

# BOOK REVIEWS

## **INCLUSIVE PRIMARY TEACHING A CRITICAL APPROACH TO EQUALITY AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED AND DISABILITY 2ND ED.**

**Reviewed by Julie Gariazzo**, University of East London

With Inclusive education still high on the agenda for teachers, Goepel et al explore current topics surrounding inclusive education. This second edition has been updated to include the New Code of Practice (2015) and two new chapters on understanding vulnerable learners and learners with communication difficulties.

The authors of Inclusive Primary Teaching have a varied experiences within the field of Special Educational Needs (SEN), ranging from teaching on the National Award in SEN Co-ordination and post and undergraduate professional studies in SEN. They draw on these experiences to create a comprehensive text book for trainee and experienced Primary teachers alike, and it would also be a useful text for anyone about to complete the SENCo award.

Written over three parts which include inclusive environments, reasonable adjustments and developing partnerships, the authors link a range of theory to practical scenarios and encourage the reader to reflect through a series of critical questions, extended thinking and links to further reading. The scenarios provide useful practical examples of issues that teachers might encounter in the classroom, and the questions to extend thinking support teachers in reflecting about how they might manage a particular situation. This is particularly useful to

the novice teacher who may not be experienced in different situations, and as each chapter is linked to the Teachers' Standards, it could support any evidence needed, for example on an initial teacher training programme, towards meeting these.

Each chapter begins with a useful mind map demonstrating how the different themes within the chapter link to each other. The chapters are set out with subheadings which can be used to signpost the reader when needed. Written clearly and broken up into sections, the way they are presented makes them easily comprehensible, which is helpful as many chapters include relevant policy and legislation and support knowledge of the development of policy in education. This is an easy to read text and understand.

One thing that stands out from this book that is different to other texts on 'inclusion' is that it draws on a range of inclusive themes from English as an Additional Language (EAL) to understanding learners in poverty and who are vulnerable. The chapters on poverty and learners who are vulnerable provide a useful discussion on socio-inequality, poverty and education, and what makes children vulnerable, including social networking and child trafficking. They provide the reader with careful consideration of other issues surrounding inclusion that

**Authors:** J. Goepel, H. Childerhouse and S. Sharpe

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are not just about special educational needs but are relevant for today's children in education.

This book is undoubtedly a useful guide for teachers and can provide practical support in reflecting on inclusive issues in today's society. I would recommend this for anyone on an initial teacher training programme or for experienced teachers looking to develop their knowledge and understanding of inclusive issues. Although each chapter includes critical questions, because of the broad themes, anyone embarking on a higher level of study, for example a Master's degree could use this as an initial guide but would benefit looking at further reading within their specific area. ■

## UNDERSTANDING ASSESSMENT IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

Reviewed by **Diane Dennis**, Furze Infants School

**Author:** S. Faragher

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Understanding assessment in primary education provides a heuristic guide for primary school teachers, teaching assistants, pre-service teachers and indeed all stakeholders involved in the assessment process of primary age pupils. The contents of the book are organised into 11 chapters, which can be read from beginning to end or by selecting relevant chapters. The chapters are clearly organised and identify key principles in relation to different assessment processes. The book fulfils its promise and provides primary educators with practical examples of how to operationalise assessment activity in school. A full reference list can be found at the end of the book, which can be used for further reading or research.

One real strength offered by this book is the helpful points for reflection, which are featured at the end of each chapter. The reflective section summarises salient points and offers the reader an opportunity to develop their own reflective practise. To my mind, this is particularly useful for any pre-service teacher or newly qualified teacher (NQT), who are expected to be well versed in reflective practices for their future career in the primary education sector.

I found the first chapter, which provides a general overview to the principles of assessment to be written at times with a lack of authority or empirical evidence. For example, when the book claims that there is a possibility that pupils who feature as part of the continuous

assessment process may become disheartened when receiving repeated feedback that highlights details of their need to improve, (p.5). This claim is made with no reference accompanying it and therefore to my mind, the reader can only assume that it is a sweeping generalisation with no research evidence to support this claim. Although it is useful to bear in mind that this chapter is an introduction to the key principles of assessment, that is not to say that assessment should be considered in isolation and without the perspective of the child who should always be at the heart of the assessment. If there is strong research evidence to support this claim which the author has chosen to omit, I found myself wanting to learn more about the children that are subject to this perceived trend.

Nevertheless, there is little doubt that the book provides a strong and useful overview of the principles of assessment alongside a comprehensible guide to understanding key elements of assessment. For example, the different forms of assessment are clearly defined such as summative and formative assessment approaches, which are presented in a context that is both fluid and easy to read.

The book gives consideration to the historical and national context of assessment practices within primary education, which allows the reader to understand how the bigger picture has come to shape and influence the education system of the twenty-first century. One such example that best exemplifies this

can be found in chapter two, (p.15). Where the book highlights how the top-down approach to assessment in primary education and beyond has become intrinsically linked to standardised testing and the obsession with gathering and publishing performance data. I found this to be a real strength of the book which allows the reader to fully understand the evolving nature of assessment and how this manifests itself within the primary classroom. The book achieves this by identifying influential legislation which has brought the ideological shift from child centred education to that of the performance and assessment driven education system of today.

Interestingly, after reading the first two chapters I could not help but wonder what is the purpose of primary school education in the digital world of today? Furthermore, what is the value of assessment in education to communities who are not fully aware of the purposes of the assessment? Of course, the answers to these question lay outside the realms of this book and are completely philosophical in nature, however, they were generated from reading this book and for that reason alone I would recommend this book to my colleagues. ■

## INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES IN THE EARLY YEARS

**Reviewed by Athina Tempriou**

University of East London

The book 'International Perspectives in the Early Years' is definitely worthwhile reading. The reader realises straightaway that the book is research focused and the authors are prominent researchers and practitioners from various countries. All the authors are highly respected in their field and they draw knowledge upon an impressive breadth and depth of practice. It is remarkable how they have achieved a clear illustration of the fundamental details of the life in the setting they provide as examples.

The book is well structured and the text is systematically set out. Though the subject is highly multifarious, the content is easy to follow and access. The book is clearly divided in two parts; firstly, the authors discuss issues around 'care, education and notions of intervention' and secondly, they talk about 'children's spaces'. Amongst other issues, the book highlights the relationship between EC and Primary Education (PE), the significance of the inclusion of Roma children and the perceptions of using outdoors in early childhood education centres in England, Hungary and Denmark.

One of the key aspects of the book is its exploration of national and international policies and perspectives on critical issues in Early Childhood Education (EC) and Early Childhood Education Centres (ECEC). Professionalism and 'up-skilling' in the early childhood workforce, as well as interventions in the lives of children and families are among the main issues that the book addresses. The authors have chosen to use different examples from Europe and Mexico as evidence to

question existing policies and practices in the world.

Due to the recent interest in Early Childhood, especially from an international perspective, this book is a key text for students of Early Years at all levels, early year's practitioners and those training to become practitioners in the near future. Readers are encouraged to consider, how international evidence provided can be used as a vehicle for questioning existing practices and policies, and how these can provoke debate. Even more, there is a challenge to consider what standards and goals are worth sharing and working towards.

The main philosophy underpinning this book is that the children are the experts in their own life, and deserve and have the right to self-expression, citizenship as well as a sense of belonging in ECEC. One of the contributions of the book is that the child's experience is valued; in the here and now and that is what is considered greatly important. In the main, the book highlights the importance of advocating knowledge from a range of disciplines when considering ECEC in an international context.

The editors of this book most certainly meet the promises that they state in the introduction. They use case studies to address all the issues they have raised, as well as offering comprehensive suggestions for further reading and reflection for readers.

**Authors:** Linda Miller and Claire Cameron

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Overall, this is a useful book as a source of evidence of the varied practices at a national and international level and how these can influence practice and policy decision design specifically in Early Years settings.

Finally, an interesting part of this book is the reflective task that can be found at the end of each chapter, under the subtitle 'Questions for discussion'. This task challenges the readers to critically reflect upon their experiences and think forward with each chapter's issues. Many ECEC can use this task in order to offer training for their staff and work collaboratively to promote effective practice in their workplace. I have enjoyed reading the book and would recommend it to students who would like to extend their knowledge about EC and ECEC from an international perspective. ■