

**The psychology of education**, by Martyn Long, Clare Wood, Karen Littleton, Terri Passenger and Kieron Sheehy, London, Routledge, 2011, £75 (hardback), £24.99 (paperback), 438 pp., ISBN 978-0-415-48689-7 (hardback), 978-0-415-48690-3 (paperback)

This book is aimed at undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as trainee teachers. It covers key topics in the psychology of education literature and discusses theories and research findings that have direct implications for teaching and learning. In this second edition of their book, Long, Wood, Littleton, Passenger and Sheehy have updated all chapters and enriched them with engaging activities and practical scenarios that serve as points for reflection and discussion. They have also added a chapter on learning interactions and social worlds. As the book is primarily aimed at a tertiary education student population, the book has been designed to be used as a reference book and/or textbook covering key applications of psychological knowledge in education settings.

The book is comprised of 13 chapters. In chapter 1 ('Introduction to psychology and education: Some essential background'), the authors discuss the different methodologies used in psychological investigations and argue that these can facilitate our understanding of educational processes. Chapter 2 ('Learning') begins by reviewing the key theories related to learning such as behaviourism, social constructivism, sociocultural theory and their implications for education. At the end of the chapter the authors discuss more recent developments in the field, such as educational neuropsychology and the use of ICT to optimise students' learning experiences. Chapter 3 ('Assessment') discusses the different facets of learning that assessment can provide information for (attainment, knowledge, skill, understanding and aptitude). They then move on to consider the functions of assessment and the different types of testing that can be used by teachers such as standardised tests, observational techniques, checklists and interviews. Chapter 4 ('Individual differences and achievement') focuses on the uniqueness of individual students and discuss that teaching methods should be adapted to meet children's individual needs. The authors discuss individual differences in the context of intelligence, creativity, problem solving, thinking skills, cognitive style and personality. Chapter 5 ('Student engagement and motivation') discusses the importance of motivation for education and reviews the implications of motivation-related concepts such as achievement motivation, attributions, academic self-concept and self-efficacy for learning. Chapter 6 ('The educational context') begins by discussing evidence related to primary and secondary school effectiveness and then moves on to consider how the physical environment, the organisation of pupils and teaching, as well as teaching style and classroom management can affect student progress. Chapter 7 ('Society and culture') takes a broader perspective and looks at the functions of education in society, as well as how social phenomena such as poverty can limit educational progress. The authors also consider the gender gap in society and discuss how gender inequalities in achievement are manifested through differences between boys' and girls' educational attainment. Chapter 8 ('Learning interactions and social worlds') focuses on interactions between teacher and pupils, as well as between peers. The authors review Vygotskian theory on the zone of proximal development and scaffolding to illustrate the importance of teacher-pupil interactions. They also discuss Piagetian theory on socio-cognitive conflict to show how children can expand their knowledge through peer interaction. They also review literature on the types of talk that children engage in when working together (cumulative, disputational and exploratory). They also discuss the importance of interactions outside the classroom context, such as the playground. Chapter 9 ('Language') reviews the characteristics and major theories of language development. The authors then move on to consider the relationship between language and

thought, and finally discuss implications of language development for education. The discuss issues such as second language learning, speech and language problems, and special provisions for pupils with language difficulties. Chapter 10 ('Literacy') focuses on teaching children how to read and reviews the reading difficulties that pupils often experience. Authors then review the different types of tests that can be used to assess reading ability. Chapter 11 ('Inclusive education') begins by discussing whether inclusive education is effective in catering for the needs of children with special educational needs. The authors then provide a very useful breakdown of the different ways in which special educational needs are conceptualised, before outlining the special educational needs and inclusive education provision legislation in England and Wales, and Scotland. They also review the different types of special educational needs, such as cognition/learning and sensory/physical needs. The role of educational psychologists is also discussed. Chapter 12 ('Behaviour problems') reviews psychological theories explaining the causes of educational and behavioural difficulties, and also considers the role of gender, home environment and school environment. Research that suggests a medical basis for these problems is also reviewed. Finally, authors consider the assessment of behavioural difficulties and review approaches employed, such as teacher/pupil questionnaires and standardised tests, whole school approaches and classroom observation techniques. Chapter 13 ('Dealing with behavioural problems') reviews techniques for managing problem behaviour such as the use of rewards/punishment and time-out, and discusses how a behaviour modification programme can be implemented in practice. Other techniques such as cognitive and medical approaches are also discussed. The authors also discuss school-based behaviour programmes and special-needs provision for behaviour problems.

The brief description of the various topics covered in the chapters indicates that the book offers a wide coverage of literature surrounding key psychological theories, their application to education and their contribution to our understanding teaching and learning processes. Other advantages of the book include the use of practical scenarios. This approach is extremely useful as key educational psychology related issues are brought to life, which can facilitate understanding. The practical scenarios are presented at the beginning of each chapter (so that the reader can keep them mind whilst reading the chapter) and then a discussion follows at the end of the chapter, which is a way to consolidate understanding and encourage critical thinking. At the end of each chapter the authors summarise the key information and the implications for teaching learning, which serve as a useful reminder and also put in context the material previously presented. Figures and diagrams are used throughout the book to illustrate key points and theories. The Appendix, which provides a brief description of some of the statistical techniques mentioned in the book, will be very beneficial to the readers. Finally, the extensive list of references will be a useful resource for students and researchers.

A key contribution of this book is that it directly relates the material to classroom experiences by including practical scenarios and discussing implications for education in a clear and informative manner. It will be an invaluable resource to students, as well as lecturers in psychology and education related courses.

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