



Reviews

Antúnez, S.; Güell, M. (2019). *La dirección de sí mismo: Orientaciones para directores y directoras escolares*. Barcelona: Horsori 184 pp. ISBN978-84-949098-4-9.

The work of the head teacher at a school is complex and varied, probably more than that of any other school employee. Head teachers' tasks cover academic, administrative and management duties, resource management, activities that create links with outside institutions and individuals, and also, in many cases, unexpected extra responsibilities that they have to address with limited resources at their disposal and in unfavourable circumstances. The post of head teacher requires considerable social skills. The working day is usually very fragmented and discontinuous and can be subject to multiple interruptions; head teachers are in great demand and, if they are not careful, may find themselves constantly having to change focus as their attention is diverted to some new problem.

So head teachers need to carry out a variety of roles: as leaders, negotiators, promoters of innovation and culture, information managers, and so on. One of the most important functions is that of "self-direction", which has been largely ignored in the analysis and studies of the role of the head teacher carried out to date. The idea of self-direction stresses that people who are required to lead others should first be able to lead themselves. This is not a skill that necessarily develops as one grows older, and it is not usually included in the training courses offered for the post of head teacher.

The book presents two invitations to readers, either professionals already working as head teachers or less senior teachers intending to take on this role. The first part encourages readers to cultivate their self-knowledge, via successive examinations of their emotions, desires, thoughts and values. It aims to help them discover their strengths and weaknesses and to assess the possible consequences of these characteristics for improving the organization of their personal work. Readers are urged to "look in the mirror" as a way of analysing themselves

and of considering the knowledge thus gained as a diagnosis, as the first step on the way to improving their professional practice. The suggestion is that this analysis should always be a fundamental concern for head teachers, especially those new to the role or those preparing for the post. The reflection on their work – ideally, through the exchange of impressions with their colleagues – is an indispensable exercise.

In the second part, four key steps for enhancing self-direction are presented and explored: developing and applying a self-direction project for guiding and regulating professional practice; delegating properly, in accordance with requirements and due precautions; making rational use of personal time; and developing various facets of professional activity starting from a systematic and practicable plan.

Each of the nine chapters is organized around the following structure: (i) an introduction to the topic and its location and relationships within the tasks of the organization of personal work; (ii) overview of notions, approaches, reflections, examples and dilemmas surrounding the subject; (iii) exercises proposed for readers, in the form of suggestions for reflection; (iv) feedback on the responses to these exercises; (v) conclusions and suggestions for improvement.

This eminently practical book constitutes a summary of many of the lessons that the authors have learned through their active participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of initial and in-service training programs for school management in many different formats (face-to-face, online, blended learning, and assessment), through academic studies of the subject, and through an analysis of their own managerial and professional experience.

Patricia Silva PhD

Ferraces Otero, M. J., Godás Otero, A. y García Álvarez, J. (2019). *Cómo realizar un estudio científico en ciencias sociales, de la educación y de la salud*. Madrid: Dykinson. 164 pp. ISBN: 9788413240534

“Cómo realizar un estudio científico en ciencias sociales, de la educación y de la salud” is a book that aims to be a support for students when carrying out a research work. In this sense, it has been written in a

perfectly schematized and practical way, so that everyone who is starting in the research methodology can, not only understand the basic structure of a experimental or quasi-experimental research with their corresponding analysis of data, but also apply it to their own projects, such as final degree projects or Doctoral Thesis.

The book contains five chapters. The first one has a theoretical nature, starting with a brief introduction about the origin of the scientific method, as well as the requirements for a work to be considered as such and the phases that compose it. It also provides useful diagrams about the different contrasts hypothesis and guidelines for the writing of results reports.

The rest of the chapters show different designs that a quantitative research could have, this is possibly by offering examples of each one of them, detailing their corresponding statistical tests associated and interpreting the results obtained.

The second chapter provides information about unifactorial intergroup designs this is, the study of the association between a single independent variable (divided into two or more levels) with a dependent variable. For this purpose the book validates and interprets comparisons of means tests between groups. The third chapter is dedicated to the intergroup factorial designs, similar to the previous ones, but increasing the number of independent variables and, therefore, the number of groups that are formed.

The fourth chapter explains unifactorial intragroup designs, those where all the experimental conditions are received by a single group. The fifth and last chapter covers examples of both factorial intragroup designs and mixed (in which intra and intergroup designs are combined). In addition, a case where the dependent variable is dichotomous is studied.

Finally, the authors include an appendix with real examples of research articles, analyzing its important parts by adding notes on the margins. Its purpose is to have a global vision of all the parts that compose the article. It also shows a critical assessment of an article, highlighting its strengths and possibilities for improvement.

The design of the work allows an easy and quick understanding of several concepts. It has an eminently practical nature that encourages the reader to interact with the contents, offering activities so that he is not limited to a mere observation of them, but to first hand rehearse what he have learned in each section.

The end result is the creation of a tool focused on one objective: to be a clear guide to make easier the path in the research process to University students at any level. This provides an operative book that is easy to use at any time in order to consult each one of the issues that may arise when facing a scientific investigation, simplifying questions which can be tedious for students who have not received previous research training.

Likewise, it is in interest to highlight that the content could be extrapolated to other fields since, although the examples are based on the disciplines named in the title of the book (Social Sciences, Education and Health) and this facilitates the Identification of an own problem with one of those provided, the statistics tests and methods applied throughout its pages could also be used in a wide variety of situations from different scientific sources.

All of the above makes this book an innovative resource that is essential for all those interested in conducting a research project, noting in this way the need for more works which make pleasant such complex theories as those treated in these pages.

Daniel Sáez Gambín

Santos Rego, Miguel Á. (Ed.). (2020). The transference of knowledge in education. A strategic challenge. Madrid: Narcea. 229 pp. ISBN: 978-84-277-2680-2.

The current society, characterized by the acceleration of its changes and dynamics in all spheres of the social field, increasingly demands a series of specialized knowledge that can be adjusted to the contexts and provide the necessary tools to improve the life quality of civil society. Consequently, it is urgently needed an adequate interaction between the different agents involved in the transmission processes of university knowledge to society.

This proposal as a joint study that reaches the reader in the form of a book is constituted by diverse perspectives from social sciences professionals who have been entering the complex paths of knowledge transference for some time.

The first chapters address, from a more theoretical view, the initial conception of the term “knowledge transference” and its direct implications in the university. Thus, it is possible to find a plurality of definitions and models that address this concept, explaining paradigms such as the quadruple helix, which explains the interactive context between the university, the productive sector, the state and civil society, emphasizing the social responsibility of universities, in addition to its educator and researcher role.

Although the university undoubtedly presents itself as the main issuer of knowledge, it is important that the transference of it may be assumed as an institutionally task from the centers and not only from the universities. The specificity of the task by areas and by subject requires the provision of job positions for mediating personnel, which energizes the transference and plays the technical role.

It is from chapter 5 that the presentation of specific cases of strategies begins, which is the case of the identification of markers of knowledge transference outside the university, with experiences carried out in collaboration between university students and external social entities. Likewise, the application of the analysis model of knowledge transference processes to education is referenced, providing different resources so that it can be propitiated.

Getting deeper into the second part it is possible to find the pragmatic transference of knowledge collected from some outreach projects in educational research. Such is the case of the *Civic Parliament Project*, promoted by the University of Navarra, which resulted in a didactic guide, the preparation of various videos and other types of written and audiovisual material.

It is about making clear the importance of the activities that benefit the civil society and the different interest groups, generating social value, and also, highlighting the immense scope that provides the training of professionals from the university, if the aim is to achieve an effective impact on society.

Another noteworthy aspect of the book is the analysis made about the impact of the transference of knowledge on diversity from the R I D project entitled “Attention to diversity and inclusive education in the university. Diagnosis and evaluation of institutionalization indicators”, located at the University of Córdoba, and directed towards the design of an institutionalization proposal constituted by indicators and strategies

that incorporate attention to diversity. This proposal is directed, above all, to those institutions of higher education that are interested in the incorporation of the knowledge generated to their institutional exercise.

On the other hand, this book includes contributions about knowledge derived from approaches that make use of the community development perspective to give value to innovation, within the teaching-learning processes in the university, in order to optimize the transference of knowledge.

In short, it is a volume that justifies the relevance of knowledge transference as a strategy for economic and social growth, in addition to the enrichment of individuals and communities in such perspective.

In this way, we are faced with a careful analysis work that lays the foundations for a greater understanding and implementation of the transference of educational knowledge, as an invaluable resource in the service of improving the human condition.

Gabriela Míguez Salina

Wood, P. & Smith, J. (2018). Educational Research. Basic concepts and methodology for developing research projects. Madrid: Narcea. 132 pp. ISBN: 978-84-277-2382-5.

Educational research is a complex undertaking; it addresses the wide range of components and factors intervening in educational processes and enables improving the quality of such processes through teachers' reflective practice. The text presented by Phil Wood and Joan Smith offers a clear and practical guide on how to design and develop educational research projects. The work begins with a prologue by Professor Rodríguez Gómez followed by eight chapters that combine theoretical and practical aspects allowing to visualise, to a certain degree, researchers' empirical work. The text's clarity and brilliance help build an understanding of the different components of Educational Sciences giving a pragmatic vision of the paradigms in which educational research is grounded to solve problems in schools.

The first chapter describes the theoretical foundations necessary to “develop a suitable level of research literacy” (p.17) based on three

elements: theoretical foundations, “threshold knowledge” of educational research and the application of this research. The second chapter is thus dedicated to the “basic principles of ethical research”. These attributes are considered relevant and at the heart of research design and development, as they ensure that participants are treated with care and respect, and that “three fundamental principles: consent, honesty and care” (p.25) are applied.

In chapters three and four the authors establish a series of guidelines on how to write a research project. Researchers’ capacity to make critical reviews of the bibliography in order to know and analyse the state of the art allows them to show their *positionality* and identify gaps in the subject that may, therefore, lead to an original contribution to the scientific community. This process allows to “refine and polish” the project through the main research question and help to integrate “a sharp, clear and operative focus” (p.59) before raising the research sub-questions.

Methodological approaches to educational research are based on three underlying philosophical principles: ontology, epistemology and visions of the research world (paradigms). The latter are “the basis on which decisions regarding methodology are made” (p.69), an aspect that is developed in chapter five, together with practical examples of the most common methodological approaches: action research (a process that allows to reflect on practices); surveys (an effective method to collect perceptions of populations); the case study (which explores a specific educational context); experimental methodologies (interventions aimed at changing educational practices); and mixed methods (quantitative-qualitative). Decision-making during data collection and sample selection, so that data compilation be considered “high quality”, is explained in detail and exemplified in chapter six. It is important to reflect on the data to avoid “inaccuracies or biases in its interpretation, which will affect the usefulness of the research” (p.106). These aspects relating to the analysis of the data obtained are raised in chapter seven and take into account the validity and reliability criteria proper to the method applied.

The text concludes with a draft of an outline for research projects that integrates the characteristics exposed throughout the book. This work helps us to learn and reflect on the fact that most studies developed in educational research are based on human relationships (and not merely on study subjects), which means that researchers must be careful not only in the data collection phase, but throughout the research process.

They must learn to avoid placing the subjects under study in positions of vulnerability and to prepare reports without causing harm to the study groups, because “no research project is perfect” (p.128).

Marcos Jesús Iglesias Martínez