RESOURCE REVIEWS

EDUCATION THAT MATTERS: TEACHERS, CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION AT LOCAL AND GLOBAL LEVEL

Mags Liddy and Marie Parker-Jenkins (eds.) (2013) *Education that Matters: Teachers, Critical Pedagogy and Development Education at Local and Global Level*, Oxford: Peter Lang.

Review by Benjamin Mallon

Set against the backdrop of numerous global social, economic and environmental challenges, this edited volume seeks to add to the discussion of how learning which addresses global issues of social justice, equality and power is facilitated, experienced and understood. It sets out to explore the opportunities afforded to young people in regard to developing an awareness of local and global events, as well as considering their position in relation to the causes and possible solutions of these issues. The publication also seeks to lend weight to securing the position of development education (DE) within the education system by providing teachers, student teachers and other educationalists with suggestions on how to embed development and sustainability into classrooms, schools and the curriculum. In their introductory chapter, Parker-Jenkins and Liddy identify the two key themes which run throughout this publication. Firstly, learners are positioned at the centre of the approaches towards DE, resulting in a particular focus on methodologies grounded in active and participatory learning. Secondly, critical pedagogy is identified as the dominant lens for this publication, and as a means by which DE theory can be put into practice.

In the second chapter of the publication, Parker-Jenkins and Liddy provide a brief analysis of the theoretical debates around the topic, offering points of comparison and contrast between DE, Education for Sustainable Development and Environmental Education. They settle upon the definition of DE focused on awareness, analysis, reflection, and action on multiple levels,

from the personal to the global, as prescribed by Irish Aid (2006). This definition is followed by the proposal of action research as a model applicable to DE and concomitant active learning methodologies.

With the definition and conceptual framework in place, the subsequent chapters focus on a number of group and individual DE action research projects taking place within teacher education contexts across the island of Ireland. One particular point of interest is that in addition to the standard reference lists, each chapter is supplemented by a number of opportunities for reader reflection, practical suggestions on the application of particular methodologies, ideas for further reading as well as suggestions for useful resources and links. These useful extra components could be utilised as a professional development resource but could also be used to directly inform both short and longer-term planning of both teachers and student teachers.

In the third chapter, Liddy and Tormey examine how DE is currently incorporated in the classroom. This chapter illustrates how acquisition of this knowledge and the subsequent engagement of teachers and student teachers can vary across the curriculum. The important position of teachers in facilitating DE is illustrated, but clear gaps within the knowledge of practitioners are identified. Whilst development studies is recognised as a means by which the teaching of DE can be informed, there are numerous practical issues which inhibit the development of teacher knowledge and understanding through this framework, particularly as there is a difference in the ease that DE content is applicable to all subjects across the curriculum. In addressing this shortfall, Liddy and Tormey propose three methods for enhancing knowledge related to DE, each with their own possibilities and challenges. Primarily, they propose building upon the practice of other subjects to augment learning opportunities through an 'interdisciplinary approach'. The remaining two approaches revolve around collaboration, firstly through 'team teaching', which utilises the knowledge and skills of groups of teachers in the design and delivery of learning opportunities, and secondly as a broader collaboration with individual subjects making a contribution towards the wider objectives of an 'integrated curriculum'. This suggested framework proposes a challenge to both school leaders and teacher educators to ensure that opportunities are available for teachers and student teachers to build upon educational practice outside of their

specialisms. It also appears to see the need for the development of collaborative networks where innovative teaching approaches can be utilised to support the embedding of DE.

The book moves on to consider a number of approaches to teaching DE in innovative ways. Fitzgerald considers the moral challenges of facilitating DE, through an exploration of the experiences and perceptions of student teachers, teaching both Business and Religion. Drawing upon a number of data sources, Fitzgerald identifies that student teachers were able to utilise DE as a tool for overcoming the moral dilemma between the two subjects, for example using sustainability as a model of good business practice. Such a focus would certainly be of interest to those involved in the teacher education of students undertaking studies in more than one curricular area. Despite perceptions of its importance, it is clear that embedding DE has particular challenges. Progress in teacher education must be supported by adequate resources and protected curricular time. On a broader level, education policy and school level DE support must be coordinated, something that can only come about as a result of collaboration between schools and education colleges.

Utilising the written and oral reflections from post-graduate students, the next chapter considers the use of development-themed documentary film through an approach underpinned by critical media literacy, as a means of widening the scope of learners to critically analyse their position and complicity in global networks. Bryan adds to the discussion of the challenges of teaching about controversial issues through a critical analysis of versions of DE which limit the possibility of learners to critically interrogate their own position within global 'systems of inequality', and proposes critical media literacy, with its analysis of social justice, power and inequality as one approach which may support critical pedagogy. This chapter provides a detailed account of the challenges of incorporating a methodology that moves beyond 'soft' approaches to DE (Andreotti, 2006) and pinpoints the limits and potential of approaches which challenge learners to confront uncomfortable issues. The chapter is supplemented by a number of highly useful practical suggestions as to how critical media literacy framework could be applied within classrooms across all education levels and is important reading for educators interested in the use of development-themed film and more broadly critical media literacy.

Building upon the book's initial identification of the interlinked nature of local and global issues, Ryan considers art-based approaches as a means by which learners can explore their connections to local issues of the human and physical environment. The chapter draws upon examples of how such connections have been made though the creation of poetry as well as a learning activity which draws out learners' connections to local issues in the form of visualisations and enactments which take place at a local historical site. This chapter provides an opportunity for teachers to consider how the affective and local aspects of DE can be tackled.

The theme of arts-based educational approaches is continued in King's chapter, which provides a thorough consideration of the potential contribution of arts education to DE. The chapter justifies this innovative approach in light of the critical visual literacy skills that arts education can support. Through a process of collaborative inquiry, student art teachers created pieces of work which addressed development themes. At the same time they imagined how DE could be embedded within the post-primary education system. Key to this collaboration was the development of multi-disciplinary groups (with specialists from different areas such as photography and film) which extended the knowledge and skill base of clusters and increased the depth of outcomes. Both of these chapters will be of interest to teachers and student teachers seeking to explore the potential of art-based approaches to DE. Moreover, the chapter provides some interesting ideas around the use of collaborative groups which may have application in other subject areas.

Holland and Mulcahy begin their chapter by identifying the potential of information communication technology (ICT) to develop networks within which knowledge may be socially constructed and transformative learning opportunities created. Whilst ICT is a common aspect of the home lives of learners, as a tool to support teaching and learning it must be supported by a strong values base as well as the appropriate skills. For teachers to utilise ICT successfully, Holland and Mulcahy suggest that maximising both technical and pedagogic competence remains key towards enabling ICT to support learning, and will remain a key challenge for teacher educators across all subject areas. The potential of ICT to develop communication and collaboration is clearly illustrated through a number of learning activities. Ensuring the safety of the

online environment is identified as a key challenge in relation to ICT and Holland and Mulcahy provide a measured response to this issue through a number of practical suggestions around the use of the internet as a resource, of potential use to all practitioners.

Successfully building upon the classroom approaches covered within previous chapters, Nevin moves on to a broader proposal of embedding DE through a 'whole school approach'. Identifying schools as components of both local and global communities, a number of challenges and potential benefits from pursuing a 'whole school approach' to DE are recognised. Drawing on three case studies from New Zealand, Australia and an international programme, Nevin suggests how these challenges may be overcome in order to achieve a successful whole school approach. Firstly, the inclusion and active support of all associated parties is central to a holistic approach. Secondly, the review and development of current school-wide DE policy and practice requires consideration. Finally, building teachers' capacity for policy creation is integral. Both the 'whole school approach' proposed by Nevin and the 'integrated curriculum' identified by Liddy and Tormey offer practical and compatible solutions to the question of how DE might be truly embedded within schools. Nevin underscores the importance of inclusive collaboration on such a venture, whilst offering highly practical and accessible ideas which would support teachers and school leaders on the first steps towards developing a whole-school approach towards DE.

The final chapter from Parker-Jenkins and Liddy provides a succinct summary of the publication, and returns to the central question of how education can develop knowledge and skills that will support young people's participation at local and global levels. They identify that whilst global perspectives have been increasingly incorporated into classrooms, there is a further need to build upon this foundation. This publication provides a number of approaches to DE each adaptable to a variety of themes across different subjects. Staying true to the chosen definition of DE, the publication also provides a number of examples of how learning can successfully address issues at the personal, local and global level. Utilising critical pedagogy as a theoretical foundation is shown to provide an opportunity to facilitate learning which considers issues of equality and power across local and global networks,

and supports young people not only to consider their own position and responsibility within these reticulations, but also to formulate how they might be able to act as agents for social change. Collaboration is a term repeated throughout the volume, whether it is between learners in multidisciplinary groups, between teachers in team teaching episodes, between teachers and school leaders in developing policy, or between schools and teacher education centres. This collaboration appears of the utmost importance if DE is to be successfully embedded in educational policy and practice.

The education that matters in the title of this book is an education based around not only supporting learners to extend their knowledge and understanding of issues of development and sustainability, but also to develop the critical skills enabling engagement with the widespread and often varied impacts of these events. This is clearly a huge undertaking, but this publication offers a number of excellent examples of how teachers, teacher educators and policy makers can embed DE in schools, and how such a focus can support learners to realise and address their interconnectedness to local and global issues of social justice, equality and power.

References

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