

BOOK REVIEWS

Work with young people: theory and policy for practice, by J. Wood and J. Hine,
London, Sage, 2009, 304 pp., £20.99, ISBN 9781412928854

Reviewed by Daniel Bradley, Senior Lecturer in Applied Social Studies, University of Cumbria

As someone who has spent his whole career ‘working with young people’ I think that this book is a welcome addition to the literature on young people and the social condition of youth. I should state at the beginning that I enjoyed reading this book which is both thought provoking and challenging.

This work will have an obvious attraction to students who are studying subjects which require an understanding of young people and their place within contemporary society and will be of particular interest to youth and community work students. Having said this, the book could make a valuable contribution to the learning of students from a wider range of subjects including social policy, social work, education, criminology and policing.

In addition to an academic audience, the book has real relevance for practitioners and it is good to see a book that is well structured in terms of its ability to engage those who are already working with young people. With the convincing evidence that good practitioners are reflective practitioners, *Work with young people* has much to offer in this regard.

Nineteen authors from a wide range of disciplines have contributed to the book and the names will be instantly familiar to most students of youth work. The work is split into two main sections. Section 1 is titled ‘Theory and practice’ and begins by examining the changing conceptions of ‘youth’ and continuing to cover issues which include globalisation, ethics, anti-oppressive practice and social capital. Section 2, titled ‘Policy and practice’, explores the multiple challenges that modern youth policy presents to practitioners and includes sections on citizenship, risk, youth justice and European youth policy.

Of particular interest is the chapter by Malcolm Payne which is titled ‘Modern youth work: Purity or common cause’ in which he provides a useful analysis of the need for modern youth work to be broad, inclusive and cooperative whilst still adhering to practice principles. Payne’s case study on hospital youth work is illuminating and charts the success of a hospital youth work team and their work across a number of departments, including accident and emergency and other clinical encounters. The case study highlights the need for youth work to adapt to the changing society in which it is located and Payne provides a very useful analysis of the benefits of questioning notions of both purpose and benefit.

For students who are aiming to develop some understanding of current issues in youth justice, the chapter by Joe Yates, ‘Youth justice: Moving in an anti-social

direction', provides an excellent analysis which addresses the notion of 'total panic' in relation to young people. It is vital that anyone working with young people understands the difficulty of the notion of 'youth' as a metaphor for 'trouble' and Yates explores this very well, particularly in relation to the New Labour policy agenda. He challenges the whole concept of 'anti-social behaviour' in a very useful way.

The final chapter of the book provides an overview of the emergent themes in relation to working with young people and rounds the work off well. Because of the wide range of interrelated topics that this work covers, the analysis of each issue is necessarily brief and in this regard provides a useful introduction rather than an in-depth analysis. This is acknowledged in the fact that each chapter ends with useful suggestions for further reading, allowing the reader to find a more in-depth analysis elsewhere and encouraging the reader to go further in reaching understanding.

The book is well structured and it is possible to pass between the various subjects covered with ease. The inter-relationship of the issues is apparent and this is helped by the overview provided in the introduction and conclusions to the sections. Each chapter includes a number of 'reflective questions for practice' and this undoubtedly adds to the value of this work. There is a real attempt to engage the reader in exploring the practice implications of both theory and policy.

Society changes rapidly and youth work has sometimes been accused of failing to adapt readily enough to the changes presented. This book acknowledges this in presenting an agenda for the future and in discussing the increasingly wide range of agencies who seek to intervene in the lives of young people and whom the youth work field will have to successfully relate to.

I would suggest that the book could be useful in Higher Education teaching at all levels through introducing the various concepts. When reading any new book of this kind the ultimate question for me is always 'would I use the book in my own teaching?', and in relation to *Work with young people* the answer is a clear yes.

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Vocational psychological and organisational perspectives on career, edited by A. Collin and W. Patton, Rotterdam, Sense Publishers, 2009, xv + 245 pp., £35.00, ISBN 978-90-8790-915-4

Reviewed by Dr Charles Jackson, Senior NICEC Fellow and Visiting Professor, Kingston Business School

This is an interesting and challenging book. Work is very important to individuals and is becoming ever more complex and specialised. Anything that offers a serious contribution to the debate about how we think about work and careers is worth reading. Improving our understanding and thinking about work and careers is a vital step in developing more effective strategies for career support across the lifespan.

The aim of the book is to share perspectives and in that way counter the isolation of much career scholarship that draws on only a single disciplinary perspective. This