

her mother's partner in the Chelsea flat where coal came up, and rubbish down, a little lift outside the kitchen window. It is a story of a life lived in over 50 bedrooms and across countless kitchen tables, from Walls ice-cream in West Ham to chick-pea fritters in the Sudan.

Home is, finally, an autobiography. Professor Tizard explains that though she originally intended this memoir to cover her early life, up until she, as a young mother, finished her PhD, she later decided to extend it into a selective account of her life to date. In doing so, it became the autobiography of a truly impressive and inspiring child, girl, young woman and older woman, a self-pronounced rebel who nevertheless searched out – and won – conventional approval in the form of degrees, awards and prizes. It describes a person did things her way and frequently had to do them on her own: her school German exam, her doctoral thesis, and perhaps this book. This book has not been edited for maximum commerciality. It reads less like a polished stone of a carefully crafted memoir and more like an oral account told on a quiet Sunday afternoon, where the teller has plenty of time for digressions and is at ease to decide what to add and when. And why not? If there is ever a time when a writer is entitled to tell it her way, surely this is it.

And yet, in keeping with the contradictions running throughout its pages, for all its un-literary-ness, *Home* is also written with the skilful use of what could be called two literary devices, more associated with the novel. The first is the occasional use of what literary studies calls an 'unreliable narrator,' in this case, Barbara as a girl. For most of the memoir, Professor Tizard, the older woman, writes of her younger self, not as her younger self. However, very occasionally (for example when explaining her mother's constant absences during her childhood) she writes from the perspective of her much younger self. This conjures up the child and, sitting her beside the older woman, says far more about this particular mother-daughter relationship, as well as about adult recollection of childhood understandings, than an adult comment would be able to express. The second occurs in her very last paragraph. After discussing the pleasures of friends and family in old age, lest 'I may seem smug' (305) the author reveals in one devastating line a series of painful experiences – tragedies even – that she has chosen *not* to write about, leaving the reader to reinterpret the previous 304 pages in a new, and humbled, light.

A foolproof test of the quality of a book is what one *does* immediately after finishing it. When I finished *Home is where one starts from*, I wrote myself a list of things that I had to read, starting with Professor Tizard's own research, and ending with an account of London life during the Blitz, and the works of Karl Popper. But first I felt slightly sad to have finished.

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Key issues for education researchers, by Diana Burton and Steve Bartlett, London, Sage Publications, 2009, 192 pp., £19.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-1847873583

Causation in educational research, by Keith Morrison, Abingdon, Routledge, 2009, 256 pp., £20.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-0415496490

Key issues for education researchers is part of a series, 'Key issues in education studies', published by Sage Publications. The core text in the series, *Introduction to education studies* (Bartlett and Burton 2007) is written by the same authors so as a result the two books complement each

other. This book is explicitly aimed at students of education studies and related subjects, those who as part of their professional development are returning to the study of education and students who are embarking on masters level research. All these students need to be able to critically evaluate and make use of research in their field of study so understanding how such research is conducted and the limitations of various types of data is vital.

The book proceeds in a logical order, starting with a simple and clear consideration of the nature and purpose of research. Then there is a short, but effective, examination of action research that moves on to a consideration of practitioner research in the British school system. This chapter follows a standard layout used in the rest of the book with an introductory summary paragraph, a number of boxes giving a 'student activity' distributed throughout the main body of the text and ends with a concluding paragraph. Finally, the authors present some recommended reading accompanied by a brief explanation of why those items are worth reading. For a book that will be used by students, I think this approach works well.

Research paradigms and social perspectives are next considered, with a brief introduction to ontology, epistemology, the positivist and interpretivist paradigms and ethnography before a discussion of reliability, validity and triangulation. Although these are substantial topics, the authors deal with them appropriately for an introductory text and the use of an extended case study of a research practitioner helps bring these ideas into focus. Case studies are again used well in the subsequent chapter to illustrate the practical application of ethical concerns. Next, there is a chapter dedicated to 'Getting started: Beginning a research project', which I think works very well as there are explicit examples of the design process for research projects on 'Student transition into higher education' and 'Pupil truancy' with examples of a data collection plan and a research timeline. This chapter is followed by one on accessing and using literature, which discusses the purposes of a literature review, how to critique research studies, types of sources and how to write a literature review. Given the limited space available, the authors have provided an excellent overview that will be very useful to students who have not tackled such issues before.

Next we move on to chapters covering case studies (with three examples of case studies examined), experiments, questionnaires, interviews, observation and an informative chapter on research biographies and logs. These are very strong, although I think restricting the discussion of the experimental approach to just one page is an opportunity missed as the strengths of such an approach are consequently overlooked. Examples (such as transcript codes, an extract from an interview transcript and a student teacher weekly reflective log) are used to bring the other methods to life and I think students will find these very helpful in understanding how they might apply these methods. Indeed, the chapter on the use of existing documents has one example – the report of a pupil from a primary school in a town in the West Midlands in 2003 – that spans almost seven pages. The final chapter is on writing up and refers back to relevant chapters to help students in this task. Finally, there is an extensive bibliography detailing appropriate reading that more advanced students will find very useful to identify their further reading.

Overall, the book is a success and a remarkable achievement for what is a relatively short introductory text. However, students will have to ensure that they take advantage of the further reading to ensure that they fully understand the relevant issues in education research.

Causation in educational research is a contrast to *Key issues for education researchers* with engagement with philosophical theory and more advanced research designs. In the preface, Morrison states that:

... this book provides an introduction to causation, sets out key debates, and, above all, seeks to raise practical and theoretical matters, problems and their solutions in understanding causation. It is strongly practical in intent. If it makes researchers cautious of having any sense of certainty at all about causation, then this small volume will have done its work.

Morrison achieves these aims with a book that focuses on the practical while still engaging with the theoretical.

After a brief introductory chapter of four and a half pages, there are five substantive chapters: 'Tools for understanding causation', 'Probabilistic causation', 'Approaching cause and effect', 'Determining the effects of causes' and 'Determining causes from effects'. The final chapter provides an overview of the argument in the book together with prospects and challenges under the heading 'Causation: Effective, inconsequential or a lost cause?' The first of these five chapters, 'Tools for understanding causation', makes use of the work of philosophers such as Hume, Mill and Russell as well as worked examples and a number of clear figures to help the reader better understand the issues relating to causation. A particularly nice, and effective, touch is that each section in these chapters is followed by a box listing 'Implications for researchers'. The next chapter on 'Probabilistic causation' begins with a worked example of small class teaching before exploring various aspects of probability. This chapter includes seven examples exploring the use of control and two other examples on qualitative and ethnographic research. With such a great deal of content it is no surprise that the chapter is almost 80 pages long, but this length is not a problem. Instead, the chapter provides a coherent body of work that will tax some readers but will help them to understand the issues if they persevere with it.

The chapter on 'Approaching cause and effect' explains the stages in identifying causation with good use of worked examples and a particularly strong section that looks at alternative explanations of results. The subsequent chapter on 'Determining the effects of causes' provides the detail that is missing from the previous book in this review with an extensive consideration of experimental methods as well as a few pages on action research. The last of the five substantive chapters, 'Determining causes from effects', focuses on case studies and detailed examples with the emphasis on the role of intervention.

Morrison deserves a great deal of praise for this book as he has attempted to produce an intellectually demanding text that rewards the careful student; fortunately, he has succeeded. In a very practical book, he has managed to introduce some complicated philosophical concepts and ensured that their relevance is clear to the reader. I would hope that students who have mastered Burton and Bartlett's text would find Morrison's book to be the next step in their development as critical researchers in education. I also hope that more established academics will take the time to work through Morrison's book. Doing so will enable them to reflect on their practice through the lens of causation to understand how they might improve as researchers.

Reference

Bartlett, S., and D. Burton. 2007. *Introduction to education studies*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

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Key issues in education policy, by Stephen Ward and Christine Eden, London, Sage, 2009, 184 pp., £19.99 (paperback), £60 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-84787-465-5

There are many occasions when, as a policy-maker in teacher education, I need an accessible source of information about one or more current and key issues in education as a starting point