

STEFANO D. TORRE, MASSIMILIANO BOCCIARELLI, LAURA DAGLIO, RAFFAELLA NERI (Eds) *Buildings for Education. A Multidisciplinary Overview of The Design of School Buildings*, Springer, Cham 2020, pp. 327

The design of school buildings is currently attracting as much interest as social support and its effects on health and well-being. This particular book belongs to a series prepared by the ABC Department (Architecture, Built Environment, and Construction Engineering) of Milan's Polytechnic in Italy, which is well-known all over Europe. The idea that architecture and buildings themselves can change our quality of life was first presented by environmental psychologists. Nowadays, empirical research in this book reveals enormous complexity within the field of architecture and civil engineering. Bringing together many of the best researchers in this area, the editors succeed in creating an interdisciplinary, integrative volume that addresses problems in dealing with the process of planning, design, construction, management, and transformation of the built environment as well as current conditions of Italian school buildings.

The publication which was published in 2020 presents a structured vision of the many possible approaches, which might be interesting to educators and psychologists, architects or engineers. The main aim is strengthened by the attention given to „describe the outputs and the potentialities of researches, giving a report on experiences well rooted in the reality and at the same time introducing innovative perspectives for the future” (p. 5). According to the editors, school design can be seen as one of the hottest topics in architectural research and this particular volume proves that. Inside, the reader will find three, extensively written sections with various papers devoted to 1) the urban and social role of school buildings, 2) tools, models and processes, and 3) management, transformation and enhancement of the built heritage. All of them though underline „the effective collaboration with institutions at various levels and the synergetic combination of the different disciplines involved, needed to respond to their requests through applied and basic theoretical research works” (p. 12). It is important to note, however, that the publication presents some of the research and consulting works by Milan's Polytechnic which was related to the design of new schools in the national program *ItaliaSicura* 2014-2018. Over the years, metropolitan cities were funded to construct 300 new buildings and start 12,000 renovation projects of school buildings all over the country. Readers who are familiar with this project or are curious about its results will find this book even more riveting.

Like I have mentioned before, the publication is organised around three major ideas with a dozen or so papers connected to them. It is not possible to discuss all of the good papers in the book but some of them briefly reviewed next are illustrative of a much larger set of excellent work presented in the volume. Several interesting facts maybe find in the wide introductions, such as the analysis of the current situation of school buildings with the challenges of renovation and new buildings design. Three divided by editors sections „investigate central themes about buildings for education, focusing, in particular, on the definition of multidisciplinary approaches for the design of new schools and for the upgrading of existing ones”

(p. 12). The first section entitled „Urban and Social Role of School Buildings” consists of thirteen papers devoted to the relationship between the city and the school in terms of a civic building with a public role. Most of the case studies from countries such as Italy, Greece, Argentina are described in this part followed by the literature review and research findings. The second section called „The Paths to Innovation: Tools, Models and Processes” includes a compilation of seven chapters that explore creativity and innovation approach to school building design and construction. The authors also describe the use of the building information modelling (BIM) strategy which might be seen as an optimal tool in creating schools for our times. The final section is an eight-chapter overview of „Management, Transformation and Enhancement of the Built Heritage” which provides from one hand theoretical but from the other one applied research paths on built heritage. Readers of this part should be aware of advanced and specific vocabulary and the mass of the data that can quickly lead to information overload.

Two papers that I want to mention as the most interesting to me as a young researcher in the field of environmental psychology, greatly expand the idea of the school of the future. The most substantive and scholarly of included in the book chapters is a contribution by a group of the scientist: Massimo Ferrari, Claudia Tinazzi and Annalucia D’Erchia. The authors of the article „Imagining the School of the Future” managed to merge architecture and pedagogy ideas and present the educational model suitable for contemporary society. The paper covers a lot of ground that will be helpful to educators who are trying to understand the value of education and the space throughout the centuries.

Another valuable contribution is a chapter by Domenico Chizzoniti, Luca Monica, Tomaso Monestiroli, Raffaella Neri and Laura Anna Pezzetti on design for schools. The authors provide some competitive projects concerning the construction of new schools with illustrative photos and plans of the school complex. Being able to visualise winning projects of schools and other institutions described with the deep analysis of design offered by pedagogues and architects made me read this paper with great satisfaction.

*Buildings for Education* is remarkably even in quality and level of presentation. To add to its credit, the book as a whole is well written, with each section setting forth its purposes clearly. Each paper addresses an important topic, however, and the decision to include them is a good one. Overall, the volume is a comprehensive scholarly work in an area badly in need of such, and it would be difficult not to conclude that it is a „must” reading for anyone interested in doing worthwhile research in the area of school building design.

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