

BOOK REVIEWS

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A sound approach to education?

BASED on the model of the factory, mainstream schooling almost necessarily limits individual choice and freedom, quashing a natural motivation to learn in many students. Lillard explores the Montessori alternative, an education system designed around goals intrinsic to a child's development and allowing students to choose work topics and a level of progression that feels natural to them. The author praises what she considers to be the genius of Montessori in developing a system, continually supported by research, which helps to maintain the natural curiosity to learn.

To develop her argument she examines one by one the key concepts of Montessori providing both discussion and supporting research evidence on each of them. Some of the corresponding chapters provide

Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius

ANGELINE STOLL LILLARD

OXFORD: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS; 2005; Hb £19.99
(ISBN 0 19 516868 2)

REVIEWED BY Sarah Killing

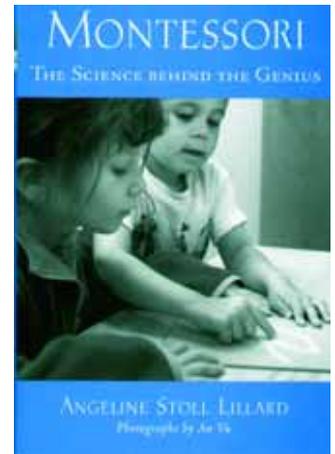
fascinating reading – the one on the impact of movement on learning and cognition, or the section discussing Montessori's theories on the preschool child's sensitivity to order (which should be of specific interest to developmental psychologists).

Unfortunately these chapters provided the exception, as a significant portion of Lillard's book failed to capture my interest, presenting extensive research evidence that either seemed circumstantial or related to topics intuitive to any teacher or parent.

However, the more troublesome aspect of the book

for me was the large gap between the theory presented and the reality of the Montessori classroom. I was put into Montessori before I could speak, and although the school provided me with my first positive school experiences, these were miles away from the classroom Lillard outlined in her text. The Montessori name is unprotected, thus the experience is as vast and varied as the teachers who deliver it.

So, in summary, while providing a good and instructive overview of the principles of the Montessori system as originally intended, Lillard's book has little to offer



in answering the question on educators' and parent's lips: Are Montessori schools the superior alternative?

■ Sarah Killing is a qualified secondary teacher and currently a postgraduate student at the Department for Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford.



A Student's Guide to Studying Psychology (3rd edition)

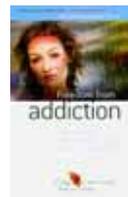
THOMAS M. HEFFERNAN

HOVE: PSYCHOLOGY PRESS; 2005;
Pb £14.95 (ISBN 1 84169 394 4)

REVIEWED BY Andy Medley

ONCE again, we are faced with the usual hysteria surrounding the apparent decline of traditional subjects like maths and physics, and the concomitant rise of supposedly 'soft' subjects such as psychology. But Heffernan's guide effectively dispels this unflattering distinction; introducing the prospective psychology undergraduate to the multidimensionality and robust scientific credentials of the contemporary discipline. And for those navigating the early stages of their degree course, the book includes thorough and focused sections on empirical report writing, research methodology, and examination preparation. Refreshingly, Heffernan emphasises the importance of 'critical analysis' and 'understanding' – values that must be internalised by those who aspire to enter the applied fields that are cogently outlined in the final chapter.

■ Andy Medley is with the Cancer Psychology Service, University Hospital Birmingham.



Freedom from Addiction: The Secret Behind Successful Addiction Busting

JOE GRIFFIN & IVAN TYRRELL

CHALWINGTON: HG PUBLISHING; 2005;
Pb £9.99 (ISBN 1 899398 46 5)

REVIEWED BY Neia Glynn

AN easy-to-read, empowering self-help guide for those considering themselves 'addicted' to anything. Despite the archaic use of the term 'addict', its pragmatic techniques could benefit substance users, especially working on expectations effects on dependency. It breaks down simply the self-assessment needed for discerning problem areas and their development, adding relevant research in a jargon-free manner, with a fascinating explanation for how neurophysiology and 'pattern-matching' underpin symptoms like cravings. The stance is entirely individualistic, leaving aside social circumstances supporting addiction. It introduces readers to the basic needs inherent in the human givens approach, using varied prompts to encourage change.

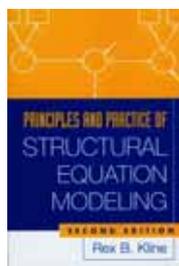
■ Neia Glynn is a trainee forensic psychologist at Bullingdon Community Prison, Bicester, Oxfordshire.

A surprisingly good read

STRUCTURAL equation modelling (SEM) is a growing field in multivariate statistics. SEM is an umbrella term for a large family of procedures that can tackle research designs ranging from experiments and longitudinal studies all the way to cross-cultural comparisons.

Unfortunately SEM can be relatively difficult to learn for researchers without a strong grounding in matrix algebra.

Kline, however, hits the nail on the head. He perfectly addresses the needs of social scientists like me without formal training in mathematical statistics. He succeeds in conveying the conceptual complexity of SEM without sacrificing the reader's understanding of the ramifications of the model's assumptions.



Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modeling (2nd edition)

REX B. KLINE

NEW YORK: GUILFORD PRESS; 2005; Pb £31.00
(ISBN 1 57230 690 4)

REVIEWED BY Cedric Ginestet

Mathematical equations are kept to a minimum, and the book is rich in examples from different fields, although they tend to revolve around education since this is the initial training of the author. Kline does not assume any prior knowledge in multivariate statistics. In fact, he succinctly summarises all you need to know on multiple regression and correlation in one of the first chapters of his book.

I was agreeably surprised by Kline's introduction to the

topic. Despite having read other publications on SEM and having used different SEM software packages, I nonetheless discovered a lot of interesting new concepts, such as the suppression effect and the links between identification problems and simultaneous equations.

This textbook covers the full gamut of the different structural models, including path analyses, confirmatory factor analysis, full SEM, nonrecursive structural models and even multiple sample SEM and latent growth models.

Structural equation models are a relatively new group of procedures, which has initially become popular for its actual simplicity and intuitive logic. This book definitely gives justice to this aspect of SEM. It can be read by any graduate in psychology or even by keen undergraduates interested in exploring new vistas. Yet it will also constitute a surprisingly good read for experienced researchers in search of some refreshing insights in their favourite techniques.

Kline has indeed negotiated a real tour de force with this second edition by succeeding in reconciling comprehensiveness and comprehensibility.

■ *Cedric Ginestet is in the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, Imperial College, London.*



Turning 30: How to Get the Life You Really Want

SHEILA PANCHAL & ELLEN JACKSON

LONDON: PIATKUS; 2005; Pb £7.99
(ISBN 0 7499 2550 7)

REVIEWED BY Clare Roberts

NOT normally attracted to self-help books, I felt compelled to read this because of its relevance for me. The biggest accomplishment of this book was to make the 'turning 30 blues' seem normal, with the addition of many case studies. Areas of difficulty faced by a person turning 30 are assigned a chapter each and the reader is expected to complete the exercises along the way. As a clinical psychologist, I often use a cognitive-behavioural approach, so it felt strange to be on the receiving end of CBT techniques. However, the individual exercises were essential to the effectiveness of this book.

Overall, this book was light-hearted, motivating and employed well-known psychological techniques. Although, I may not read another self-help book again, it has helped to change my opinion of them.

■ *Dr Clare Roberts is a clinical psychologist with South Birmingham Primary Care Trust.*

VALUABLE INSIGHTS

Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researchers in Education, Health and Social Science (4th edition)

JUDITH BELL

MAIDENHEAD: OPEN UNIVERSITY PRESS; 2005; Pb £16.99
(ISBN 0 335 21504 1)

REVIEWED BY Jo Roos

THIS latest edition has successfully evolved with the demands of researchers, who increasingly rely on the web and electronic databases. Bell's concise and uncomplicated style makes the text accessible to both lay people and experienced researchers. The book has a clear trajectory, enabling the reader to dip in and out of chapters whilst progressing through a research project. Chapters are also dedicated to more practical considerations, such as referencing internet sources or avoiding the horror of plagiarism!

In an attempt to provide an unbiased view of concepts, such as 'grounded theory', one or two chapters include various quotes and extracts. Unfortunately, this format upsets the fluidity of the text and confuses the book's main message.

The guide is mainly skills-focused and offers checklists and practical ideas that will equip potential researchers with a plethora of valuable insights and skills.

■ *Jo Roos is an assistant psychologist at Frenchay Hospital, Bristol.*