# MOTIVATING EVERY LEARNER

*Alan McLean (2009) London: Sage Publications. ISBN 978-1-84860-182-6.  (pp. 257, £19.99 , pb.)*

## Review by Daniel Murphy

This is a 'must read' book for all teachers.   In it Alan McLean*,* using his work with teachers and school pupils across Scotland, builds on his previous book *The Motivated School* (McLean, 2003) to offer a comprehensive and dynamic theory of motivation for learning.    Although the conceptual map of motivation which is provided by the book might apply across a wide range of human activity, the book sticks tightly to motivation for learning in the school environment and is addressed directly to teachers.   It is not however simply a book of tips and hints for the classroom – teaching techniques – although there are many of these.   It is a book which, in the first instance, aims at understanding what McLean argues is the most important factor in successful learning: motivation.  Why are some children motivated to learn in school and some not?  Why are some children motivated to learn in some classrooms and not in others?   If teachers better understand motivation in learning, they are empowered to develop their teaching skills accordingly.

The 'map' which McLean provides makes good use of a wide range of current research, principally in psychology, with an unobtrusive but valuable set of references for those who wish to explore this territory in more detail.  But it is no scholarly textbook, outlining what other researchers have said.   McLean raids the research to support and validate his own theories – theories which shed considerable light on the dynamics of teacher-pupil interaction.   In a rather dense opening chapter, which introduces a significant number of key concepts, McLean outlines the rationale and structure of the book.  Above all, he argues that we need to go deeper than currently popular – but superficial – behaviourist approaches to managing pupil learning in school.   We need a more fluid and dynamic model which has the potential to engage every learner.   The book then divides into five sections: what makes pupils tick, how pupils motivate (or de-motivate) themselves, what teachers can do to energise their pupils, how pupils develop learning stances (their default mode in the classroom) and, finally, how teachers, using their understanding of the stances, can maximize pupil motivation to learn.

McLean's model is based on pupil needs:   the "3As". These are three interlinked essentials for successful learning: affiliation (how much do you belong?), agency (how much can/will you do yourself?) and autonomy (to what extent are you controlling your learning journey?).   These 3As have a 'dark

side' – the opposite of affiliation is alienation, of agency, apathy.  The opposite of autonomy is more complex; it includes learned helplessness, anxiety, low resilience – easily 'giving up'.  It can express itself as distorted, crushed or restricted autonomy.   Pupils in schools may not understand in words, but more often feel through their 'self emotions', whether or not their needs are being met: self esteem (related to affiliation), self belief (related to agency) and self determination (related to autonomy).  When any or all of the '3A needs' are not being met, self emotions can become self restricting, self draining and self distorting.     However the complex, often unarticulated, concept of 'self' which every learner develops is able to be changed and often can be improved if the right 'energisers' are used.   This is not just about the individual, but also about the social microclimate (most often in the classroom) within which that individual is operating. The behaviour of the peer group, the climate created by the teacher and the ability of the teacher to understand and respond flexibly to the different 'learning stances' that pupils bring to the classroom are all significant external influences on a pupil's motivation to learn.

The concept of 'learning stances' allows McLean to pull the various parts of the map together, in the final section of the book, into a classroom focused guide for teachers.   There are nine learning stances, associated with the 3A model.   The stances have been widely used by teachers and have been adapted successfully for use with pupils, to help them understand how they operate as learners and how they can learn better.   There are three broadly positive stances:  'harmoniously engaging' (affiliated, autonomous and acting) is the most positive, closely followed by 'quietly engaging' (more affiliated than acting) and 'energetically engaging' (more acting than affiliated).   Negative stances are:  'hiding' (apathetic), 'alarming/draining' (neither affiliated nor active), 'opposing' (alienated) alongside 'threatening' (both alienated and active), 'exasperating' (all at sea) and 'mutedly engaging' (affiliated but apathetic).   The typical classroom learning behaviours associated with each learning stance are outlined and McLean convincingly shows how teacher behaviour can either motivate or de-motivate pupils adopting a particular stance.   This section has a range of highly practical classroom advice, but is only accessible to those who have understood the overall map; teachers' understanding of motivation (whether fully articulated or not) is an essential pre-requisite if they are to demonstrate the kind of flexibility required to support the development of positive learning attitudes in their pupils.   Above all, teachers are called on at all times to strike a balance:  they need to control their pupils, but in a manner which supports the development of the pupils' inner controls – their capacity for self determination and their motivation to learn.

The book benefits from a number of features.   The index is clear and comprehensive.   The references are wide-ranging.   Each chapter contains reflective activities, encouraging the reader to apply the concepts being outlined to aspects of their professional and personal lives. In some cases this might be particularly powerful for the reader, asked to consider his or her own motivations in various situations, for example in their relationship with a 'boss'.     An outstanding feature is the use McLean makes of visual 'maps' of the conceptual

territory – positive aspects (strategies and behaviours, self emotions, learning stances, teaching styles) are plotted on a circle against their 'dark side'. These visual 'matrices' summarise understanding and validate the model; many of them will resonate with teachers.

McLean closes the book with some rather more ambitious statements on the purposes of education and schooling: 'our schools' most important goal is to encourage pupils to be who they want to be, not who we think they ought to be' (p.233). Justifying this statement would require a different kind of argument; indeed, it might require a whole other book! However, whatever your view on that, if you want to understand what makes for a motivated (or a de-motivated) learner in contemporary classrooms, you could not do better than read, understand and apply the insights of *Motivating Every Learner.*

**REFERENCES**

McLean, A. (2003) *The Motivated School,* London: Paul Chapman.

# GANGS, MARGINALISED YOUTH AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

*Ross Deuchar (2009) Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books. ISBN: 978 1 85856 444 9 (pp. 168, £17.99, pb.)*

**Review by Terry Barber**

In this book the author has succeeded in deconstructing the critical dynamics of youth marginalisation, revealing the significant influence of gang membership within areas of relative deprivation. I was particularly impressed by his congruent focus on enabling young people themselves to 'speak their own word' but also his ability to highlight the range of interdisciplinary strategies which seek to respond to the needs of young people pro-actively. The focus is very much on Glasgow, but this book offers insight which can be of real use to those concerned with cultural learning dynamics in other settings.

Chapter 1 offers a personal stance on the 'demonization' of young people and the culture of fear which stigmatises young people today. In this work the author challenges the mythology relating to deviance and offers an assessment of the disproportionate effects on young people from asylum-seeker families. In the main, the early assertions developed utilise sound academic discourse but there are a number of journalistic sources which I found less academically credible.

Chapter 2 offers an honest description of methodology with a very good application of ethical standards and sensitivity to the participants involved in the author's research. I was left with the impression that the author was far more concerned with revealing a critical qualitative narrative than producing a

systematic objective analysis. Perhaps more explanation and justification relating to the selection of young people was needed in this work. I also felt that some question prompts used in the research were more 'leading' than open-ended.

Chapters 3 and 4 provided a very useful historical analysis of gang culture in Glasgow and the persistent territoriality phenomenon. The author makes the point forcefully that the lack of 'spatial mobility' restricts the social development of young people significantly. What comes across in the author's work is the inability of adults in general (and some key services) to fully understand youth culture and the effects of a negative learning environment. The notion of the gang as a 'surrogate family', providing a sense of identity, power, status and respect is illustrated well in the spotlight sections of the book.

Chapters 5 and 6 evidence the exclusion and discrimination experienced by young people from asylum-seeker families and refugee children in post 9/11 Glasgow. The author proposes that Islamophobia and the marginalisation of minority ethnic communities is being exacerbated by global events and the media's pre-occupation with domestic terrorism. In particular, gang membership and the involvement of asylum and refugee young people as a form of 'social acceptance' is explored critically. The author reveals his extensive knowledge of sectarianism as a form of 'male tribalism' within the Glasgow context and the influence of the 'old firm' (Celtic and Rangers Football Clubs). More subtle and sensitive discussion highlights the role of faith schools.

Chapter 7 applies the theoretical constructs of social capital theory as "a lens through which to examine young people's lives". I thought that the author applied social capital theory very well, using a range of illustrative examples drawn from the faithfully recorded introspections of young people involved in the study. For me, it would have been useful to examine the limitations of social capital theory and perhaps acknowledge its limitations with a sub-cultural analysis.

Chapter 8 focused primarily on school-based and partnership projects which seek to address the marginalisation of young people. This chapter offered a very useful case study approach which systematically outlined the ethos and methodology of specific projects, but also the link to macro developments in policy and strategy. The link to *Curriculum for Excellence* is well established. It was encouraging to see that schools in particular are making a big difference in supporting young people from asylum-seeker families and refugees. Perhaps more alarming was the finding that suggested that these young people felt safer in school than outside in their new community of 'choice'.

Chapter 9 makes the case for sport as a vehicle for active learning and challenging the exclusion of young people. Again the author presents a number of illustrative examples to demonstrate that sport (football in particular) can reach out to young people and promote structured learning in their lives, in a manner which is seen to complement the mainstream curriculum. I agree with the author's points on the 'sportification of society' but it would have been good to acknowledge, or even investigate, the position of young people who are **not** interested in sport.

In Chapter 10 the book concludes with an optimistic way forward, highlighting the initiatives being nurtured by *More Choices, More Chances*, the government's flagship initiative to challenge young people likely to fall into the NEET category (Not in Employment Education or Training). There is an interesting summary of problem-oriented policing and the home-grown community initiative to reduce violence in Scotland.

I enjoyed reading this book and I feel it would be of use to a wide range of audiences concerned with the marginalisation of young people. It is an excellent reference point for the diverse range of policy and strategy initiatives which seek to make communities stronger and safer. For students involved in education, community learning and development and social work in particular, this work would provide valuable insight into the processes which influence both positive and negative behaviour within an urban context.

# LEARNING TO TEACH IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL (5<sup>th</sup> edn.)

*Susan Capel, Marilyn Leask & Tony Turner (Eds.) (2009). Oxon: Routledge. ISBN: 978-0-415-47872-4. (pp. 544, £23.99, pb.)*

## Review by Neil Taylor

The latest edition of this well-known text retains its focus on evidence-based practice and supporting theory to provide a framework for student teachers to critically reflect on their own learning and performance. The book is split into several chapters, addressing key areas for the student teacher. These range from 'Becoming a Teacher' and 'Beginning to Teach' through to 'Your Professional Development'. The latter provides guidance for a qualifying teacher on how to gain their first post, and beyond this towards further study and qualifications.

Each chapter is divided into smaller manageable units of work written by experienced professionals from around the UK. The writing is evidence-based and well researched. Within each unit readers are introduced to the aims and tasks are provided which encourage reflection on practice and understanding of the material. A summary of the key points of each unit is provided, together with further reading and useful websites. Each of these has accompanying commentary summarising the resource, along with a link to the publisher's companion website which provides additional resources to support the unit. For example, there are web links directly related to each chapter and additional downloads for chapters specifically aimed at Wales and Northern Ireland. It should be noted that Scotland is given consideration in the main textbook. There

are also versions of the tables and figures used in the textbook as WORD files, and even PowerPoint slides for teacher educators.

As each chapter is sub-divided into stand-alone but related units, the text is very user-friendly. It offers the reader flexibility to study one or more complete chapters in depth or to dip into a specific area of interest to support their current practice. I think student teachers would find this text extremely useful, both in their initial teacher education year and later in their career. It is the sort of textbook which you can comfortably return to for quick revision or further support.

The editors have been comprehensive in the content they cover by also including details of how education is centrally organised and structured in the different areas of the United Kingdom. As a result they may have fallen victim of their own success in that education is such a politically dynamic area that changes can occur rapidly after the book has gone to print. An example of this can be found in unit 7.5 on Scottish Education. In Scotland the education system is going through a period of significant change and several such changes have been announced by the Scottish Government since the book has gone to press. It may have been better to keep this chapter as an additional resource on the accompanying website, along with the online detail regarding Wales and Northern Ireland. As this book is aimed at teachers of secondary school pupils, the publisher's accompanying web links for chapter 7 should include links to the SQA and the GTCS, especially since the current link to (S)ITE will lead the reader to outdated (S)ITE benchmarks. That said, however, this is a text which I will be recommending to my students to support their studies.

# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS

*Mary Baginsky (Ed.) (2009). London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. ISBN: 978 1843105145 (pp. 206, £19.99, pb.)*

**Review by Teresa Moran**

Child protection is an issue of which all teachers need to have awareness. However, it is often the case that a designated member of a school staff requires to have a much deeper knowledge and practical understanding of this complex, difficult and sensitive issue. As I read this book, once again the media are discussing horrific details of an abuse case; this one slightly unusual in that it is two young brothers who are the perpetrators in the incident. However, it does raise the common theme, the common question at every level of child abuse: 'How could this have been allowed to happen?' It is unlikely that this book will answer that question - indeed this is not its aim - but it may help those

dealing with such incidents to be clearer about their role and the role of other professionals, and to understand these within the wider context.

The book is helpfully organised into three sections, focusing on policy, practice and training. Although it focuses more on the English context, the content is equally relevant to those working in the Scottish sector, and the two specific chapters detailing Scottish practice would also be of interest and relevance to those practitioners south of the border. The first chapter of section one gives some background and puts the issue into the context of the legislation. Although perhaps a little heavy going for the reader at times, it gives the information required for those who feel that an historical picture is necessary for full understanding of the current scene. The chapter clearly states the outcomes of the 'Every Child Matters' programme and focuses on the key issue of collaborative practice.

This is echoed in the following chapter where the 'Every Child Matters' agenda is set within the context of the role of the Local Authority. The information is presented in a clear and detailed manner and gives the reader a sense of the enormity of the task for Local Authorities in this sensitive area. This is even more so given the scrutiny authorities are placed under with the safeguarding of children being at the forefront of the political agenda. It concludes by making the point that it is the business of every parent, school and professional working with children to ensure that every outcome from the 'Every Child Matters' agenda is achieved. The final chapter in section one focuses on the role of interagency partnerships. It highlights that this is not a new concept and identifies a number of reports which have made reference to this. The provision of a case study was an interesting way in which to focus on issues and discuss strategies. A convincing argument was put forward for the role of the 'family worker' within a school integrated team.

Section two looks at the practice of safeguarding children in schools. I found this section interesting and useful in equal measure. A wide variety of issues is addressed: Pupils in Care, Safeguarding Disabled Children, School Responses to Children with Harmful Sexual Behaviours, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Schools, Counselling in Schools and The Curriculum and Safeguarding. Each one of these chapters has a very interesting and sensitive issue to deal with. It may be of interest that when I had the opportunity to discuss the book with a school colleague who is the designated Child Protection Officer, the chapters focusing on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Schools and The Curriculum and Safeguarding were the two recognised as being most pertinent to the work she was engaging with in school at present.

Given the very stressful and challenging life many young learners have, it is not surprising that for those working at the 'chalk face' the role of CAMHS is increasingly being recognised as a valuable resource. The chapter gives a very helpful background, explanation, overview of government policy and discussion of the role of CAMHS staff. The 'boxes' with specific examples of real situations provide excellent detail of how this service can work in practice to help in a

variety of situations. The conclusion highlights the importance of the CAMHS staff working in close collaboration with other agencies to best support children.

The final chapter in this section certainly lifted the spirits. Although brief, it was heartening to read, and perhaps for some to be reminded of, that there are simple strategies that practitioners in schools could put in place which would go some way to helping and preparing pupils to deal with the challenges they may face. In my opinion the greatest benefit of this chapter was to remind class teachers and school staff that there are ways in which the curriculum can address issues which are very real for the child.

Of vital importance to the safeguarding of children is the training of both school staff and all others who work with children, and this is the focus of the final section of the book. Enid Hendry and William Baginsky gave a succinct but comprehensive outline of the training each group of workers would require from those with 'regular contact' to those with 'strategic responsibility', including some detail of that training. Particularly interesting was the discussion about the increasing use of information and communication technology by children and young people and the possible risks that they could be at through this medium. Many local authorities are already engaging staff in training of this kind. The 'sources of information' section at the end of this chapter was particularly useful.

A strength of this book is the wide variety of practitioners who would find it useful in their everyday work. Another strength is that a classroom teacher, with or without a designated responsibility for Child Protection, would not have to read from cover to cover; each stand-alone chapter, although following the theme, would help and support in a given situation.

In the foreword of this book Brigid Daniel states that 'it would be surprising if the recent policy developments have not raised the anxiety of teachers'. I would suggest that much of the information, strategies and advice discussed in this book would go some way to allaying some of these anxieties. I would certainly recommend this book, not only to those working in schools, but to those preparing the future groups who will work closely with children.

# PHYSICAL EDUCATION: PICKING UP THE BATON

**Review by Gwen Boswell**

This text is number 27 in the *Policy and Practice in Education* series from Dunedin. It is an excellent book which succeeds in urging the reader to lift up the baton and join the team of 'unofficial voices' of physical educationalists who are seeking to understand the origins of the numerous tensions and complex

concerns which beset the current physical education curriculum. This is necessary in order to create improvement, both within the Curriculum for Excellence and for the future professional development of physical education teachers. According to the authors, 'it is now likely that professional development priorities will cycle forward to consider in greater detail the implementation of CfE and the new General awards which are scheduled to replace the Standard Grade'.

The book discusses a broad range of issues which have contributed towards the current problems, but optimistically offers several positive possible solutions for 'transformational' curricular change, based on sound research evidence. These solutions include programme designs which will move away from traditional, teacher-led lessons, and which are based on a deeper understanding of pedagogy appropriate to the key principles of Curriculum for Excellence. Several constructivist models are clearly described and justified in the book. Two of these are TGfU, or 'Teaching Games for Understanding' (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982) and the 'Tactical approach' (Griffin *et al*., 1997). The authors explain that these game-based approaches focus on game understanding where 'movement is developed as a consequence of the opportunities pupils have to explore each game situation'. This approach very much reflects the pupil-centred pedagogy of Curriculum for Excellence as the teacher's role in the learning process is less direct, 'employing strategies such as question and answer, modified game and problem-solving tasks, thus giving pupils more responsibility for their learning'.

Given frequent media reports on the poor uptake of games in schools, these approaches could be the answer to easing tensions between the health and sports agendas. If pupils who usually struggle with the complexities of games can be motivated, and less intimidated by the rules and tactics, then perhaps they might be more inclined to participate in a game for the first time in their lives. Confidence can be improved through developing the self knowledge born out of the opportunities to explore and understand the tactics without the pressure of the games arena. Participation might then lead to fun and enjoyment, and the desire to seek further life-enhancing challenges outwith school – thus fulfilling the ultimate goals of the health and well-being curriculum. Furthermore, it is hoped that these pupils may even discover latent talent and enthusiasm for sport and go on to become full team members who study physical education in the future. Given the additional demands made of the curriculum by the Inclusion Agenda, it seems likely that this pupil-centred, constructivist approach could provide enhanced opportunities for those who have additional support needs as it facilitates personalisation of learning.

However, for teachers to fully support pupils in this level of understanding and ownership of their learning, the authors advocate that teachers develop their understanding of learning, 'so that they view it, not as a linear, but as a much more emergent, dynamic, interactive and complex process'. It is argued that the outcomes of such an approach would encourage teachers to adopt approaches 'that offer pupils a wider and more diverse range of experiences that hold more potential for learning'. It will be necessary to enhance teachers'

professional knowledge, and in particular their understanding of the complex theories of teaching and learning. Such theories and their practical applications are exemplified in chapter 3. In the following chapter there is a discussion on issues related to professionalism and professional development for present and future teachers.

Unfortunately, change always carries financial implications and given the current financial situation it is important to heed the advice given in the final chapter of the book: 'it is important that physical education does not become 'isolated' in policy and practice terms from the Scottish Government's attempts to deliver on a plethora of health, education and sporting targets, but remains central to high quality and value for money definitions of professionalism. In many respects the opportunities of the present time have never been greater, provided, of course, that the baton for change is picked up and securely grasped'.

I have no hesitation in recommending this book. It is timely and stimulating and it takes the reader's needs into full consideration, each chapter beginning with a synopsis and ending with a summary. Sub-headings highlight the different themes within the discussion and different fonts help separate these sections out further. I would certainly encourage students, teachers and anyone with an interest in improving physical education to read this excellent book – and to rise to the challenge laid down by Malcolm Thorburn and Shirley Gray.