Book Reviews

Welcome to the first book reviews section of the International Journal of Emotional Education. Our aim in this part of the journal is to provide frank reviews of the latest publications in this rapidly expanding field. In this and future issues we will be reviewing a wide range of academic and practitioner-oriented texts. The reviews provided below have all been completed by colleagues at the University of Manchester, UK. However, we would greatly welcome offers from other ENSEC members who feel that they can spare the time to read and review one of our new books for a future reviews section. If you are interested in volunteering to act as a book reviewer, please email neil.humphrey@manchester.ac.uk and I will send you a list of our available texts.

1. Effective Group Work with Young People

Unlike some books on group work that essentially focus on its management in learning, therapy or other service delivery contexts, or act as guides to setting tasks and projects for groups to work on, this book has set out to be refreshingly different.

Aimed primarily at assisting practitioners involved in young people's personal learning development, (PLD), this book sets out to act as a guide to supporting the needs, concerns, aspirations and wishes of those young people. We all readily acknowledge that our lives are becoming increasingly more complex. Through the chapters in this book, educationalists, careers advisors, learning mentors and other support service providers are guided through how to assist young people in coping with such difficulties as anger management, self esteem issues, relationship building and self awareness.

Encouraging young people to express themselves can be fraught with difficulties for both parties and this book provides sound guidance and advice on how this can be effectively accomplished through group work. Although the emphasis is primarily on group working in educational settings, it nevertheless has relevance also for practitioners working in counselling, therapy, mental health and youth work settings. It guides the practitioner through the essentials of preparation, planning and structuring of group sessions and provides templates that can be used to evaluate sessions and monitor the development of group participants over time. Using five case studies involving 'group leaders' from a range of backgrounds, (a careers advisor, learning mentor, personal advisor, teenage pregnancy advisor, and youth worker), the reader is taken through the initial planning and facilitation processes involved in group work in a clear and direct style.

Each of the ten chapters are designed to be 'stand alone'. All have learning objectives, summaries and useful 'activity boxes' and are suitably but not excessively referenced to existing literature. This accessible format enables the material to be used both for the purposes of personal study and continuing professional development (CPD), as well as acting as a practical reference for practitioners needing structured guidance and practical advice on how to manage and evaluate group work with sometimes 'hard to engage' young people. Unlike some books that tend to theorise and not deliver in terms of explicitly providing guidance to group leaders, this book will help those embarking on there first group work with young people but will also be a useful resource to draw on when practitioners are asked to evaluate and provide evidence of effectiveness of group working as part of an evaluation of their own service delivery.

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2. The Handbook of Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy: Psychoanalytic Approaches (2nd Edition)

Every now and again a book comes to your attention that proves useful for a specific task at hand. Thus, as a Counselling Psychologist putting together a taught module introducing therapeutic theory and counselling skills to trainee Child and Educational Psychologists, this text potentially had a great deal to offer. But, did it come up with the goods?

Firstly on reviewing the text, the book looked very relevant. I was also slightly reassured by the rather conservative look to the text – in particular, the book does not have a rather ambiguous image of a sullen looking child or young person on its front cover and there is no evidence of the use of the 'comic sans' font throughout. Such presentation may only be one of my dislikes, and of course we should not judge a book on its cover, but it does give the sense of what's inside. With this in mind, the content proved no surprise. The book is logically presented and divided into four major sections (1) theoretical foundations, (2) context, (3) diversity of treatments and settings, and (4) areas of specialist interest. Broadly speaking, these move from the theoretical roots of child and adolescent psychotherapy through the place it has in today's culture before exploring practice issues (ranging from those that are relatively generic to those more specific in nature). Importantly, each chapter is well written has been clearly produced by individuals well versed in the subject matter.

When considering the strengths and weaknesses of the text it is relatively simple to assess. As noted above, the chapters are well written and informed – I particularly valued the initial contributions which provided a readable introduction to the work. The practice elements also include some useful case examples that bring to life the concepts that are discussed. On the downside, for me, the text appeared relatively inward looking. Although the 'context' section does explicitly look outwards (at different contexts and professions) it does feel like a text deeply entrenched in the psychoanalytic approach with a medical model view of the world. For instance, the mention of allied interventions such as counselling in schools or the recent social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) initiatives may have provided useful yardsticks for outsiders looking in. Additionally, as the authors readily acknowledge in their introduction "It is not, in any common sense, a handbook – there is no intent to train the reader who will not, in turn, emerge as a child psychotherapist from the reading." It aims to "broaden knowledge about the profession and the range of work with children and young people that this adaptation of psychoanalysis encourages." Although this clearly isn't the snappy title that publishers require - a 'handbook' does have a certain ring to it - it realistically sums up the book more accurately. Therefore those after more than an overview of the topics in the text may be better served by more specific texts. For me, it proved perfect for my preparing for a new term.

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3. *Child Psychology: a Contemporary Viewpoint (7th edition)*

Child Psychology: a contemporary viewpoint is aimed at college students and their instructors, and has been reorganised and shortened to facilitate teaching over four semesters. In this latest edition, the authors claim to have deleted 900 outdated references and replaced them with 600 current, mostly 21st century sources. Seminal works have been retained, however, and integrated with more recent approaches, such as dynamic systems and evolutionary theories and socio-cultural perspectives. There is also updated material on contemporary issues, including family diversity; however, as this focuses on the American family, its relevance to other cultural settings may be reduced.

The first two chapters on theory and research methodology have been condensed into one to allow students to access the main content more quickly. This has resulted in the inclusion of key issues such as multiple influences on development in the epilogue rather than in an extended first chapter. The introduction of these themes at an earlier stage would have allowed these issues to be referred to more frequently and usefully throughout the book and served to highlight the dynamic and often uncertain nature of the discipline and encourage a more questioning attitude among students. This would be particularly useful, as, in common with other books in this category, the text at times reads like a list of immutable facts about child development.

As in similar textbooks, each topic-based chapter begins with an outline of its contents and concludes with a summary, often usefully comprehensive. Key concepts are in bold type in the text and explained in both the margin and a full glossary. Information boxes in most chapters reflect three key themes: 'Child Psychology in Action', which links basic and applied research, 'Risk and Resilience' and 'Perspectives in Diversity' which often links to cross-cultural and intercultural influences on development. This is an important and recurring theme throughout the text, although the full significance or implications of these influences is not always fully explored.

This book benefits from the very useful inclusion in each chapter of a 'Making the Connections' diagram which links the content to associated topics in other chapters, thus highlighting the inter-relatedness of development across domains, an aspect which is often too easily lost in topic-based and thematically organised chapters. The 'Explore and Discuss' sections at the end of each chapter offer a limited number of study questions, which usefully support students' self-assessment of knowledge and understanding of the chapter ; some of the more challenging and thought-provoking questions may also be useful for classroom based discussion. Additional supplementary web-based material provides more (multiple-choice) questions and other resources such as videos and flashcards for students and a manual, powerpoint slides and a video database for instructors, although these may not be available outside the US.

There is little to distinguish this book from its main competitors, including US-centric content (although this particular issue is partially compensated for by the frequent inclusion of cross-cultural studies). Overall, it provides a comprehensive, accessible and contemporary introduction to the study of child development and as such, may deserve a place on undergraduate reading lists as supplementary reading.

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4. *Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Diversity* (Second Edition)

Writing a text on the topic of SEN and inclusion could be considered particularly challenging, not only because of the difficult and complex nature of the issues involved, but also because rapidly changing opinion and research constantly redefines what should be included and how to accurately portray the relevant perspectives. However, the authors appear to have overcome these considerable barriers to produce an engaging and authoritative text.

'Special Education Needs, Inclusion and Diversity (2nd Ed.)' represents the culmination of previously published works by the authors, including text from the first edition, and completely new material which expands the range of SEN covered and updates work on recent legislation and current UK initiatives in schools.

The scope of the text is ambitious as the text is split into three distinct topics, each of which could warrant a book by itself. Topics covered include a discussion on the principles and concepts of special education needs, the issues in assessment and identification of SEN, and the largest section details the current issues in a range of areas including language, literacy, SEBD and socio-emotional wellbeing. Despite the breadth of material included, the depth and extent to which each chapter discusses the major issues is not diminished. The reviewer does not claim expertise to assess the accuracy of all areas of this book (which are particularly diverse in the third section and include sensory needs, literacy, SEBD and social and emotional wellbeing, among others), but for the more familiar topics, critical insight and appropriate references appear abundant.

The topics focus on the nature of current thinking and government policy in regards to inclusion and diversity as a whole, as well as policy in regards to specific learning needs. This makes the book particularly compelling as a contemporary text as many of the cited examples of current policy are very recent (e.g. Assessment for Learning, Secondary SEAL programme). The inclusion of both UK and US policy and research provides particularly pleasing comparisons and helps highlight the context in which the research and policy operates.

The inclusion of learning objectives at the beginning of each chapter and activities may be of interest to those teaching or learning on education courses, and although the complexity of some of the issues may make this an advanced text for some undergraduates, this is not as a result of the fluidity of the authors style, which is compelling.

The text on the back-cover suggests the textbook is recommended for student teachers, newly qualified teachers, trainee educational psychologists and special needs co-ordinators. The reviewer tentatively suggests that this text is also of interest to anyone working or researching within the area of inclusion and SEN, including head-teachers, researchers and those involved in policy. This is a highly recommendable text.

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5. *Social and Emotional Development (Critical Concepts in Psychology Series*)

This four-volume set is a landmark publication in the field. It brings together seminal publications from leading authors over the last few decades in an 'anthology' that will doubtlessly become the first port of call for anyone writing or researching social and emotional development. The only downside of this mini-library is the inevitably steep price tag – around £600 – which will put it out of the reach of all but the most enthusiastic readers. As such, it is much more likely that this will become a text adopted by institutional libraries rather than one bought by individuals.

The four volumes are organised as follows: the first covers methods and models in developmental psychology, with 24 papers from influential figures such as Jay Belsky, Judy Dunn, and Michael Rutter. The section on methods covers strategies for data generation and analysis in the field. The section on models covers theory, social cognition, process, life span, and psychopathology issues. The remaining volumes take the reader through childhood and adolescence in chronological order. Thus, volume 2 explores infancy and early childhood, and contains 26 papers from authors such as Kenneth Rubin, Jerome Kagan and Susanne Denham. Of particular note in this volume was the excellent section on factors associated with (and predictive of) young children's social and emotional development, which ranged from activation in the frontal lobes to early family experiences.

The third volume looks at development during the school-age years, and includes 24 papers from authors that include Kenneth Dodge, Carol Dweck and Linda Rose-Krasnor. A particularly noteworthy section of this volume (for ENSEC members in particular) covers diversity and contextual issues – including, for example, a paper by Xinyin Chen and colleagues that examines social reputation and peer relationships in Chinese and Canadian children. The fourth and final volume completes the developmental journey by examining social and emotional development during adolescence. Here we have 24 papers by authors that include Susan Harter, Nancy Eisenberg and Jacquelynne Eccles.

The papers reproduced in *Social and Emotional Development* were originally published in the period 1963-2005, and so one could argue that a few of the older ones may be somewhat out of date (although the counter argument is, of course, that they are seminal works). Also, with the excellent access to journals (both electronically and in hard copy) that most higher education institutions offer these days, the vast majority could be accessed for little or no cost. That said, it is nice to have such an excellent and comprehensive text directly to hand, and so if you can afford it yourself or can persuade your librarian to spend a chunk of the library budget, it comes highly recommended.

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