

Cómo conseguir apoyo social valiéndose de la etnografía

Se conseguirá, usándola como vehículo que facilite el cambio social por medio del desarrollo de la comunidad. Se examina el fenómeno desde nuestra perspectiva de trabajadores sociales tanto como desde la de los etnógrafos que hacen investigación de acción. Se atiende a la importancia de la narrativa tanto para la etnografía como para el trabajo social comunitario. Esto no es más que la extensión de la aplicación de un proceso practicado diferencialmente en muchas culturas, pero cierto es que las posibilidades de allegar apoyo social por medio de la narrativa no está confinado a fronteras nacionales. Bien, primero describimos la reconfiguración necesaria para adaptar las intervenciones de trabajo social comunitario al objeto de responder a temas emergentes de la narrativa comunitaria. Luego examinaremos los ajustes obligados para aplicar la etnografía al desarrollo de la comunidad. El ciclo de experiencia—aprendizaje—teoría que se describe sugiere a los trabajadores sociales la reconfiguración de su práctica.

Foster parents for persons with mental retardation in Israel

This study examines two questions: what motivates Israeli mothers to choose the role of foster parents for persons with mental retardation? How do they see their role, as parental or as non-parental? The population studied comprised 130 foster mothers for persons with mental retardation. The primary findings were that foster mothers' child-related motivation was positively associated to their view of the foster persons' advancement in terms of level of functioning, and that foster parents who viewed their role as parental reported a higher quality of contact with the foster persons. Findings are interpreted in respect to policy and practice.

Des parents nourriciers pour déficients mentaux en Israël

L'étude dont il est question dans le présent article pose deux questions: quelles raisons poussent des mères israéliennes à choisir le rôle de parent nourricier pour des personnes atteintes de retard mental? Et comment conçoivent-elles leur rôle, se voient-elles comme parent ou simple gardienne? La population étudiée comprend 130 mères nourricières de déficients mentaux. Les premières conclusions démontrent que l'attitude des mères nourricières qui concevaient leur rôle comme parent était associée de façon positive au progrès du comportement de leurs protégés et qu'elles avaient un meilleur contact avec eux. L'article poursuit en interprétant ces conclusions en fonction de la politique et de la pratique.

Padres adoptivos de retrasados mentales en Israel

Se examinan dos cuestiones: ¿qué motiva a las madres israelis a optar por ser madres adoptivas de retrasados mentales, y cómo conciben su papel: maternal o no maternal? El estado abarca 130 madres adoptivas, con el resultado primario de que la motivación está asociada positivamente con el hecho de que las madres adoptivas perciben su propio progreso de funcionamiento, y con que las que entre aquéllas conciben su papel como un papel maternal arrojan más alto nivel de contacto con sus pupilos. Se interpretan los resultados con respecto a la política y la práctica de servicio social.

Book reviews

Steyaert, J. (ed.) (1996) *Information Technology and Human Services: More Than Computers?* Utrecht: Netherland Institute for Care and Welfare

This is an edited book of papers delivered at a conference sponsored by Causa, the innovation center of the Institute of Higher Professional Education, Eindhoven. The application of information technology to human services is a very timely topic as both governmental and non-governmental organizations confront the need for efficiency and effectiveness in human services while maintaining the quality of care. Ignace Snellen's introductory paper sets the context. Snellen has a wonderfully clear grasp of the recent changes in social policy and administration in Europe, and the importance of information technology applications over a wide range of problems. In a very concise and readable fashion, he looks at how both professionals and clients can benefit from the increased use of information technology. He also understands the potential problems that increased technology poses.

The bulk of the book deals with the importance of information technology in three specific areas: paying for care, care management, and professional practice. In each area, a keynote paper is presented. Howard Glennerster neatly outlines the information needs of a variety of applications in payment for care. Hans van Ewijk deftly handles the issues in care management, while Walter Hudson pleads the case for the use of Empirical Social Work Practice (ESWP) in demonstrating service outcome accountability. Each keynote paper is followed by several reaction papers. These reaction papers are intended to stimulate discussion. This procedure does not quite work for the first two topics. The reaction papers, while instructive and worth reading for their own content, fail to offer much of a challenge to the keynote papers. In fairness to the writers, there is little in Glennerster's and van Ewijk's papers that is controversial and I can't find anything important to quarrel with either.

Walter Hudson's keynote paper is a different story. Hudson is a true believer in using standardized tests and single-case time-series designs as the exclusive ways of demonstrating client improvement. The reaction papers challenge the simplicity of Hudson's approach. In the most pungent reaction, Joe Ravetz points out that 'The properties of mathematics and chess are not attainable in human service domains' (p. 159) and that Hudson's model fails to account for external effects in client improvement. The critics could also have noted that single-case designs also suffer from a lack of comparison with any outside standard of improvement.

The discussions in this book are much more sophisticated than similar discussions in America. Clearly, the Europeans are ahead of us again. The papers are in admirably clear English, free of cyber-jargon, and one does not have to be a computer nerd to understand them. The book can be profitably read both by practitioners and scholars of social policy, because it gives a clear picture of the growing importance of information technology and its potential for enhancing practice and policy.

Charles R. Atherton

Professor Emeritus, School of Social Work, University of Alabama