

Simon, C. A., & Downes, G. (Eds.). (2020).
Sociology for Education Studies: Connecting Theory, Settings and
Everyday Experiences.
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Reviewed By: Richard Oppong-Bosomah, Western University

This book is a captivating entry on the sociology of education. It discusses key conceptual and theoretical questions throughout its twelve chapters. The authors did well to relate their discussions to practical examples and empirical cases, which provide further clarification. The chapters are well arranged and seamlessly connect with one another. In the introduction, the editors discussed the idea of education as a social institution; they highlighted the need to investigate the contribution of educational practices and structures to social processes, policies, and practices. This opening section concludes with an invitation to the reader to ponder if the sociology of education ought to be considered a discipline on its own.

In the first chapter, *Sociology and Education*, Graham Downes submitted that the study of education cuts across several disciplinary boundaries including sociology, psychology, politics, ethics, and many others, which makes it difficult to properly situate education as a field. The chapter argued that the sociology of education needs to find some detachment from the core discipline of sociology. This stems from the fact that although some educational researchers adopt sociological theories, education, as a field of research and practice, has its own discourses with its own patterns, languages, and modalities. Graham further submitted that traditional approaches to the sociology of education have placed greater emphasis on routines and symbolism which ultimately portrays education as a somewhat ritualistic experience (e.g., Durkheim, 1912/1995). Regarding the role of the state in compulsory education, the author made an argument to justify the role of the state in the provision of formal education, explaining how through history, education has progressively been made compulsory. The focus of this argument, however, is formal and compulsory education, which inadvertently sidelines informal education.

In chapter two, *Education and Habitus*, Dan Bishop dwelled on Bourdieu's work on habitus (dispositions which usually operate below people's conscious level), discussing the relevance of this concept for the study of education. Bishop, referencing Bourdieu, noted that habitus cannot be understood in isolation from the environment within which it is construed; explaining that habitus explains why people with common social backgrounds tend to exhibit common behaviour. Further, Bourdieu noted that habitus partly influences our decisions as it provides intrinsic alternatives upon which conscious choices are based. For example, the literature on access to higher education suggests that the habitus of the working class is alienated in high-ranking universities, where the habitus of high-income individuals is often privileged. Reay (2001), as presented by Bishop, argued that working class individuals often negotiate whole or part of their original habitus in order to advance within the social hierarchies. As social actors internalize new habitus, some dispositions become active while others become dormant, depending on the individual's aspirations. Bishop exemplified habitus further by referencing Mu's (2016) work. Mu (2016) noted that the habitus of immigrants does not often match their new environment which, together with challenges associated to the adaptation to new language and culture, may affect their educational outcomes. This view is nuanced by Chao's research, which showed how rich immigrants overcome challenges in their new environment by using their economic power. Finally, Bishop noted that habitus, as a concept, has been criticized because of its over-usage in social research and its multifaceted definitions