

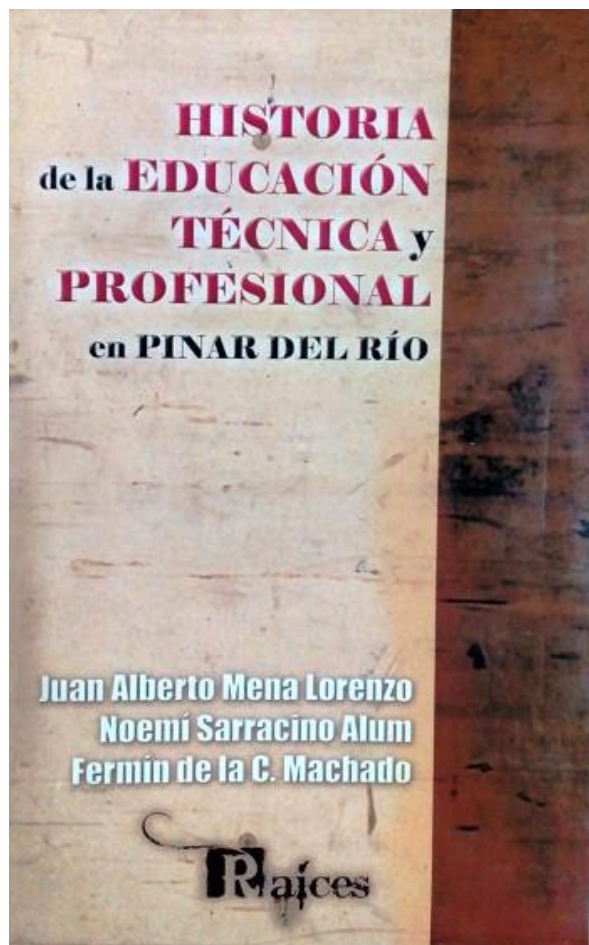
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The history of Technical and Professional Education in Pinar del Río from the memory of its protagonists

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La historia de la Educación Técnica y Profesional en Pinar del Río desde la memoria de sus protagonistas

A história da Educação Técnica e Profissional em Pinar del Río a partir da memória de seus protagonistas

Armando Acosta Iglesias¹



<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1825-0097>

¹University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca". Cuba



armando.acosta@upr.edu.cu

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At present, it is recognized that education is a social phenomenon, which emerged and has developed during the long process of human evolution. In order to accurately judge the development of Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) in Cuba, it is necessary to present some general ideas about the evolution of this type of education in the different economic-social formations through which

the history of humanity has passed. The treatment of this element can be seen in the book *Historia de la Educación Técnica y Profesional en Pinar del Río*.

It is extremely important to make reference to issues related to the history of TVE in the world, in Cuba and particularly in Pinar del Río, which is the case we are dealing with, as part of the knowledge that should be possessed of the local history.

Perhaps one of the most significant and permanent challenges facing TVE in our country is the need to use new alternatives, methods and means of teaching, among other elements, in order to train future professionals with knowledge of the history of Cuba and the history of their region, specifying the contents that have to do with their profession.

Today, in addition to the systemic and systematic transmission of technological knowledge, skills, habits and professional values, the Technical and Professional Education process is required to include other dimensions such as those related to a general and integral culture, work and production, in the perspective of a process of initial and continuous training of workers.

This book could be considered essential in the training process of TVE professionals, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Its authors are teachers and researchers who have worked for a long time in the training of the qualified workforce for this education. They approach the chapters that make up the bibliographic material in a pleasant, didactic and scientific manner.

In the book, the historical periods are structured in three chapters and some considerations about their content are established, which favors their initial comprehension.

Chapter I, entitled "Preconquest or pre-Hispanic period: a technical and professional education for subsistence", is related to learning through observation and experience: knowledge for subsistence. Here we evaluate the characteristics of the aborigines of the region, their way of life, their social organization, their occupations and their main ways of transmitting and learning knowledge for subsistence living. It begins with a simplified review of the results of important archaeological research carried out in the territory.

Another aspect of interest included in the chapter has to do with the main work processes carried out by the natives in the region. It was determined that among the vital tasks were: the use of fire, cooking, sun-drying and smoking of food; gathering vegetables and mollusks, hunting, fishing, construction and use of boats, preparation of paintings, drawings and engravings, making of containers and vessels, construction of rustic dwellings, weaving, among others. This stage is characterized by an apprenticeship in practical activity.

Chapter II, entitled "Colonial Period. Birth of occupations, jobs, trades and professions in Vuelta Abajo", refers to what happened in the westernmost region after the arrival of the European conquerors and during the following centuries, to the relationship and birth of the first forms of work, trades or jobs, as well as the transmission of knowledge for their practical execution.

The stage begins with the almost total disappearance of the former inhabitants and is characterized by the emergence of the province in a region demolished by the effects of colonization, which reduced the territory to raising cattle to supply expeditions to the continent. Throughout this period, technical education in the territory followed the trend of apprenticeship in the trades with all its limitations and effects.

Chapter III, "Colonial or pseudo-republican period. Birth of school-based TVE", is related to the emergence of middle-level technical schools in Pinar del Río, beginning in the 20th century. It is considered that it is represented by four institutions of three traditional branches: commerce, economy and services; the agricultural branch and the industrial branch, the ETP and its educational entities emerge progressively, independently to the almost permanent request of the people of Pinar del Río, during a period of half a century, in a process characterized by the lack of concern of the dominant class for the formation of the workers.

It addresses the emergence of the first school; the changes in the agricultural branch and the emergence of the Elementary School of Commerce in Pinar del Río; the strengthening of agricultural and industrial TVE, as well as the emergence of art and trade schools in Vuelta Abajo, among other aspects of interest for the knowledge of the history of TVE in the province.

The richness of this stage makes this chapter the one that provides the most information of the first three; consequently, it is the most extensive.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly the latter, were substantial in the development of TVE. This was largely due to the work of the most progressive intellectuals and educators, who promoted the creation of schools dedicated to the training of workers, convinced of the importance of this education for the sustainable and sustainable economic-social development of the country.

All these events, which included the creation of technical schools, the provision of study materials, the increase in enrollment and the updating of study plans, represented an essentially quantitative impulse in the

development of Technical Education. But it was still far from satisfying the needs, both in terms of the country's productive technical development and of the large number of young people who, due to lack of resources, could not access higher levels of education.

The analysis does not exclude the self-sacrificing, constant and loving work of the vast majority of teachers and administrators of these educational centers who, underestimated and underpaid, contributed significantly to lay the foundations for the dizzying development that took place in TVE in later stages.

A relevant aspect that is analyzed is related to the formation of workers in massive professions, in correspondence with the situation of the country and Pinar del Río, for example: the sugar and mechanical industries, which were organized by the respective ministries and had polytechnic centers attached to plants and industries. In these centers, workers were trained and their qualifications were improved in numerous specialties; special attention was given to the creation and operation of agricultural technology and to the preparation of cadres for this branch, given that the country was eminently agrarian.

In *Historia de la Educación Técnica y Profesional en Pinar del Río* we find enough reasons to prepare future professionals in the elements of knowledge about this education and to foster in them the love for their profession and for work, which will allow them to learn to live. Following José Martí's phrase: "...to acquire the indispensable means of life in the time in which it exists...", which the authors quote in this book, Martí's thought related to the preparation for life is exalted and his principle of linking study with work is elevated to a higher expression.

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Throughout the 142 pages of this work, not only allusion is made to the pedagogical thinking of the apostle, but also to that of different illustrious pedagogues and researchers such as Tranquilino Sandalio de Noda, among others. In the same way, the research work of the authors is summarized in this first part, who plan a second part that aims to collect the historical evolution of TVE after the revolutionary triumph.

Finally, a group of testimonies is presented that certify the historical journey carried out by the authors on TVE in Pinar del Río, allowing us to appreciate the characteristics of training for work and the trades continuously related to socioeconomic development.

One idea supported in this book is that TVE, independently of any economic development project, must occupy a prominent place, since its task is to train the skilled labor force that the country needs, for dignified and useful work.

Undoubtedly, it is a book that contributes to discover the history of TVE in Pinar del Río, which not only involves students, but also teachers and specialists from productive entities. Hence, the text becomes a reference document when studying the problems in this context, for improvement purposes or to take into consideration when designing curricula.

Conflict of interest:

The author declares not to have any conflicts of interest.

Authors' Contribution:

The author has participated in the writing of the work and analysis of the documents.



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