

## BOOK REVIEWS

### MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND

Nigel Grant (Policy and Practice in Education [3], Dunedin Academic Press, 2000)

Reviewed by ROWENA ARSHAD

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What is clear from reading Grant's book is his absolute commitment to and passion for Scotland to recognise, appreciate and celebrate the pluralism within its own shores. The whole book beseeches us to be open minded, to learn from history and to see such diversity as assets and opportunities rather than as problems. Through the book two themes emerge which he returns to in most chapters.

The first is that multiculturalism is the norm, not the exception. Throughout the book Grant persuades the reader of the legitimacy of placing multicultural education on the Scottish education agenda. He asks that this be done in a permeative and thoughtful manner rather than tagged on or as an afterthought. He shows, through tracing the history of Scottish peoples and their languages, that plurality has always been evident in Scotland. There is a whole chapter on the languages of Scotland and the importance of bilingualism. Grant argues that as we learn to value Gaelic and the Scots languages and their importance for Scotland, we should be equally considerate of other languages that have come to Scotland, such as Punjabi, Bengali (with Silheti), Hindi, Urdu, Polish, Italian, Ukrainian, Greek, Cantonese, Hakka, Chinese and Arabic. He warns us of the monoglot's fear of linguistic diversity which perceives bilingualism as an educational disadvantage. Grant asks the reader to learn from history

For example, it was the belief that bilingualism was a deficit and could damage a child's acquisition of English and general educational attainment that led teachers to beat Highland children for speaking Gaelic and lowland children for speaking Scots. Parents acquiesced in this and stopped speaking to their children in Gaelic. A similar scenario is being re-enacted with the community languages of Punjabi, Cantonese and so on.

Grant provides a very interesting chapter on how the issue of languages is addressed not only in Europe but also in Africa and Asia. He cites the Welsh approach as a success story. In Wales, there are schools where Welsh is the language of instruction and there are schools which are bilingual where some of the curriculum is taught in Welsh and some in English. What this has done is raised the linguistic and cultural identities of the Welsh peoples. Even though only about 20% of people in Wales speak Welsh, the Welsh language is identified with Welsh nationality much more than are Gaelic or Scots with the Scottish nationality. Not only has the Welsh language been revived, there is evidence that the record of the bilingual and Welsh-medium schools is making it possible for the pupils to do rather better in public examinations than pupils attending English-only schools. There is equivalent evidence that Gaelic-medium schools are displaying a similar success story to the Welsh experience, though Grant does not cover this in his book.

For Grant, multicultural education in Scotland should be about learning about Scottish languages, histories and cultures and also about those from other minority groups. It should also be about new cultures where different peoples arriving in Scotland such as the Irish, Italians, Pakistanis, Africans and others are contributing to new cultural forms of music, diet, social mores, faiths and so forth.

Which brings me to the second theme. Grant repeatedly states that multicultural education is not about ethnic minorities. Grant laments the misconception that he feels is still prevalent which is that multicultural education is still widely perceived as something to do with immigrants, not society at large. Grant also feels there still remains a strong tendency towards assimilation rather than a genuine promotion of plurality. He provocatively asks to which aspect ethnic minorities in Scotland should assimilate if assimilation be the intention? Should it be to the majority Scottish culture (whatever that is), or that part of Scotland where the ethnic minority person happens to live (like Glasgow or Stornoway), or perhaps, since the Scots are a minority within the UK, it should be about being assimilated to the majority English culture?

Grant warns that when we use terms like 'the problems' of ethnic minorities, we should be careful that in our conversations we do not inadvertently come to talk about the minorities as if they *were* the problem. He warns that the descent from that position to racism is no great distance.

Instead he suggests that we should be talking about opportunities. The diversity that exists within Scotland should be viewed as an asset to equip young Scots to live in a modern world which is culturally and racially diverse. He states that there can be no future for multicultural education if it continues to be viewed as a kind of remedial course for and about ethnic minorities. Once again, he returns to his key theme that multicultural education is for everyone.

Grant states that racism is a complex phenomenon and will need complex solutions in education. Education needs to be broad-based and teachers need to engage with social and political policies. Once again, he warns that multicultural education cannot possibly work if it is a mere appendage to the curriculum; it has to be an approach that touches different parts of the curriculum. He gives a couple of practical examples of what he means. For example, in English, if we were studying *The Merchant of Venice*, we should not hide from the fact that Shylock, the Jew, is portrayed as a hateful character; but a teacher working to multicultural and anti-racist approaches would use the opportunity to discuss with pupils why Shylock's Jewishness is cast in a negative light. In this way, racism is addressed naturally as it arises, not intruding as a 'special issue'.

Part of the book also discusses the issues of multicultural and anti-racist education as concepts. Grant does not see the terms as essentially opposed and states that multicultural education that ignores issues of racism misses one of the fundamental and central issues that stand in the way of any sensible treatment of cultures, whether 'racial', linguistic, religious or national. Equally, he berates any approach in anti-racism that plays on polarisations and is critical of anti-racists who adopt the position of racism being an issue of white against black. Grant reminds us that it is a mistake, and simplistic, to cast all white people in the role of oppressor and all blacks as victims. He states that no one has the monopoly on racism and that context, time and location all have a part to play. History has shown that that different groups have in the past attracted disapproval at any given time. While being black might give insight to what racial discrimination feels like, it does not give black people an exclusive right to define it. Grant also asserts that we need to be more cautious when labelling actions or attitudes as 'racist'. He asks that we are more discerning and analytical in our discourses on racism, xenophobia and bigotry, which he sees as interlinked. For example cultural arrogance, however deplorable, is not necessarily racist, though it might spill into that. He offers the example of France, which imposed its language, education and mores throughout its colonies, the aim being to 'civilise the natives'. This act might be seen as racist, but then the French dished out the same treatment to the Basques, Bretons and Occitans within France itself. Equally, he reminds us that it is prudent to distinguish between Nazi anti-semitism and that of mediaeval Europe which was religious in its justification,

not biological. In addition, Grant asks us not to dismiss scientific racism simply because it appears to have passed out of fashion. He states that it still exercises an appeal, particularly among those whose knowledge of science and history is slight. Therefore, multicultural and anti-racist educators require to continue to dismantle scientific racism as it can be used to legitimise the cruder forms of prejudice while absolving the occasional uneasy conscience.

I would have liked to have seen Grant spend some time exploring the concept of systemic racism and the institutional practices which sustain that form of racism. While I would agree that no one has the monopoly on experiencing racism, the issue of systemic racism is, I think, an important point that Grant misses. There is a need for power-holders, whoever they may be, to act more proactively to challenge racism and xenophobia and to understand their roles in either dismantling or colluding with such systems.

Overall, the key messages in the book are not new. Much of the work Grant draws from is clearly from his earlier work in this area in the 1970s and 1980s. Grant has to be admired for being one of the pioneer writers in this field in Scotland, putting forward ideas and issues when they were not in vogue. This book is an easy read and provides a different approach to most books I have read about multicultural and anti-racist education in that it focuses on languages and cultures to legitimise the need for multicultural education. At times, the book is repetitive as Grant consistently returns in each chapter to his two key themes of multiculturalism being the norm and that multiculturalism is not a problem but an opportunity. However, it is a challenging book. To those who remain sceptical about multicultural and anti-racist education, it challenges such sceptics to become more informed before displaying their scepticism or ignorance. To those who are committed to the issues, he asks that we too deepen our knowledge, to avoid the pitfalls of polarisations and to be less arrogant about our own knowledge and experiences of discrimination, deferring instead to the lessons of history while relating these to contemporary occurrences.

## SCOTTISH EDUCATION POST-DEVOLUTION

Tom Bryce and Walter Humes (Editors) (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003)

Reviewed in TESS by FRANK PIGNATELLI <sup>1</sup>

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A long hard look at the facts is an eye-opener for post-devolution policy-makers, says Frank Pignatelli

That Tom Bryce and Walter Humes should have embarked on such an ambitious project as the production of “a definitive text on Scottish education”, providing “a detailed, informed and critical account of Scottish education at the turn of the century”, is no surprise to those who know these two distinguished and hugely experienced academics.

Nor is the fact that the first edition of *Scottish Education*, a veritable tome of some 1,040 pages containing 112 chapters written by 120 contributors, was received with significant critical acclaim on publication (1999), being considered to be formidable and impressive with a sharp, critical edge.

The second edition, launched yesterday (Thursday) in Glasgow, builds on these strengths and reflects the changing education environment in post-devolution Scotland and is similar in ambition and even more extensive in scope than its predecessor, running to 1,088 pages containing 115 chapters.

In addition to sections offering an introductory overview and a final look to the future, 11 further sections of the book cover policy, administration and context; the organisation, management and curriculum of the pre-school, primary and secondary sectors; further and higher education; assessment, certification and achievements; education for all; and teacher education.

The diversity of views of the 126 authors lends the work a dynamism and variety rarely encountered in such weighty tomes. The balance of writers, bringing together insiders with first-hand experience of their area and therefore able to offer a unique view of change as it occurred, and outsiders with a more objective, critical view, ensures a text that is authoritative yet accessible, scholarly yet provocative, definitive yet iconoclastic.

Despite the very detailed, formulaic editorial guidance offered to the writers, individual chapters of the book retain an individuality and variety that lends diversity and interest to an otherwise intimidating tome. The editors are to be congratulated on their ability to encourage direct, honest and, in some cases, exciting accounts of many fairly dry aspects of policy and practice in Scotland. Perhaps inevitably, in such an ambitious and extensive project, the quality of the contributions is variable, ranging from the outstanding to the merely competent. Overall, however, the quality of writing and analysis is high.

John Darling’s impressive analysis of the philosophy and practice of primary education offers invaluable philosophical and political insights into the Caledonian caution that has ensured the stability and success of Scottish primary education over the years (“innovations are adopted cautiously and judiciously... child-centred education has tended to be relatively well received in Scotland because it has been practised in a level-headed form”).

The local governance of education in Scotland is expertly dealt with by two of Scotland’s most experienced local government officers. Keir Bloomer’s perceptive and provocative analysis of the political context in Scotland poses some tough questions that go to the heart of the debate about national and local governance of education in post-devolution Scotland.

Gordon Jeyes offers a stimulating and at times controversial perspective on the challenges facing local government at a time of rapid organisational, political and legislative change. His account confirms that some of the fundamental questions around the role of local government, market models of education, integrated service delivery and school improvement remain unresolved.

The inclusion in this edition of 32 new authors, sometimes writing on the same topic as previous contributors, not only offers the opportunity for fresh insights on particular topics but reminds the reader of the fundamentally subjective nature of all historical analysis.

Craig Thomson's cautious, realistic, yet upbeat and optimistic account of further education in Scotland points clearly to a sector that is successfully dealing with the many challenges identified by Michael Leech, writing on the same topic four years earlier. Douglas Weir's critical, robust and at times provocative analysis of the role of the inspectorate historically and in more recent times contrasts sharply with the account offered by the former senior chief inspector in the first edition, an account inevitably conditioned by the experience of the writer as the ultimate insider within that organisation.

Clearly, the scale and scope of the book are such that few in the education service will be able to find time to do justice to the whole work; nor will many policy-makers and politicians. Some chapters are so significant, however, that they should be required reading for anyone with an interest in or responsibility for any aspect of the service in Scotland.

Julie Allan's hugely impressive and sensitive piece on inclusion should be of concern to every teacher, lecturer, parent, policy-maker and politician in Scotland. Combining a clear and helpful description of the legislative and historical context, she skilfully analyses the conceptual confusion around this topic, cuts through the muddled thinking that has characterised much of the debate and offers some helpful pointers on inclusive practice, based on her own and others' extensive research. Helpfully, she links all of this to the potential role of the Scottish Parliament in addressing the challenges.

Her final words bear repeating in full: "For inclusion to succeed, it will be necessary for teachers to reconcile their professionally based and deficit-orientated approach, which focuses on helping, with the pupils'

desire to be included in more subtle and less visible ways. It is also crucial that the voices of those who have the most direct experience of inclusion are allowed to influence any future developments of policy and practice."

Post-devolution Scotland would do well to bear these words in mind.

Frank Pignatelli, former director of education at Strathclyde Region, is chief executive of the Scottish University for Industry. *Scottish Education Post-Devolution*, by Tom Bryce and Walter Humes, is published by Edinburgh University Press at £24.99.

#### NOTE

- This review is printed with permission from the Times Educational Supplement Scotland (TESS) 5.9.2003. A full review of this book will appear in SER 36(1)*

## CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE TEACHING, BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT AND COLLEAGUE SUPPORT

Bill Rogers (London: Paul Chapman, 2002)  
ISBN 0-7619-4018-9 (pp. 176, £16.99, paperback.)

Reviewed by GARRY M CAMERON

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A key message of this eminently readable and practical book is the development of positive, respectful relationships between teachers and pupils in schools. The type of demanding and challenging behaviour faced by teachers today may not have been experienced by earlier generations of teachers; particularly in the area of social and emotional difficulties there is recognition that young people are demanding, discriminating and less willing to accept authoritarian techniques. If teachers and schools are to cope they have to take every opportunity to develop positive and respectful relationships at both classroom and whole-school levels. In "Classroom Behaviour" Bill Rogers puts forward several practical strategies for classroom teachers to do this, focusing on a culture of respect, two-way communication and a caring ethos.

If positive relationships are to be developed between staff and pupils, Rogers recommends a problem-solving approach linked to a clearer understanding of pupil behaviour. There is also a strong emphasis on the need for school staff to feel supported and part of a team in order to develop high quality relationships with pupils which will then make a positive difference to classroom behaviour. There is a clear requirement to develop a shared understanding of standards and procedures.

Chapter two sets out some of the standards and routines that can be achieved during the establishment phase of the academic session. This section recommends the need for firmness, fairness and consistency to develop a range of pro-active strategies, routines and structures, in order to encourage a caring and supportive ethos for all stakeholders in a learning community. Chapter three provides useful and practical advice on the language of choice to direct pupil behaviour and sustain quality working relationships. The use of positive and affirmative language, it is argued, can encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own actions by reinforcing appropriate behaviour and stressing the inevitability of consequences when they make inappropriate choices. A strong link is made to direct interactive teaching skills and how teachers can reflect on teaching styles to motivate learners and develop relationships within the classroom.

"Classroom behaviour" succeeds in bringing an element of realism to behaviour management. For some classes and individuals it is extremely difficult for practitioners to sustain good relationships, but Rogers provides, as always, practical advice to assist teachers to meet the opportunities and challenges of supporting pupils with social and emotional difficulties. A key thread running through the whole book is the emphasis on collective responsibility and support for colleagues within the learning community if teachers and pupils are to have the chance to build positive working relationships. Rogers discusses many of the basic skills that can be developed, boosted and sustained to achieve this at classroom and school levels.

There is no shortage of books in the area of behaviour management, but there are several interesting features which make this text worthy of our attention. One such feature is the focus on the need for a consistent safety net for both staff and pupils, one based on effective teaching, consistent approaches to behaviour and colleague

support. The message is that collective responsibility, linked to agreed standards of behaviour which are modelled consistently by adults, can lead to better behaviour and raised self-esteem for all stakeholders in a learning community. Rogers does not shrink from highlighting the obvious challenges but does provide a sense of optimism for all adults and pupils in today's classrooms. As such, this text is a valuable resource, both for initial teacher education and for those involved in continuing professional development supporting pupils with social and emotional difficulties.