to give importance to empathy, and to value those who work for others; in short, to make present what public education has always aspired to be, and to give it an important place at the heart of our society.