

Scottish Education. Fourth Edition: Referendum.

Tom Bryce, Walter Humes, Donald Gillies and Aileen Kennedy (Eds.)

Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

ISBN: 9780748645824 (pp. 1062, £29.99, pb.)

Reviewed by: STEVEN COWAN

The periodic arrival of volumes of *Scottish Education* provides us with another milestone where we can take a pause by the road along which we have been travelling and reflect upon what we have seen passing and what might lie ahead. Although one milestone may come to look much like another, right from the beginning of this review I must stress that for this fourth volume there are more than 60 new authors with only two unaltered chapters out of a total of 111 over an impressive 1062 pages. Repeat authors display a tendency to radically recast previously appearing papers, so despite the apparent similarity of structure and format from previous volumes, the book is to all intents and purposes, new and fresh and therefore definitely worth purchasing as your standard reference for matters concerning Scottish Education. We have reached a point where reading parallel chapters from successive volumes provides critical historical insights into developments across two decades.

The editors comment upon why there are so many new authors, directing their readers to the cull of experience and expertise that has taken place over the intervening years since 2008, due to financial cuts in the teacher training and education faculty departments of colleges and universities. Despite this, the quality of writing of the chapters is not only informative and authoritative but often exhibits what many of us have felt over many years, that *Scottish Education* displays writers and writing of quality. An example of this can be seen in the work of Donald Gillies whose chapters read more like eloquent lectures delivered with passion and commitment than some dry recounting of even dryer facts. This literary quality which has been the hallmark of *Scottish Education* since Volume 1 in 1999 continues, making the publication accessible to teacher readers, those training to be teachers and indeed to those working in alignment with the education service in community, social and other affiliated fields. Although by and large written by academics, *Scottish Education* is free from some of the suffocating and alienating *educationese* that blights so much contemporary writing on education emanating from universities. Publishers elsewhere might learn a lesson from the section on page 8 politely called 'Requests made to Authors'. Despite this, the 'Glossary of Abbreviations' running across 16 pages reminds us of the propensity of those leading the field towards use of an intra-educational argot which can erect barriers to those outside of our field.

One important target to set before the next volume is for the diversity that one finds within the Scottish educational world to be reflected better in the composition of the editorial board. Let's hope that the addition of Aileen Kennedy

marks a movement towards achieving this goal of ever-greater inclusivity and representativeness. The presence of a number of non-academic voices among contributors has been, and continues to be, a particular strength of *Scottish Education*.

I want to echo the sentiments of Liz Clark when reviewing *S.E. Beyond Devolution* in SER Vol. 41, No.2, in 2008 when she said: "...a reader accessing this for the first time will probably find answers to most questions or burning issues they might have in relation to Scottish Education." Undoubtedly the present volume has managed to extend this tradition. I would also echo the observation of Frank Pignatelli when reviewing *S.E. Post Devolution* in Vol. 35, No. 2 of SER in 2003, that the publication was "... formidable and impressive with a sharp, critical edge." Refreshingly, the 'critical edge' that Pignatelli spoke of continues to arise from the presence of contrasting views and perspectives within the group of commissioned authors. It was a brave decision to go ahead with the volume before the pending Referendum, especially as it is certain that, irrespective of the result, Scottish education will continue to be affected by political processes far greater in scope than those that address educational issues.

One critical concern is the over segmentation of curriculum matters into separate subject areas. While this permits insights into specifics connected with areas such as Business Education (Bryan Reid & Anne Bradley), Home Economics (Karen Bryce) or Health and Wellbeing (Monica Porciani) the approach limits the place for broader cross-curricular discussions.

May I draw particular attention to the chapter by Fran Payne (pp. 949-55) outlining the work of the Scottish Educational Research Association and the challenges it currently faces and make a plea that all who read this review make a decision to become individual members. Some of the themes developed by Payne are continued by Walter Humes in the succeeding chapter on Journals, and remind us how important such forums are in focussing attention upon key issues and debates. *Scottish Education* contains what Scottish educators think about their own educational system. My belief, as an academic based in London, is that this volume has much to teach those of us living and working outside of Scotland.

Democratic Citizenship in Schools, Teaching Controversial Issues, Traditions and Accountability

Jane Brown, Hamish Ross and Pamela Munn (Eds.) (2012) Edinburgh:
Dunedin Press

ISBN: 9781780460055 (pp. 176, £18.95, pb.)

Reviewed by: GRAEME NIXON

The volume is the product of outcome of a seminar series organised by the Scottish Educational Research Association's Citizenship and Democracy Network and brings a diverse group of scholars together to discuss citizenship

education under the headings of democratic education, teaching controversial issues and accountability. This structure plays out in each of three sections, where the thirteen contributors attempt to provide a context and definition for citizenship and democratic education; a justification for viewing controversy as essential to it, and a discussion of the pressures and challenges associated with measuring success within it. In the introduction the editors justify discussing citizenship education in this threefold structure, given we are living in a time of globalisation, plurality and neo-liberal politics.

The stated aim of the book is to bridge policy, research and practice and that it should inform discussion in “staffrooms, seminars and policy forums” (pxix). The book’s aim is perhaps too broad, and it lacks the cohesion the concluding chapter by Maitles alludes to. Whilst it is easy to imagine this book informing academic discussions about comparative approaches (and perhaps informing initial teacher education provision), it is more difficult to foresee it being a significant aid to teachers requiring guidance about how to grapple with citizenship education. Though discussing the importance of the medium as message with regards to citizenship is a repeated theme, there is little concrete advice about effective pedagogy in this area. The importance of the development of critical thinking skills (most prevalent in the Britton chapter) is, to this reviewer, not surfaced adequately for practitioners to take away anything but a wide-ranging view of the field.

There are also some omissions and opportunities missed. For example, no author grapples with the social changes that have precipitated the emergence of more formal or explicit approaches to citizenship (Maitles is too simplistic in his assertion that citizenship education is in its infancy). Why is it that schools are having to increasingly address these issues? The book does little to consider ideological conflict, particularly of a religious nature, especially given that many controversial issues relate to the secularisation process, suspicion towards ideology (religious or otherwise) and the disentanglement of legislative ideas of right and wrong from religious ideas of virtue and sin. Indeed, the discussion of citizenship evident in most of the chapters seems sanitised, despite the recognition of the importance of considering controversy. There is little discussion of the reality that all teachers convey values and ideology in all lessons. Nor is the tension between the UNCHR and the Convention on the rights of the child discussed, which potentially sets familial outlook against the rational autonomy of the child.

Along the way there are some instances of helpful anecdotes, guidance and exemplification (particularly the Britton and Peacock chapters). The last section on accountability looks at the opportunity cost of placing attainment as the key indicator of educational success and the nebulous nature of measuring success in citizenship education. This reviewer was left a little suspicious that in some respect this book (or at least its editorial direction), particularly in its oft-stated critique of neo-liberalism, is not modelling its own messages about democratic education and rational autonomy, thereby lacking the methodological agnosticism necessary for effective values or citizenship education.

Primary School Placement: A Critical Guide to Outstanding Teaching

Catriona Robinson, Branwen Bingle and Colin Howard (2013) Northwich: Critical Publishing

ISBN 978-1-909330-45-0 (pp. 164, £18.00, pb.)

Reviewed by PETER MTIKA

Primary School Placement: A Critical Guide to Outstanding Teaching is an excellent practical guide to primary school placements. The book is written by experienced lecturers in initial teacher education at one of the universities in England and the book is set within the context of initial teacher training in England. Some might consider this book as kind of a manual or toolkit without necessarily suggesting that teaching should be viewed in such a mechanistic manner. This book is very accessible and easy to read due to its down-to-earth tone and language. It is likely to appeal to trainee teachers on different entry routes to the teaching profession.

In terms of structure, the book comprises 11 Chapters; each dealing with a significant topic related to primary school placements. Each Chapter begins with a diagrammatic summary of elements covered in it. Authors start their discussion by connecting each Chapter with relevant (England's) Teachers' Standards (2012). In addition, authors have effectively deployed case studies in each chapter with the view of deepening understanding as well as promoting further reflection and critical questions. Each chapter also ends with suggested readings under 'taking it further' for those who may wish to extend their knowledge and understanding. There are useful 'frequently asked questions' (FAQs) at the end of the book which trainee teachers may find very useful.

In terms of contents, the chapters in the book have been systematically organised starting with 'reflection throughout practice' to 'from good to outstanding' and then 'employability'. By placing reflection at the beginning of the book, authors have effectively underlined the importance of trainee teachers (as well as teachers) as reflective practitioners. Other chapters in the book focus on individual and professional attributes, placement practicalities, collaborative professional partnerships, behaviour management and classroom discipline, planning and assessment, teaching the core curriculum, teaching inclusively, and creative placements. These topics constitute an essential mosaic of trainee teacher placements.

Some of the highlights in this book are the importance for trainee teachers to remain professional and preserve the positive image of the teaching profession. Authors have aptly highlighted how, for example, improper use social media such as Facebook can ruin trainee teachers' careers. The importance of building professional relationships by trainee teachers not only with other teachers, their teacher mentors, supervisory tutors and teaching assistants in the school, but also with parents and other relevant agencies has been highlighted. This is significant in view of recent research evidence that collaborative partnership

remains vaguely defined in initial teacher education (Mtika, Robson & Fitzpatrick, 2014). A problematic area for trainee teachers who may have to undertake placement in 'troublesome' schools is behaviour management and classroom discipline. Authors have addressed this topic and have emphasised the importance for trainee teachers to 'promote optimum opportunities for learning' (p. 63) in the course of implementing appropriate behaviour management and classroom discipline. Strategies of systematic rewards and sanctions that trainee teachers may use are considered.

Understandably, at the heart of trainee teachers' pedagogical practice during placement are three-pronged issues: planning and assessment; teaching of the core curriculum, and teaching inclusively. These issues have been discussed and demonstrated in three separate chapters. With regards to planning and assessment, authors have, among other issues, considered differentiated planning and assessment and how this can enhance children's learning when effectively implemented by ensuring that 'learning is accessible and appropriately challenging for all pupils' (p. 104). Authors note that teaching inclusively is about 'celebrating diversity and ensuring equality for all learners' (p. 114). With regards to teaching of the core curriculum, authors deliberate how trainee teachers can implement the (English) National Curriculum in science, mathematics and English. Most importantly, authors note that developing adequate subject knowledge is central to effective teaching and trainee teachers (and teachers) should refrain from conveying any individual negative perceptions about certain subjects to their learners. Unfortunately, while authors have rightly identified mathematics as the most problematic curricular area, they do not provide follow-up case studies in this subject area to help trainee teachers to critically reflect and enhance their self-efficacy. It is hoped that any future editions of this book extend this discussion to include mathematics-based case studies.

In a later chapter, authors discuss alternatives to traditional primary school placements and how these are equally helpful to the development of a 'more self-assured and balanced' teacher (p. 127). The key message from these alternative creative placements, such as libraries and museums, is that trainee teachers can learn and develop varying skills from working with children in diverse environments. The penultimate chapter, 'from good to outstanding', is appropriately developed in that it outlines England's Teachers' Standards (2012) and how trainee teachers can critically engage with these in order to achieve an 'outstanding' in their training. Finally, the book offers successful trainee teachers guidance on how to search for their first teaching post, prepare a personal statement and conduct themselves at interviews. It also considers induction of a newly qualified teacher (NQT).

Overall, this book succeeds in providing trainee teachers with comprehensive guidance on how to meaningfully navigate school placements. It is likely to become a trainee teacher's worthwhile companion immediately before and during placements. Even though it is written for trainee teachers in England, it could also serve as an invaluable resource for trainee teachers beyond its immediate context.

REFERENCE

Mtika, P., Robson, D. & Fitzpatrick, R. (2014). Joint observation of student teaching and related tripartite dialogue during field experience: Partner perspectives. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 39, pp. 66-76. [DOI: [10.1016/j.tate.2013.12.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2013.12.006)]

Professional School Leadership; Dealing with Dilemmas. (2nd Edn.)

Daniel Murphy (2013) Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press.
ISBN: 9781780460185 (pp.120, £17.95, pb.)

Reviewed by IAN MINTY

Looking back over my career in education, I begin to reflect now on the changed nature of teaching and the challenges faced in today's classrooms. It is indeed a much changed scene from when I first entered the classroom in 1969. Educational leadership, both as a whole-school issue, as well as that provided in the classroom, is now firmly embedded in the mind-set of today's teachers. And increasingly, too, in the minds of parents and students; one only has to tune in to such programmes as Channel 4's "Educating Yorkshire", or BBC 3s "Tough Young Teachers" to see the reality of what it means now to exercise (or not) professional leadership.

So the second edition of Daniel Murphy's book, "Professional School Leadership; Dealing with Dilemmas" is a timely and topical trip through some of the current challenges and how to analyse and work with them. Murphy speaks with authority born of considerable experience. An ex Head Teacher of two secondary schools in Scotland, he is now a Senior Teaching Fellow at Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh; well placed to provide a hands-on account to those students who will soon confront the issues outlined in his book.

Although Murphy writes from a Scottish context, many readers will be familiar with the distinctiveness of Scottish Education within the UK. In addition, the situations and problems he poses are likely to be universal. He sees an important step to understanding the dilemmas of leadership as being an ability to analyse the psychology, politics and ethics of different situations. It is interesting to read in the preface that Murphy's route into initial teacher education was in some part due to being "in a position of growing conflict" with his local authority bosses. I'm sure that will sound familiar to a growing number of aspiring head teachers and school leaders, on both sides of the border. We live in a period when the strategic and operational direction of schools in England is rapidly fragmenting, while in Scotland the traditional relationships between Head Teachers and their Directors of Education (now often combined with wider responsibilities) are also changing, though not quite so fundamentally as in England.

Much of this book is about how differently we, as human beings, interpret the world around us and how "different individuals frame dilemmas differently". He makes the valid, yet obvious, point that in order to understand a dilemma, you

must first of all understand your own emotions. The range of dilemmas now faced on a daily basis by Head Teachers is such that not knowing yourself, and failing to learn from these challenging situations, can only spell trouble.

He has a useful chapter on the social and political context of schools, their power and influence, while contrasting the increasing centralisation of governments with the need for school leaders to build "...relationships...to make sense of the arbitrary complexity of some aspects of modern living".

The second section of the book deals with offering some practical guidance and it is here that new and aspiring school leaders may want to take note. Murphy provides his readers with that by now familiar concept, a user's toolkit. He outlines what he refers to as the COPE process¹ as a way of understanding and analysing action. There are, of course, plenty of such analytical tools around, but new head teachers and school leaders may find this approach of some use.

The book is compact (just 150 pages less references), easy to follow and understand. Murphy has included enough practical examples of everyday dilemmas and how to approach them to give new school leaders encouragement and direction. Even the older hands amongst us will find something useful in Daniel Murphy's latest work.

Low-fee Private Schooling – aggravating equity or mitigating disadvantage?

Prachi Srivastava (Ed.) (2013) Oxford: Symposium
ISBN 978-1-873927-91-5 (pp. 220, US\$48.00, pb.)

Reviewed by HELEN E. LEES

What a messy bun fight! Low-fee private schooling is the fast-paced rising phenomenon of education for the poor, although not the poorest people in the world, who in this area (Ghana, India, Kenya, Nigeria and Pakistan) clearly form a new level of excluded-from-education "working class" of the poor. Prevalent around the world, where state education is particularly useless, *exit, voice and loyalty principles* from Albert O. Hirschman dictate that a market economy in private schools for low cost can flourish. Global promising of "education for all" just isn't working. So balance sheets in hand, proprietors step in and provide those parents with a strong belief in the value of education, a solution – at a cost. From reading the variety of profiles of economic models this book supplies, it seems that cost could be viewed as very approximately 10% of whatever the family earn. Education should be free but it isn't, simply and not simply because what is freely supplied is not sufficiently good.

In a variety of locations – from Lagos to Hyderabad – schools pop up to serve parents whose children live too far from a school, or need to walk through danger to get to a school or who actually want to learn from a teacher who turns up for class and teaches, who have religious preferences, or want girls to sit only with

¹ Clarify, Options, Plan, Evaluate

girls or girls to have access to a toilet... and so on. The reasons why these schools operate, survive and continue to do so is vastly complex. When I say “messy bun fight” what I’m pointing to is not haphazard lesson planning. Frankly, as this book highlights, there is little information available currently on actual pedagogy or what goes on in these privately-funded classrooms. Educational theory? Nope. There ought to be more information about this. Instead, from reading through the detail of the chapters, a picture emerges of local, national and international issues that are political and economic, but not particularly child-centred. The issue of these schools (raging as a controversial topic now for many years) is mired and loaded down with adult concerns. A striking feature of this book’s presentation as a collection of chapters from empirical studies in some of the world’s poorest regions of Africa, India and Pakistan, is of educational politics: problems with corruption, regulation, profiling, advertising, recruiting, structures, relationship to the state, numbers of students, numbers about parents, numbers about school numbers. Whilst the detail is fascinating, the weight of this makes the book altogether a heavy read.

That every chapter as a whole renders the reading of this text in its entirety tiring would suggest that the savvy reader does not expect it to flow like a finely-wrought novel and instead cherry picks those chapters of greatest relevance to their work and interests. I had expected more enjoyment from it, having found the 2009 James Tooley book ‘The beautiful tree’ a wonderful mental experience in this regard. Whilst private schools remain a stable element of educational provision – for good or ill – in developing regions, there is little myth busting available in this book, despite the detail. The same themes get repeated chapter after chapter, just with different particulars and specifics. Perhaps the most interesting idea emerging for me (from the Fennell chapter only) was that judgements of private provision are best left to children. Parents run around looking for the best deal, all things considered, yet, when asked, the children intuitively know what is working and what not. It suggests the value of a prominent place for children’s voice in future analysis of these schools.

I found it a great shame that the studies offered so little qualitative data which would have greatly enriched the significant level of quantitative data being applied. Again, the Fennell chapter was strongest in this regard and also helpful. If we want to know what is happening to people, I am of the humble opinion we ought to ask them as educationists and record what they say to share it, not bicker over the relevance of applying chi-squared significance tests. Whilst the quantitative data of this book offered much, it makes the book specific and focuses it in on socio-economic data, rather than experiences. This is a loss which I sincerely hope future volumes will seek to address because the fact of these schools is extremely relevant to so much we take for granted in education in the west. For instance, how do the children feel about the way the often unqualified low-fee teachers teach them? Is being teacher-trained perceived as better or worse for them? Does a teacher-student relationship happen more easily when the ratio goes down from the local state norm of circa 1:90 to the private set-up of 1:15 or 1:25? I’d love to know about the children’s experience. Also, and this is a big gap in every piece of literature on this topic I’ve so far read, and this book didn’t fill it: what *kind* of pedagogy and pedagogical relationship

dynamics is occurring? Is there room in these schools for alternative approaches and informed experimentation of style, given they are largely operating beyond state commands at that level? Alas the picture this book paints is of a sector perpetually struggling to survive at the most basic educational level of 'bums on seats' and teacher reliably at blackboard.

It is a book full of information to be recommended to those with an expert eye on the issue of low-fee private schooling, but it won't serve to enlarge interest more widely with much ease.

Education in a Catholic Perspective

Steven McKinney and John Sullivan, (Eds.) (2013) Surrey: Ashgate Publishing.

ISBN: 9781409452713 (pp. 255, £65, hb.)

Reviewed by: MARY KNIGHT

This book brings together theology and philosophy to create a context for understanding and appreciating Catholic education, while raising issues and debates within the Catholic education tradition. It adopts a wide perspective and challenges thinking by highlighting important contemporary issues within the context of Catholicism. It emphasises the relevance of the book for Catholic educators, but also considers education in a wider sense. It places the underlying values of the Catholic tradition within the context of education as a human pursuit, as well as an intellectual or academic endeavour. I think that this is a strength of the book because it discusses the very practical aspects of education and the purposes of education, drawing on educational theory, rather than taking a purely religious perspective. It offers a sound overview of the aims and purposes of Catholic education and considers counter arguments. There are some robust and intelligent debates, presented in a non-dogmatic way, while acknowledging the centrality of Catholic faith.

It offers an insightful introduction to some major influential thinkers in relation to the philosophy of Catholic education; this is worthwhile reading to gain an understanding of the thinking that drives, or influences, contemporary Catholic education. It identifies some of the main Catholic thinkers, discussing morals and values which are of interest to all educators, whether Catholic or not. It examines Blondel's philosophy within the context of the Catholic faith and values, and also in relation to the wider social, cognitive and psychological aspects of teaching, reflecting a whole-person approach, while remaining underpinned by an acknowledgment of religious faith. Indeed it assumes this religious belief is central to human functioning and development. I think these aspects make it accessible to non-Catholic educators, who may otherwise overlook it, seeing it as a text essentially for those with Catholic belief.

There are some lively discussions regarding post-modern philosophy, where truth is perceived as multiple and subjective. The book raises issues about the purposes of education and views Catholic education not as indoctrination but as

an ultimate quest for truth through all disciplines. It emphasises the notion that truth is a possibility, while not suggesting that it is necessarily singular.

A strength of the book, I think, is that it is consistent with a humanistic perspective. The emphasis is on Catholic faith being human as well as spiritual, where curricular subjects serve both a secular and spiritual function. The book argues that the Catholic notion of knowing is “deeply human” (p71) based on reason and faith rather than divine revelation. This is an interesting point and is apparent where arguments are embedded in the practical notion of humanity, intellect, reasoning and faith. This idea of faith as human, not super-human, is important because it acknowledges the central role of humanity.

The discussion acknowledges that while Catholic institutions teach the Catholic faith and values, they must do this in a climate of openness, enquiry and questioning, considering wider beliefs and values. It suggests that teachers in Catholic schools should teach an understanding of other faiths in order to support an understanding of their own faith and to enable critical consideration of their own religious views. There are interesting discussions of the relationships between faith and culture, and Catholic education as a means to engage with contemporary culture, for example through an understanding of citizenship, equality, justice, truth and democracy. It argues that religious belief and practices should not sit out-with culture but should engage with, and question cultural practices and beliefs.

It identifies and acknowledges the challenges for Catholic education in contemporary culture in a realistic and practical way. Challenges such as materialism, secularism, pluralism, scientism and managerialism, are considered in relation to Catholic principles, and some interesting arguments are posed about how involvement with Catholic intellectual tradition can enable critical engagement with these challenges. This is also relevant within a non-denominational context, where humanist values underpin the philosophies of education and are sometimes at odds with popular contemporary culture.

The book confidently deals with some controversial issues such as women’s place within the Catholic tradition. It draws on feminist theology and asks some pertinent questions about the concept of gender and what this means in relation to being male and female. There are interesting points made about the notion that education teaches equality but the Catholic tradition does not seem to follow this in relation to gender, and some relevant questions posed, such as, can feminism and Catholicism co-exist when Catholicism is patriarchal?

This book will be of particular significance to those working within Catholic education, but also more generally, to all educators who have an interest in the principles and practices which underpin Catholic educational perspectives.