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This collection of multi-authored essays is really two books united in their common dedication to Gavriel Salomon. The breath of his diverse interests which embrace change and learning processes, on the one hand, and peace studies, on the other are mirrored in fifteen scholarly chapters.

The first nine papers on learning and change embrace a diverse set of methods and themes. These range from an assessment of mathematical simulation teaching models to a review of emotional intelligence. Three thematically unified chapters particularly stood out for both for this reviewer.

David R. Olson succeeds in provoking readers with his “Natural History of Pedagogy,” in which intentionality in teaching and learning is distinguished in such a way that it refracts different light upon the motives for and capacity for

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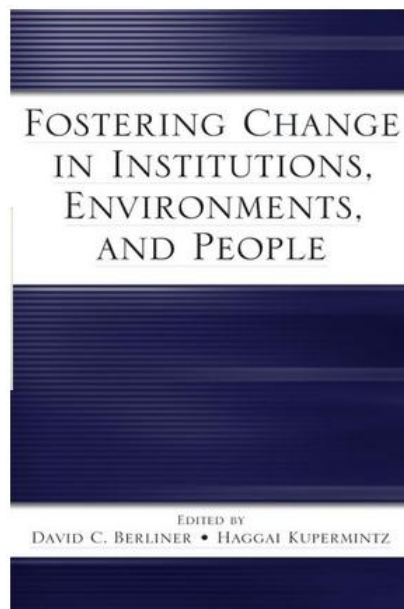
schooling. Formal education is contrasted with against other child rearing institutions involving more “natural” modes of learning, such as apprenticeship and family. Olson’s introductory paper forms a curious but effective backbone in support of the volume’s various probes into particular mechanisms designed to foster change and learning.

Complementary with Olson’s work is Richard E. Clark’s examination of the extent to which automatic processes guide our behavior and abilities to learn or unlearn. Like Olson’s work the essays challenge societal assumptions that schools must or can be responsible for their students.

Berliner and Nichols extend this story one step further systematically reviewing the ways in which accountability through high stakes testing produces perverse results. Instructors may find this classic essay highly useful for courses in which students must address educational outcomes and the statistics intended to measure them.

Unfortunately, coverage by the rest of the papers in the first portion leaves a lot of ground to be uncovered. The book’s title virtually begs for a more thorough essay on institutional adaptation in schools, which is largely unfulfilled. An abrupt segue between these early papers and the latter ones on peace education will leave cover-to-cover readers longing for an explicit connection. Partially filling is Niens and Cairns discussion of peace education in Northern Ireland, which manages to bring in broader themes of relating to class and social integration. Not surprisingly, their essay is only modestly enthusiastic about the prospects education-based change in social attitudes. Much of their guarded optimism is based on increased social contact between rival ethnic groups rather than the intentional effects of instructional design. In separate papers, Perkins and Kupermintz discuss larger themes and the major approaches within peace education, which should be quite helpful for readers seeking overviews to the topic.

Not surprisingly, given Salomon’s interests, the volume’s discussions of peace education are heavily influenced by the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. From a sociological point of view, perhaps the most interesting piece is by Bar-Tal and Rosen.



What makes their essay so striking is the extent to which its attempts to lay down conditions for successful peace education mimic the debates about pre-conditions for peace negotiations. It appears that parties must agree to agree before they can start either peace education or peace negotiations. While this may perhaps be realistic, those who believe that preconditions create barriers to direct negotiations, will likely find that the authors' conditions tend to preclude much needed dialogue among those who stand most in need of peace education.

By contrast, Bar-On, Litvak-Hirsch and Othman present a fascinating Israeli based attempt of peace education in attempt at such dialogue under a peace education initiative at Ben Gurion University. This program featured a life-telling model in which two groups of students (Israeli and Palestinian) created narratives partially intended to bridge communication and empathy gaps. The ability of members of opposing groups to hear and accept these stories varied. Discussing their participants experience the author's found that the Palestinians seemed more open to discussion of their own differences than were the Israelis. The asymmetry of group responses seemed to foster a power dynamic that inhibited dialogue. It appeared far from certain that this type of peace education would or could succeed in creating enduring bridges between the two camps of students.

Readers who wish to tackle all the chapters may consider beginning by reading the concluding biographical essay of Salomon. The essay reveals how Salomon moved among diverse pursuits, and in so doing it encourages a wider frame of reference among readers hopeful of traveling along with Salomon through the intellectual discussions gathered together in this volume.

Even so, the essays are not always fully integrated, and because of its title, prospective readers whose interests lie more towards peace studies may fail to examine this volume for its insights. Those motivated to consider this book because of its title or editors will find it an eclectic set of work, whose individual papers are frequently insightful.

About the Reviewer

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