Book reviews

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Aprendizaje organizativo e informal en los centros educativos [Organisational and informal learning in educational centres] (María del Mar Duran Bellonch).

Santos Rego, M. A., Valle Arias, A., & Lorenzo Moledo, M. (Eds.). (2019).
Éxito Educativo. Claves de construcción y desarrollo [Educational success: keys for building and developing it] (Anaïs Quiroga Carrillo).

Sarramona, J. (2020).
La enseñanza no presencial en la educación básica. Guía práctica para maestros y profesores [Distance teaching in elementary education: a practical guide for teachers] (Antonio J. Colom Cañellas).

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Aprendizaje organizativo e informal en los centros educativos [Organisational and informal learning in educational centres].
Pirámide. 162 pp.

Although much has been written about organisations that learn and there are numerous theoretical approaches to this topic, there are still few works that specifically consider it in the case of educational organisations. The book that interests us here helps remedy this shortcoming. Informal learning processes that result in the transformation of organisations are currently present in the field of education, although they are not sufficiently widespread. Another problem with this topic is the difficulty of understanding some of the concepts used in it: is an organisation that learns the same thing as organisational learning?; what do learning processes have to do with managing knowledge? are they the same or do they differ?; has the latter been abandoned in favour of the former?; who really learns? the professional who is employed, the group, or the organisation?; is speaking about organisations that learn not ultimately a word game? The authors of this work consider these and other questions and offer their own answers clearly and simply, something that is welcome when covering topics that at first sight might not appear to be very practical. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. The day to day life of educational organisations is shaped by many of the processes that are explained and analysed in this book. Apart from bringing the reader into contact with this reality, the work provides numerous strategies to be put into practice, which are devised to support people who set out to accept change as one of the main driving forces of their organisation.

Some of the work's main theses and an overview of its structure are provided below.

If the members of an organisation learn and this learning then has an impact on the organisation, we can state that the

organisation learns. This is the starting position of the editors of this work. Organisational learning is understood as a process in which: errors are detected and corrected; organisational knowledge is shared and developed; actions in the organisation are improved; ideas, processes, and mental models are exchanged; competences are acquired collectively by the members of the organisation; changes are made to structures of cognition; and where transformation of the organisation is pursued to achieve efficacy and quality (p. 39).

In addition, the editors of this work note that members learn in a variety of ways, with the ones known as "informal" being of most interest to them. In very broad terms, it could be said that informal learning is regarded in this work as the type that is not organised in syllabuses or restricted to specific contexts. It is a self-directed learning in which professionals decide what, how, where, and when to learn and which resources to use based on their everyday professional needs or interests p. 42.

At a time when business organisations are putting all their weight behind encouraging informal learning, treating it as the strategic cornerstone of their policy, educational organisations cannot and should not be neglected. Fortunately, many educational centres have started processes of change that are deliberately aimed at improvement and based on informal learning by their staff.

The work that concerns us here has eight chapters, and we believe it could be divided into three sections, although it is not. The first section comprises chapters one and two. In them, the editors of this work, Gairín and Rodríguez-Gómez, lay the conceptual foundations for change, improvement, innovation, development of organisational learning, and informal learning. In the first chapter they examine, from a critical perspective, the current situation of innovation in educational centres. In chapter two, they lay the theoretical foundations for the possibility of organisational learning based on informal learning, through knowledge management processes. Furthermore, ideas for promoting informal learning are set out, such as research-action, coaching and peer-coaching, and feedback 390, among others.

What could be treated as the second section comprises three chapters, each dedicated to an intrinsic part of the process of organisational change. Chapter three considers the design of the process of change, providing ideas for how to choose a particular planning model, how to set the boundaries of the needs for change, and how to guarantee the right dynamic during its execution.

Chapter four develops the process of implementing change, starting with an analysis of this process that makes it possible to detect the main errors often committed in it, with the authors making suggestions on how to confront, minimise, or eliminate each of them. The chapter also ends with practical advice on how to reduce resistance to change, which is impossible to ignore and, in this case, eliminate fully.

Chapter five sets out the advantages of evaluation in any process of change. It then specifies key actions for this evaluation and also for institutionalising the change that is achieved. In fact, the authors consider that without this last stage in the process, it is not truly possible to speak of organisational learning. The chapter concludes with particularly interesting ideas for maintaining an organisational culture aimed at innovation through sustainable change. To achieve this, participatory processes are especially important.

Finally, what could be regarded as a third section examines in depth the means or tools that make driving change, developing it, and integrating it into the organisation possible and facilitate these processes. Chapter six introduces social media, serious games, and gamification as an illuminating conceptual approach. It then sets out how these tools can be applied appropriately in the field of education, specifically for fostering teachers' learning in applications and services for accessing and processing information; for communication, interaction, and training on line. The chapter ends with a full summary of the current position of the use of technology by teachers.

Chapter seven provides a detailed description of various experiences in the use of technology, in this case for professional development and cooperative work in the field of education. The section on WhatsApp for teachers is especially interesting. This chapter also sets out best practices from a number of organisations from which we can learn, such as the Social Services Area of Barcelona Council, the Institute of Public Safety of Catalonia, and the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, among others.

Finally, the last chapter is dedicated to what is most important in the first and last instance in any learning process: the person. The editors of the work develop topics that are of interest, such as the role of people as knowledge promoters and the professional, institutional, and ethical challenges that must be confronted: what will be the practical and theoretical agenda for organisational development in coming years?; if the person makes organisational learning possible on the basis of individual learning, then what relationship must be established between the person and the educational organisation?; how can personal ethics be combined with organisational ethics? The authors offer tentative answers for these and other interesting questions, which will undoubtedly inspire readers to action starting from a good theoretical basis.

María del Mar Duran Bellonch ∎

Santos Rego, M. A., Valle Arias, A., & Lorenzo Moledo, M. (Eds.). (2019). *Éxito Educativo. Claves de construcción y desarrollo [Educational success: keys for building and developing it].* Tirant Humanidades. 318 pp.

The contemporary knowledge society has posed new academic challenges for students and teachers alike in recent years. Educational success currently goes

beyond qualifications and social acknowledgement, as it encourages moral and material growth, personal self-confidence, and confidence in the people who help learners in the process. Clearly we mean teachers. These professionals have the task of accompanying students and providing the knowledge, affection, and support they need to overcome the difficulties they inevitably encounter on the winding path of learning.

In the words of the editors of this work, educational success can be understood as the capacity we acquire to *self-propel* our will, associated with the cognitive regulation of learning, enabling feedback for personal internal motivation and epistemic curiosity for learning. This phenomenon is also imbued with personal learning experiences and their cognitive and/or emotional impacts, which undoubtedly determine the acquisition of the keys for building and developing success.

This success, requires knowing how to manage the errors and mistakes that occur throughout the academic journey. And the fact is that learning how to manage failure is part of the process, another step that allows better progress. This undoubtedly does not neglect the individual energy and effort that combine with pedagogical intervention to make it possible for learning to be a successful motivation.

And this topic cannot be approached without analysing all of the factors that have an influence on educational success from a critical perspective. Academic attainment cannot be understood as a

way certifying the acquisition of knowledge or certain skills. From a pedagogical perspective, it must involve a subsequent aim, totally separate from market assumptions, as a value that catalyses knowledge and fosters civic-moral development and so in some way has an effect on the community.

On the other hand, this phenomenon cannot escape from the scientific sphere — nor should it — and this is why this work attempts to offer an approach to a concept as complex as educational success, in all of its aspects and conditions for opportunity. Researchers with notable academic careers from all over Spain have come together to follow a common path, undoubtedly offering a variety of theoretical approaches that are essential for a correct understanding of educational success.

Their joint efforts have taken shape in the book *Éxito Educativo. Claves de construcción y desarrollo*, a work of careful analysis by the authors who, over fourteen chapters split into three different sections, consider in depth the principal questions that have inspired the most interest in the field that concerns us.

The first chapter analyses the construct of motivation and how its interaction with students' cognition influences learning and academic performance. It considers the effect of self-referenced beliefs, students' personal interests, and the relevance of the utility attributed to academic work. The authors also consider the role of achievement goal orientation,

concluding with the importance of action monitoring strategies.

Chapter two covers the contentious debate surrounding homework, providing arguments for and against setting it. It considers in depth the variables involved in doing homework, such as motivation, volume of homework, time spent on it, and the teacher's and family's involvement, concluding with various recommendations for educational practice.

Chapter three is dedicated to students with lower performance than expected, a topic that is considered in the English-speaking sphere in particular. Specifically, it considers relevant questions for identifying and evaluating these students, the characteristics that define them, and the key tools for reversing failure among them.

Chapter four alludes to study strategies for improving learning, most notably the construction of summaries or figures, generating ideas and developing mental images. The authors go on to describe mechanisms for supervision of an adequate retention of what is studied, existing evidence regarding time management, and the importance of seeking help in this process.

The first part of the book ends with chapter five, which considers the role of emotional intelligence in educational success. To this end, it offers an approximation to the term emotion, focussing on how this permeates individuals' life experiences and exploring its influence on the development of intelligence.

Chapter six considers the necessary change of methodological paradigm that must occur in classrooms in order to include a series of active methods, based on imagination and creativity, and foster students' success. Some examples of these are project-based learning, group techniques, collaborative techniques, dramatisation, and service-learning.

Chapter seven considers the important contributions neuroscience has made to the field of education, most notably in physical exercise, arts, and positive emotions, which act as powerful learning facilitators. Its argument then focuses on the principal challenges the contemporary school must face, especially in methodological terms.

Chapter eight, on new technologies, describes the technological innovations that have recently entered the educational setting, such as e-learning 2.0, the flipped classroom, and MOOC courses. The authors also mention internationally applied models for integrating these methods into pedagogical practice and make suggestions for a more flexible, open, and personalised educational proposal.

The second part of the book ends with chapter nine, which is dedicated to the process of guidance as a fundamental pillar of educational success. In it, the main areas of guidance actions are considered as well as the moments of academic transition to which this should be adapted.

Chapter ten considers the concept of school adjustment, which encompasses

the attitudinal, behavioural, and cognitive aspects needed to assimilate content and adapt to the school setting, which principally depend on academic performance, social relations, and satisfaction with school. It also examines the influence of the family, family/school communication, and the involvement of the community on academic achievement.

Chapter 11 covers the educational management of cultural diversity. The authors first consider the concept of educational success, examining how it differs from school success and then moving on to the chapter's main debate. To this end, they refer to the intercultural education model, which is vital for achieving success in students from migrant backgrounds, and they discuss some of the successful results of a recent intervention programme carried out with these boys and girls, the ECO-FA-SE programme.

Chapter 12 covers measures in educational and employment policy aimed at ensuring the inclusion and employability of young people who are at risk. Specifically, it sets out the functioning of Spain's Social Guarantee Programmes and Basic Professional Training, insofar as they encourage the educational success of young people whose initial situation was marked by failures and problems with learning.

Chapter 13, on lexical competence and academic success, analyses the extent to which intelligence tests evaluate verbal comprehension and how this is worked on in the environment which, in the view of the authors, is most decisive: the school.

The last chapter considers mathematical competences. It describes early mathematical skills, models for developing number sense, and the learning difficulties that can occur in this field from a psycho-evolutionary perspective. It then proposes specific tasks and standardised tests for measuring mathematical competence and some of the most successful programmes for learning it.

In conclusion, this is a comprehensive multidisciplinary work with a harmonious structure that can be read as a whole or focussing on specific selected parts, in which the reader can find the most important aspects that academic literature has revealed regarding sustained success through education.

Anaïs Quiroga Carrillo ∎

Sarramona, J. (2020).
La enseñanza no presencial en la educación básica. Guía práctica para maestros y profesores [Distance teaching in elementary education: A practical guide for teachers].
Horsori. 92 pp.

This new book by Jaume Sarramona is, in our opinion, well worth reviewing because, more than ever, we believe that it merits a discussion to make known certain aspects that, as well as being noteworthy, seem important to us as they have had a bearing on the development of educa-

tion in Spain in recent years, a process in which Professor Sarramona has, to a large extent, been a leading figure.

We say this because in 1975, Sarramona published no fewer than three books; one with the Teide publishing house called *Cogestión en la escuela* [Co-management at school], and two others which now, after many years, can be seen to be important milestones for our most recent times; namely, *La enseñanza a distancia. Posibilidades y desarrollo actual* [Distance learning: possibilities and current development] and *Tecnología de la enseñanza a distancia* [Distance learning technology], both published by CEAC. As a result, Spain progressed, coming up to date with what was already an established reality in the English-speaking world.

These titles were not examples of mere snobbishness or of being *avant la lettre*, although he was ahead of his time, but instead they soon had a practical expression as our colleague was involved at the forefront of the design of the UNED, Spain's distance education university. However, no trace is now left of the good work from that period and his valuable proposals. Costa Rica and other Latin American countries also benefitted from his collaboration to establish their respective distance education universities.

This is not, therefore, a new author or an opportunistic book, rather quite the contrary. The *distance learning* we now have the pleasure of presenting is the culmination of the long career of someone who was a pioneer in these questions and,

given the situation in which we currently find ourselves, it arrives as a useful and above all necessary instrument for our schools. And also because I believe that new generations not only lack historical knowledge, which is perhaps forgivable (I have my doubts), but also the very culture of the environment in which they work.

In the midst of a pandemic, Professor Sarramona has written a book that is not just exemplary — he has many more of these than the current crop of academics — but necessary, tremendously necessary and useful. In the current difficult circumstances, this book is a tool — a vital one, I would say — for enabling our children to do their courses with complete security in both the health and cultural spheres alike.

Sarramona has undoubtedly provided a useful and necessary tool to help solve the issue of classes in which students are not physically present, and fundamentally to help teachers with questions related to the act of teaching. The author provides an exemplary response to both of these circumstances because he develops aspects such as planning for distance teaching — a basic element that should form part of any teacher's professional skills — that is to say, setting clear objectives, doing relevant exercises, ensuring students work in groups and individually, promoting the necessary didactic resources for this type of teaching, and essentially connecting didactic activities to the objectives previously set. What Fernández Huerta called *congruence* between teaching and learning. (*Nota bene*: Professor Fernández Huerta was Chair of Educa-

tion at the Universidad de Barcelona. He was a great statistician and he introduced educational technology and programmed learning to Spain.)

As well as what is mentioned above, the author dedicates a chapter each to the most difficult questions relating to distance teaching, which have been the target of many tirades in recent months, namely, how to assess, how to motivate, and fundamentally, how to tutor students, in other words, how to help them, how to direct them, how to make the necessary guidance possible so that they feel secure in their activities and know that what they are doing is not just valuable but also that this value is guaranteed by their teacher.

In short, this is a book for this very moment, that all teachers should be familiar with, in particular so that they can apply its proposals. Indeed, it is packed with examples of practical activities and attitudes, with suggestions, synopses, and that which is the ultimate purpose of pedagogy; namely, it focusses on *how to do it*. This is undoubtedly the ideal book for use in primary education and teaching degrees.

It is, therefore, an illuminating example taken to its maximum expression of what the theory of education is, or at least what it should be, and which I hope (and this hope is, it seems to me, plural) will focus on being theory for action, or to put it another way theory for improving educational practice, and so solving problems in class. Values yes, and also morality — what would become of pedagogy without them? — but theory's *raison d'être* is undoubtedly that it improves practical pedagogy and resolves educational problems. Those problems that are so far from the university, but which primary school teachers face every day in class.

Sarramona's new book is an excellent example of all of this. And please read it, even if you are not of his generation. You will learn from it and perhaps, if you do not have mental or other objections, it might affect what you think the theory of education is and should be, namely, solving problems and helping those who do not know, more or less as Monsignor Tusquests taught us. (Another forgotten Professor of Pedagogy, who with his *Pedagogía de la problematicidad* [Pedagogy of problematics] could still as my colleague and friend the novelist Camilo J. Cela said, help many people lose their simplicity.)

Antonio J. Colom Cañellas ∎