

Book title: Effective Teaching in Schools; Theory and Practice

Author: Chris Kyriacou

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The review

1. What is your overall impression of the book?

Dr Chris Kyriacou is Reader in Educational Psychology at the department of educational studies, University of York, and also is the author of three other books published by Nelson Thornes.

This book is a well-structured insight into what makes an effective teacher. It is relatively easy to digest compare to other texts I have read. The book is set into relevant chapters. Each chapter has a short summary at the end and also some discussion questions to help you think about what you have read.

The author hopes to show how and why certain activities are successful for learning and what factors may influence their effectiveness. The book is split into 3 parts. Part one discusses the issues of effective teaching and the way children learn. The second part deals with effective classroom practice and the final section is based around reflecting on teaching experience.

2. Who do you think would benefit most from reading the book? What will they learn?

This book is aimed primarily at new teachers and those who are currently undergoing their initial teacher practice. Each chapter deals with a different element of effective teaching. Throughout the book the reader will learn about how to match class room activities with how children learn. Thinking about managing behaviour, building relationships, how different children learn.

The section on reflecting on practice gives a useful guide to thinking about how effective/ successful a lesson has been.

There is a worthwhile section on pupil's differences which gives a good outline of how pupils differences can affect learning. The chapter is broken down into different sections. It discusses the effect of ability, gender, SEN, social class, motivation and race. Each section discusses what effect these differences can have on learning. When discussing gender, Kyriacou suggests how important it is to ensure that both male and female pupils receive a broad-based curriculum with the opportunity to follow up specific interests.

3. What did you think about the quality of the writing? Please consider the tone, structure and ideas. Does it suit the audience?

The book is well written and is easily accessible. It marries up theory and school based practice using examples and discussion. The book has three main sections dealing with effective teaching and how children learn, effective classroom practice and reflecting on teaching experiences.

Chapter 1 describes how the book is set out and what will be discussed in each chapter.

Chapters 2 and 3 discuss how children learn and what is effective teaching. Chapter 3 is particularly interesting, it deals with how children learn, considering the importance of psychological theory for learning and development. There is an interesting section on the hidden curriculum, which is messages conveyed to children through experience of schools and the effect this may have on their learning. For example, how praise not only affects the high achieving pupil who the praise was aimed at but may also have a negative effect on pupils that are not doing so well.

4. Please discuss the research used to underpin the ideas. What evidence does the author use? Is it robust and up-to-date?

Kyriacou uses a wide range of research papers and psychological theory to help back up discussion and analysis of classroom practices. Evidence used is both from respected theorists of the past i.e. Piaget, Maslow and Vygotsky, and more up to date research published around the time of the book being released.

Kyriacou created a study to identify a set of qualities which could later be explored in terms of their relationship with effective teaching. He conducted this study over 40 lessons, the teachers that agreed to the study were all experienced teachers. He then goes on to discuss the findings of the study and relevance of the observed qualities.

5. What did you learn from reading the book? What ideas/approaches/practice will you change or adopt as a result of reading this book?

I have learnt to consider the hidden curriculum, thinking about how I use praise to motivate pupils and how I use children's work to model expectations, considering how it is going to make that child feel and will it motivate others in the way I desire.

I found the section in chapter 6 on reflection and evaluation a useful tool for evaluating practice. Kyriacou sets out a list of questions that may be useful to consider when evaluating one's own

practice. I think this will help me in the future when I am reflecting on how successful/effective a lesson has been.

The book has also encouraged me to consider how I am differentiating my lessons. i.e. differentiated by task, outcome, pace or support. I think that this will help me when planning lesson to give me guidance on how I may wish to differentiate.

6. Could you share a quote from the book that particularly resonated with you?

“...distinguishing between ‘less able’ pupils and ‘low attainers’ is important in its implication for effective teaching. After all, low attainers may well include some able pupils” p57