

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.

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CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF CONTENTS

<i>Alphabetical list of contents</i>	viii
<i>Notes on contributors</i>	x
<i>Preface</i>	xiv
A.S. Neill, 1883-1973	1
Peter Hobson	
Susan Isaacs, 1885-1948	6
Robert Hinshelwood	
Harold Rugg, 1886-1960	10
Stephen J. Thornton	
Ludwig Wittgenstein, 1889-1951	15
<i>Nicholas C. Burbules and</i>	
Michael Peters	
Martin Heidegger, 1889-1976	23
Michael Bonnett	
Herbert Edward Read, 1893-1968	28
Stephen Mark Dobbs	
Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky, 1896-1934	33
Alexander Ardichvili	
Jean Piaget, 1896-1980	37
Leslie Smith	
Michael Oakeshott, 1901-92	44
Anthony O'Hear	
Carl Rogers, 1902-87	49
<i>Eleanor Feinberg and</i>	
Walter Feinberg	
Ralph Winifred Tyler, 1902-94	54
Elliot W. Eisner	
Burrhus Frederic Skinner, 1904-90	58
Torsten Husén	
	-v-
Harry Broudy, 1905-98	64
Simone Weil, 1909-43	69
Richard Smith	
Joseph J. Schwab, 1910-88	73
<i>Ian Westbury and</i>	
Margery D. Osborne	
Clark Kerr, 1911-	79
<i>Debra D. Bragg and</i>	
Frankie S. Laanan	
Benjamin S. Bloom, 1913-99	86
Torsten Husén	
Jerome S. Bruner, 1915-	90
Howard Gardner	
Torsten Husén, 1916-	96
T. Neville Postlethwaite	
Lee J. Cronbach, 1916-	102
Torsten Husén	
Donald Thomas Campbell, 1916-96	105
Carol Taylor Fitz-Gibbon	

Maxine Greene, 1917- Christine Thompson	112
R.S. Peters, 1919- John White	118
John I. Goodlad, 1920- Jianping Shen	122
Paulo Freire, 1921-97 <i>Michael W. Apple,</i> <i>Luís Armando Gandin and</i> Álvaro Moreira Hypolito	128
Seymour B. Sarason, 1919- Andrew Hargreaves	133
Israel Scheffler, 1923- Harvey Siegel	142
Jean-François Lyotard, 1924-98 Michalinos Zembylas	148
Lawrence A. Cremin, 1925-90 James D. Anderson	154
Basil Bernstein F., 1925-2000 Ivor F. Goodson	161
Michel Foucault, 1926-84 Michael Peters	170

-vi-

Margaret Donaldson, 1926- Ivan Illich, 1926- <i>David A. Gabbard and</i> Dana L. Stuchul	175 181
Lawrence Kohlberg, 1927-87 K. Peter Kuchinke	188
Paul H. Hirst, 1927- Terence H. McLaughlin	193
Philip Wesley Jackson, 1928- Elliot W. Eisner	199
Jane Roland Martin, 1929- Susan Laird	203
Nel Noddings, 1929- David J. Flinders	210
Jürgen Habermas, 1929- Keith Morrison	215
Carl Bereiter, 1930- David R. Olson	224
Pierre Bourdieu, 1930- <i>Ingólfur Ásgeir Jóhannesson and</i> Thomas S. Popkewitz	229
Neil Postman, 1931- Dan Inbar	234
Theodore R.Sizer, 1932- Tamar Levin	241
Elliot Eisner, 1933-	247

P. Bruce Uhrmacher	
John White, 1934-	<u>252</u>
Eamonn Callan	
Lee S. Shulman, 1938-	<u>257</u>
<i>Pam Grossman and</i>	
Sam Wineburg	
Michael W. Apple, 1942-	<u>263</u>
Carlos Antonio Torre	
Howard Gardner, 1943-	<u>272</u>
Mindy L. Kornhaber	
Henry Giroux, 1943-	<u>280</u>
Keith Morrison	
Linda Darling-Hammond, 1951-	<u>285</u>
Ann Lieberman	

-vii-

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF CONTENTS

Michael W. Apple, 1942-	<u>263</u>
Carl Bereiter, 1930-	<u>224</u>
Basil Bernstein, 1925-2000	<u>161</u>
Benjamin S. Bloom, 1913-99	<u>86</u>
Pierre Bourdieu, 1930-	<u>229</u>
Harry Broudy, 1905-98	<u>64</u>
Jerome S. Bruner, 1915-	<u>90</u>
Donald Thomas Campbell, 1916-96	<u>105</u>
Lawrence A. Cremin, 1925-90	<u>154</u>
Lee J. Cronbach, 1916-	<u>102</u>
Linda Darling-Hammond, 1951-	<u>285</u>
Margaret Donaldson, 1926-	<u>175</u>
Elliot Eisner, 1933-	<u>247</u>
Michel Foucault, 1926-84	<u>170</u>
Paulo Freire, 1921-97	<u>128</u>
Howard Gardner, 1943-	<u>272</u>
Henry Giroux, 1943-	<u>280</u>
John I. Goodlad, 1920-	<u>122</u>
Maxine Greene, 1917-	<u>112</u>
Jürgen Habermas, 1929-	<u>215</u>
Martin Heidegger, 1889-1976	<u>23</u>
Paul H. Hirst, 1927-	<u>193</u>
Torsten Husen, 1916-	<u>96</u>
Ivan Illich, 1926-	<u>181</u>
Susan Isaacs, 1885-1948	<u>6</u>
Philip Wesley Jackson, 1928-	<u>199</u>
Clark Kerr, 1911-	<u>79</u>
Lawrence Kohlberg, 1927-87	<u>188</u>
Jean-François Lyotard, 1924-98	<u>148</u>
Jane Roland Martin, 1929-	<u>203</u>
A.S. Neill, 1883-1973	<u>1</u>
Nel Noddings, 1929-	<u>210</u>
Michael Oakeshott, 1901-92	<u>44</u>

R.S. Peters, 1919-	118
Jean Piaget, 1896-1980	37
Neil Postman, 1931-	234
Herbert Edward Read, 1893-1968	28
Carl Rogers, 1902-87	49
Harold Rugg, 1886-1960	10
Seymour B. Sarason, 1919-	133
Israel Scheffler, 1923-	142
Joseph J. Schwab, 1910-88	73
Lee S. Shulman, 1938-	257
Theodore R.Sizer, 1932-	241

-viii-

Burrhus Frederic Skinner, 1904-90	58
Ralph Winifred Tyler, 1902-94	54
Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky, 1896-1934	33
Simone Weil, 1909-43	69
John White, 1934-	252
Ludwig Wittgenstein, 1889-1951	15

-ix-

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-xi-

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-xii-

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-xiii-

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