

## **Beginner's guide to reviewing books for *Gender and Education***



For me, book reviewing is one of the most straightforward and pleasurable forms of academic writing. Reviews are short (about 700 words in *Gender and Education*), they don't get rejected (the worst that can happen is that you get asked to do minor rewrites to fit the journal's style), and they tend to get printed fairly quickly after you submit them, plus you get to keep the book.

I think it helps to read a few book reviews before you write yours to get a sense of the genre (I can send some on request). Most reviews follow a fairly set pattern. I'm very happy for yours to depart from this but I give this pattern below since you might find it helps you to structure what you write (and to help you take notes as you read the book):

- Introduction: set the context for the book. You can do this in a variety of ways e.g. by telling us why you chose it, linking to some recent policy shift, or to some recent strand of research.
- Description of content: either chapter by chapter or thematically.
- Assessment of book: What do you like about the book? What do(es) the author(s) do well? Is there anything you don't like/any limitations of the book?
- Summing up: end with your review's take home message and some indication of who could use this book and in what contexts (for teaching: which courses and at which levels? For researchers: in which areas? Wider appeal?)

It is important to keep the overall tone of the review positive. (The book you're reviewing is the result of the author's/authors' blood, sweat and tears.) It's also important to keep in mind the audience for your review, in this case readers of *Gender and Education*. So, for example, if the book is about gender issues generally then make clear the links to education; if it is about sex education then make explicit the links to gender.

Once you've finished your review re-read the general instructions to book reviewers and set out the information needed in the format asked (you can copy-paste ISBN, page nos. etc. from Amazon). Finally, try to get the review in on time and if you really can't then send me an email saying when you will be able to submit the review. When you have finished your review if you want me to critically read it and give you feedback then just ask me to do this when you email it to me.

Happy reading!!

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