

Last words

We have all learnt that numbers have a certain symbolic value; as much for Pythagoras, as for the Bible. Specifically, the number 40 holds particular significance within the Bible: it is referenced more than a hundred times, in many ways representing a time frame in which an important task is carried out. Thus, Jesus Christ spends 40 days in the desert and 40 days on Earth after the resurrection, while in the *Old Testament* the flood lasted 40 days, and the Israelites wandered for 40 years before reaching the promised land.

In light of all this, I consider that I have reached the *promised land* of retirement, having served on the editorial board of the **Revista Española de Pedagogía** for 40 years. I think the results we have seen over these years have been fundamentally positive. A total of 130 issues have been published, featuring 1,069 articles written by 1,164 authors. From the very beginning I fought for quality and openness to all, including those who were just starting to put out relevant work. As time went by, we adapted to international publishing standards, both in terms of presenting original works, as well as the timeliness of their publication. We strived to get the journal into the most important libraries in the West and introduced novel features, including special issues and articles by foreign authors published in English. We then began publishing issues on our website, in good time so as to prevent losing subscriptions, and providing open access to an article from each issue from the very beginning, as well as book reviews. Finally, in 2017, we decided that the entire issue would be published online in Spanish and English, while the printed version would only be in Spanish, providing a single *DOI* to articles in both languages.

These efforts have met with great success. The journal's readership and citation statistics show good results, and we have received international public recognition. It is impossible to determine the exact number of readers, since journals are read far and wide. One potential figure is provided by Google Analytics, which we started working

with in mid-2017. It says that over this time, up to the start of 2023, we have received 1,863,355 hits, counting only the 500 most read articles. According to Google's statistics for 2022, the journal had 154,444 readers, mostly from Mexico (55,573), Spain (30,430) and Colombia (13,110), with the top 22 places being mostly Spanish-speaking countries. However, the USA took the 9th spot, while Brazil was 20th.

The number of citations is also difficult to pinpoint, as there are so many education journals around the world, with each database having different selection criteria for suggesting journals to its readers. These databases sometimes require a subscription to access their content, but there are statistics available for all to see, such as those offered by *Dialnet*, which collects data from some 230 journals of special relevance within our cultural environment. Among the *Dialnet* rankings, the journal has always been in the *first quartile* and has gone from an impact factor of 0.65 in 2016, the first year of online publication, totalling 88 citations, to an impact factor of 1.30, with 161 citations in 2021, the last publication year recorded.

It is worth comparing these data with those collected in the *SCImago SJR2022*, last year's results for which were released on 2 May: some highly relevant journals have dropped in quartile, although not the **Revista Española de Pedagogía**, which remains exactly in the middle of the second quartile as number 16 in the list of 74 Spanish journals included in the Education section. This classification is not always clear, however, which explains the difference in citations compared to *Dialnet*.

Meanwhile, two international developments have been especially significant. One day, on 22 August 2006, I received a letter from an international company offering me to feature in several of their databases. As I receive numerous proposals from overseas offering to buy the journal, or payment for featuring articles from lesser-known places, I didn't respond immediately. However, after closer consideration of the proposal, I accepted. This led our journal to become the first in Spanish to be included in the *Education & Educational Research* section, among a very select group of some 120 journals from all over the world, 95% of which were in English. This was in *Journal Citation Reports*, which, over time, has acquired great prominence when it comes to applying for six-year research fellowships. Many years have passed, and we are still in there, delighted that the number of Spanish journals included (some with English titles) has increased to 10, the total number reaching 270, and only a few journals having been withdrawn during these years. By all means, hoping to achieve a high number of citations in English journal databases seems a little naïve to me. In fact, that section of *JCR* features only one Spanish journal among the first quartile, called *Comunicar*, thus demonstrating its distance from pedagogy. This is known to *JCR*, which has no qualms about its databases including a few quality, significant journals published in other cultural contexts, with a lower number of citations.

A similar thing happened a while ago with *JSTOR*, another American database that, since its founding, has offered a complete collection of the best scientific journals from around the world, very few of them being in Spanish. I also accepted their proposal, after thinking about how to send them the complete collection from 1943 onwards. They send me various statistics every year, and with regard to their readership, I was surprised to learn that readers from 150 countries had read the journal since it was first included in *JSTOR*. Practically every year, people had read various articles, book reviews or news items published in the journal from when it was founded in 1943 to the present day, reviving the titles of the 4,971 works published over these 80 years, which not only had been read since the journal joined *JSTOR*, but also downloaded. This figure really caught my attention. Without a doubt, there is reason to be proud of being among the very limited number of educational research journals from around the world that have kept going for over 80 years without a break or so much as a name change. But that pride is further enhanced when you realise that articles from dozens of years ago are still being read.

Of course, reaching these standards has required the work of many different people, including academic/administrative secretaries and the numerous referees who have voluntarily reviewed our articles in line with the double-blind policy. I would hereby like to express my appreciation to all of them for their contribution towards creating a journal that cares for quality, both in terms of their time dedicated to correcting any errors overlooked by the authors, as well as assessing the argumentation and originality of the articles.

But the first indication of quality for any journal is whether its Board members are solvent. Therefore, with these last words of farewell, I wish to express my special gratitude to all those who, over the years, have collaborated from this special place that is the Board.

Naturally, a journal cannot survive if it is not sought by potential authors, nor read by the intended readers. I have never had an issue with a lack of authors, since a great number of them have sent original works, and I'm terribly sorry that the great majority of them have been unable to publish here. Nor can I complain about the readers, since, as I've already pointed out, it is clear that the journal has enjoyed a vast readership from all around the world. My thanks goes out to every one of them.

And perhaps I should also take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to those who will take up this Olympic torch.

My warmest regards,

José Antonio Ibáñez-Martín

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