



## **Reviews**



**Gairín, J. & Ion, G. (Eds.) (2021). *Evidence-based Educational Practices. Reflections, strategies and good practices*. Madrid: Narcea. 280 pages. ISBN: 978-84-277-2802-8**

The present study is a collective work conducted by doctors Gairín and Ion, sharing authorship with the participation of academics from Spanish universities such as Autónoma de Barcelona (UAB), Complutense de Madrid (UCM), Universidad de León (ULE) and the British University of Durham (UD). It compiles the existing knowledge in our context about evidence-based learning (EBL).

This approach is shared by education professionals in educational centres when designing and developing their practice. Evidence constitutes a filter for the development and improvement of teachers' professional careers, as well as management teams. It contributes to the design and development of intervention strategies and procedures linked to reflective practice, trying to enhance it by providing internal or external research data, thus achieving the sustainability of the most successful educational actions. In this sense, the use of evidence in educational practice contributes to the assurance of its quality. Therefore, the basis of EBL is established as a tool to promote, drive, and lead changes, strategic transformation, and educational improvement.

This work compiles the existing knowledge in our context about this improvement proposal focused on basing educational practices on evidence, providing theoretical and practical frameworks that can support the implementation and development of its use in educational centres. The present study represents a useful theoretical and practical resource for the educational community as a whole, proposing strategies, instruments, and good practices in order to support the implementation and development of EBL in educational institutions.

Throughout twelve chapters, distributed into four thematic sections, the study presents the results of the research and theoretical contributions–

national and international—that support the reflections relating to EBL. It also describes good practices observed in educational centres, and proposes strategies and instruments designed and validated within the framework of an R+D+i EBL project (PBETools).

The first section (Rationale) discusses an elaborate conceptual and operational approach to EBL, reflecting on innovations based on research through educational and professional learning networks that explore the role of distributed leadership. The Spanish research on EBL, the improvement plans in educational centres, and, finally, everything known about schools that are sensitive to the use of scientific evidence in their practice were assessed.

The second section (Strategies and Instruments) addresses a whole set of strategies and tools for the development of EBL to improve the working and sharing atmospheres, collaboration and feedback processes, critical reflection, or the evaluation and analysis of the outcomes obtained by the students. The validated design of a training proposal for EBL targeted at educational centres is also presented.

The third section (Good Practices) presents the map of innovations in educational centres, based on the analysis of different innovative experiences. From the teachers' perspective, within the framework of the EBL project, this section presents the knowledge they have acquired about the strategies and resources for the effective use of research in educational practice.

Finally, the fourth and last section of the present study (The Intervention Context) presents the reflective practice of teachers as researchers, educational leadership focused on learning, and teachers' collaborative work, as key elements for changes through EBL in educational centres.

Therefore, by virtue of the aforementioned, it is worth mentioning that the present study is of inestimable value for scholars, researchers, professionals or future professionals in the educational field. This work combines theoretical and practical approaches, providing fundamentals, reflections, strategies, instruments, experiences, and good practices of enormous utility for educational centres and for educational practice based on the use of evidence.

*Patricia Olmos Rueda*

**Bauman, Z. y Portera, A. (2021). *Education and Intercultural Identity. A Dialogue between Zygmunt Bauman and Agostino Portera*. Oxon/ New York: Routledge. 79 pp. ISBN: 978-0-367-642554-9**

Bringing the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman and the Italian pedagogue Agostino Portera into dialogue to discuss education and intercultural identity is a luxury and a good opportunity to bring up to date the major underlying issues that explain many of the challenges we face in education today.

The book is an account of the open conversation between these two intellectuals on the risks and challenges of globalisation and cultural pluralism, the repercussions of which are taking on an emerging dimension in the midst of a pandemic. Bauman offers us his critical view from the concept of liquid modernity and Portera brings us his analysis from the perspective of intercultural education.

In the first chapter, both views converge, diverge and generate new perspectives on the concept of cultural diversity in global society; about a sense of belonging in a neoliberal context that monetarises human relations; and considering territory in a cyberspace that breaks down geographical borders and generates a global interdependence that has to be managed at the local level as a process of *glocalisation*.

From this relational approach, in the second chapter is analysed religious pluralism and the need to connect the religious sense with human dignity and the need to combat poverty, beyond an ornamental approach to diversity. In the face of the failure of the multiculturalist model, religious difference is addressed through the need for dialogue and encounter.

The third chapter is devoted to biodiversity and serious reflection on the possibility of an environmental approach to sustainability in a liquid modernity characterised by “*the ghost of superfluous things*”, as Bauman said. Excess, superabundance and waste coexist with ephemerality, volatility and precariousness, in a model of relationship with nature that is one of domination rather than reciprocity.

The interconnection that Bauman and Portera establish between the challenges of globalisation, cultural pluralism and human and ecological relations is extremely interesting. Interpreting ourselves and others in the world, feeling a sense of belonging and becoming aware of the possibilities of collective action for social transformation are key elements

for education in our times and set the goals of sustainable development in the 2030 Agenda at the international level.

Both authors foreground the role of education in the construction of identity in this society of fragmentation, discontinuity and superficiality of human relationships, challenged and weakened by the satisfaction of individual needs. Our identity is a work of bricolage; of pieces that fit together like a collage of diverse cultural references and influences, not always harmonious and cohesive. On the one hand, the assimilationist approach has failed in a liquid society of multiple identities and multiple belongings. On the other hand, the crisis of the systems of belonging and inclusion, generated by the transport revolution and the weakening of the local community structures, pose the construction of an open and dynamic identity that challenges us to deal with the dialectic between community and individuality. And so young people in particular seek to be part of groups, often mediated by fragile social networks, which are easy to join and also easy to leave.

If we educate in this “global village”, the “neighbourhood” plays a fundamental role in identity formation. In a context where time and space have been compressed and geographical distances have been broken, the concept of neighbourhood takes on a new dimension that is interesting to express the grey zone between anonymity and familiarity.

The educational response proposed in this conversation between Bauman and Portera is based on historical, literary, political and ethical arguments in order to promote intercultural identities from a dialogical and interactive approach between people and nature.

We cannot be spectators but rather feel that we are participants in and responsible for this complex globalisation that puts education for social justice, critical thinking and democratic coexistence at the forefront. It demands humanising education from interculturality, throughout the interaction with the others’ perspective and linked to territories that are not only geographical but also symbolic. It’s there where we can build a dynamic identity that recognises the other as a person and provides us with the agency to transform ourselves and the world around us.

*Auxiliadora Sales Ciges*

**Poehner, M. E. (2008) *Dynamic Assessment, a Vygotskian Approach to Understanding and Promoting L2 Development*. Springer, XII, 202 pages, ISBN 978-0-387-75774-2**

This is a well-structured book in which the author analyses Dynamic Assessment (DA) with a clear and effective writing style. The use of many references and research as the basis for this book makes it valid and trustworthy. The book is divided into two parts: part I chapters one to four, in which the author introduces and explains the concept of DA to make a clear understanding of the theory. In the second part: chapters five to nine, the author provides practical examples to the reader about the DA in L2 classroom practice.

This book is based on the work of the Russian psychologist, L. S. Vygotsky which is carried out 80 years ago. In the first part, the author provides an objective explanation and analysis of assessment and instruction through remarkable background information about the history of assessment. As a reader, it is interesting to see how assessment has gained more and more relevance from the late nineteenth century - standardized testing is no longer seen as the only use of assessment as gathering information but as improvement and growth. This framework helps the reader to understand the crucial place that assessment takes in our current educational systems. Furthermore, in the attempt to connect assessment and instruction, the author mentions researchers such as Lantolf and Frawley, Swain (2001), or McNamara (1997) who argued the position of Oral Proficiency as solo functioning. Research showed it is a property that is affected by the interaction of other individuals on the outcomes. Oral proficiency is not a property in isolation and how the presence of assistance can improve individual growth in language learning. In addition, the author provides example approaches such as task-based to explain the possible integration of assessment and instruction in communicative activities. Furthermore, the term incidental formative assessments (Ellis, 2003) is included to explain differences between helping students overcome the tasks and promotion.

The foundations of the unification of instruction and assessment rely on Vygotsky's understanding of development. According to M. E. Poehner, the term Zone Proximal of Development is fundamental for this subject matter. These studies on the development of cognitive functions revealed a significant outcome, and he highlights the role of the social environment

in learning and the interactive perspective from which Vygotsky addressed it. When teachers observe an individual's performance it is just good for acknowledgment of past development. Solo performance is not enough for growth and learning. The idea of rejecting innate abilities is something that Vygotsky pointed out a long time ago and it is the basis for DA, in which learners' engagement, interaction with others, and cultural devices must be combined for development to occur. Collaboration among individuals promotes learning development. However, teachers may have lots of different instruments to assess students but no clear determination to use and interpret the results from these tests, quizzes, etc. DA procedures not only provide scores and grades but also in words of Matthew E. (2008) "insights into the depth of an individual's abilities, the causes of poor performance, and specific ways of supporting development" (p.6). Following Matthew and the Vygotskian pedagogical perspective, development happens thanks to the active involvement in activities that are beyond the learner's level of ability. In this sense, he points that DA contributes to the integration of assessment and instruction because it establishes learner development as the main goal in classroom activities. The author emphasized the Vygotskian perspective in which assessment is seen as something that provides only insights into the outcomes, the product but not the procedure.

The enormous contribution of this book to the field of language teaching and assessment clearly appears in the second part where practical applications of DA to L2 development are provided and the relationship between assessment and instruction is explicit. Interpreting and interacting are what make the difference in promoting language development. The author argues about the relationships between DA and second language learning and the implementation of the activity in the classroom. What is the impact that it has on learning development? How to put it into practice? These answers are revealed in this part to offer in-depth analysis and discussion on DA in second language learning with practical examples for the potential use of DA in the classroom. In words of M.E Poehner (2008) "successfully constructing a ZPD with learners involves moving beyond a model in which mediation is likened to a medication or treatment that is administered to individuals in measured dosages" (p.104).

The DA is relatively unknown to L2 studies and therefore the book is worth reading. Assessment myths are debunked thanks to this book



that emphasizes the role that assessment has in the L2 classroom along mediator and meaning to promote development. Effective use of dynamic assessment covers much more than information about our current student's level of development. Features crucial to interaction such as the dialogue between mediator and learner are the basis for L2 DA programs.

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