

EDUCATION AND THE EXTENDED MIND:
POPPER, THE THIRD WORLD AND THE HUMAN COGNITIVE REVOLUTION

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Although he originally trained and worked as a school teacher, and studied educational psychology, Popper's influence over educational thinking has been somewhat limited. This is despite numerous potential areas of contribution, from his writings on political theory, philosophy of science and epistemology, as well as his almost totally ignored but insightful early papers on teaching and learning. This paper begins by considering the diverse ways in which Popperian philosophy is of relevance and value to educational studies, and goes on to examine one aspect of Popper's work that has been largely overlooked by educationalist — his notion of three worlds.

The three worlds concept is critically discussed, especially the 'third world' of objective knowledge — 'World 3' — and an attempt is made to complete Popper's picture of the interaction between objective and subjective knowledge. Drawing on recent developments in child psychology and cognitive science, it is suggested that the uniquely human capacity for an intersubjective engagement with the mental and intentional lives of other people provides a way to understand development of objective knowledge, and its contribution to the educational enterprise.