

Review

Anita Tatlow: *Conductive Education for Children and Adolescents with Cerebral Palsy. Enquiry into Theory and Practice*. Hong Kong: The Spastics Association of Hong Kong. 2005, 346pp.

In Budapest, over fifty years ago, Professor Andras Petö introduced Conductive Education, a holistic system for educating and training cerebral palsied children and others with motor disorders. Since then, teachers, therapists and rehabilitation workers well beyond Hungary have adopted this system and transplanted it successfully within their own social and cultural setting. However, from the time of its conception there has been a paucity of theoretical information to substantiate the claims made for the practice. Anita Tatlow has filled this void successfully.

Anita Tatlow trained as a physiotherapist in Germany and Sweden. After working with cerebral palsied children in the University of Würzburg's Orthopaedic Hospital she moved to Hong Kong, where she worked for twenty years in a special school for physically handicapped children. She was Coordinator of the Hong Kong Conductive Education Pilot Project 1989-92 and also Course Coordinator and Chief Lecturer for the two Certificate Courses in Conductive Education. In 1999 she was made an Honorary Conductor by The Petö Institute, Budapest. She has published many articles and has visited fourteen countries to lecture and advise on Conductive Education. Her publication 'Conductive Education for Children and Adolescents with Cerebral Palsy' is a most welcome contribution to the literature on this topic.

The book is attractively presented. The contents pages are divided into four sections. These are subdivided under distinct headings which enable the reader to extract particular elements easily as the need arises. A glossary and index follow.

The Introduction describes how and when the author discovered Conductive Education, why she adopted, practised and recommended it as an appropriate system in Hong Kong and elsewhere. In Part One autobiographies by cerebral palsied people are followed by a holistic, person centered overview of cerebral palsy. After the description of motor development, both normal and in cerebral palsy, associated sensory disorders are described, and attention is given to psychological aspects in child development and in cerebral palsy. There follows an account of Andras Petö and a description of the culture of childhood.

For many years those who became involved in the Conductive Education movement and worked diligently to establish this holistic system have been deprived of sound theoretical evidence to support the methodology. In Part Two the author has been very successful in supplying this vital need, based on her research into the theories of eminent psychologists relevant to the Conductive Education practice, culminating in 'Analogies between the Vygotskian/Lurian Theory and Conductive Education.'

Part Three focuses on the methodology and lucidly explains the science and the reasons for supporting it. The reader is transported through all aspects of practice leading to the generalization of skills required for daily living. Added to this are examples of enjoyable and motivating activities, including play, music, art, and drama, which unobtrusively include motor facilitation and learning.

Part Four describes groups from early childhood into adolescence in a variety of cultural settings. This includes multiply disabled children. There is much emphasis on continuing development in adolescence and on providing opportunities for the generalization of newly learnt skills.

This is a publication worthy of attention by teachers, therapists and rehabilitation specialists, who need to have sound knowledge of cerebral palsy and the Conductive Education system. The presentational style, the photographs and diagrams combine to make this a most informative and enjoyable reading experience.

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