

BOOK REVIEWS

THIRTY YEARS ON: IS COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION ALIVE AND WELL OR STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE?

Caroline Benn and Clive Chitty (David Fulton 1996) pp. xv + 560, hb. £27.50

Reviewed by DAVID EASTWOOD

In a world that has taken to debating important educational issues by what can be accommodated on a lapel badge, the prospect of this book at over 500 pages seems somewhat daunting. However, for anyone who is interested in, and cares about comprehensive education, this well documented survey will, as Brian Simon says in his Foreword, 'make a major contribution ... to our knowledge and understanding of our existing school system'. The authors' commitment to comprehensive education is well known and though this is apparent throughout, it does not get in the way of the analysis.

The book sets out to provide a broad outline of current practice in comprehensive education and to give general indicators of comparative differences. This is not a straightforward task as no government during the last 25 years has thought it worthwhile to launch a serious inquiry into the progress of comprehensive schooling. Indeed, the authors note that the 'Parents' Charter' booklet sent to every household in 1993 (at a cost of £3 million) completely failed even to mention comprehensive schools. In the absence of reliable evidence and research, 'it is only to be expected that many (people) will elevate anecdote to universal truth, or encourage developments without knowledge of their practical implications'. As the government was unable to provide a list of comprehensive establishments, a questionnaire was sent to all schools and colleges in 1994 asking, 'schools for all levels of attainment where admission is without academic selection (and) open access colleges acting as one of the main providers of education for the 16-19 age range in the area' to respond. The final database on which the main conclusions of the book are based consists of some 1560 establishments with at least one in each local authority area in the UK. At various points the authors are cautious about their database evidence but believe that it, 'gives a reliable general picture of comprehensive education in Britain'. However, a large number of establishments which appear to qualify are not included. It is possible that within the non-responding establishments there could be a disproportionately larger group representing less successful practice (and hence with less motivation to reply).

Chapters 1 and 2 provide the context for the study by reviewing the history of comprehensive education, its international dimensions and the debates (and contradictions) which have characterised the approaches of governments since the 1960s. Despite the fact that comprehensive education has been adopted widely in the UK, it still lacks clear positive definition. The authors provide a clear summary of the many strands in research and analysis involved in this uncertainty. Of course, in one sense this is hardly surprising since the debate is fundamentally about the nature and function of education itself. The authors suggest that, 'democracy is the only antidote to market destruction, the only route to the balance of conflicting interests, the means by which decisions can be taken when all the parties to the process of education are consulted ...'. 'For comprehensive

education, therefore, the debate about encouraging higher levels of democratic activity is the most important debate of all.'

Chapter 3 examines the patterns and progress of comprehensive education, being mainly concerned with the significant variation in practice in England. Chapter 4 looks at the distribution of comprehensive schools in the UK and the information collected about intakes. Here there is a short section (7 pages in a chapter of 65) on Scotland which summarises developments after the first survey conducted in 1968 (Benn and Simon, 1970). The authors rightly comment on the drive in the 1970s to establish 'all-through' 12-18 schools, but they rely too heavily on the 'official' history of the period, with a token reference to 'radical' MacKenzie (whose inability to actually run a school damaged, rather than advanced the comprehensive case) and they fail to appreciate the role played by CSE Mode 3 in enabling teachers to offer courses for all pupils. The success of SCOTVEC courses is documented, but the relative figures between schools in different social areas for students achieving 3 or more modules in S5/6 are explained by the fact that schools in private estates simply did not see the need to introduce SCOTVEC courses at all.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 examine pastoral and academic policy almost entirely from the perspective of English schools. Chapter 8 has a similar bias, but is, nevertheless, an interesting survey of administration and democratic accountability. As the authors comment, 'The management task in the last 30 years has been to develop both the system and the democracy, and over the years many comprehensive schools and colleges have achieved this. Some, however, have developed the system without the democracy; and, occasionally, the democracy without the system. Much more of a problem, a significant number have continued to try to run the new schools in the old schools' image.'

Chapter 9 concludes the survey material by examining the 16 to 19 age group. The final chapter provides an overview of the project, 'comparing the comprehensive education we have with what we could have' and a broad conclusion, justified by the survey findings that, 'the main brake on educational development in Britain has been trying to hold on too long to the inappropriate ways of the past, not any attempt to change too quickly. Thus the most considered criticism of comprehensive reform has been that it has changed education too little, not that it has changed education too much'.

Perhaps we may be permitted a little national pride that, thanks to the efforts of local authorities, research bodies such as CES, and to some extent the Inspectorate, even after more than a decade of government attempts to undermine comprehensive education in Scotland, this survey shows that, 'the more comprehensive a school system is, the better it does ...'. How odd that, with a new government, setting, streaming, fast-tracking and heavy-handed central control seem to be the agenda for the future.

ACADEMIC WOMEN

Ann Brooks (Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, 1997), pp. xii + 174, pb. £11.99.

Reviewed by MARGARET B. SUTHERLAND

The title of this book must cause some confusion. In 1987 was published a book of the same title, by Angela Simeone, dealing with much the same topics:

Someone's publication is even listed on page 1 of the present book. Surely a more distinctive title could have been found? Even 'More about academic women'?

That indeed would have indicated quite helpfully the content of this latest publication, for it follows familiar paths in setting out the employment situation of women in universities, their pay and prospects of promotion, the reasons for their relatively lowly situation and their perceptions of the university world in which they work. It deals with these topics by discussing not only data relating to women in the United Kingdom (mainly in England and Wales) but also parallel data concerning women teaching in universities in New Zealand — the author herself teaches Sociology in Massey University.

The findings here correspond to those of the World Yearbook of Education for 1994 (*The Gender Gap in Higher Education*) and Simeone's earlier book: women are likely to cluster in the lower ranks of university teachers; more men are likely to hold doctorate degrees; women's publication records tend to be less good than those of men; women's careers are complicated by the demands of child-rearing. So far as discrimination against women is concerned, some progress has been made in the formulation of official equal opportunities policies and relatively few women complain of direct discrimination: but the ethos of universities, and the way in which universities work, continue to be seen as male-dominated and as favouring men.

As to women's employment, the book usefully indicates, though it does not give prominence to, recent changes in both countries which have increased the proportion of part-time or short-term contract posts in universities. Thus while the numbers of women teaching in universities have increased, this is often through entry to non-tenured levels, with unpromising career prospects.

Another observation reinforcing earlier findings (of Halsey [1992], for instance) might also merit fuller discussion: university women teachers are less likely than their male peers to be married.

New trends also arousing interest are role-modelling, mentoring, and professional appraisal: but they seem as yet to be too patchy or infrequent in one or the other country to be reliably judged. While appraisal received mild approval in some English cases, the theory or practice of mentoring/role-models evoked conflicting opinions.

The book's findings are in fact based on quantitative and qualitative data. For both countries there are statistical tables showing the proportions of women employed at different levels, during past and present decades, as well as a clear gender bias in subject choices. Qualitative material comes from 108 questionnaire returns in England and Wales (200 questionnaires having been distributed for the researcher by registrars' offices in 19 English universities and one Welsh): for New Zealand there are the results of interviewing 23 women in three universities.

One usually expects qualitative material to have an advantage in providing human interest, and this is the case here. But there is also the danger of placing too much reliance on opinions expressed — especially if the sample is not necessarily representative. Here, for instance, we are told that women have a heavier teaching load than their male colleagues. This may be so, women may well believe it to be so, and it may have been shown to be fact in some countries: but since no information is given about the actual number of teaching hours of the women in question here, and no specific research presented on this point, the teaching load cannot be accepted as necessarily disadvantaging these women. Similarly, in considering complaints about frequent involvement in low level committees, we need to know whether men in the same university departments would claim to be equally burdened.

Like any dutiful Ph.D. student, the writer states a theoretical framework. She claims advantages for feminist poststructuralism which 'rejects the concept of a

unitary model of subjectivity and experience' advocated by feminist theories and methodologies of the 1970s. Within a feminist poststructuralist model, subjectivity is understood as both fragmented and contradictory. Feminist poststructuralism posits a model of experience, which is variable, contestatory and resistant.' But on the whole, this framework has scarcely proved noticeably innovatory in its effects on the style of the rest of the book, the analysis of data and the conclusions presented. Thus the book's main contribution is to offer some interesting new material on the New Zealand situation and largely to reinforce earlier findings on women teaching in universities.

Perhaps it is time for a careful investigation, producing reliable qualitative data, of academic men's present perception of their work and status?

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: WHY IT CAN MATTER MORE THAN IQ

Daniel Goleman (Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, London, 1995) (Great Britain, 1996), pp. xiv + 352, pb. £7.99

Reviewed by TOM BRYCE

Heads, hearts or both? Some would have it that educational practices are driven by one-dimensional thinking, that our conception of ability or intelligence as a general and pervasive factor and therefore *the* predictor of success leads to neglect and wastage. And of course Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (in *Frames of Mind*, 1983) has become *de rigueur* among critics when they challenge conventional thinking and the logic of the IQ mind set. In the past year or so Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence has begun to grab the same headlines; human capabilities aren't just multi-dimensional, in their very essence many do not have intellectual roots. Emotional strengths, those concerned with *character* and humanity, should be recognised for what they are; having different biological roots they thread *differently* through upbringing and schooling and we neglect them to our great loss.

Goleman's book isn't traditionally academic in its style. As befits a seasoned writer for the New York Times and in possession of a Harvard Doctorate in Psychology, he has written it to be a best seller. Helpful vignettes of real emotional behaviour cue the reader to each of the themes, before the detail of relevant psychological studies — many of them social psychological, some with rather more neurological or therapeutic emphases — is skillfully explained with a broad readership evidently in mind. This is not to say that scientific detail is shirked. Goleman has interviewed many of the academics whose work he quotes and he provides convincing argument with flair and style. Inevitably, reference notes and further detail constitute a sizeable appendix, so the more conventional academic has some cross-checking to contend with.

The 'true episodes' of emotional life which Goleman provides for us are indeed thought-provoking. They spell out instances of altruism and extreme self-sacrifice; of unconscionable rage, sociopathic behaviour and temporary insanity; of debilitating depression or escape therefrom; of paralysing fear or skilful anxiety reduction; of the origins of empathy, or the alexithymic predisposition to prevent its onset, etc. and their range and depth supports the author's conviction. The studies of which these are illustrations are certainly recent and relevant. For some however, the journalistic format will lead to frustration and by the end one would like a more succinct formulation of the links between emotion, abilities and motivation. Goleman doesn't grapple with the difficult debate as to which of the human emotions are 'primary' (if indeed any may be so construed). The early sections of the book setting out the neuro-biology of emotional behaviour and interrelating cognitive control (or the lack thereof) are however clear and provide a good background against which a wide range of behaviour may be understood.

Where Goleman turns to the application of this recently acquired knowledge of how emotions work, he is convincing at the personal level. The psychology of family life, how patterns of emotional behaviour build up, how individual strengths and weaknesses develop, are all set out with clarity (and the reader can't help but gain insight into past feelings of child rearing, whether as child, or as parent). But the text is rather disappointing when it comes to the discussion of society's mechanisms and contributions, both actual and prospective, to the improvement of human life. Education and schooling get short shrift. Yes, there is the odd reference to Dewey but little or no reflection on educational thinking and practices throughout this century, radical or otherwise, concerned with character building and social maturation (even if they could not be informed by the more recent scientific conceptions of emotion). Chapter 15 on the costs to society of emotional illiteracy is as convincing as Chapter 16 on the 'schooling of the emotions' is not. This isn't to knock the powerful efforts by the few radical alternatives cited, or the innovative programmes which promote pro-social behaviour, simply to say that this book doesn't analyse what it would take to connect new thinking with the work of professionals thirled to existing systems and structures. From this point of view the text will disappoint those who expect a well-argued link with the schooling with which teachers are familiar.

To pick up claims from the paperback cover: yes this is a good book about 'self awareness and impulse control, persistence, zeal and motivation, empathy and social deftness' (what Goleman defines as emotional intelligence). These may be 'the qualities that mark people who excel: whose relationships flourish, who are stars in the workplace'. But no, Goleman fails to provide 'detailed guidance as to how parents and schools can benefit from [the strengthening of emotional intelligence in us all]'. He makes a case for what we should be trying to achieve and why, but not how. Maybe this is too harsh; one shouldn't judge the book by its cover (blurb) and the 'how' is the prerogative of educators, not Goleman. He has set out the challenge; the work has much to say of value to educators who, arguably, have for too long neglected the home as the crucible for the development of emotional intelligence and the extent of teachers' potential influence upon it. We need to work out our responses (a point already underlined in SCCC's 'Teaching for Effective Learning', 1996).

A lasting thought from reading this book is that if, in the past, the deprivation literature on IQ made you *feel* how many children would benefit from *Headstarts*, the work reported in Emotional Intelligence lets you *know* how many children would benefit from '*Heartstarts*'.

STANDARDS AND VARIATION IN URBAN SPEECH: EXAMPLES FROM LOWLAND SCOTS

Ronald K.S. Macaulay (*Varieties of English around the World*, Hb. General Series, Vol. 20) (John Benjamins, 1997), pp. x + 201, Hfl. 120.00/\$64.00

Reviewed by JOHN CORBETT

At a time when Scottish secondary schoolteachers are coming to terms with new courses and examinations in Scottish and English Language, at Higher Still and Advanced Higher levels, this volume is both welcome and thoughtprovoking. Ronald Macaulay is a sociolinguist whose active interest in urban Scottish speech dates from the 1970s (see, for example, Macaulay, 1977 and 1991). This is a collection of articles published elsewhere over two decades, although many have been revised and updated. The chapters revisit Macaulay's main preoccupations with the speech of Glasgow adults and schoolchildren, and of the working and middle-class inhabitants of Ayr. In general they cover:

the problems of defining language varieties, the nature of standard languages, elitism in language, the question of linguistic insecurity, dialect in the media and literature, the importance of social class, the notion of a dialect, stylistic differences, narrative skills, and the goals of sociolinguistic investigation (p.6).

The range is broad, and, given the diverse audiences of the original articles, the chapters are inevitably uneven. The more sociolinguistic of the chapters take up issues of theory and methodology, and the reader needs to be at least slightly acquainted with current and long-standing debates in this academic discipline (see, for example, Labor, 1966; J. Milroy, 1981; and L. Milroy, 1987); while other chapters are more accessible celebrations of dialect humour, the poetry of Tom Leonard, and the neglected skills in oral narrative of working-class Scots. There is much here to interest English teachers, and in particular those teachers who are to pioneer the new courses in Scottish and English Language. Macaulay carefully traces a path through politically-charged terminology, shedding light on the different uses of words and phrases such as 'the vernacular', and 'standard language', while pointing out the relationship between speech and what has been termed 'the unit of loyalty' (p.5), a unit variously perceived as nation, region, city, gender, social class, ethnic grouping, or generation. Standard English is not viewed as an intrinsically superior form of language, but as a variety of English with a clear range of social functions, its prestige granted to it by its origins in writing and its adoption and dissemination by the educational system. Over a century of education in Standard English, however, shows no signs of eradicating non-standard vernacular speech. The persistence of spoken Scots may be taken either as the result of poor teaching by generations of dominies, or as an indication that vernacular language varieties also have important social uses in their communities, functions which are different from those served by the standard variety. Macaulay clearly takes the latter view of why vernaculars have survived in the face of (until latterly) a long history of denigration by educational institutions and the media. He takes those sociolinguists to task who have argued that vernacular speakers feel a strong sense of linguistic insecurity, sometimes represented as self-hatred. His enthusiasm for, and fascination with all forms of spoken Scots is evident in his appreciation of the poetry that can be found not only in Tom Leonard's work, but in the everyday anecdotes of working women and men.

The book is at its weakest, perhaps, in this intersection between sociolinguistics and literary criticism. For example, when discussing literary texts, Macaulay occasionally conflates aesthetic value and the accuracy with which a poem or sketch represents a particular linguistic variety. Moreover, he argues persuasively that such figures of speech as repetition and alliteration are common to both formal poetry and many workers' narratives. However, implicit in this observation is the arguable contention that repetition and alliteration in themselves have aesthetic value. Even so, Macaulay's fundamental point about the institutionally undervalued skills deployed in oral narratives is well made, and on the evidence here, his forthcoming book on 'Some Strong Scottish Voices' should be both enjoyable and insightful.

In general, this is an extremely useful anthology of Macaulay's work on Scots over the past two decades, and a worthy addition to John Benjamins' growing list of monographs with a Scottish flavour (e.g. Macafee, 1983; Gorlach, 1985; and McClure, 1995). In the changing climate in Scottish education, these volumes will be indispensable.

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BECOMING A TEACHER: ISSUES IN SECONDARY TEACHING

Justin Dillon, Meg Maguire (Editors) (Open University Press, 1997), pp. 272, pb. £14.99, hb. £45.00

Reviewed by ALLISON LONG

Becoming a Teacher claims to have been designed as a source book for students on initial teacher education courses and newly qualified teachers. The contributors have all taught in schools (mainly London) and are on the staff at the Kings College London School of Education as tutors on the Post Graduate Certificate in Education, Secondary.

The book is divided into four main sections. The first section: 'A Basic Framework' addresses areas of concern for the new teacher, teacher education and training; the current education provision; philosophical issues in education and the law as it relates to teachers. The second section: 'Social and Political Issues' provides an overview of the context in which education operates, the historical roots of the problems facing teachers, (particularly in the inner city) and a vision

of the future. The third section: 'Teaching and Learning' is a collection of articles addressing issues relevant to classroom management, adolescence, language and assessment. In section four: 'Whole Curriculum Issues' the authors explore the roles and responsibilities of teachers in areas relating to health education, information technology, vocational education and the form tutor. The book concludes with a chapter from Professor Stephen Ball on 'Better read: Theorising the Teacher' which reflects upon the role, purpose, and continuing professional development of the teacher. An in-depth exploration of recurring themes in the book are drawn together to provide a radical critique of current education policy and practice in England.

This book is an interesting and informative series of chapters (designed to stand on their own) which provide insights into the social, political and curriculum context which have influenced teacher education in England during the past two decades. Students on PGCE secondary courses in Scotland will find a rich source of referenced material some of which will resonate with their own experience. Many of the themes in the book will be familiar, for example classroom management, the role of the teacher, teacher qualities, classroom learning, assessment, the purpose of schooling, information technology, values, discipline, the health promoting school and professionalism. However, the National Curriculum with the Key Stages 1 to 4 and the changes brought about by the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) may be unfamiliar to Scottish students. Students reading the chapter on 'Teacher Education' will be perplexed by the extent of the policy shifts and legislative changes that have taken place in England in the 1980s and 1990s in order to 'reform' initial teacher education — a major outcome of the reform being the integration of the work of teacher education institutes with the school-based elements of teacher education courses leading to the formation of the mentoring scheme in England. A similar government-funded scheme was piloted in Scotland in 1992, but not implemented. This chapter also introduces the idea of the new education market where parents are 'choosers and consumers' (Gewirtz *et al* 1995). The argument that the twin market mechanisms of choice and competition will improve standards in secondary schools, however, has yet to be proven. The concept of values and schools (Cribb and Gewirtz) focuses, in part, on the aspects of the current social and political context of English schooling, a useful insight for Scottish students taking up posts in England.

The final chapter may leave the students rather bemused when they are asked to consider their role as a 'public intellectual' and at the same time reject the idea of teacher as 'technician'. However, we would share the author's concern about the 'redistribution of significant voices; not of what is said but who is entitled to speak' in the current debates on education. Stephen Ball provides challenging and critical debate on all these issues — useful source material for all students interested in the values and ideologies which shape their future practice.

The book is presented in a clear, if rather austere, format, perhaps not immediately appealing to the student or probationer teacher eager to become immersed in classroom practice. However, for those students wishing to consider ideas which will inform their own developing philosophies about teaching and learning, the book provides a useful reference source.