

Service integration in schools: Research and policy discourses, practices and future prospects

Joan Forbes and Cate Watson, (Eds) (2009) Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. ISBN: 978-90-8790-586-6. (pp. 212, €45, pb.)

Review by RALPH CATTS

This book is a compilation of edited papers from an ESRC funded series of seminars that explored integrated children's services from a variety of professional dimensions. There is a welcome diversity of authors from health, social work and allied health services but the dominant paradigms are from within the broad church of education studies. There is also a mix of new and well established writers which provides insights based on experience and new perspectives.

The fundamental issue is named by one of the contributors who points out that the point of inter-professional working is 'to improve outcomes for children, not to integrate services' (Pugh: 89). The book is divided into four sections described as discourses of inter-professionalism; tensions in service integration; research directions in collaborative practice; and future school services. The overall focus of the book is set within the context of the school and several authors focus on the implications of inter-professional working for teachers both in relation to preparation and for practice. Coming from different perspectives Watson and Menter each question the extent to which the culture of teacher preparation has prepared new teachers for what remains in most cases, and especially in secondary schools, an academically orientated and attainment-focused environment.

In relation to the discourses of inter-professionalism there are three substantive chapters that address the topic from different perspectives. Shucksmith *et al.* write from the perspective of health services and pose the question of whether the teaching profession will perceive the inclusion of other professionals as a challenge to their authority and autonomy, or as opportunities to reinvent their professionalism and practice. One of the challenges that they identify for teachers is the fuller incorporation of a theory-driven and evidence-based practice. They suggest that there is an epistemological gap between the craft aspects of classroom teaching and the encoded knowledge on which health professionals tend to rely. McCartney focuses on the role of speech and language therapists and the relationships that are formed with teachers. She highlights the distinction in terms of power between professionals and managers or support staff on the one hand, and the supposed equality of power and authority when professionals from two fields work together. She asks to what extent power sharing is realised within the hierarchical structure of a school. Another dimension of power raised by

McCartney is who determines the extent to which agreed strategies are implemented in practice when only the teacher works directly with the child.

The third contributor to this section offers an alternative explanation for the divide between teachers and other professionals. Allan points out that in Scotland the requirement for teacher registration constructs other professionals as outsiders who teachers need to influence, or appropriate to the dominant educator paradigm. Allan identifies initial teacher education as central to a change in this paradigm and suggests that a critical theory approach to deconstruct the dominant paradigms in teaching could enable new teachers to be free to adopt new approaches to inter-professional working. Like most of the views advanced in this book, this seems to be optimistic given the evidence of hierarchical authority in schools and the largely atheoretical norms and values adopted by many in schools and teacher organisations.

The focus of the section outlining research directions is primarily in terms of leadership in policy implementation. Warmington *et al.* summarise a four year TLRP project into interagency work and conclude that what they term 'rule bending' is needed both horizontally between professionals and vertically within organisations to deliver timely and effective multi-agency services. Brown approaches the question from the perspective of UK government evaluations of recent policy initiatives and summarises 'good practice' guidelines for service delivery by professionals. As important as these guidelines are, notably absent is the involvement of the service recipients in determining the services they require.

Some of the authors have been overly ambitious in the scope of their topic with the result that the analysis is superficial and hence not as potent as would be desired. For instance Butt and Gunter are overly ambitious in attempting in a short chapter to compare four national education systems in order to claim that current trends in England are part of a global 'solution' to transforming the school workforce. The four cases chosen are Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and England. All four are commonwealth countries in which British education heritage has been a substantial influence on the curriculum, administration and culture of education. To establish that there is a 'global hegemony' even in the advanced western economies, attention would need to be given to a wider range of countries. Furthermore there needs to be a critical analysis of the complex dialogues on policy and reform in each nation chosen. For instance they describe a singular Australian education system without acknowledging that there are actually nine public jurisdictions which differ in substantial ways including the duration of primary and secondary schooling, the forms of assessment at the end of secondary education, and the ways in which vocational learning is delivered to secondary age pupils. These systems differ also in the ways in which teacher professionalism is recognised and renewed. The issues raised in this chapter are significant and deserve comprehensive analysis. Dare I suggest a book?

Overall the views in this book present an optimistic view of the future of inter-professional working. Although encouraging, this view is not convincingly supported by the available evidence, at least not in terms of those young people and families who are most in need of support. The evidence provided suggests that some initiatives have been effective for some people, but it does not demonstrate that inter-professional working is effective in addressing the needs of

those with multiple sources of deprivation. Martin (p.96) points out that multiple-agency work could result in a lack of responsibility for shared outcomes. Hartley (p.135) claims that the intention is to enable service recipients to be engaged in decisions about their well being, but questions the extent to which professionals are able to cede power.

The various chapters in this book will be of use for teaching in education and other aspects of integrated children's services, and overall the book offers useful insights for those contemplating research into integrated services for children and the challenges of inter-professional working.

Perhaps it is time to focus research on understanding the experiences of young people and their families rather than the experiences of the professionals in order to find examples of successful inter-professional working. Rather than focusing on creating integrated senior management structures, perhaps it would be worth exploring the impact of the key worker concept utilised to a limited extent by Skills Scotland for unemployed youth with multiple disadvantages. Given the barriers to achieving effective inter-professional working, consideration should be given to the use of a key worker attached to each child and family in need who has the power to bang bureaucratic heads together – and facilitate connections and understandings among teachers, social workers, allied health professionals and community service staff to respond in a timely manner with the services that the child needs. In terms of a timely response to people with immediate needs for support, this may be a more effective way forward.

Scottish Education: Third Edition: Beyond Devolution

Tom Bryce and Walter Humes (Eds) (2008) Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. ISBN: 9780748625932 (pp. 1040, £27.99, pb.)

Review by LIZ CLARK

Opening the now familiar cover of the latest edition of the weighty tome, *Scottish Education*, I wondered what would be different from the previous editions, published in 1999 at the time of devolution and in 2003, post-devolution. In the opening chapter, the editors, Tom Bryce and Walter Humes, set the context for this third version, describing it as providing “a detailed, informed and critical account of present-day education in Scotland”. They state “the text concerns educational thinking and practice firmly contextualised in the now familiar setting of devolved government.”

Prior to reviewing the current edition, I thought it only right to see whether I could in fact detect the changes between Parts 2 and 3 in the trilogy. Not much has changed in the overall structure of the book, with the same section headings and largely the same chapters as before. However a quick glance reveals that a few topics have been dropped and/or combined differently and there are entirely

new topics; Citizenship Education; Social Sciences in secondary curriculum; Multi-agency working. Whilst many of the subject headings are the same, these are written by different contributors. Indeed, forty new authors who are specialists in their field have been involved in this edition. Within the updated text is an account of what has occurred in Scottish education between 2003 and 2008, which shows this to have been a time of rapid developments with major curricular change in Curriculum for Excellence, new legislation for learning support as well as the new qualifications framework. As the editors state, there is never a time when education stands still and thus there is always a need for its complexity to be critiqued – which was their motive for bringing about this edition.

It was interesting to note the advice offered to contributors, amongst which was that chapters should take account of research relevant to the topic; reference should be made to policy initiatives; sharp critical perspective should be offered on key issues; chapters would be limited to 5000 or 2500 words; and the text should be readable to wide audience, with over-use of jargon avoided. As a result, 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. As the editors state, they hope that this edition “will work well enough for the new reader intent upon understanding the range and diversity of education in Scotland.” For “old” readers (I refer to experience not age), there is a degree of familiarity in the layout and if you already have a copy of this on your shelf, you may not feel inclined to purchase an updated version. However as previously stated, a great deal has changed since 2003 and the original intention was always to update as required to assist teachers and teacher educators in their study and work.

The original idea of producing a major work of this type was to address the issue of what we do in Scotland that is different from practice elsewhere, in order to answer the question of what is particularly Scottish about Scottish education: how is it distinctive? In fact, a chapter is devoted to the distinctiveness of Scottish education which focuses on the historical aspects which appeared in the earlier editions, but now extends this to examine current policy and practice within a devolved Scottish government. The editors reason, however, that the rapid developments cannot be put down simply to devolution; reform in Scottish education, they say, is a complex blend of traditional and radical thinking.

Of particular interest to me was the section on the future of Scottish education which has been expanded from previous editions and attempts to address the big questions that we will inevitably face in the years to come. This will be a period of great uncertainty as we grapple with financial constraints and the inevitable impact of the hard choices that will have to be made on our education system. These issues are covered in a comprehensive manner from a range of viewpoints.

Scottish Education: Beyond Devolution is a recommended text at the University of Aberdeen for trainee teachers. The editors suggest that that there was a need for a long time for this book in Teacher Education. We see it as a valuable resource to help student teachers to come to terms with complex ideas and practices, which was one of its original aims. Does it achieve what the editors set out to do: to provide a third definitive text on Scottish education? I believe it does exactly that.

As such I will continue to encourage our students to buy the updated edition. The authors have been successful in bringing together a compendium which has appeal to a wide audience. Indeed I would venture to suggest that as an account of Scottish education today, for anyone involved in or merely interested in education, this is an invaluable and unique source of information.

Learning and Teaching in Primary Schools

Dennis Hayes, (2009) Exeter: Learning Matters. ISBN: 9781844452026
(pp. 168, £16.00, pb.)

Review by MARY STEPHEN

The author has ensured that the structure of this book is extremely user-friendly to teaching staff, undergraduate students and postgraduate students involved in education. For teaching staff it highlights the areas that we may have forgotten to consider – areas which cause students concern and worry while on placement and in university.

The author has adopted the style of introducing each chapter similarly to the way in which students are asked at the start of each session to state the learning outcomes. Hopefully the readers of this book will reflect back at the end of each chapter to see if they have achieved the outcomes. The author has utilised 'reflective and practical tasks' to support the learning outcomes. These tasks make the reader take time to consider and reflect on what they have been reading. The 'practical tasks' and 'moving-on tasks' allow for strong links to be made to placement, with the 'moving-on tasks' in particular providing support for newly qualified teachers.

The author makes good use of case studies; indeed, I believe that the majority of students would appreciate even more case study examples within the text. The use of referencing at the end of each chapter is excellent. Often students dip into sections relative to a time and place within their course, but here they can see where they may extend their reading further. This makes it user-friendly, and the addition of further reading will also benefit newly qualified teachers who wish to extend their knowledge of a particular section. However, some areas of the text have not taken into account differences in the education systems of Scotland and England, for example in relation to legislation.

Chapter one and two will be compatible with the early stages of many teacher education courses, where students need to observe and analyse the qualities of a good teacher. The stated characteristics of an effective teacher are appropriate both to the student and the trainee teacher. A point which came across strongly related to the constraints placed on student teachers, especially as each school is different, whether in terms of physical environment, ethos within school or catchment area.

Chapter 3, Planning, Organising and Managing, considered an area where students seem to experience most difficulty. The analogy to the car journey successfully outlined the structure of a lesson in an easy-to-understand format. This chapter addressed many of the concerns that students have and should reassure them that their concerns are similar to those of their peers. Again, the author draws from his experience of observing trainee teachers and emphasises that the plenary session is only useful if the lesson has been successfully taught. Consideration of time management was a strength of this book, as was the discussion of planning for, and utilising the skills of the teaching assistant. Links to Reggio Emilia allowed the reader to reflect on planning and how a negotiated curriculum allows both the teacher and pupil to feel they have more ownership over what they do. This in turn may lead to a higher level of motivation. Hopefully the introduction of 'Curriculum for Excellence' will allow this aspect to be fully developed within our educational system.

Chapter 4, Effective Questioning, was clear and offered good practical advice relating to teacher-pupil interactions. This will be of use to teacher educators when students are encouraged to observe and analyse questioning skills in school. Control, behaviour and discipline are always areas of concern for students embarking on the teaching profession and the following chapter offers sound advice, especially the importance of building up a good dialogue with older pupils who often see trainee teachers as a target. Reference to the pressures put on a trainee teacher having to undertake school tasks, and policies that could affect the way in which they would wish to teach, will be appreciated also by students. The discussion of 'teacher types' was very good and allowed students to appreciate they do not necessarily fit into one particular category, but instead are more likely to be a combination of many types. In this chapter reference to Scottish policy would have made the research summary more relevant. Chapter 6, Effective Communication might have benefited from reference to dialects, and how they may need to be modified during a teaching placement to cope with a range of multicultural backgrounds. In this chapter, good advice was provided on how to promote a constructive, interactive teaching environment where communication skills can be developed.

Within chapter 7, Creativity and Imagination, I noted that reference to Steiner Schools was included towards the end of the chapter, later than I would have expected. The author draws from his experience of observing trainee teachers and knows that they tend to think of creativity and imagination as linked specifically to arts. (As a science graduate this does annoy me somewhat, as I am aware that in order to become good research scientists you do need to have imagination and creativity.) Daydreaming is often a part of extended thinking – or just time out – and I was pleased that the author saw this as often constructive to learning, as too often we demand the child's attention too much in class. The author discusses the creative classroom where a creative teacher has a well decorated classroom, reflecting what has previously been taught. Some trainee teachers have observed that often displays such as these are at best superficial and do not truly reflect the teaching environment within the classroom. Some new partnership schools have a policy which forbids displays on the walls and some teachers are now restricted to merely displaying children's work on small pin

boards. This may encourage teachers to alter their opinions and their approaches to classroom displays

Exploring the Q standards in chapter eight is more relevant for teachers in England. Although the general ethos is similar in Scotland, reference to the S.I.T.E standards would have provided greater benefit to our Scottish students. However, although the two sets of standards differ, the advice on how to achieve these outcomes in chapter nine is both relevant and highly constructive. The title of the final chapter is poignant: The Eternal Teacher. Most successful teachers are not just eternal teachers but eternal learners. The quotes that the author has listed are not only reflective but will frequently act as inspiration for trainee teachers.

To conclude, I consider this a very readable text with a format that is sure to appeal to students on both undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The author has provided content which addresses the main issues of concern for student and trainee teachers. The variety of tasks adds value to the content by stimulating reflection and encouraging practical application.