(knowledge, understandings, skills abilities and attitudes), the incentive dimension (emotion, feelings, motivation and volition) and the social dimension (interaction, communication and co-operation).

The various articles provide a good overview of both the historical development of theories of Workplace learning and the current debates about its nature, support and development. They focus on the potential benefits to the individual, the organisation in which the learning takes place and on the wider economic, social and community benefits drawing on both Western and Eastern cultural perspectives. These competing ‘drivers’ set up interesting debates and challenges for those designing and delivering Workplace Learning – is the purpose to train individuals to be competent, to enable employees to move forward workplace practices in difficult and changing times or to contribute to the wider development of the social structures of the organisations of which they are part? As pointed out in a number of chapters, lack of clarity about purpose and conflicting priorities leads to potential conflict between the purchaser, learner and the educational provider.

Workplace learning is a fast moving topic and the book is a timely addition to the wealth of published material in this area given the impetus of current changes to the funding of HE in the UK and its implications for further part-time study and greater employer-responsive provision.

The Handbook, as the name implies, is not a book to read from cover to cover but provides a valuable reference volume which practitioners in this area can dip into to extend their knowledge and understanding of current practice. To some extent the ‘Handbook’ of the title is a misnomer. There is no simple way of addressing the complex needs of workplace learners, their employers and the communities of which they are a part that can be delivered by following a simple recipe. However, the articles do provide a valuable insight into the complexities of Workplace learning. It will be of interest to anyone in the University engaged in developing courses for employers or for the professions and for those engaged in researching such practices. At £90 for the hardback version perhaps not something to buy for your shelves but certainly a reference book to be purchased collectively or accessed through the library.

*  

Inspirational Teachers, Inspirational Learners
Will Ryan
Crown House Publishing Ltd. 2011
Review by Andrea Raiker

I will deal first with the one questionable aspect of this stimulating and well-written book. In fact, unless you are in education and primary education at that, I recommend going directly to the second paragraph of this review. Believe me, there are many good aspects to this book that higher education academics would
find pertinent to their practice. But back to my critique. The Journal for Pedagogic Development is an academic publication; this is not an academic book. There is no reference list. It has been written by a primary headteacher for school senior management teams and practitioners, focusing on primary schools, with the aim of stimulating ‘...hope for Creativity and the Curriculum in the Twenty First Century’. One of the reviewers quoted on the back cover declares that this book ‘draws on a wealth of research’. Indeed it does, though wealth is too strong a word. There are references to educational thinkers such as Howard Gardner, Daniel Goleman and Guy Claxton and to influential reports and reviews, for example Robin Alexander’s Cambridge Primary Review. The Cambridge Primary Review is based on a wealth of research, but this book basking in its glow does not substantiate the claim. Will Ryan, the author, is not an academic. This is particularly evident when he writes about neuroscience in the chapter on creating a ‘powerful’ curriculum. There are no references given in his discussion of a highly complex subject, and the facts presented give the impression of ‘dumbing down’ the science to make it palatable for his readers. As this book is an ‘examination of what our most inspirational teachers do in order to get creative and inspirational responses from children’, Will Ryan would have been better advised to concentrate on illustrating his thesis with examples from current everyday living. There are a ‘wealth’ of these, and he uses them very successfully to communicate and justify his argument.

The book is particularly persuasive when the author concentrates on episodes, observations and reflections that have risen from his experiences over thirty years as a teacher, head teacher and local authority advisor. The case studies, resources, anecdotes and apt references to experiences many readers will have enjoyed, for example The Simpsons and the poem ‘Invictus’, make this book an interesting read. The connecting discussion and arguments promoting the differences between the charismatic performer and the inspirational teacher is engaging and convincing. There are also points in this book that stimulate thought. For example, a useful figure is presented on page 16 which illustrates the structure of the link between inspirational teachers and inspirational pupils (interesting that the adjective ‘inspirational’ is used for pupils, not ‘inspired’, suggesting the inspiration resides in pupils and is locked by the teacher, not that the teacher transfers it). The structure begins with the inspirational teacher who plans for inspirational pupils through organising the development of thinking skills, enterprise, literacy and the arts, and awe/wonder/spirituality. It would be too easy to scoff at the latter as being typical of a certain ‘soft and fluffy’ primary school mentality. Throughout the book there is emphasis on values and underlying philosophy arising from interaction with the real world and people, and a focus on equipping today’s primary school pupils so that they will be able to make sense of the...
complex world they will inhabit as adults. This clearly resonates with the ethos of the University of Bedfordshire’s Education Strategy which is aimed at encouraging learners to know who they are and who they want to be and at stimulating a curriculum that is meaningful, active, challenging, reflective and collaborative. The structure finishes with a definition of the outcomes of the inspirational teacher’s planning and interventions—‘Successful learners, responsible citizens, confident individuals who are independent enquirers, creative thinkers, reflective learners, team workers, self managers and effective participators.’ This is CRe8 in a nutshell. This sense grows as one reads on.

My first thoughts on beginning to read this book was that, as it was not academic, there was little point in reviewing it for a Journal of Pedagogic Development. When the similarities with CRe8 and the university’s employability agenda began to emerge I was struck by the realisation that a non-academic book written by an experienced primary practitioner had so much in common with a university curriculum initiative formulated by academics and underpinned by educational theory. Not only are the perceptions of desirable attributes of learners for future employment, citizenship and self-efficacy similar in both practitioner publication and university initiative; the attributes are applicable at primary and undergraduate levels. As one reviewer cited on the back cover writes, ‘Although aimed more towards primary teachers, the ideas it contains are equally applicable to the secondary sector’. In other words, it appears that ideas expressed in ‘Inspirations teachers, inspirational learners’ could be applicable to all learners in this country and indeed to learners throughout their lives. This is why it is appropriate to review this book for a journal focused on pedagogic development. The book has been written to support practitioners in achieving pedagogic shift, from being teachers transmitting learning filtered through their own knowledge, aptitudes, abilities and biases to facilitators inspiring and supporting learners to construct their own curricula (within the legal requirements expressed in the National Curricula) and to learn according to their own learning preferences. This is the corollary to CRe8 and the University’s Education Strategy.

English universities have strong traditional roots; academics have been teaching by transmissive mode for centuries, being the accepted gatekeepers of socially approved canons of knowledge and methods of assessing its mastery. The technological revolution, globalisation and shifts in economic and commercial power have changed all that. Acquisition and understanding of subject knowledge are still necessary...but all the knowledge any individual can need is available online. The pedagogic shift to ensure understanding in current and future contexts, the shift that ‘Inspirations teachers, inspirational learners’ has been written to support, is required at higher education level too. That is what the Journal of Pedagogic Development was created to promote. So,
as you are reading the Journal, why not give the book a try also?

*

**High Performers: The Secrets of Successful Schools**
Alistair Smith
Crown House Publications Ltd. 2011
Review by Peter Norrington

Why am I reviewing a book about successful schools when I work in a university? (Even though I have also worked in both primary and secondary schools.) I expected – wrongly – to find this book widely irrelevant, although of use in Education, and perhaps full of smug seven ways to self-improve guidance. I found it inspiring.

*High Performers* focuses on: core purpose, student outcomes, learner engagement, classroom teaching, roles and responsibilities, professional development, managing data, and the school as a community. These are clearly vital areas of interest to universities, and for that matter colleges and other educational environments too.

The key strength is that he presents what his research shows is essential to developing a successful, but never copycat, school for three different audiences: leaders, managers and classroom practitioners. His original research – sometimes counter-intuitive – includes not only these staff roles, but also the pupils, who are after all the ones who will do the learning.

This approach is holistic, rather than focussing on one role group and exhorting them to do better regardless of, or even despite, what the other roles are doing. Whichever role you are in when you read this, you can check that the others are getting advice that matches and supports the advice you’re getting. Also, functional departments not directly involved in learning activity can also benefit within this whole.

If you are interested in autonomous learners and academics standards – and resolving the demands between them – you will get ideas to put into practice, to cut pointless activity, resist off-target initiatives, and engage with students. The semantic differences between the sectors are usually unimportant; the transferable solutions are valuable; the guidance is bold, evidenced and reasoned.

Currently, the significant shift in higher education is towards prospective, actual and past students deciding if an institution offers value-for-money for their own pocket. Offering challenging value-for-money degrees – in both learner and student experience terms – that will attract students and create successful graduates looks like a solid aspiration. And an aspiration that will stand future twists in policy and environment. This book can help you.

*