Book Review
Educational Psychology

Berivan Mohammed Ahmed Abdullah[1], Ilona D. Dabney-Fekete[2], Tímea Ceglédi[3]

Bibliography of the reviewed book: Santrock, J. W. (2018). *Educational Psychology* (6 Ed). McGraw-Hill Education.

Introduction

Educational psychology is a broad field of study that demands ongoing updates in the societies of our time to meet the needs of learners. This field addresses various issues related to the learning process and knowledge retention. The work, Educational Psychology, is one of the comprehensive, unique, and up-to-date textbooks that contributes to the enhancement of the education system's practices and covers the latest research, practices, and theories in the fields of education and psychology. It focuses on no one-size-fits-all, but it shows educators how to put theories into practice and deal with the needs of 21st-century pupils. A variety of techniques, practices, theories, authentic case studies, and activities are presented in this book; by understanding them, educators can create an effective learning environment. Therefore, it is worthwhile to read; for it is crucial for teachers, educators, and other teaching and non-teaching staff, psychologists, researchers, parents, and learners to be up to date, follow, and analyze the current educational issues related to technology, the learning process, students' needs and differentiation, to classroom management, and assessment.

The author's main aim is to improve the teaching and learning process in classrooms. In writing this textbook, he endeavored to put everything related to educational psychology in one book, thereby simplifying the exercise of navigation for undergraduate students and teachers. This helps readers gain a thorough knowledge of how psychological principles can be applied to educational contexts and applicable instructions based on real-life cases. His work covers the fundamental principles and methodologies of effective instruction tailored for the 21st century's educators. It entails studying various factors that influence learning, such as cognitive, behavioral, and social development processes, as well as focusing on the learners' motivation, interactions, and individual differences.

Review

This book is the sixth edition, which is a significant revision of the previous five editions sharing nearly identical titles, reflecting the rapid changes in the field of educational psychology. The author is John W. Santrock, who earned his Doctor of Philosophy degree from the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota. During an extended period, he was involved in the teaching process at the University of Charleston and the University of Georgia. Following this, he joined a psychology program where he currently teaches several undergraduate courses at the University of Texas at Dallas. He was recently acknowledged as an exceptional teacher at the university and was granted the Effective Teaching Award. The author sought input from experts in many different areas of educational psychology to ensure the book's reliability in teaching and that it is accurate and informative (Santrock, 2018).

[1] PhD student at the University of Debrecen, Hungary; Lecturer at the University of Zakho, Kurdistan Region of Iraq; berivan.abdullah@uoz.edu.krd
[2] University of Debrecen, Center for Higher Education Research and Development, University of Debrecen, Hungary; fekete.ilona@arts.unideb.hu
[3] MTA-DE-Parent-Teacher Cooperation Research Group, University of Debrecen, Hungary; cegledi.timea@arts.unideb.hu

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this book review would be the first of the sixth edition of Santrock's textbook. Although the review is brief and may not be sufficient to discuss each chapter in detail, the researcher has attempted to provide a general overview of the entire book. This book is a valuable synopsis of the recent advancement of educational psychology; it provides useful insights for educators, students, and researchers alike, which is why it is worth reading and reviewing. The book is divided into sixteen main chapters, as follows:

1. Educational Psychology: A Tool for Effective Teaching: In this chapter, Santrock introduces the foundational principles of educational psychology and its application to effective teaching. He gives a historical overview by mentioning the pioneers of educational psychology and the principle of effective teaching. He further emphasizes the importance of familiarizing oneself with different research methodologies to improve teaching practices.

2. Cognitive and Language Development: This chapter explores a range of topics related to the process of acquiring knowledge by learners of different lifespans. The chapter examines the process and periods of human development; it analyzes theories of cognitive development, which provide insights into children's cognitive development and learning process.

3. Social Contexts and Socioemotional Development: This chapter deals with social contexts that influence students' socioemotional development. It provides a comprehensive analysis and strategies for the role of parents, school, and peers in developing the child's self-esteem, identity, moral development, and emotional development.

4. Individual Variations: This chapter argues for the importance of awareness of individual variations in children's cognition in creating inclusive educational environments. This chapter explores the individual differences of the children, their types of intelligence, their learning and thinking styles, their personality traits, and their temperament.

5. Sociocultural Diversity: In this chapter, Santrock explained how variations in culture, gender differences, socioeconomic status, and ethnic background affect teaching. It highlights the importance of culturally responsive education that includes individual differences in the education process.

6. Learners Who Are Exceptional: This chapter delves into children with disabilities and gifted learners. This chapter provides an overview of various types of disabilities and disorders, as well as the educational issues involving children with disabilities. Santrock stresses the essential nature of inclusive teaching strategies and the integration of technology.

7. Behavioral and Social Cognitive Approaches: This chapter delves into various learning approaches and introduces the behavioral approach to learning, which serves as a method for teachers to enhance desirable behavior and reduce undesirable behavior. It also discusses in detail the cognitive-behavioral approaches that foster student autonomy.

8. The Information-Processing Approach: This chapter explains the information-processing approach that students experience. It focuses on attention changes, memory types, and metacognition improvements in children's developmental stages.

9. Complex Cognitive Processes: This chapter covers conceptual understanding, teaching strategies, thinking types and how teachers can foster them, problem-solving, and teacher-led transfer enhancement.

10. Social Constructivist Approaches: In this chapter, Santrock investigates collaborative learning and social constructivist approaches to teaching. It emphasizes how teachers and peers can jointly contribute to children's learning, and it further discusses the effective structuring of small-group work.

11. Learning and Cognition in the Content Areas: This chapter connects cognitive theories to subject-specific teaching. It underscores the need for a teacher to possess pedagogical content knowledge, in addition to expert knowledge, by elucidating various approaches to teaching subjects such as reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies.

12. Planning, Instruction, and Technology: Lesson planning and instructional strategies are the focus of this chapter. It involves important forms of teacher-centered and student-centered instruction, and it also involves the efficient integration of technological tools into the educational process.

13. Motivation, Teaching, and Learning: The focus of this chapter is on the motivational theories, teaching, and learning process. It discusses relationships and sociocultural contexts that can either support or undermine motivation and further delves into how to help students with achievement difficulties.

14. Managing the Classroom: This chapter provides a comprehensive and in-depth overview of effective classroom management by presenting different classroom management strategies and addressing potential

3

Central European Journal of Educational Research 6(2) 2024. 108–111.

problems. This chapter is a crucial resource for teachers seeking to enhance their classroom management skills.

15. Standardized Tests and Teaching: This chapter emphasizes the role and impact of standardized tests in the teaching environment. This chapter scrutinizes aptitude and achievement tests, describing their components and issues, and identifying the roles of teachers in standardized testing.

16. Classroom Assessment and Grading: The focus of this chapter is on assessment and the grading system as a tool for learning. It presents guidelines and types for constructing traditional and alternative assessment methods. It gives the role, purpose, and components of grading, as well as strategies for aligning learning objectives and assessment.

Each of the above sixteen chapters starts with a concise mini-outline of the chapter's contents. The field covers a wide range of topics in each chapter, presented in a manner that connects theories and practice. Santrock effectively navigates between theoretical frameworks and practical applications for providing a comprehensive introduction to contemporary education. Those chapters focus on four main aspects: connecting with teachers; connecting with students' best practices; connecting with development; and connecting with the classroom.

Each chapter of the book begins with a captivating and alluring teaching story that connects to the chapter's content. Santrock incorporates teachers' successful stories into the book to involve the community in the content, showing the authentic life stories and techniques used in teaching.

Santrock explained the chapters in depth by providing engaging examples and case studies. Each chapter includes a dedicated section for teachers, such as the Connects with Students: Best Practice section, which highlights practical activities teachers can implement in their classrooms.

Another section, Review, Reflect, and Practice, repeats the learning goal and compiles questions related to the sections to encourage students to revisit the key topics. The chapters conclude with an assessment section that guides teachers in selecting and implementing concepts from each theory in their classrooms.

Conclusion

John Santrock's Educational Psychology is a remarkable book that provides the reader and empowers students and teachers with captivating and comprehensive coverage of theories and education topics. Santrock's clear explanations, engaging writing style, simplicity, and thoughtful integration of theory and practice make it an invaluable resource for aspiring teachers, students, and anyone seeking to deepen their knowledge of educational psychology. The book provides a solid foundation in the theoretical part of educational psychology and offers the practical implementation of those theories in the school context. It also considers all the challenges that the teacher might face, like teaching strategies, classroom management, student behavior, motivation, differentiation, student needs, etc.

Furthermore, the writing style of Santrock is clear, friendly, engaging, and accessible. This makes the content accessible to all students from different backgrounds while still providing a deep understanding of the topics that suit advanced undergraduate learners and teachers. The book perfectly connects psychology and its importance in the educational development process, enriching both.

The intended audience of this book is any individual with limited knowledge about psychology and education who is seeking in-depth insight into educational psychology. It is recommended for teachers, undergraduate students, and researchers as it contains all the necessary information for their work in the fields of education and psychology. The book provides a thorough overview of the key principles and concerns essential to educators in the present day, with in-depth elaboration on the topic and offering real-life experiences, examples, and stories.

This review offers several recommendations to strengthen the book's impact on readers. The first recommendation is to include additional real-world examples and case studies from diverse educational settings throughout the chapters. This initial approach can enhance the learning experience and foster a deeper comprehension of the subject matter. Secondly, including a discussion about the differentiation instruction method in Chapter Four would be a wonderful addition to the book, as it is another important subject in the current era. This pedagogical approach involves tailoring and adopting curriculum content, activities, and methods of teaching to meet the needs of all learners (Puzio et al., 2020). Finally, a section on the Good Behavioral Game, a classroom management game the teacher can use to control and manage student behavior during classes (Donaldson et al., 2011), could enrich Chapter Fourteen.

References

Bal, M. (2019). Use of digital games in writing education: An action research on gamification. *Contemporary Educational Technology, 10*(3), 246–271. https://doi.org/10.30935/cet.590005

Donaldson, J., Wiskow, K., & Soto, P. (2015). Immediate and distal effects of the good behavior game. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 48*(3), 685–689. https://doi.org/10.1002/jaba.229

Li, K., Peterson, M., & Wan, J. (2022). Digital gaming in the language classroom: Student language performance, engagement, and perception. *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching, 12*(1), 1–25. https://doi.org/10.4018/IJCALLT.291110

Puzio, K., Colby, G., & Algeo-Nichols, D. (2020). Differentiated literacy instruction: boondoggle or best practice? *Review of Educational Research, 90*(4), 459–498. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654320933536

Santrock, J. W. (2018). *Educational Psychology* (Sixth). McGraw-Hill Education.

Suhendi, Murli, N. (2024). Application of gamification models with virtual reality for learning plant cultivation techniques. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies (iJIM), 18*(4), 65–80. https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v18i04.42439

Zhang, S. X., & Hasim, Z. (2023). Gamification in EFL/ESL instruction: A systematic review of empirical research. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13.* https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1030790