

# CONCLUSION

## A NOTE FROM THE AUTHORS

While this book, to a large extent, reflects our own particular interest in and enthusiasm for the theories underpinning education today, we were also keen to provide a text which would assist our students in unpacking some of the complexities seen in the work of theorists through the ages.

Our individual roles on education-based courses led us to the observation that there were a number of areas which undergraduate students found challenging when developing their understanding of the work of these key theorists. It was also observed that such challenges appeared to be consistent across a diverse student body, including those combining their study with work in early years settings, school-based settings and youth centres, and others who were embarking on higher education straight from school or college. Such challenges were loosely based around the application of theory to practice (particularly in the current educational climate), the relationship between the different theories and theorists and, perhaps most challenging, the ability to critique the work of those theorists in an objective manner.

In attempting to support our students in developing their understanding in some of these key areas we were able to direct them to some excellent generic texts, but there did not appear to be any one book which covered all of the areas as described above. The information required by the students could be found across a range of sources, but we observed that students starting out in higher education frequently found it overwhelming to search across a number of texts, and wondered if it would be possible to provide a book which made some of these links for the students. It was our aim to provide them with a secure foundation on which they could build their own explorations of the key areas described above. However, this text is designed as a starting point only and we anticipate that the reader will explore further those areas which they find to be the most stimulating.

Our research provided us with a fascinating insight into the lives and works of our chosen theorists, and the more we researched, the more common elements we found between their works. This ultimately led to our decision to present work chronologically rather than according to category. We also realised that a degree of selectivity

would need to be applied if we were to avoid substantially exceeding the word count we had set ourselves, since many of the theories presented here are both complex and multi-layered. It was our intention, then, to capture the essence of the theories, which would then inspire readers to delve further into the work of the theorists – hence the inclusion of lists of further reading.

Our original intention was that this text could be used as a point of reference for both students and tutors, hence we selected those theorists who we believed were fundamental to education-related courses across the sectors of further and higher education. While we were careful in our selection to include a range of ideals, we recognise that there may be omissions. We have attempted to resolve this through making links to other theorists in order to ensure that other works have at least been acknowledged, but certainly recognise that the theorists represented here constitute a mere snapshot of the wider picture of the field of educational theory.

We hope that you enjoy reading this book as much as we have enjoyed writing it, but – more importantly – that it has served the purpose of our original intention to provide a simple and accessible introduction to the work of key theorists from a range of different perspectives.

# INDEX

page numbers in **bold** indicate glossary entries  
page numbers followed by *F* indicate figures  
page numbers followed by *T* indicate tables

- ability 364, 365
- absorbent mind 31, 32, **42**
- abstract conceptualisation (AC) 243–4, 243*F*, 250, 251, **253**
- abstract thinking 31, **42–3**
- accommodation 51, 52*F*, **62**
- accommodator learning style 245, 251*T*, 252, **253**
- active experience 11, 13, 14, 16, 21, **23**
- active experimentation (AE) 243–4, 243*F*, 250, 252, **253**
- active learning 80–1, 135, **141**
- adaptation 50, 51, 52*F*, **62**
- Adolescent Aggression* (Bandura) 166
- adult education 128, 129–30, 141, **141**, 196, 205, 212
- adult learning 128, 129, 130–3, 136–41, 240, 242, 252–3
  - andragogy 14, 22, 128, 130, 131–3, 134, 136–7, 138–40, 141, **142**, 212
  - climate of pleasure 139–40
  - internal motivation 132*F*, 133
  - and knowledge 128
  - mutual respect 138–9
  - need to know 132*F*, 133
  - orientation for learning 132*F*, 133
  - pedagogy 130–1, 132, 137
  - readiness to learn 132–3, 132*F*, 139
  - role of experience 132, 132*F*
  - self-concept 131, 132*F*
- adult literacy 204, 205, 206, 207
- affective domain 108, 112, 118, 119, **123**
- affective entry behaviour 113
- aggression in children 166, 168–9
- Agnew, Spiro 97
- Ainsworth, Mary 192
- American Educational Research Association (AERA) 109
- amygdala hijack 307–8, **312**
- andragogy 14, 22, 128, 130, 131–3, 134, 136–7, 138–40, 141, **142**, 212
- anti-Semitism 63
- apprenticeship 153, 258, 260–2, 264, **272**, 283
  - see also* cognitive apprenticeship: epistemic apprenticeship
  - Apprenticeship in Critical Ethnography Practice* (Lave) 259
- Argyris, Chris 224, 226, 227, 233, 235
  - works (with Schön)
    - Organizational Learning* 224
    - Organizational Learning II* 224
    - Theory in Practice* 224
  - Artificial Intelligence and Tutoring Systems* (Wenger) 260
- assessment
  - and communities of practice 269–70
  - definition 341
  - formative 73, 80, 83, 101, 114, 115, 116, 120–1, 338, 340, 341–2, 345–6, 347, 348–55, **356**
  - for future development 77
  - for growth mindset 371–2
  - involving learners 140
  - peer assessment 352
  - purposeful 79–80
  - self-assessment 250, 344–5, 351–2
  - summative 39, 73, 79–80, 116, 341, 347
    - formative use of 343–4, 352–3
- assessment for learning 338, 342, 347, **356**
- Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategy 346, 347, 348
  - feedback to students 350–1
  - formative use of summative assessment 352–3
  - key processes 348–53, 348*F*
  - materials 348
  - peer assessment 352
  - questioning 348–50
  - self-assessment 351–2
- Assessment for Learning: Beyond the Black Box* (ARG) 342, 348

- Assessment in Education* 341  
 assessment of learning 341, **356**  
 Assessment Reform Group (ARG) 342  
   active involvement 343  
   adjustment to teaching 343–4  
   *Assessment for Learning: Beyond the Black Box*  
     (ARG) 342, 348  
   effective feedback 342–3  
   elements for assessment 342*F*, 342–3  
   self-assessment 344–5  
   self-esteem and motivation 344  
 assimilation 51, 52*F*, **63**  
 assimilator learning style 245, 251*T*, 252, **254**  
 attachment theory 192  
 Ausubel, David 154
- baby-crib 88, 90  
 Bandura, Albert 163–82  
   biography 165–7  
   critiquing 172  
   ideas  
     Bobo doll 164, 166, 168–9, 172, 173,  
       178, **179**  
     identification 172, **179**  
     modelling 164, 166, 168–9, 173, **179**  
     observational learning 168, 169–70, 170*F*,  
       172, 173  
     reciprocal determinism 96, 192  
     self-control therapy 164  
     self-efficacy 164, 171, 172, 175–7, 178, 179,  
       **179**, 326, 367, 374  
       high 177  
       low 175, 175*F*, 177  
       mastery 176  
       positive/high 175, 175*F*  
       social persuasion 176–7  
       sources of influence 176–7, 176*F*  
       stress reactions 177  
       vicarious experiences 176  
     self-regulation 164, 166, 170–1, **179**  
     social cognitive theory 166, 167, 172–3, **179**  
     social learning theory 164, 167–71, 172,  
       **179–80**  
       application to practice 173–8  
       vicarious punishment 169, 174, **180**  
       vicarious reinforcement 169, 174, 177, **180**  
   links with other theorists 76, 96, 171–2, 192,  
     265, 284, 291, 326, 332, 367, 374  
   works  
     *Adolescent Aggression* 166  
     *Social Learning and Personality*  
       *Development* 166  
 Bandura, Carol 166–7
- Bandura, Mary 166–7  
 banking concept of education 205, 209–10, 211,  
 214, 217, **218**  
 Bartlett, Frederick 283, 291  
*Becoming A Teacher* (Claxton) 320  
 behaviour  
   aggressive 166, 168–9  
   and corporal punishment 99  
   learning by children 167  
   misbehaviour in schools 98–9, 100  
   negative reinforcement 91–2, 100, 102–3, **104**  
   observational learning 167–8  
   operant conditioning 3, 81, 88, 91–2, 92*F*, 94,  
     96, 99, 103, **104**, 168  
   and play 72  
   positive reinforcement 90, 91, 99, 101–2, **104**  
   punishment 91–2, 97–8, 99, 102, **104**, 170  
   rewards 91  
   schedules of reinforcement 92–4, 93*F*, 99–100, **105**  
   verbal behaviour 94–5, 97  
 behaviour modification 90, **104**  
*The Behaviour of Organisms* (Skinner)  
 behaviourism 2–3, 279  
   Bandura's ideas on 167, 170  
   *see also* Skinner, B. F.  
 Bernstein, Basil 15, 76, 115, 152–3, 212, 217  
*Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (Skinner) 90, 97  
*Beyond the Stable State* (Schön) 223, 224  
 bidirectional influences 188  
 Binet, Alfred 49  
 bioecological model 185, 189–91, 189*F*, 194–8, **199**  
 Black, Paul 338, 340–5, 346, 348, 351, 352,  
 353, 355  
   works *Inside the Black Box* 101, 338, 340–1,  
     343, 345, 346, 348 (with William)  
 Black Box 340–5, **356**  
 blogs 269  
 Bloom, Benjamin 107–25, 345–6  
   application in the classroom 117–22  
   biography 109–10  
   critiquing 116–17, 123  
   ideas  
     cultural and social background 111, 115–16  
     mastery learning 108, 113–14, 115, 117, 120–1,  
       121*F*, 123, **124**  
     objectives curriculum model 114, 116–17,  
       123, **124**  
     taxonomies 108, 111–13, 116–17, 118–19,  
       122–3, **123**  
     affective domain 108, 112, 118, 119, **123**  
     cognitive domain 108, 112, 118, 119, **123**  
     psychomotor domain 108, 112–13, 118,  
       119, **124**

- links with other theorists 14, 76, 115–16, 345–6
- works
- Compensatory Education for Cultural Deprivation* 110, 115
  - Human Characteristics and School Learning* 113
  - Taxonomy of Educational Objects, Book 1: Cognitive Domain* 108, 111
- Bobo doll 164, 166, 168–9, 172, 173, 178, **179**
- Boud, D. 229–30
- Bourdieu, Pierre 16, 76, 115, 152, 153, 212, 217, 265, 325
- Bowlby, John 192
- Boyatzis, Richard 300
- brain 51, 53, 267, 321, 365, 368
- amygdala hijack 307–8, **312**
  - cognitive load theory 279, 280–1, **292**
  - domains of emotional intelligence 301–2
  - as learning machine 371
- Brainology interactive computer program 365, 368, 371
- Bronfenbrenner, Alexander 185
- Bronfenbrenner, Urie 183–202
- application in the classroom 194–8
  - biography 165–7
  - critiquing 193–4
  - ideas
    - bioecological model 185, 189–91, 189*F*, 194–8, **199**
    - ecological systems theory 184, 186–8, 187*F*, **199**
    - environmental structure
      - chronosystem 188, 189*F*, 191, 193, **199**
      - exosystem 188, 189*F*, 191, 196, **199**
      - macrosystem 188, 189*F*, 191, **199**
      - mesosystem 188, 189*F*, 191, 195, **199–200**
      - microsystem 187–8, 189*F*, 191, **200**
      - human development 184, 185, 186–91, 192, 198
      - person characteristics 189*F*, 190–1, 191*F*, **200**
      - Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model 189–91, 189*F*, 194
      - proximal processes 189–90, 189*F*, 191, 192, 198, **200**
      - relationships 188, 192, 196
      - links with other theorists 115–16, 155–6
      - works, *The Ecology of Human Development* 186
      - see also* Head Start programme (US)
- Bruner, Jerome 108, 145–61
- application in the classroom 154–7
  - biography 147–8
  - critiquing 153–4, 158
  - constructing knowledge 146
  - ideas
    - child-centred teaching 152
    - cognitivism 150, **158**
    - computation 150, **159**
    - constructivism 148, **159**, 260
    - culture 146, 151, 154, **159**
    - discovery learning 150, 154, 155
    - enactive mode 149, 152
    - iconic mode 149, 152
    - intersubjectivist theory 155
    - Man: A Course of Study (MACOS) 146, 148–9, **159**
    - narratives 151, 156
    - objectivist theory 155
    - scaffolding 73, 146, 150, 153, 154, 155–6, **159**, 264, 282, 283–4, 366
    - social justice 147–8, 157, 158
    - spiral curriculum 146, 149, 154, 156, **159**
    - symbolic mode 149, 152
    - visual, auditory and kinaesthetic (VAK)
      - learning styles 152
  - links with other theorists 56, 75, 135, 151–3, 158, 264, 283–4, 291, 332, 366
  - works
    - The Culture of Education* 146–7, 147–8, 151, 158
    - The Process of Education* 146, 148, 149, 158
    - The Relevance of Education* 146, 150, 158
    - Toward a Theory of Instruction* 146, 150, 158
- Buckler, S. 371
- Building Learning Power (BLP) programme 75–6, 318, 319, 322, 326, 327, 328, 332, **333**
- four Rs 172, 323*T*, 328
- Building Learning Power* (Claxton) 320, 327, 328, 332
- Bullock Report (1975) 71
- Butler, Ruth 346
- Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) 352
- Carnine, Douglas 283
- Carlzon, Becky 320
- Carroll, John 113, 115, 123
- Casa dei Bambini* 28, 30, 31, 32, 34, 38, 40
- Catholic Church 206, 211
- Centre for Educational Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) 279, 280
- character development 304–5
- child-centred approach to learning 42, **43**, 152
- Piaget's influence 58–9, 60
- Children's Centres 196
- choice 32
- Chomsky, Noam 97
- Christodoulou, D. 347, 348
- Christianity 204, 206, 211, 217
- chronosystem 188, 189*F*, 191, 193, **199**
- Citizenship Education 20

- classical conditioning 3, 95–6, **104**  
*The Classroom Experiment* documentary 338, 347, 351
- Claxton, Guy 317–35  
 application in the classroom 328–31  
 biography 319–20  
 critiquing 326–7, 332  
 ideas  
   building confidence and character 318  
 Building Learning Power (BLP) programme  
   75–6, 318, 319, 322, 326, 327, 328, 332, **333**  
   four Rs 172, 323*T*, 328  
 creativity 322  
 dispositions 305, 321, 322, 326, **333**  
 educational change 318, 330  
 epistemic apprenticeship 75–6, 265, 283, 291, 319, 321–3, 325, 330, **333**  
 learning power 319, 323, 327, 328–31  
   four facets 328–9, 329*T*  
 Learning Power Approach (LPA) 318, 323–5, 326, 327, 332, **333**  
   elements of 330, 331*T*  
 learning to learn 319, 321, 329  
 lifelong learning 320, **333**  
 Magnificent Eight 330  
 persistence of students 319  
 resilience 323*F*, 326, 328, 367  
 Results Plus **334**  
   epistemic and prosocial characteristics 324–5, 324*T*  
   soft creativity 322, 330, **334**  
*The Learning Power Approach INTED Keynote Speech* 324–5  
 links with other theorists 75–6, 115, 153, 172, 265, 283, 291, 305, 325–6, 332, 367  
 works  
   *Becoming A Teacher* 320  
   *Building Learning Power* 320, 327, 328, 332  
   *Hare Brain, Tortoise Mind* 320  
   *Powering Up Students* (with Powell) 320, 324  
   *What's the Point of School?* 320  
   *Wise Up* 319, 320
- Cleary, Robert 300
- Coffield, F. 20, 247, 265
- Cognition in Practice* (Lave) 259
- cognitive apprenticeship 265, 282, 283, 287, 291, **291**, 325
- cognitive constructivism 3, 74, 75*F*
- cognitive development 49, **63**  
 as a continuous process 56  
 cultural and social background 68–9, 111, 115  
 disequilibrium 51  
 equilibrium 51
- as a historical process 69  
 mediation 69  
 and social interactions 82  
 social nature of 69  
 stages of 35, 48, 50, 51–5, 52*F*, 56, 59, 60–1, 62  
 Vygotsky's ideas on 68–9  
 zone of proximal development (ZPD) 73
- cognitive domain 108, 112, 118, 119, **123**  
 reasoning tasks 119  
 reproductive tasks 119
- cognitive entry behaviour 113
- cognitive load theory 279, 280–1, **292**
- cognitive psychology 277, 279, 283, **292**
- cognitive science 318, 323
- cognitive theory 246
- cognitivism 150, **158**
- collaboration 139
- Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) 298, 307, 311
- colonialism 205
- commenting (facet of learning power) 329*T*
- Commission on Assessment Without Levels (CAWL) 345
- common school 10
- communities of discoveries 265
- communities of practice 258–9, 262–3, 263*F*, 265, 266–7, 268–70, 271, **272**, 325  
 and assessment 269–70  
 and epistemic apprenticeship 325  
 three characteristics 262, 268, 270, 271
- Communities of Practice* (Wenger) 153, 258, 266, 271
- Compensatory Education for Cultural Deprivation* (Bloom) 110, 115
- compensatory learning 116
- computation 150, **159**
- concrete experience (CE) 243–4, 243*F*, 249–50, 251, **254**
- concrete operational stage 52*F*, 54, 57, 60–1, **63**
- conditioned reinforcers 94
- conscientisation 205, 208–9, 209*F*, **218**
- conscious mind 31, **43**
- conservation 53–4, 57, **63**
- Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organisations 298
- constructing knowledge 3, 35, 48, 51, 55–6, 68, 70, 146, 150
- constructivism 3, 135, 148, **159** *see also* cognitive constructivism; social constructivism
- contingent self-worth 363, **374**
- converger learning style 245, 251*T*, 252, **254**
- corporal punishment 99
- craft apprentices 261–2, 266, 269, 271

- creativity 210, 322  
 soft 322, 330, **334**
- critical education 20, 204, 208
- critical pedagogy 15, 211, 212, 213, 217
- cultural capital 153, 325
- cultural circles 207, **218**
- cultural deprivation 115
- cultural-historical social activity theory 68, **83**
- cultural history 74, 76
- cultural tools 70, 78
- culture **159**  
 Bronfenbrenner and Vygotsky compared 192–3  
 Bruner's ideas on 146, 151, 152–3, 154  
 construction of knowledge 70  
 and environment 68, 146, 151, 208  
 of family and community 151, 152–3  
 and globalisation 154  
 and language 76, 217  
 and learning 76, 136, 151, 158, 217, 318  
 and learning dispositions 322  
*The Culture of Education* (Bruner) 146–7, 147–8, 151, 158
- 'culture of silence' 205
- curiosity 48, 53, 56, 215
- curriculum  
 creative 18  
 flexible 11, 12  
 holistic and cross-curricular approach 80  
 integrated 40  
 objectives curriculum model 114, 116–17, 123, **124**  
 as partnership between experts and teachers 148  
 pertinent to learners 215–16  
 Piaget's influence 59–60, 62  
 process model 15  
 project-based 80  
 rigid 10–11  
 set 210  
 spiral curriculum 146, 149, 154, 156, **159**  
 subject-based 18, 19, 80, 131
- Darling-Hammond, Linda 10, 115, 212, 265
- Darwin, Charles 13
- democracy 8–9, 10, 15, 19–20, **23**
- Democracy and Education* (Dewey) 8, 9
- Dewey, John 4, 7–26  
 application in the classroom 17–22  
 biography 9–10  
 critiquing 16–17  
 ideas  
 active experience 11, 13, 14, 16, 21, **23**  
 democracy 8–9, 10, 15, 19–20, **23**  
 experimentation 8, **23**  
 habits 11, 16, **23**
- inclusivity** 20–1
- learner-centred pedagogy** 8, 12, 16, 18, 19, **24**
- pragmatism** 13, 16–17
- progressive education** 10–13, 16, 17–18
- reception in USA** 16
- reflection** 8, 13, 14, 17, **24**, 222, 229
- theory of inquiry** 222, 223
- links with other theorists** 13–16, **15F**, 22, 36, 56, 75, 115, 134, 152, 212, 217, 223, 229, 245–6, 305, 311, 325
- works**  
*Democracy and Education* 8, 9  
*Experience and Education* 9, 10  
*The School and Society* 8, 9
- dialogic teaching 75, 215, 350
- dialogical problem-posing pedagogy 215
- dialogue 205, 207–8, 209F, 210, 215, **218–19**
- differentiated teaching 73
- differentiation 79, 101, 119, 122, 137, 189
- directress 32–4, **43**
- discovery learning 59, 61, 150, 154, 155
- disequilibrium 51, **52F**, **63**
- Displacement of Concepts* (Schön) 223
- dispositions 305, 321, 322, 326, **333**
- diverger learning style 244, 251T, 252, **254**
- Dollard, John 165
- double-loop learning 222, 228–9, 228F, 233, **235**
- dual coding 279, 281, **292**
- Dweck, Carol 359–77  
 application in the classroom 368–73  
 biography 361–2  
 Brainology interactive computer program 365, 368, 371  
 critiquing 367–8, 374  
 ideas  
 contingent self-worth 363, **374**  
 entity theory 360, 362, 373, **374**  
 failure 361, 362, 363, 367–8, 371, 372  
 fixed mindset 360, 363, 364, 366, 373, **375**  
 giftedness 365  
 growth mindset 360–1, 365, 366, 369–73, 373–4, **375**  
 incremental theory 360, 363, 364, 366, 367, 369, 373, 374, **375**  
 intelligence 304, 360, 363, 367, 368, 370, 374  
 learned helplessness 361–2, 371, **375**  
 learning goals 364, 369  
 mastery-orientated approach 364  
 motivation 361, 363–4  
 performance goals 364  
 praise 364–5, 366, 369–70  
 resilience 367  
 self-concept 363

## UNDERSTANDING AND USING EDUCATIONAL THEORIES

- self-esteem 363
- self-theories 360, 367, 374
- links with other theorists 76, 115, 153, 172, 284, 326, 332, 366–7, 374
- works
  - Mindset* 362
  - Self-Theories* 362
- e-learning 269
- early years 39, 60, 82, 115, 195
  - education, influence of Montessori 40
  - importance 31
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 39, 60, 196–7
  - curriculum 18, 36, 50, 60, 61
  - key workers 195
- Statutory Framework* (2021) 39, 40, 195
- École de la Rue de la Grange-aux-Belles, L'* 49
- ecological systems theory 184, 186–8, 187F, 198, **199**
- The Ecology of Human Development* (Bronfenbrenner) 186
- economically-driven education 16, 20
- Edison, Thomas 370
- Education Endowment Fund 309
- Education Reform Act (1988) 59
- egocentric speech 71
- egocentric stage 53, **63**
- Eight Year Study 14, 109, 115
- Einstein, Albert 370
- Elder, Glen 193
- Embedded Formative Assessment* (William) 353
- emotion 229–30
- emotional intelligence (EQ) 298–9, 300–3, 305–6, 306–10, 311, **312**, 321, 326, 367
  - and academic achievement 302–3, 305, 307, 311
  - domains and competencies 301–2, 302T
  - five components 303, 303T, 308
  - five skills for the classroom 309–10
  - teachability 306
- Emotional Intelligence* (Goleman) 298, 300, 301, 304, 306–7, 311
- emotional literacy 300, 305, 306, 307, 308–9, 311–12
- Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) 305–6
- emotional/rational dichotomy 300–1
- empathy 298, 301, 303T, 307, 308, **312**
- Engels, Friedrich 74
- Englemann, Siegfried 283, 291
- entity theory 360, 362, 373, **374**
- environment
  - choice within 32
  - and human development 184
  - human/social/psychological 50
  - making sense of 31, 53
  - Montessori classrooms 38–9, 40
  - physical 50
  - prepared 40, 41, **43**
  - security in 32
  - structure (Bronfenbrenner) 187
- epistemic apprenticeship 75–6, 265, 283, 291, 319, 321–3, 325, 330, **333**
- equilibrium 51, 52F, **64**
- espoused theory 227, 231–2, **235**
- evolutionary theory 13
- examinations 39, 108, 116, 154, 330 *see also* tests
- exosystem 188, 189F, 191, 196, **199**
- Experience and Education* (Dewey) 9, 10
- Experience Based Learning Systems Inc. (EBLS) 241, 242
- experiences
  - and adult learning 132, 132F
  - Dewey's ideas on 245–6
  - Lewin's ideas on 246
- experiential learning 23, 134–5, 241–2, 243, **254**, 285
- Experiential Learning* (Kolb) 241, 242
- Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) 14, 241, 242–4, 247–9, 249–52
- experimentation 8, **23**
- explaining (facet of learning power) 328T
- extraneous load 279, 281, **292**
- external monologues 71, 82
- failure
  - blame for 367–8
  - coping with 361
  - and entity theory 363
  - girls vs. boys 362
  - and learned helplessness 362, 371
  - and Not Yet grade 372
- family *see* home and family
- feedback 101, 114, 119–20, 122, 178, 346, 354
  - AfL strategy 350–1
  - ARG element 342–3
  - for growth mindset 369, 371–2
- feminist thought 213
- fixed mindset 360, 363, 364, 366, 373, **375**
- formal operational stage 52F, 54, 61, **64**
- formative assessment 73, 80, 83, 101, 114, 115, 116, 120–1, 338, 340, 341–2, 345–6, 347, 348–55, **356**
- framing of problems 226–7
- free school concept 14
- freedom
  - for learners 14, 29, 32
  - for teachers 12, 17
- Freedom to Learn* (Rogers) 212
- Freire, Paulo 4, 203–220
  - application in the classroom 213–17
  - biography 205–7



- critiquing 212–13, 218
- ideas
- adult literacy 204, 205, 206, 207
  - conscientisation 205, 208–9, 209F, **218**
  - cultural circles 207, **218**
  - dialogue 205, 207–8, 209F, 210, 215, **218–19**
  - oppression 204, 205, 206, 208, 213
  - banking concept of education 205, 209–10, 211, 214, 217, **218**
  - praxis 205, 208, 209F, **219**
  - problem-posing education 205, 210–11, 214–15, 217, **219**, 265
- links with other theorists 76, 152, 211–12, 217–18, 246, 265
- Marxist/Christian outlook 204, 206, 211, 217
- as a teacher 216
- works
- Pedagogy of Hope* 204, 206–7, 212–13
  - Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 16, 204, 207, 209, 212, 213, 214, 217
  - Teachers as Cultural Workers* 213, 214–15
- Freud 164, 172, 178
- Freudian theory 366, 374
- Froebel, Friedrich 35
- Fry, Roger 242, 243, 244, 245, 253
- Gardner, Howard 14, 152, 311, 247, 304, 305, 326, 332, 367
- Gibbs, Deborah 247, 285
- gifted children 365
- Giroux, Henry 15, 211, 217
- globalisation 154
- Goldenberg, Gemma 320
- Goldschmied, Ellinor 35
- Goleman, Daniel 297–315
- biography 299–300
  - critiquing 305–6, 311–12
  - ideas
    - amygdala hijack 307–8, **312**
    - character development 304–5
    - emotional intelligence (EQ) 298–9, 300–3, 305–6, 306–10, 311, **312**, 326, 367
    - and academic achievement 302–3, 305, 307, 311
    - application in the classroom 306–10
    - domains and competencies 301–2, 302T
    - five components 303, 303T, 308
    - five skills for the classroom 309–10
    - teachability 306
  - emotional literacy 300, 305, 306, 307, 308–9, 311–12
  - emotional/rational dichotomy 300–1
  - empathy 298, 301, 303T, 307, 308, **312**
  - interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence 304
  - relationship management and skills 298, 302, 302T, 308, 310
  - responsible decision making 310
  - self-awareness 298, 301, 302, 302T, 303T, 308, 309–10, **312**
  - self-management 310
  - self-motivation 298, 303T, **313**
  - self-regulation 303T, **313**
  - social awareness 310
  - social skills 301, 303T, 307, **313**
- links with other theorists 304–5, 311, 326, 332, 367
- works
- Emotional Intelligence* 298, 300, 301, 304, 306–7, 311
  - The Meditative Mind* 299
  - The New Leaders* (with Boyatzis and McKee) 300
  - Working with Emotional Intelligence* 300
- Greaves, Mary 89
- Growald, Eileen 307
- growth mindset 360–1, 365, 366, 369–73, 373–4, **375**
- feedback 369, 371, 371–2
  - Not Yet grade 372
  - and praise 369–70
  - pre-tests 372
  - stories about accomplishment 370
  - teaching about the brain 371
- guilt 366
- habits 11, 16, **23**
- habitus 16, 115, 152
- Hainer, Raymond 223
- Have Brain, Tortoise Mind* (Claxton) 320
- Hattie, John 115, 123, 284, 291
- Hayes, Dennis 87
- Head Start programme (US) 109, 147, 148, 151–2, 184, 196, 198
- Hegel, Georg W. F. 13–14
- Heuristic Play 35, 36
- hierarchy of needs 135
- high-stakes testing 12, 343–4, 352–3
- higher education 20
- holistic needs of the child 39–40
- Holt, John 211
- home and family
- cultural environment 111, 115–16
  - educational advantages/disadvantages of children
    - middle-class families 76, 111, 115
    - working-class families 76, 111, 115
  - family values 185, 196, 198
  - human development 184, 185–6

- instability and unpredictability 196
  - transition to school 195
  - working with school 196–7, 198
  - see also* Head Start programme (US); parents; Sure Start programme (UK)
- homework 195
- Honey, P. 245, 247
- hooks, bell 212, 213, 215, 267
  - Teaching Community* 267
- Hull, Clark 165, 171–2
- Human Characteristics and School Learning* (Bloom) 113
- human development 184, 185, 186–91, 192, 198
- humanism 3–4
- identification 172, **179**
- Illich, Ivan 211
- imagination 35, 36, 71–2, 331*T*
- inclusivity 20–1
- incremental theory 360, 363, 364, 366, 367, 369, 373, 374, **375**
- independence 41
- individuality of the child 28, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 42, 60
- Informal Adult Education* (Knowles) 128, 129–30
- information processing 159, 279–80, 281*F*, 289
- Inside the Black Box* (Black and William) 101, 338, 340–1, 343, 345, 346, 348
- Institute for Experiential Learning 241
- intelligence
  - and entity theory 360, 363
  - as fluid concept 321, 368, 374
  - vs. hard work 370
  - and incremental theory 360, 363
  - interpersonal and intrapersonal 304
  - and praise 364
  - see also* emotional intelligence; IQ; multiple intelligences
- intelligence tests 49
- internal motivation 132*F*, 133, 135, 303*T*
- internalisation 69, 71, **83**
- International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) 110
- intersubjectivity 155
- The Invention and Evolution of Ideas* (Schön) 223
- IQ (intelligence quotient) 304, 311, 363, 370
  - vs emotional intelligence 298, 302, 305–6
  - scores 367, 368
- Itard, Jean-Marc-Gaspard 28, 29
- Jackson, Rebecca 49
- Johnson, Lyndon 110
- Jung, Carl 49, 247
- Kant, Immanuel 9, 13, 22
- Kapp, Alexander 134
- key stages 58–9
- key workers 195
- Kilpatrick, William Heard 36, 37
- Kindergarten* 35
- Kirby, Joe 347, 348
- knowing-in-action 225, 234, **235**
- knowledge
  - and active experience 13, 14
  - and adult learning 128
  - constructed 3, 35, 48, 51, 150
  - social construction of 260, 262
  - tacit 222, 225
  - through communities 215
- knowledge-based economy 137, **142**
- Knowles, Malcolm S. 127–44
  - application in the classroom 137–40
  - biography 128–30
  - critiquing 136–7
  - ideas
    - active learning 135, **141**
    - adult education 128, 129–30, 141, **141**
    - adult learning 128, 129, 130–3, 136–41
      - assumptions about adult learners 131–3, 132*F*
    - andragogy 14, 22, 128, 130, 131–3, 134, 136–7, 138–40, 141, **142**, 212
    - knowledge-based economy 137, **142**
    - learning society 137, **142**
    - lifelong learning 128, 137, **142**
    - pedagogy 130–1, 133, 137, **142**
    - physical space 138
    - psychological climate 138–9
    - self-directing 131, 134, **142**
  - links with other theorists 14, 22, 76, 134–5, 152, 212, 246
  - works*
    - Informal Adult Education* 128, 129–30
    - The Making of an Adult Educator* 130
    - The Modern Practice of Education* 130, 137
- Kohlberg, Lawrence 56–7
- Kolb, David 239–56
  - application in the classroom 249–52
  - biography 241–2
  - critiquing 247–9, 253
- Experience Based Learning Systems Inc. (EBLS) 241, 242
- ideas
  - experiential learning 241–2, 243, 253, **254**
  - Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) 14, 241, 242–4, 245–6, 247–9, 249–52
  - learning cycle 242–4, 243, 243*F*, 247, 248, 249–50, 251–2, 253

- abstract conceptualisation (AC) 243–4, 243F, 250, 251, **253**
  - active experimentation (AE) 243–4, 243F, 250, 252, **253**
  - concrete experience (CE) 243–4, 243F, 249–50, 251, **254**
  - feedback 240
  - reflective observation (RO) 243–4, 243F, 250, 251, **254**
  - Learning Style Inventory (LSI) 241, 245, 247, 253
  - learning styles 243, 244–5, 247–8, 250, 251T, 252, 253
    - accommodator 245, 251T, 252, **253**
    - assimilator 245, 251T, 252, **254**
    - converger 245, 251T, 252, **254**
    - diverger 244, 251T, 252, **254**
  - links with other theorists 14, 135, 229, 245–7, 265
  - works, *Experiential Learning* 241, 242
- Laboratory School 9, 14
- Labour government (1976), UK 59
- language
- as cultural tool 70
  - and learning 76
  - middle-class families 76, 115
  - restricted/elaborate codes 76, 212
  - and scaffolding 74
  - working-class families 76, 115
- language acquisition
- Chomsky's ideas 97
  - Skinner's ideas on 94
- Lave, Jean
- Apprenticeship in Critical Ethnography Practice* 259
  - Cognition in Practice* 259
  - Learning and Everyday Life* 259
  - Understanding Practice* 259
- Lave, Jean and Wenger, Etienne 257–74
- application in the classroom 267–70
  - biographies 259–60
  - critiquing 266–7, 271–2
  - ideas
    - apprenticeship 153, 258, 260–2, 264, **272**, 283
    - communities of practice 258–9, 262–3, 263F, 265, 266–7, 268–70, 271, **272**
    - three characteristics 262, 268, 270, 271
    - legitimate peripheral participation 258, 261, 262, 263F, 267, 268, 271, **272**
    - situated learning 75, 246, 258, 260–4, 264–5, 266, 267–70, 271–2, **272**
    - components 264
    - situatedness 262, **272**
    - storytelling 263–4, 267
    - links with other theorists 75, 153, 212, 217, 246, 264–5, 271, 283, 291, 325, 332
    - works, *Situated Learning* 153, 258, 271, 283
    - see also* Wenger, Etienne
  - learned helplessness 361–2, 371, **375**
  - learner-centred pedagogy 3–4, 8, 11, 12, 16, 18, 19, **24**
  - learners, schools of thought 3–4
  - learning, schools of thought 2–4 *see also* adult learning
  - Learning and Everyday Life* (Lave) 259
  - learning cycle 243, 247, 248, 249–50, 251–2, 253
    - abstract conceptualisation (AC) 243–4, 243F, 250, 251, **253**
    - active experimentation (AE) 243–4, 243F, 250, 252, **253**
    - concrete experience (CE) 243–4, 243F, 249–50, 251, **254**
    - feedback 240
    - reflective observation (RO) 243–4, 243F, 250, 251, **254**
  - learning dispositions *see* dispositions
  - learning goals 178, 364, 369
  - learning power 319, 323, 327, 328–31
    - four facets 328–9, 329T
  - Learning Power Approach (LPA) 318, 323–5, 326, 327, 332, **333**
    - elements of 330, 331T
  - The Learning Power Approach INTED Keynote Speech* (Claxton) 324–5
  - learning society 137, **142**, 222, 235, **235–6**
  - Learning Style Inventory (LSI) 241, 245, 247
  - learning styles 243, 244–5, 247–8, 250, 251T, 252, 253
    - accommodator 245, 251T, 252, **253**
    - assimilator 245, 251T, 252, **254**
    - converger 245, 251T, 252, **254**
    - diverger 244, 251T, 252, **254**
  - learning to learn 319, 321, 329
  - Learning to Make a Difference* (Wenger-Traynor and Wenger Traynor) 260
  - legitimate peripheral participation 258, 261, 262, 263F, 267, 268, 271, **272**
  - Lewin, Kurt 165, 171, 242, 246
    - Lewinian experiential model 242
  - life course development 193
  - lifelong learning 128, 137, **142**, 320, **333**
  - Lindeman, Eduard 134
  - literacy 151 *see also* adult literacy; emotional literacy
  - Locke, John 14, 34, 88
  - Lucas, Bill 320

- Macfarlane, Rachel 320  
 macrosystem 188, 189F, 191, **199**  
 Magnificent Eight 330  
*La Maison de Petits* 35  
*The Making of an Adult Educator* (Knowles) 130  
 Malaguzzi, Loris 14, 158  
 Man: A Course of Study (MACOS) project 146, 148–9, **159**  
 Managing Self 39–40  
 marking 342–3, 350–1  
 Marx, Karl 13  
 Marxism 16, 204, 211, 217  
 Maslow, Abraham 4, 116, 135, 366  
 mastery learning 108, 113–14, 117, 120–1, 121F, 123, **124**  
 mastery-orientated approach to learning 364  
 Mayer, John 298, 300, 301, 303, 305, 311  
 McClelland, David C. 299  
 McKee, Annie 300  
 meditation 299  
*The Meditative Mind* (Goleman) 299  
 Meister, Carla 278, 289  
 'mental age' 73  
 Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF) 174  
 mesosystem 188, 189F, 191, 195, **199–200**  
 metacognition 278, 279, **292**  
 Mezirow, Jack 135, 246, 212  
 microsystem 187–8, 189F, 191, **200**  
 Miller, Neal 165  
*Mindset* (Dweck) 362  
 Mischel, Walter 166  
 modelling  
   Bandura's ideas on 164, 166, 168–9, 173, **179**  
   facet of learning power 329T  
   Rosenshine's ideas on 276, 281–2, 284, 286–7, **292–3**  
*The Modern Practice of Education* (Knowles) 130, 137  
 Montessori, Alessandro 29  
 Montessori, Maria 27–45  
   application in the classroom 37–42  
   biography 28–30  
   critiquing 36–7  
   ideas  
   absorbent mind 31, 32, **42**  
   abstract thinking 31, **42–3**  
   child-centered approach 42, **43**  
   child development 31–4, 33T  
   conscious mind 31, **43**  
   directress 32–4, **43**  
   individuality of the child 28, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 42  
   prepared environment 40, 41, **43**  
   sensitive periods 31–2, 33T, 35, **43**  
   social interaction 37  
   social liberty 31  
   spiritual embryo 31, **43**  
   unconscious absorbent mind 31, 32  
   learning materials 28, 30, 36, 37–8  
   links with other theorists 34–6, 55–6  
 Montessori, Mario 29  
 Montessori Method 28, 32, 36  
 Montessori schools 28, 30, 37  
 Moore, A. 7, 213, 216  
 moral development  
   Kohlberg's ideas on 56–7  
   Piaget's ideas on 54–5  
*The Moral Judgement of the Child* (Piaget) 54  
 morality of constraint 55  
 morality of cooperation 55  
 motivation  
   adult learning 132F, 133  
   ARG principle 344  
   Bandura's ideas on 170, 178, 179  
   Dweck's ideas on 360, 361, 362, 363–4  
   extrinsic 39, 100, 366  
   internal 132F, 133, 136  
   intrinsic 78, 100, 367  
   Montessori's ideas on 30, 39  
   pedagogy 131  
 multiple intelligences (MI) concept 14, 152, 247, 304, 326, 367  
 Mumford, A. 245, 247  
 Myers-Briggs psychometric test 247  
 narratives 151, 156  
 National Curriculum 18, 19, 20, 59, 81, 118, 210, 308  
 nature vs. nurture 35  
 need to know 132F, 133  
 negative reinforcement 91–2, 100, 102–3, **104**  
 Neill, A. S. 4, 14, 212, 218, 366  
 neuroscience 321  
*The New Leaders* (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee) 300  
*New York Times* 300  
 Noddings, Nell 211  
 non-drinking alcoholics 261–2, 263–4, 266, 271  
 North American Montessori Teachers Association (NAMTA) 37  
 'Not Yet' grade 372  
 object permanence 53, 58  
 objectives curriculum model 114, 116–17, 123, **124**  
 observational learning 168, 169–70, 170F, 172, 173  
   motivation 170  
   observation 169–70

- produce the action 170
- retention 170
- Ofsted 347
- On Becoming a Person* (Rogers) 212
- open questions 350
- operant conditioning 3, 88, 91–2, 92*F*, 94, 96, 99, 103, **104**, 168
- operations 51–2
- oppression 204, 205, 206, 208, 213
  - banking concept of education 205, 209–10, 211, 214, 217, **218**
- orchestration (facet of learning power) 329*T*
- Organizational Learning* (Schön and Argyris) 224
- Organizational Learning II* (Schön and Argyris) 224
- Paivio, Allan 281
- parents
  - and key workers 195
  - as partners 40, 197
  - progress reports for 195, 197
  - relationships with 30
- passive learning 10, 12
- Pavlov, Ivan 2–3, 89, 90, 95–6
- pedagogy 130–1, 133, 137, **142**
- Pedagogy of Hope* (Freire) 204, 206–7, 212–3
- Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire) 16, 204, 207, 209, 212, 213, 214, 217
- peer assessment (AFL strategy) 352
- peer-mentoring schemes 174–5
- peer role models 174, 176
- peer tutoring 178, 354–5
- performance goals 364
- perseverance 114
- persistence 100, 115, 319, 362, 367, 368
- person characteristics 189*F*, 190–1, 191*F*, **200**
- personal orientated praise 369
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum 308
- personalised learning 120
- Petty, G. 19, 118–19, 279, 369–70
- physical space 138
- Piaget, Arthur 49
- Piaget, Jean 47–65, 164
  - application in the classroom 58–61
  - biography 49–50
  - critiquing 57–8
  - ideas
    - accommodation 51, 52*F*, **62**
    - adaptation 50, 51, 52*F*, **62**
    - assimilation 51, 52*F*, **63**
    - child-centred learning 60
    - cognitive development 49, 50–5, **63**
    - concrete operational stage 52*F*, 54, 57, 60–1, **63**
    - formal operational stage 52*F*, 54, 61, **64**
    - preoperational stage 52*F*, 53–4, 57, 60, **64**
    - sensorimotor stage 52*F*, 53, 58, 60, 61, **64**
    - stage theory of 35, 48, 50, 51–5, 52*F*, 56, 59, 60–1, 62
    - conservation 53–4, 57, **63**
    - discovery learning 59, 61
    - disequilibrium 51, 52*F*, **63**
    - egocentric stage 53, **63**
    - equilibrium 51, 52*F*, **64**
    - moral development 54–5
    - play 55–6, 59, 60–1
    - schemas 50, 51, **64**
    - links with other theorists 14, 35, 55–6, 74, 75*F*, 246, 366
    - works, *The Moral Judgement of the Child* 54
- play
  - and cognitive development 55–6
  - and imagination 71–2
  - importance of 55–6, 59, 60–1, 71, 78–9
  - Montessori's ideas on 36
  - Piaget's ideas on 55–6, 59, 60–1
  - Plowden Report (1967) 59
  - Vygotsky's ideas on 71–2
- Plowden Report (1967) 8, 17–18, 58–9
  - criticisms 59
  - play and discovery learning 59
  - stages of development 59
- policy diffraction 347
- Popham, W. J. 115
- positive reinforcement 90, 91, 99, 101–2, **104**
- poverty 148, 157, 185, 205–6 *see also* War Against Poverty
- Powell, Graham 320
- power interactions 266
- Powering Up Students* (Claxton and Powell) 320, 324
- pragmatism 13, 16–17
- praise 364–5, 366, 369–70
- praxis 205, 208, 209*F*, **219**
- preoperational stage 52*F*, 53–4, 57, 60, **64**
- prepared environment 40, 41, **43**
- primary reinforcers 94
- principles of instruction 75–6, 276–7, 278–82, 284–5, 286–91, **293**
- Pring, R. 21
- privilege 20, 109, 136
- problem-posing education 205, 210–11, 214–15, 217, 219, 265
- process curriculum model 15
- The Process of Education* (Bruner) 146, 148, 149, 158
- process orientated praise 369

- Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model 189–91, 189F, 194
- Professional Development Schools 265
- professionals 222, 224, 232–3
- progressive education 10–13, 16, 17–18, 34–5, 206 movement 8
- proximal processes 189–90, 189F, 191, 192, 198, **200**
- psychological climate 138–9
- psychology, as a science 88, 92
- psychomotor domain 108, 118, 119, **124**
- punishment 91–2, 97–8, 99, 102, **104**, 170
- Pupil Behaviour in Schools in England* report (2012) 98
- questioning 79, 119–20, 346  
AFL strategy 348–50  
hinge questions 349  
principle of instruction 287–8  
talk partners 349
- reasoning tasks 119
- reception learning 154
- reciprocal determinism 96, 192
- reflection 246–7  
Dewey's ideas on 8, 13, 14, 17, **24**, 222, 229  
and emotion 229–30  
intersubjectivity 155  
Schön's ideas on 223, 229, 224–9, 231–3  
in schools 231–3
- reflection-in-action 222, 224, 226, 230–1, 232, 233–4, 235, **236**
- reflection-on-action 222, 226, 230, 231, 234, 235, **236**
- reflection-on-practice 232
- reflective observation (RO) 243–4, 243F, 250, 251, **254**
- reflective practice 13, 14, 17, 217, **236**  
Schön's ideas on 222, 224, 225–6, 232–3
- The Reflective Practitioner* (Schön) 224
- Reggio Emilia schools 14, 75, 80, 152, 158
- reification 263
- reinforcement 3  
negative 91–2, 100, 102–3, **104**  
positive 90, 91, 99, 101–2, **104**  
schedules of 92–4, 93F, 99–100, **105**  
vicarious 169, 174, 177, **180**
- The Relevance of Education* (Bruner) 146, 150, 158
- relationship management and skills 298, 302, 302T, 308, 310
- Reppuci, N. Dickon 362
- reproductive tasks 119
- resilience 367  
four Rs of BLP 172, 323F, 326, 328
- resourcefulness (four Rs of BLP) 172, 323F, 326, 328
- responsible decision making 310
- Results Plus **334**  
epistemic and prosocial characteristics 324–5, 324T
- rewards 91  
systems in schools 98, 99, 101, 102
- rights of the child 38, 42
- Robinson, Jann 320
- Rogers, Carl 4, 14, 97, 134–5, 212, 218, 247, 366  
*On Becoming A Person* 212  
*Freedom to Learn* 212
- role models  
peers 174, 176  
teachers 173–4
- Rose Review of the Primary Curriculum 18
- Rosenshine, Barak 3, 123, 275–95  
biography 278  
critiquing 284–5, 291  
ideas  
cognitive apprenticeship 265, 282, 283, 287, 291, **291**, 325  
cognitive load theory 279, 280–1, **292**  
cognitive psychology 277, 279, 283, **292**  
dual coding 279, 281, **292**  
extraneous load 279, 281, **292**  
metacognition 278, 279, **292**  
principles of instruction 75–6, 276–7, 278–82, 284–5, 286–91, **293**  
application in the classroom 286–91  
ask questions 276, 287  
check for student understanding 276, 288  
daily review 276, 288  
guided practice 276, 282, 289  
independent practice 277, 279, 289–90  
modelling 276, 281–2, 284, 286–7, **292–3**  
obtain a higher success rate 276, 289  
present new material in small steps 276, 286  
scaffolding 277, 278, 279, 281–2, 283–4, 287, 291, **293**  
Sherrington's strands 277, 286–90  
weekly and monthly review 277, 289  
schemata/schema 279, 280, 283, **293**  
teacher performance 278  
thinking aloud 282  
working and long-term memory 279–81, 281F, **293**  
links with other theorists 75–6, 115, 153, 265, 283–4, 291, 325, 332, 366
- Ross, Dorothea 166, 168
- Ross, Sheila 166, 168
- rote learning 8, 68, 80, 108
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques 34–5

- Rowe, M.B. 346, 348  
 Russell, Bertrand 89
- Sadler, D. R. 346  
 Salovey, Peter 298, 300, 301, 303, 305, 311  
 San Spirito Hospital 29  
 satiation 99, 100, **105**  
 Savicevic, Dusan 130  
 scaffolding 73–4, 153, **159**  
   Bruner's ideas on 73, 146, 150, 153, 154, 155–6, 264, 282, 283–4, 366  
   Rosenshine's ideas on 277, 278, 279, 281–2, 283–4, 287, 291 **293**  
   Vygotsky's ideas on 73, 75–6, 77, 79, 83, **83**, 156, 282  
 schedules of reinforcement 92–4, 93F, 99–100, **105**  
*Schedules of Reinforcement* (Skinner) 92  
 schemas/schemata 50, 51, **64**, 279, 280, 283, **293**  
 Schön, Donald 221–38  
   application in the classroom 231–4  
   biography 223–4  
   critiquing 230–1  
   ideas  
     double-loop learning 222, 228–9, 228F, 233, **235**  
     espoused theory 227, 231–2, **235**  
     framing of problems 226–7  
     knowing-in-action 225, **235**  
     learning society 222, 235, **235–6**  
     reflection 223, 229, 231–3, **236**  
       and learning 224–9  
     reflection-in-action 222, 224, 226, 230–1, 232, 233–4, 235, **236**  
     reflection-on-action 222, 226, 230, 231, 234, 235, **236**  
     reflective practice 222, 224, 225–6, 232–3, **236**  
     school effectiveness 225  
     single-loop learning 227–8, 228F, 233  
     tacit knowledge 222, 225  
     technical rationality 225, 231  
     theory-in-use 227, 232, **236**  
     theory-practice conflict 225  
   links with other theorists 229–30, 247  
   works  
     *Beyond the Stable State* 223, 224  
     *Displacement of Concepts (The Invention and Evolution of Ideas)* 223  
     *The Reflective Practitioner* 224  
   works (with Argyris)  
     *Organizational Learning* 224  
     *Organizational Learning II* 224  
     *Theory in Practice* 224  
*The School and Society* (Dewey) 8, 9  
 school effectiveness 225
- schools of thought 2–4  
 Scriven, Michael 345  
 Sears, Robert 165–6, 171  
 Séguin, Édouard 28, 29  
 self-actualisation 116, 128, 135, 233  
 self-assessment 250, 344–5  
   AFL strategy 351–2  
 self-awareness 298, 301, 302, 302T, 303T, 308, 309–10, **312**  
 self-concept 128, 131, 132F, 136, 137, 363  
 self-control therapy 164  
 self-directing 131, 134, **142**  
 self-efficacy 164, 171, 172, 175–7, 178, 179, **179**, 326, 367, 374  
   mastery 176  
   social persuasion 176–7  
   stress reactions 177  
   vicarious experiences 176  
 self-esteem 171, 344, 363  
 self-management 301, 302, 302T, 310  
 self-motivation 298, 303T, **313**  
 self-reflection 222, 224, 231, 232  
 self-regulation **84**, **179**, **313**  
   Bandura's ideas on 164, 166, 170–1  
   as component of emotional intelligence 303T  
   Vygotsky's ideas on 60, 72, 78–9  
 self-theories 172, 360, 367, 374  
*Self-Theories* (Dweck) 362  
 senses 30, 31, 32, 53, 279  
 sensitive periods 31–2, 33T, 35, **43**  
 sensorimotor stage 52F, 53, 58, 60, 61, **64**  
 sensory experiences 53  
 Sherrington, Tom 277, 280, 282, 286, 287, 288, 289  
 Shriver, Timothy 307  
 Simon, Theodore 49  
 single-loop learning 227–8, 228F, 233  
 situated learning 75, 246, 258, 260–4, 264–5, 266, 267–70, 271–2, **272**  
   and assessment 269–70  
   community 264  
   identity 264  
   meaning 264  
   practice 264  
*Situated Learning* (Lave and Wenger) 153, 258, 271, 283  
 situatedness 262, **272**  
 Skinner, B. F. 3, 87–106, 164  
   animal testing 88, 90, 91, 94, 96–7  
   application in the classroom 98–103  
   baby-crib 88, 90  
   biography 88–90  
   critiquing 96–8  
   ideas

- behaviour modification 90, **104**
- classical conditioning 95–6, **104**
- conditioned reinforcers 94
- negative reinforcement 91–2, 100, 102–3, **104**
- operant conditioning 3, 81, 88, 91–2, 92*F*, 94, 96, 99, 103, **104**
- positive reinforcement 90, 91, 99, 101–2, **104**
- primary reinforcers 94
- punishment 91–2, 97–8, 99, 102, **104**
- rewards 91
- satiation 99, 100, **105**
- schedules of reinforcement 92–4, 93*F*, 99–100, **105**
- speech types 95
- verbal behaviour 94–5, 97
- links with other theorists 95–6, 171
- Skinner Box 88, 90, 91, 94
- works
  - The Behaviour of Organisms* 90
  - Beyond Freedom and Dignity* 90, 97
  - Schedules of Reinforcement* 92
  - The Technology of Teaching* 90
  - Verbal Behaviour* 94, 97
  - Walden Two* 88, 90
- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme 308–9
- Social and Emotional Literacy (SEL) programme 300, 308–9, 311
- social awareness 302, 302*T*, 310
- social background 10, 70, 108–9, 159
- social class
  - and academic achievement 108–9
  - and linguistic codes 76
  - and zone of proximal development (ZPD) 73
- social cognition 259
- social cognitive theory 166, 167, 172–3, **179**
- social constructivism 3, 11, 68, 74, 75*F*, **84**, 260, 264
- social constructivist learning 81, 260
- social intelligence 301, 304, 311
- social interaction 3, 8, 146, 249
  - and apprenticeship 272, 283
  - Bronfenbrenner's ideas on 187
  - and learning 56, 75, 261
  - Montessori's approach 37
  - Vygotsky's ideas on 56, 77–8, 82
- social injustice 151, 212
- social justice 109, 114, 116, 123, 205, 207, 211, 217
  - Bruner's ideas on 147–8, 157, 158
- Social Learning and Personality Development* (Bandura) 166
- social learning theory 164, 167–71, 172, **179–80**
  - application in the classroom 173–8
  - judgement 170
  - self-observation 170
  - self-response 171
- social liberty 31
- social persuasion 176–7
- social skills 301, 303*T*, 307, **313**
- socially situated learning *see* situated learning
- societal breakdown 185
- soft creativity 322, 330, **334**
- special needs children 28, 29
- speech 71
- speech types 95
- Spence, Kenneth 165, 171
- spiral curriculum 146, 149, 154, **159**, 308
- spiralling 156–7
- spiritual embryo 31, **43**
- split-screen thinking 329
- stages of cognitive development (Piaget) 35, 48, 50, 51–5, 52*F*, 56, 59, 60–1, 62
- Stalinism 68
- Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) 81
- Stenhouse, Lawrence 15, 117, 152, 158, 230
- Stevens, R. 278
- Stoppani, Renilde 29
- storytelling 263–4, 267
- streaming 12
- Stubbs, Beth 36
- student councils 20
- summative assessment 39, 73, 79–80, 116, 341, 347, **356**
  - formative use 343–4, 352–3
- Summerhill School 4, 14, 212
- Sure Start programme (UK) 184, 196
- symbolic play 59, 60
- tacit knowledge 222, 225
- talent 114, 364
- talk partners 349
- task orientated praise 369
- taxonomies, Bloom's 108, 111–13, 116–17, 118–19, 122–3, **123**
  - affective domain 108, 112, 118, 119, **123**
  - cognitive domain 108, 112, 118, 119, **123**
  - psychomotor domain 108, 112–13, 118, 119, **124**
- Taxonomy of Educational Objects, Book 1: Cognitive Domain* (Bloom) 108, 111
- teacher education 12
- teacher performance 278
- teachers
  - asking questions 79, 119, 346, 348–50
  - classroom practice 214
  - conflicting expectations 40
  - conscientisation 205, 208–9
  - creative teaching 101



- dialogue 205, 207, 210, 215  
 directional role 216  
 as directresses 32–4  
 experiential learning 249  
 as facilitators 4, 8, 12, 14, 18–19, 34, 37, 56, 61, 134, 138  
 first-hand knowledge 225  
 growth mindset training 372  
 help with problem solving 79  
 knowing children 78  
 as motivators and catalysts for learning 155  
 as observers 38, 39, 41  
 problem-posing 210, 214–15  
 as role models 173–4  
 role in developing self-efficacy 176  
 scaffolding 79, 83  
 skills and qualities 21  
 speech of 79  
*Teachers as Cultural Workers* (Freire) 213, 214–15  
 Teachers' Standards 173  
 teaching, differentiation and challenge 119–20  
*Teaching Community* (hooks) 267  
 technical rationality 225, 231  
*The Technology of Teaching* (Skinner) 90  
 Tennant, M. 247, 248–9  
 tests 39, 341, 343–4  
   intelligence 49, 304  
   pre-tests 372  
   *see also* examinations  
 Thatcher government, UK 18  
*Theory in Practice* (Schön and Argyris) 224  
 theory of inquiry 222, 223  
 theory-in-use 227, 232, **236**  
 thinking aloud 282  
 Thorndike, Edward 91, 96, 304, 311  
*Thought and Language* (Vygotsky) 68  
 Tickell Review 39  
*Toward a Theory of Instruction* (Bruner) 146, 150, 158  
 traffic light system 347, 351, 353  
 transformative learning 135, 212, 246  
 transitions 195–6, 197  
 treasure baskets 35–6  
 Tyler, Ralph 109, 115
- unconscious absorbent mind 31, 32  
*Understanding Practice* (Lave) 259  
 universities, student feedback 20
- Varns, Virginia 166–7  
 verbal behaviour 94–5, 97  
*Verbal Behaviour* (Skinner) 94, 97  
 vicarious experiences 176  
 vicarious punishment 169, 174, **180**  
 vicarious reinforcement 169, 174, 177, **180**  
 violence, television and video games 178–9  
 visual, auditory and kinaesthetic (VAK) learning styles 152
- Vygotsky, Lev 67–86  
   application in the classroom 77–82  
   biography 63–4  
   critiquing 76–7  
   ideas  
     assessment 73, 77, 79–80  
     cognitive development 68–9  
     cultural–historical social activity theory 68, **83**  
     cultural history 74, 76  
     cultural tools 70, 78  
     internalisation 69, 71, **83**  
     language and thought 70–1  
     learning through social activity 70–4  
     play and imagination 71–2  
     scaffolding 73, 75–6, 77, 79, 83, **83**, 156, 282  
     self-regulation 60, 72, 78–9, **84**  
     social constructivism 68, 74, 75F, **84**, 260  
     speech 71  
     zone of proximal development (ZPD) 72–3, 75–6, 76–7, 83, **84**, 264, 325  
   links with other theorists 56, 74–6, 75F, 146, 151, 158, 171, 192–3, 212, 264, 283, 284, 291, 325, 332, 366  
   works, *Thought and Language* 68
- Walden Two* (Skinner) 88, 90  
 Walters, Richard 166, 168, 171  
 War Against Poverty (US) 110, 122  
 Watson John 3, 88, 89, 90, 95  
 Weissberg, Roger 307  
 Wells, H. G. 89  
 Wenger, Etienne  
   *Artificial Intelligence and Tutoring Systems* 260  
   *Communities of Practice* 153, 258, 266, 271  
   *Learning to Make a Difference* (with Beverley Wenger-Trayner) 260  
   *see also* Lave, Jean and Wenger, Etienne  
 Wenger-Trayner, Beverley 260  
*What's the Point of School?* (Claxton) 320  
 William, Dylan 337–58  
   biography 339–40  
   *The Classroom Experiment* documentary 338, 347, 351  
   critiquing 346–8  
   ideas  
     assessment for learning 338, 342, 347, **356**  
     assessment of learning 341, **356**  
     Black Box 340–5, **356**

UNDERSTANDING AND USING EDUCATIONAL THEORIES

- formative assessment 338, 340, 341–2, 345–6, 347, **356**
  - application in the classroom 348–55
- formative learning strategies
  - evidence of learner's achievements 354
  - feedback 354
  - learning intentions and success criteria 353–4
  - students as owners of own learning 355
  - students as resources for one another 354–5
- policy diffraction 347
- summative assessment 341, 347, 352–3, **356**
- Teacher Learning Communities (TLCs) 338, 355, **356**
  - traffic light system 347, 351, 353
  - links with other theorists 115, 345–6, 367
- works*
  - Embedded Formative Assessment* 353
  - Inside the Black Box* (with Black) 101, 338, 340–1, 343, 345, 346, 348
- Williamson, B. 20, 265
- Wise Up* (Claxton) 319, 320
- working and long-term memory 279–81, 281F, **293**
- Working with Emotional Intelligence* (Goleman) 300
- zone of proximal development (ZPD) 72–3, 75–6, 76–7, 83, **84**, 264, 325

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