

# On Publishing, Publishers and Cultural Capital

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**SUMMARY:** This article speaks to publishing as an endeavour and an industry. It describes publishing a critical text and contrasts the process of large and small publishers.

**KEY WORDS:** learning, publishing, marketing, irony

The idea for our book, *Teaching Critical Psychology: International perspectives*, came from nowhere – as ideas do. We knew a critical bunch from Academe and practice and enjoyed the way they expressed themselves in print. But an edited book on the subject? This is harder than it might first appear. Self-authorship can be a trial – books always take longer than optimistic deadlines suggest. Both of us had any number of contributors to previous volumes and other sorts of publications who did not deliver – deadlines missed and multiple extensions requested. People have busy lives. Academics gain cultural capital by signing up to write; some have several chapters or whole volumes on the go at the same time as universities demand regular submissions to peer-reviewed journals – the main currency of such institutions. So, meeting agreements made for draft chapters and contributions is inevitably fluid. Our solution was an attempt to make the book an organic project. We asked people to contribute a chapter with no publisher contract in place at that point – we had yet to approach a publisher and waited several months, and for the arrival of draft chapters before making an approach with a book proposal. Some of the people we asked to contribute to the book readily said ‘yes’ – others blanched at the idea of

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