

REVIEWS

RETHINKING EDUCATION. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE DYNAMICS

Belando Montoro, M. R. (Coor.) (2015). Madrid: Pirámide, 176 pp. ISBN: 978-84-368-3431-4

The work coordinated by María Belando reviews the significant theoretical questions related to the universe of Education. This is done taking the challenges of our current world in the 21st century into consideration. This task is carried out in eight chapters grouped together in three parts. In the first one, it is approached a basic conceptualization from which it is drawn an image of the human being as an educable individual and as a horizon of the education from the delimitation of the educative. This conceptualization is grounded on the Pedagogy and anthropology sciences. Concerning the second part, the education is analysed as a process in which several professionals participate. These professionals also operate with the setting, that is, families and communities.

In the frame of this relational function, it is mentioned the figure of the social educator as a kind of agent who is qualified to apply an efficient mediation from the community, between families and educational institutions, always adopting an approach which must be holistic and socio-communitarian. Finally, in the third part, the important educational goals of the globalized society are reviewed focused on the education in values and in cultural diversity, as well as on the human rights.

It is interesting to highlight the identification that is done in the first chapter of this section about the abilities which are necessary to be morally competent: the self-awareness, the autonomy and the

self-regulation, the social skills and abilities for the dialogue, the empathy, the critical understanding, the moral reasoning and the transformation of the surrounding.

The majority of the competences have a social tone, so that the overlapping area between moral and social education is outstandingly wide. So, with regard to the development of the socio-moral competences, it is essential the articulation of a collaborative work groups dynamic among the different communitarian agencies, as it is mentioned in the chapter 7, in relation to the education for the cultural diversity.

María Belando, Gonzalo Jover, Bernardo Gargallo, Julio Vera, José Luis Álvarez, María Rosa Buxarrais, Mar Lorenzo and Carolina Ugarte are recognised professionals from seven Spanish Universities and some of them are also members of the SIPS. Together, they have written a really didactic piece of work, in which they introduce, in a clear and concise way, the timeless foundations of the education (continuity dynamics), as well as those foundations which are significant in relation to the social context where we are living (change dynamics).

It is a brief collective work that can be understood as a genuine handbook of educational theory. A proof of this is the common structure of its eight chapters: the formulation of the objectives, the development of the contents, a summary, a planning of activities and the list of references. That is to say, both, students of Pedagogical grades and professionals of the formal and non-formal education can find in "La Educación Repensada" with unbeatable clarity, the basic coordinates of the foundations, processes, agencies and goals of the Edu-

cation. It also includes an updated knowledge, based on the recent educational research about the mentioned concepts. This theoretical and global view is an important achievement of this work, specially if we consider, as the prologue writer states, that

the integration of the construction of knowledge tends to be a scarce resource.

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SOCIAL PEDAGOGY

Santos Graciani, M. S. (2014). San Pablo, Cortez editora. pp.205. ISBN 978-85-249-2274-9

The PHD in education Maria Stela Graciani Santos (University of São Paulo-Brazil) shows us in her book a Latin American perspective on the Social Pedagogy, based on the socio-educational experience of Brazil.

In this text she takes as reference the main educator Paulo Freire, to think the Social Pedagogy from a political pedagogical conception committed with the transformation of reality, social justice and Human Rights.

This work is divided into an introduction and three chapters, where Graciani unfolds the meanings of the Social Pedagogy, understood as a science that is in a constant process of re-construction.

The author begins the Introduction reflecting on the Brazilian reality, basic element to understand the constitution of the Social Pedagogy in this country. She emphasizes in the effects generated by the neoliberal capitalist system and explains that social, economic, cultural, political and educational exclusion of a sector of the population, along with the promotion of a consumerist and individualistic society, made transformative socio-educational practices, which paved the way for the field of study, training and intervention in Social Pedagogy, arise.

The first chapter "Social Pedagogy: a work in progress" explains that the social Pedagogy is opposed to all welfare model, and proposes a collective work between educators and learners, based on four dimensions: democratic, participatory, solidarity, and transformative, who are looking to build a collective political- pedagogical project. On this last point she deepens, presenting the four general characteristics of political-pedagogical project of Social Pedagogy, which she defines as: several knowledge; ongoing research; attention to the cognitive, to the affective and the corporeality; and finally the participatory planning, collective work and the emancipatory evaluation.

In this same chapter she defines the social educator as a political subject immersed in different educational practices, who assumes the pedagogical intervention and the directivity of such a process, being aware that this is full of conflicts and contradictions. She emphasizes on the need for each educator to as-

sume the reality as complex, and take a critical position on this, to analyze and reflect on the root causes of social exclusion and inequality, to fight against them.

It also elaborates on the proposed methodology, which sits in a dialectic methodology that looks for a continuous process of theorizing on the practices of Social Pedagogy, to be able to think critically about them and transform them, taking into account the social context in which it is located.

In the end she emphasizes on three points: the importance of playing as a mean for the construction of knowledge; the need for the mind, spirit and body in the production of instances of knowledge; and the need to understand that education occurs in a social-environmental ambient, being aware of the damage caused in it.

In the second chapter "multiplicity of socio pedagogical dimension: reports and reflections" Graciani argues that the Social Pedagogy is a part of reality, in which both educators and learners are engaged culturally, socially and politically with a project to end human emancipation and humanizing of the subject.

Then she develops the pillars of the Social Pedagogy: the promotion of peaceful coexistence, respect, dialog and solidarity, which are held on the political pedagogical project of this proposal. She also explains that it favors the model of participatory and democratic coexistence, respecting national and international legal frameworks.

She closes this section with the description and analysis of different educational practices of Social Pedagogy, such as working with children and adolescents living on the street; the Ganga; the experience of the Movement of Literacy of young and adult people; the indigenous education; and education in Human Rights.

In the last chapter "Necessary understanding for the socio pedagogical action" Graciani, highlights the position of the social movements as subjects of the transformation, characterizes them and highlights their potential to establish a new order of life and fight against social injustice, through a collective endeavor.

In this section the author will reflect on the access and the permanence of the "children of the misery" to public school institutions. Then deepens over the changes in the Brazilian legislation that recognizes children as subjects of rights; analyzing in depth the Statute of Childhood and Adolescence.

This chapter ends reflecting on the challenge of the social construction of educational public policies committed to the Brazilian people.

This book is a significant contribution to be able to think about the Social Pedagogy on de-colonial way, Graciani appropriates an existing concept to re-build it from a Latin American perspective. That way she

let us re-think the different socio-educational practices and the reflection on them, from a Freireian political pedagogical concept and guided by a project of social transformation.

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EDUCATING WITH HEART AND MIND

Toro, J.M. (2015). Bilbao: DESCLÉE DE BROUWER, pp. 296. ISBN 978-84-330-2011-6

Based on the author's experience as a professional educator, the book *Educating with Heart and Mind* by J.M. Toro is organized into nine chapters, each with focus on a specific proposal to build a pedagogical approach and a way of life at the school that will serve as a reference to teachers.

Being an educator and developing high quality work in the classroom with students, families, schedules and activities is a necessary educational challenge in our daily practice.

In relation to this book, the author stresses the existence of three types of teachers. The first type is the "technical teacher" who, with an individualist attitude, uses textbooks as the primary source of their teaching. The second and the third types are known as "practical and critical teachers", that are more innovative and flexible teachers who focus on developing the quality of teaching through the learning experience of their students. Nowadays, we can find these three types of teachers in our classrooms.

Much to our regret, there are technical teachers and professors who base their *entire classroom curriculum* on a single textbook, where communication and interaction are understood as *separate concepts*. However, in other classrooms, such as the one of the author, there are critical and practical teachers who are interested in an education that involves a critical, analytical and educational challenge, building tolerance to mistakes or to new alternatives other than the textbook which is seen as a resource for students, but not the only resource. Therefore, the author shows a constant reflection on practice, circumstances and conditions on which he works.

This book describes the fundamental aspects of Toro's experience through a case study of a small group of children who he worked with from the first to the fifth grade of Primary education (1993-1998). This case study offers a vision on how to act and to behave in the classroom, as well as provides an approach to students as to what the author defines as "Eropedagogy": an education based on love and energy.

This book is a valuable and useful attempt to provide a broader understanding of the role of practical and critical teachers during the course of their lessons that, as mediators throughout the process, will become positive influences on the educational structure by interacting through content and teaching style.

Reading this book, there is an evident evolution of a critical teacher from the initial stages of his/her activity until present, showing a prospect of improvement, analysis and criticism, and the opportunity to improve.

Cultural policy is related to education. The curriculum is a construction of knowledge driven by tensions, political, economic and cultural commitments or conflicts that organize and disorganize the content that we teach and learn within our schools but: do these powerful authorities think of our students as a good teacher concerned about the day to day difficulties does?

Unfortunately it is not as it should be. Education is seen as a public asset rather than an entitlement, and it is used in most cases as a tool to transfer knowledge and standards of conduct. Therefore, we need to assign new roles within the school in order to determine the classroom's baselines performance and to understand education not only as a social function, but also an education that engages critical thinking from an early age. This idea can be found at the end of this book.

I would like to highlight the author's attitude toward relaxation by stressing its importance within our educational system, not only for the relaxing virtues but also as an educational tool, showing a healthy and relaxed life as the key issue for students to understand, memorize and learn.

It is interesting to note the importance of reviewing our teaching style in the classroom due to the fact that the need for teachers that educate with heart and mind can be taken for granted. The author positions the need for a heart-based education that goes beyond the reason as he points out when he writes "when it is the heart that writes, it is the whole body that listens. It does not talk but it reveals; it does not specify anything but it reveals all, and it cannot be read except by a consciousness that gently drinks from the fountain of Wisdom". (Toro, 2005, p.20).

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ECOLOGICAL AWARENESS AND WELL-BEING ON THE CHILDHOOD. EFFECTS OF THE RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE

Collado, S. & Corraliza, J.A. (2016). Madrid: CCS. ISBN 978-84-902-3331-3

Wellbeing and personal health are linked to the relationships that both individually and as a group, we have with the environment. We human beings are part of this environment. These ideas are currently very present in social conscience, as well as in reflections, debates and publications around ecology.

The book I am presenting is studying those relationships and the beneficial effects of the direct contact of people, especially children, with the environment. This is a scientific book of environmental psychology useful for developing an ecologic intervention in the psychological and pedagogical fields. The authors collate existing research with several of their own investigations that describe the connection between children and their environment. This collation allows them to assess the children's experiences with nature, together with the effects of these experiences on wellbeing, attitudes, beliefs and the children's environmental behaviours.

The need for direct contact as a health and wellbeing fixing resource is the conclusion repeatedly expressed throughout the book. This need is increased in the current world, an urban world where the direct contact with nature is scarce. As a consequence, this is usually causing a disconnection with the environment. Besides, we are witnessing another destabilising fact of everyone's health and wellbeing. I mean the stress generated by the accelerated and consumerist style of life today. This lifestyle that forces live and work at an exorbitant rate and that has the effect of using time almost exclusively for work and consume is what the current sociology called "rapidación". In sum up, a normalised disconnection with nature and the "rapidación" are the two current realities that activate negative dynamics and situations for wellbeing and mental and physical balance of individuals and groups.

In this context of scarce relation, or disconnection 'between man and nature', the authors are not falling into the comfortable topic of criticising urban environments, or, the negative consequences of the current lifestyle. They focus on showing the reparatory and positive effect of the direct relationships that children have with the environment, from the environmental psychology perspective.

This is achieved by presenting, analysing and evaluating a series of specific case studies that aim to search for scientific answers to the question of whether the contact with the natural environment is as beneficial and needed for children as we intuitively believe. Fi-

nally, if the benefits of these relationships are evidenced, it analyses to what extent they are presented in different situations, contexts and environments.

The content of the book facilitates the task of contrasting empirically theories and ecologic action models, as well as valuing elements for the design of pro-environment intervention in different general and school situations. The book not only offers the results of different research, it also opens new channels of specific research. Most notable for future investigation:

1. *To unify research and environmental action/intervention with the socialisation and education processes.* The current environmental intervention is not only a technique of environmental protection - the instrumental perspective of the environment has been left behind. It is an effort to generate a permanent conscience and environmental compromise to live in harmony with nature because all creatures, alive and unanimated, are part of it. We are part of a whole, an integral system, one unity in ecologic diversity.

Ecology needs to be considered in this framework of integral human-environment interaction. This explains the relevance of continuing the research from the psychological, sociological and pedagogical perspectives of the human processes of connection with the environment. This is necessary not only to promote a protection of the environmental conscience, but also to promote an ecologic compromise. This is therefore, an integral compromise of equal interaction between humans and the environment as well as between human beings.

2. *Future research should continue to analyse the effects of daily contact with nature on children's: wellbeing, ability to learn and pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours.* The book offers bases to check that the children's direct contact with nature determines their attitudes and behaviours in their adult life - related to the care and environmental conservation (Case Studies 1, 2 and 3 of the book). The subject around the motivations of this connection with nature around social relations in infancy and then in adult life is less researched.

3. *The positive effects of prolonged direct contact with nature as a resource to counteract the negative effects* (E.G. Case Study 4). In this framework, the results presented in the book invite the reader to rethink urbanism and architecture of educative facilities. This is because the current designs avoid the contact with the environment. One ecological plan would reduce the search for special situations that can restore specific harmful effects such as stress or mental fatigue. In short, a plan aimed to work towards

health, instead of correcting the illness, or the lack of wellbeing, should be developed. The urbanisms and scholar plans should be placed in this context of working towards health. The search for new urbanism models is not news. The book outlines one more argument to boost this search.

4. *To continue adapting and generating new intervention programs, designs and evaluation tools along with environmental education from the appointed ecological perspective.*

TRABAJO SOCIAL CON COMUNIDADES

Pastor Seller, E. (2015). Madrid: Universitas
ISBN 978-84-799-1451-6

It is no wonder nowadays that communal is resurgent, being a consequence of socioeconomic and epistemological changes which are product of social complexity. Therefore the gratitude to the author who configure a new work committed to reapproximate to the communitarian perspective of social intervention.

In this work you can find the keys to go in depth into the community social work. In the first chapter, *the local ecosystem: privileged context analysis and community intervention*, the author determines that social relations are connected to post-industrial spaces, coexisting new and old exclusions, justifying the requirement to strengthen participatory formulas which integrate global and local levels to promote a comprehensive development. Prioritized the territorial / local, in the second chapter, *The purpose of Community Social Work from community to social networks*, offers an analytical approach that characterizes the community as an amalgam of organizations and formal and informal relationships, as a network of relational networks; configuring it as the object and subject of practical social intervention.

The third and fourth chapters are devoted to theoretical models in community practice and intervention models *with communities* respectively. In the first of them, *theoretical models in Community Social Work*, the author describes the theoretical approaches (critical and radical, empowerment and advocacy and environmental) that support the community professional intervention. He delves into each of these frameworks but away from the positivist approaches, he emphasizes from them the necessity for education as a tool for members of a community to discover the reality of their situation and develop the specify capabilities for making changes structural. Pastor supports the integration of theoretical models depending on their application needs, considering highly relevant in action a combination of individuals, families and

To sum up, this is a scientific report. It is a really useful book for researchers in psychology, sociology and ecological pedagogy. In addition, it is a reference to use as a starting point in further research aimed at making progress in the effort to promote contact with nature and promote ecological awareness and commitment.

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collective unities social (groups, associations, neighborhoods, etc.).

In the fourth chapter, *community intervention strategies in Social Work*, he identifies the characteristics that differentiate the models of social action, social planning, development of the local community, programmatical development and community-connection. Finally he proposes several approaches of bimodal action that they can be adopted by professionals, product crossroads of several community intervention strategies (social action / planning social action / local development, etc.), arguing that they can respond more effectively to the personal values, social, organizational and political contexts and, ultimately, human development.

In his fifth chapter, *The obligation of social work with comprehensive local social development on a human scale*, the author emphasizes (that) the sustainable development of the territories will be able to strengthened if citizen participation is channeled and citizens are no longer mere recipients of benefits. It reveals that the exercise already said of citizenry in the management of Social Services is a principle contained in the relevant regional laws, exemplifying the synthesis offered on them. It infers that the participation mechanisms are not equally recognized by all these laws; traditional welfare perspective associated with economic poverty persist.

In the sixth part of the work, *Methods and Techniques of Community Social Work*, it bets on a sustainable social change. For this reason, he proposes an integrative methodological process which emphasizes the citizenry participation. It is focusing on processes and tasks, around some circular phases instead of linear. He/the author delve into and establishes relations between each of the stages of investigation-action? research. These relations will implement an effective network of local development (characterization, analysis, in intervention, implementation and validation). Then and for didactic purposes, he approaches to analysis techniques, intervention and research identified as instruments to obtain information on community reality (Delphi, FTA, etc.).

Finally, in the *Scopes and practices of community intervention in Social Work* chapter, he analyzes the spaces that provide opportunities for the development of Community intervention. He argues that in the field of justice the opportunities are limited, being essential to conduct such as intervention before the crime, in a preventive way. It is not so in the other, more disposed to strengthening the local community systems (social services, health, education, housing, etc.). It questions about the community work in the health system, in spite of considering the possibility of community care, attendance is biologicist and satisfaction of specific demands. Afterwards, it offers a view of presen-

ting examples of good practice community practices (STOP Evictions, Cañada Real Galiana, among others).

Definitively, the recent state of the theoretical and methodological positions of Community intervention is presented and it emphasizes the need to an approach from an ecological, educational and reflective stance. It is a text directed to professionals and scholars of social intervention in general and social work in particular, the result of scientific reflection.

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