

FIFTY MODERN THINKERS ON EDUCATION

Fifty Modern Thinkers on Education looks at fifty of the most significant contributors of modern times to the debate on education. Among those included are:

- Pierre Bourdieu
- Elliot Eisner
- Hans J. Eysenck
- Michel Foucault
- Henry Giroux
- Jürgen Habermas
- Susan Isaacs
- A.S. Neill
- Jean Piaget
- Simone Weil

Together with *Fifty Major Thinkers on Education* this books provides a unique history of educational thinking. Each essay gives key biographical information, an outline of the individual's principal achievements and activities, an assessment of their impact and influence, a list of their major writings and suggested further reading.

Joy A. Palmer is Professor of Education and Pro-Vice-Chancellor at the University of Durham, England. She is Vice-President of the National Association for Environmental Education and a member of the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication.

Advisory Editors: **Liora Bresler** is Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. **David E. Cooper** is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Durham.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Anderson, James D. is Professor and Head of the Department of Educational Policy Studies, College of Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA.

Apple, Michael W. is John Bascom Professor of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA.

Ardichvili, Alexander is Assistant Professor in the Department of Human Resource Education, the College of Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA.

Bonnett, Michael is Senior Lecturer in Education at Homerton College, Cambridge, England.

Bragg, Debra D. is Associate Professor at the College of Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA.

Bresler, Liora is Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, USA.

Burbules, Nicholas C. is Professor in the Department of Educational Policy Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA.

Callan, Eamonn is Professor of Education at Stanford University, California, USA.

Cooper, David E. is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Durham, England.

Dobbs, Stephen Mark is Executive Vice-President of the Bernard Osher Foundation and Adjunct Professor of Humanities at San Francisco State University, California, USA.

Eisner, Elliot W. is Lee Jacks Professor of Education and Professor of Art, Stanford University, California, USA.

Feinberg, Eleanor is a registered psychologist in private practice, with special interest in Self Psychology, based in Illinois, USA.

Feinberg, Walter is Professor of Education Policy Studies at the College of Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA.

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Fitz-Gibbon, Carol Taylor is Professor of Education and Director of the Curriculum, Evaluation and Management Centre at the University of Durham, England.

Flinders, David J. is Associate Professor in The School of Education, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, USA.

Gabbard, David A. is Associate Professor in the School of Education at East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

Gandin, Luís Armando is Professor of Sociology of Education, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil.

Gardner, Howard is Professor in the Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA.

Goodson, Ivor F. is Professor at the Centre for Applied Research in Education, University of East Anglia, Norwich, England.

Grossman, Pam is Professor of English at Stanford University, California, USA.

Hargreaves, Andrew is Co-Director and Professor at the International Centre for Educational Change, University of Toronto, Canada

Hobson, Peter is Associate Professor in the School of Education Studies, University of New England, Armidale, NSW, Australia.

Hinshelwood, Robert is a psychoanalyst in London and a part-time Professor in the Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies at the University of Essex, England.

Hughes, Martin is Professor in the Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol, England.

Husén, Torsten is Emeritus Professor in the Institute of International Education, Stockholm, Sweden.

Hypolito, Álvaro Moreira is Professor of Education, Federal University of Pelotas, Pelotas, Brazil.

Inbar, Dan is Professor in the School of Education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel.

Jóhannesson, Ingólfur Ásgeir is Associate Professor of Education at the University of Akureyri, Iceland.

Kornhaber, Mindy L. is Assistant Professor at Pennsylvania State University, USA and a non-resident Fellow with the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University.

Kuchinke, K. Peter is Assistant Professor in Human Resource Education in the College of Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA.

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Laanan, Frankie S. is Assistant Professor at the College of Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA.

Laird, Susan is Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, University of Oklahoma, USA.

Levin, Tamar is Professor of Education at Tel Aviv University, Israel.

Lieberman, Ann is Senior Scholar at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Visiting Professor at Stanford University, California, USA.

McLaughlin, Terence H. is University Senior Lecturer in Education and Fellow of St. Edmund's College, University of Cambridge, England.

Morrison, Keith is Professor of Education at the Inter-University Institute of Macau.

O'Hear, Anthony is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Bradford, England.

Olson, David R. is Professor and Head of the Centre for Applied Cognitive Science, cross-appointed to the Department of Linguistics and to University College at the University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Osborne, Margery D. is Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA.

Palmer, Joy A. is Professor of Education and Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of Durham, England.

Peters, Michael is Professor of Education in the Faculty of Education, University of Glasgow, Scotland and in the School of Education, University of Auckland, New Zealand.

Popkewitz, Thomas S. is Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA.

Postlethwaite, T. Neville is Emeritus Professor of Education at the University of Hamburg, Germany.

Shen, Jianping is Assistant Professor in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Leadership, College of Education, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, USA.

Siegel, Harvey is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, USA.

Smith, Leslie is Professor of Psychology and Epistemology of Development, Department of Educational Research, Lancaster University, England.

Smith, Richard is Professor of Education at the University of Durham, England.

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Tuchul, Dana L. is Assistant Professor in the Department of Education Studies, Berea College, Kentucky, USA.

Thompson, Christine is Associate Professor of Art Education at Pennsylvania State University, USA.

Thornton, Stephen J. is Associate Professor of Social Studies and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, USA.

Torre, Carlos Antonio is Professor of Education at the Southern Connecticut State University, and Fellow, Yale University, USA.

Uhrmacher, P. Bruce is Associate Professor of Education, College of Education, University of Denver, Colorado, USA.

Westbury, Ian is Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA.

White, John is Professor of Philosophy of Education at the Institute of Education, University of London, England.

Wineburg, Sam is Professor of Educational Psychology and Adjunct Professor, Department of History, University of Washington, Seattle, USA.

Zembylas, Michalinos is Assistant Professor of Science Education in the Department of Teacher Education, Michigan State University, USA.

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PREFACE

The twin volumes *Fifty Major Thinkers on Education: From Confucius to Dewey* and *Fifty Modern Thinkers on Education: From Piaget to the Present*, are together intended to provide a valuable and fascinating resource for readers with an interest in 'influential lives' relating to critical thinking, action and, in more recent times, research, which has influenced policy and practice in the field of education. As a pair, the two volumes cover consideration of influences upon educational thought and practice from the very earliest times through to the present day. In the first volume we examine the lives and influence of fifty individuals from the time of Confucius to the era of Dewey. The second volume continues where the first ceases, examining the contribution of a further fifty individuals from the time of Piaget to the present.

Each volume and each essay within it follows a common format. An opening quotation sets the scene at the start of each essay. Then, readers are provided with an overview of the subject's work and basic biographical information. Each author then engages in critical reflection which aims to illuminate the influence, importance and perhaps innovative character of the subject's thinking and, where appropriate, research and actions. In other words, authors have moved beyond the purely descriptive and have provided a discussion of the nature of the intellectual or practical impact that the life, thinking and works of each figure made or is making upon our understanding or practice of education.

At the end of each essay, we have provided information that will lead interested readers into further and more detailed study. First, there are the references for the notes to which the numbers in the text refer; second, there is a cross-referencing with other subjects in the two books whose thought or influence relates in some obvious way to that of the subject of the essay; third, there is a list of the subject's major writings (where applicable); and finally, there is a list of references for those who wish to pursue more in-depth reading on the subject.

By far the hardest task in assembling these volumes was deciding on the final list of 100 thinkers on education to be included. How can one begin, in a field so extensive as education, to select 100 individuals from over 2000 years of thought? Inevitably, my advisory editors and I were inundated with suggestions and ideas for influential people who, for the obvious reason of lack of space, had to be left out. The 100 subjects finally decided upon include some very obvious 'great names' such as Plato, John Dewey and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, alongside some less well-known, yet clearly influential, people. In making our choice we also aimed to provide coverage of a range of fields within the vast and complex arena of teaching and learning-philosophy, psychology, thinking on the early years, on testing, evaluation and so on. Most importantly, we emphasize that this pair of volumes is certainly not exhaustive. As already mentioned our choice of subjects proved to be extremely difficult. Furthermore, the combined work certainly does not pretend to be an overview of the lives of the 100 greatest educational thinkers the world has ever known. We believe that it includes some people who would fall into this category of those who have had arguably the greatest global influence on educational thought and practice, but most importantly, *all* the people in the books have made very substantial contributions to educational thinking in some form or another. It is hoped that some readers will derive great benefit and pleasure from the books because they introduce them to previously unknown lives. As a whole, I hope that the books will be of interest to all who would like to find out more about the lives of individuals past and present who have influenced thinking about knowledge and the education of the people of our world.

Joy A. Palmer

Fifty Modern Thinkers on Education looks at fifty of the twentieth century's most significant contributors to the debate on education. Together with Fifty Major Thinkers on Education this book provides a unique history of educational thinking. Each essay gives key biographical information, an outline of the individual's principal achievements and activities, an assessment of his or her impact and influence and a list of their major writings and suggested further reading. By far the hardest task in assembling these volumes was deciding on the final list of 100 thinkers on education to be included. How can one begin, in a field so extensive as education, to select 100 individuals from over 2000 years of thought? Fifty Modern Thinkers on Education. From Piaget to the present, London: Routledge. Links. To cite this article: Smith, M.K. (2002) 'Jerome S. Bruner and the process of education', the encyclopedia of informal education <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/bruner.htm>. © Mark K. Smith 2002. 5.