

# Power to the pupils

This strongly written, clearly set-out book describes what the authors call BLP, Building Learning Power, a radical approach to bring our schools into the 21st century and prepare children for the ambiguous future ahead.

Albert Einstein once said that 'the only thing that interferes with my learning is my education'. The book outlines a distinct response to Einstein's criticism, which the authors have developed over the past decade with an array of schools, in diverse areas and different countries, with children of different ages and backgrounds. The book describes convincingly the rationale for educational change, some selected psychological theory and evidence, the approach itself and a detailed evaluation demonstrating its highly positive impact.

At its heart, the idea behind this ambitious approach is to facilitate and develop children's learning skills, confidence, meta-learning, resilience, resourcefulness and interpersonal skills. In short, the authors argue that we need to teach children *how to learn and to become better learners*. This requires changes to the language teachers must use, changes to lesson plans and structure, and changes to the way the teaching day is structured to allow children to follow their own explorations and inquiries, requiring, for example, inquiry-based learning projects.

The ideas, though not new and unique, are comprehensively pulled together, attractively presented and made readily accessible. There are many ideas for schools, teachers and others to use, such as 'split screen lessons', (focusing on content plus methods of learning and thinking), and ways of developing students' 'learning muscles'. Perhaps more could have been made of the use of philosophy in the classroom.

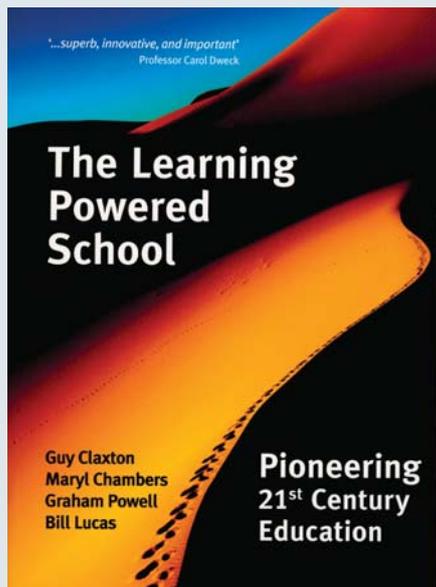
The book is divided into four parts; the first sets out the vision, the science and the beliefs of the authors. The second section outlines the classroom experience, with chapters about teaching, the curriculum and assessment. The third section discusses the whole-school changes needed, aptly focusing on leadership, professional development and parental involvement. The final section addresses the question of whether the approach works, examines its future, and includes an evaluation and a commissioned study of some 20 schools utilising the approach.

One beauty of the approach is that schools can select how much or how little they use, and they can adapt and develop it over time. This is pragmatic, but creates a real problem for the evaluation, because one critique of the highly positive evidence presented is that the 'intervention' itself is not a distinct variable, and no control groups are used. The writers acknowledge this limitation, depicting the evaluation as a 'mid-term' survey. To their credit, they do use a triangulation of methods, samples and evidence. That said, this is a book on a mission, the authors are advocates and promoters, rather than dispassionate researchers, and their conclusions rather strongly made. However, all my personal experience, and work as an educational psychologist and teacher tells me that their message is valuable, worthwhile and of direct use for schools.

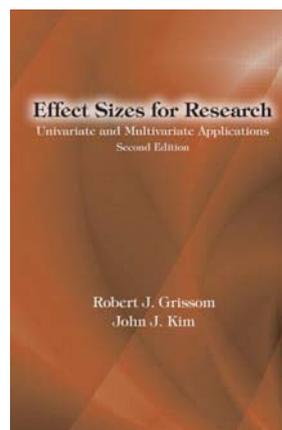
The book should be of interest to all those engaged in education; teachers, head teachers and researchers, as well as policy makers, all of whom will doubtless review and critique the ideas through their own lenses, which I think fits the ideals of this book very nicely.

| TLO; 2011; Pb £23.95

Reviewed by **Irvine Gersch** who is Professor of Educational and Child Psychology at the University of East London



The Learning Powered School:  
Pioneering 21st Century Education  
Guy Claxton, Maryl Chambers, Graham  
Powell & Bill Lucas



## Something for everyone

Effect Sizes for Research:  
Univariate and Multivariate  
Applications (2nd edn)  
Robert J. Grissom & John J.  
Kim

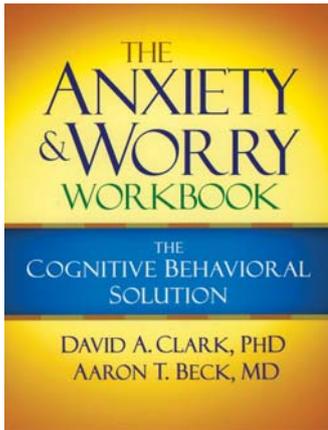
We are all being enjoined to report effect sizes, and papers that report only *p* values are increasingly derogated and, indeed, rejected. This book presents an excellent summary of the debate around the use of null hypothesis significance testing and includes a lot of examples and practical advice to researchers about the software and methods needed to report effect size.

Coverage of different models (ANOVA, ANCOVA, regression, MANOVA, SEM, and HLM/ mixed effects models) is wide and much of the material will be highly relevant to psychologists working in many fields. No one piece of software is covered for all tasks – researchers could spend a lot of money on software following all the chapters; more coverage of the free and polymath R would have resolved this problem.

One other niggle is the slightly uneven tone, ranging all the way from giving advice on dummy regression, a very basic task for most researchers with statistical know-how, all the way up to advanced treatments of multivariate techniques. Something for everyone, therefore, but perhaps not everything for someone; recommended nonetheless.

| Routledge; 2012; Pb £29.99

Reviewed by **Chris Beeley** who is Senior Evaluation Manager at the Institute of Mental Health, Nottingham



### From the horse's mouth

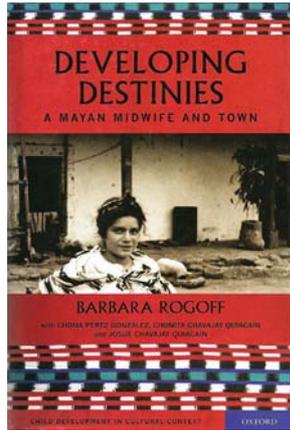
The Anxiety and Worry Workbook: The Cognitive Behavioral Solution  
David A. Clark and Aaron T. Beck

Overcoming anxiety and worry is not for the faint-hearted. Coming from a family of world-class worriers, I know how strong the drive is towards safety behaviours of avoidance and reassurance. I also know, from listening to clients, how common and potentially debilitating the experience of anxiety is.

This book comes from world authorities including Beck, one of the founders of cognitive behavioural therapy. It is laid out in a workbook style, with plenty of charts and tables to fill in or photocopy. For those who are serious about tackling their anxiety, it is an excellent resource of well-tested exercises, explanations and encouragement. Those seeking a quicker fix might be put off by the somewhat dry textbook layout and the daunting amount of work that it involves.

But therein lies the underlying but not always palatable truth that overcoming anxiety requires the same kind of motivated dedication that training for a marathon does. The authors do not shy away from making this point, which I found refreshing in an age of big promises on the self-help shelves.

█ Guilford; 2012; Pb £14.99  
Reviewed by Sarah Dale who is a Chartered Occupational Psychologist, *Creating Focus*



### Engrossing page-turner

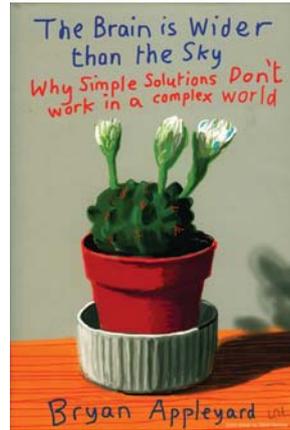
Developing Destinies: A Mayan Midwife and Town  
Barbara Rogoff

Describing the life of Chona, an 85-year-old Guatemalan midwife, this book explains how we build on our cultural heritages from previous generations whilst also creating new ways of living. The author details Chona's life, from birth to the present day, drawing on interviews with Chona and her community of San Pedro, background history, and previous work of researchers who first visited in 1941.

Photographs of Chona and San Pedro interweave the text, adding depth of interest by putting faces and images to what is described in words. Wonderful examples illustrate how cultural practices in San Pedro are still preserved, even as they are adapted with the changing times.

Combining psychology, anthropology and history, the author reveals the integral role that culture plays in human development overall, and at the same time, provides a detailed insight into one small community. The book highlights that by examining how people participate in cultural practices we can better understand the role of culture in our lives. Overall, *Developing Destinies* delivers a fascinating, real-life account whilst also bringing theory alive – an engrossing page-turner.

█ Oxford University Press; 2011; Hb £22.50  
Reviewed by Kate Sparks who is a Chartered Psychologist in Health



### A wider window

The Brain is Wider than the Sky: Why Simple Solutions Don't Work in a Complex World  
Bryan Appleyard

Can the human mind be understood as a purely physical phenomenon, or does consciousness preclude simple materialism? Appleyard is a scientific journalist with a wealth of direct contact with leading scientists and thinkers. On meeting Bill Gates he became convinced that some technocrats believe Art is just another activity awaiting transposition into binary code. This follows a tradition of reductionist science exemplified, inter alia, in the concept of the Singularity, where computers eclipse human intelligence.

Appleyard describes various attempts to reduce complex activity to simple algorithms: the personalisation of the internet, which becomes a

mirror rather than a window into knowledge; the frustration of 'call-trees', which aim to shape human behaviour according to the convenience of machines; financial models based on the naive assumption that formulae can be free of the 'contamination' of human judgement. Appleyard broadly favours a more complex view, epitomised in Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis.

This book is engaging, perceptive and important, if not always sufficiently critical. Nevertheless, its thesis deserves consideration by scientist-practitioners, who will find a window to a wider cultural perspective on their enterprise. It might even make computers ponder!

█ Weidenfeld and Nicholson; 2011; Hb £20.00  
Reviewed by J. Mitchell Noon who is an Honorary Fellow at the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry

#### MORE REVIEWS ONLINE

See [www.thepsychologist.org.uk](http://www.thepsychologist.org.uk) for this month's web-only reviews

just in

Sample titles just in:

**Psychology at the Movies** Skip Dine Young  
**Changing Behaviour in Schools** Sue Roffley  
**Online Consumer Behavior** Angeline G. Close (Ed.)  
**Different... Not Less** Temple Grandin  
**Psychologisation in Times of Globalisation** Jan De Vos  
**Judgement, Decision Making and Success in Sport** Michael Bar-Eli, Henning Plessner & Markus Raab

For a full list of books available for review and information on reviewing for *The Psychologist*, see [www.bps.org.uk/books](http://www.bps.org.uk/books)

Send books for potential review to The Psychologist, 48 Princess Road East, Leicester LE1 7DR