

Reviews

The Editors are pleased to receive notice of books written or edited by educationists in Wales, or with Welsh connections, or with a Welsh educational interest.

Gareth Roberts and Cen Williams (eds), *Addysg Gymraeg Addysg Gymreig* (Welsh-Medium Education, Welsh Education) (Bangor, University of Wales, 2003), 337pp. £14.95, ISBN 1-842200-47-X (pb).

This is undeniably an important publication. It will be of interest to professional educationalists and students as well as to those with a general interest in education. The volume contains research articles and contributions by some of Wales's most prominent academics and practitioners, thus providing the reader with a valuable overview, a useful source of reference, and many incisive analyses and evaluations of aspects of education in Wales from a range of perspectives.

The book is particularly timely for two reasons. Over the past fifty years or so, education in Wales has evolved in several dramatically different ways from the process in the other countries of the United Kingdom. The articles provide a quite comprehensive overall view of these developments and their impact on the Welsh language. In their introduction, the editors refer to a new spirit in education and the teaching profession following a somewhat barren period during the 1990s when educationalists

and teachers felt overburdened by bureaucracy. Despite the fact that many of the bureaucratic fetters remain, there is, without doubt, a burgeoning confidence within the profession in Wales, and this publication will certainly further support, energize and encourage this resurgence of the professional spirit in Welsh schools.

The volume has a number of valuable features. It deals with a range of themes and issues, such as bilingualism and dual literacy, higher-order reading skills, first-language and second-language teaching methodologies, Welsh writing in English (Anglo-Welsh literature), the curriculum and assessment. It combines the pragmatic and the philosophical and is immensely readable. The authors make powerful statements, pose provocative questions and reach important conclusions, based on their wide knowledge, rich experience and in-depth understanding of education in Wales. There is also a wealth of practical guidance for teachers and headteachers in schools.

Many of the articles trace the history of systems, organizations and developments thoroughly and in detail. Three of the finest examples in this volume are those on Welsh writing in English, the work of the Welsh Language Board and

the growth of Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin (the association for Welsh-medium nursery education). Each provides the reader with a rich source of evidence and a sound basis for further research and evaluation. There are articles which answer important questions and raise many others. These contributions contain thought-provoking and sometimes controversial hypotheses. The volume's first article, by Iolo Williams, for example, discusses issues such as the purpose of education as a means of transferring culture from one generation to the next, and education in the weaker language as the main and most effective way of acquiring balanced bilingualism. These are themes which merit further research and investigation.

The article by Roy James and Peter Wynn on the curriculum in Wales combines an insightful overview of developments with powerful conclusions and questions for further discussion. For example, the authors claim that the curriculum is a means to an end and that pupils must live their education with intensity and passion, otherwise its influence on their lives will be weak and fragile.

Colin Baker and Jessica Clapham's article on the nature and needs of bilingual pupils is a valuable source of information about the advantages and disadvantages of bilingualism in general, not only in Wales. It also provides some practical advice and guidance for those involved in developing pupils' bilingual skills. Cen Williams's article on dual literacy takes the discussion of bilingualism a step further and provides examples of trans-linguaging, which

teachers in bilingual schools will find particularly relevant and useful.

There are a number of other articles which focus on the practicalities and reality of teaching in bilingual situations, and which will be of great value to teachers and headteachers. In his article on assessment, Wynford Bellin discusses this complex aspect of education in a commonsense way which school practitioners will find refreshing. The articles by W. Gwyn Lewis, Geraint Wyn Jones, Gareth Williams, Gwawr Maelor and Zohrah Evans and Ann Tegwen Hughes are based on thorough research and an in-depth understanding of the intricacies and skills of first- and second-language teaching and learning, and of managing schools and classrooms.

The editors deserve to be congratulated on their achievement in compiling this compelling book. There has been a real dearth of published research of this kind and quality in recent years in Wales. In this volume, an invaluable pattern for future publications, focusing on individual and specific aspects of education in Wales, has been firmly established.

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Dai Smith and Meic Stephens (eds), *A Community and its University: Glamorgan, 1913–2003* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2003), 208pp. £14.99, ISBN 0-7083-1786-3 (pb), £25, ISBN 0-7083-1787-1 (hb).

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Although we Welsh are often said to be mad on education, the number of books on education in Wales, especially higher education, is remarkably small, and so this pleasingly produced volume is most welcome. It is part straight history, relating how Pontypridd became an industrial powerhouse, how the School of Mines grew out of its needs, how the School of Mines became a technical college, becoming in time a polytechnic, and how that eventually became the University of Glamorgan. It is partly a book about the interconnection of educational ventures with the needs of south Wales Valleys society. It is also in part a book of reminiscence about Trefforest and Pontypridd by two writers who have lived there and, lastly, it is a book intended to make a statement about the kind of university which has evolved in Pontypridd and what its future might hold. In a way this book is a Festschrift, not to an academic, but to an academy, and this laudatory quality is most clearly seen at the beginning and the end, with the contributions of the Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University, Sir Adrian Webb and Professor Dai Smith.

Meic Stephens skilfully mixes personal memoir with local history, showing how Pontypridd moved from being a rural society to an industrial one, emphasizing most entertainingly that, despite the communal shared experience of industrialization, Pontypridd produced a remarkably large number of eccentrics, such as Francis Crawshay and Dr William Price. It is remarkable that it was not until 1913, when the Welsh coal industry had reached its apogee, that the

coal-owners got together to found their own School of Mines, in the teeth of opposition from University College, Cardiff, which had its own mining department, as is shown here by Dr Peter Harries. Because of the crisis in Welsh coal in the 1920s and 1930s, the School went through difficult days and was transformed largely into a technical college by 1939. The story is then taken up by Mr Basil Isaac, showing how the college was greatly enlarged throughout the later twentieth century, becoming the Polytechnic of Wales, and then, when in 1992 the 'binary line', the division between universities and polytechnics, was broken, becoming the University of Glamorgan. How it became a university, separate from the University of Wales, a pathway quite different from that taken a few years previously by the Welsh College of Advanced Technology, which became part of the University of Wales, is mentioned only very briefly here, and it would have been very interesting to know more of the ins and outs of the process in the early 1990s.

The University sees itself as having a special mission to advance 'lifelong learning', so it is appropriate that Dr Keith Davies devotes a chapter to the often stormy history of adult education in the Valleys, an area which was a battleground between Marxists and non-Marxists, and which reflected also the ebb and flow of industrial prosperity. Adversity followed prosperity rapidly in the 1920s and 1930s, to return only fitfully during and after the Second World War; all this leaving a legacy of serious poverty and social exclusion, which in turn has led to poor educational

expectations and exclusion from higher education. Professor David Adamson in his chapter explains how it is part of the mission of the University to reach out to the educationally excluded, and in doing so he explains the fierce educational debates over the causes of social and educational exclusion. His chapter must be read in conjunction with the following one by Professor Dunkerley and Dr Lesley Hodgson on 'Civil Society', that is to say, the incredible number of voluntary associations to be found amongst Valleys people, and which buoy up Valleys society. To develop as rapidly as it has done since 1992 the University has had to tune into this informal network, and hitch itself to the energy and goodwill to be found there.

Towards the end of the book, in an essay which is a model of its kind, Peter Stead returns to the theme of Meic Stephens at the beginning, partly based on his experience of living as a boy in Pontypridd, of the importance of Pontypridd as a hub of south Wales society, and the utter appropriateness of having a university situated there. Finally Dai Smith ties all these themes – personal, historical and educational – together, as he outlines the University's mission for the future regeneration of the Valleys. All in all, then, this is a volume which is a most important contribution to the history of higher education in Wales.

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Stephen Gorard, Chris Taylor and John Fitz, *Schools, Markets and Choice Policies* (London and New York, Routledge-Falmer, 2003), 226 pp. £24.99, ISBN 0-415-30423-7 (pb), £70, ISBN 0-415-30422-9 (hb).

Unlike its Conservative predecessors' habit of treating almost all educational research as irrelevant, the Blair Government is ostensibly committed to evidence-based policy. Yet it is also ideologically committed to offering 'real' choice to the consumers of welfare services. That vision is not readily reconciled with inconveniently difficult evidence. It is also the case, however, that the claims made by market enthusiasts have been investigated mainly by researchers strongly disposed to disbelieve them. This book is pointedly distanced from that tradition.

Its focus is firmly on the outcomes of choice, not on social class differences in how and why successfully choices are made. In contrast to over-generalization from small-scale qualitative research, what is presented here is 'the largest and most sustained study' undertaken anywhere of the impact of choice on schools' intakes and performance. Data from over 24,000 secondary schools in England and Wales, from 1988 through to 2001, enable regional and local differences in how quasi-markets have worked to be identified and explained, with systematic reference to how things were before. A segregation index was computed by analysing the distribution of pupils from the poorest homes,

measured by eligibility for, and take-up of, free school meals. It is described, along with objections and alternative methods, in a detailed Appendix. Its application at system, LEA and school levels produced findings which considerably complicate matters for both market advocates and their opponents.

Belief that choice works to the advantage of the already advantaged is contradicted by showing that school intakes are less socially stratified overall than in the time of officially designated catchment areas. Segregation levels are determined mainly by patterns of housing, which is why they were already high before so-called 'open' enrolment was introduced. But while they were lower overall in 2001 than in 1989, they have been rising since 1997. 'Segregating' and 'desegregating' statistics for every LEA in England and Wales illustrate the danger of generalizing from small samples, which may obscure large variations in the availability of choice and the competitiveness of local markets. They also suggest that researchers whose focus has been on London have exaggerated the polarization of intakes.

As several case-studies indicate, administrative boundaries have ceased to constrain competition in places where many, even most, pupils attend schools outside 'their' LEA. There was a surprising lack of evidence of 'sink' schools 'spiralling into decline' under pressure from popular competitors. But while the 'basic fact' of increasing stratification is rejected, that contrary finding is significantly qualified. Levels of social segregation tend to be higher where 'zoned' community comprehensives

coexist and compete with schools that can 'set their own geographical boundaries' because they control their admissions. They are higher where 'school allocation is by academic selection, faith, fees or specialism' (p. 122). In short, choice without diversity appears to be more equitable than choice *and* diversity.

This conclusion is highly relevant for Wales (and Scotland), where the private sector is much smaller and where government promotion of institutional diversity has done far less damage to the still-dominant model of community comprehensives. Between 1994 and 2000, nearly one in three secondary schools in England took a declining share of children from poor families. That tendency towards more 'privileged' intakes was most marked in grammar schools, church schools and specialist schools that were also selective or had foundation status. It is therefore argued that comparisons of school performance are unfair, and the presumption that diversity raises standards is not properly tested 'if politically favoured categories of school receive preferential funding, and use a different admissions process to the schools with which they are in competition' (p. 135).

This book provides a thoroughly documented warning against expecting too much, for good or evil, from national policies, which are unevenly implemented in very different social conditions. It includes a firmly evidence-based defence of 'unmodernized' comprehensive schools, and of a relatively unmarketized Welsh education system, against politically expedient

accusations of underperformance. More generally, it explains why the statistical link between school-level results and the background characteristics of pupils remains unchanged after fifteen years of subjecting schools to the discipline of market forces. Given England's prominence as a 'test-bed' for market reforms taken further than in comparable countries, it is unsurprising that the research reported here has received so much attention from both policy-makers and the research community. The book ends with an account of how its findings have been communicated and received, and of how they have been used selectively by opposing sides in a policy debate richer in ideology than evidence, and which the authors regard as having distracted attention from 'the real causes of unequal access and opportunities in education' (p. 190).

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Paul A. Singh Ghuman, *Double Loyalties: South Asian Adolescents in the West* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2003), 248pp. £14.99, ISBN 0-7083-1765-0 (pb), £30.00, ISBN 0-7083-1766-9 (hb).

A number of academic studies have addressed the experiences and predicaments of South Asian young people living in the UK, yet a profound ignorance of these young people's unique histories, cultures and traditions remains. A real need will therefore be met by

Ghuman's comprehensive study of second- and third-generation South Asian young people in western countries. In particular, this work addresses the complex notion of acculturation, posing the question: how do young South Asian pupils and students adapt to or become integrated into their dominant host society? There is, as Ghuman points out, a continuum of traditional views of acculturation, ranging from separation to full integration into western host societies. He reminds us of the sensationalist media stories that highlight the plight of young South Asian girls in the UK – those who are not allowed to adapt to British culture, due to the restrictions of their authoritarian fathers, and who are forced to flee the confines of arranged marriages. However, he makes the point that this is an oversimplification of the acculturation process and uses his own research to illustrate the complexity of the issue. A number of parents and children in his study agree that their customs and religions still impede them from adapting to some western traditions and that racism is still an issue that they face every day. However, the majority of his participants report that they have been able to integrate into western culture successfully, without imperilling their sense of personal identity. This is particularly true in the case of the young people living in Vancouver, whom he found to be surrounded by all-embracing multicultural policies in their schools and wider society. Ghuman's study therefore suggests alternative findings and, in particular, stresses the positive aspects of biculturalism. This, says Ghuman, is both

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timely and topical: in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, the issues of integration and inter-ethnic relationships need to be re-examined.

A major strength of this book is that it is a cross-cultural comparative study using a wide variety of methods and a synthesis of theory. Very few studies of South Asian pupils offer a cross-cultural comparison of four different countries as this one does; Britain, Canada, America and Australia are all included here. Nine hundred and fifty-one young people from a range of different backgrounds and religious preferences, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh, took part in the study. Teachers and parents were also involved in giving their experiences and opinions. The study used the Aberystwyth acculturation scale, and students were asked for their attitudes regarding a number of different topics, from schooling to clothing. Several students, parents and teachers also took part in in-depth interviews in order to enable sound interpretation of the statistical data produced by the scale. Observation and 'informal sessions' were then used to reference and contextualize the data. The triangulation of data and eclectic use of methods leads to some illuminating results and the use of verbatim quotes makes the book fascinating reading. Since the work covers such a large sample and a wide range of topics it did leave me wanting more detail in some parts. In particular, more information on the position of the researcher amongst his sample population would have been interesting, especially regarding the role he played and how his

own ethnicity contributed to or enhanced his work.

Yet this book is more than a study of acculturation; it adds to the current literature in several ways. For example, it highlights the issue of gender in acculturation and explores some serious psychological consequences (bulimia, anxiety, depression) which South Asian girls may encounter. In this respect it helps to overcome some of the stereotypes and myths that surround this subject. Not all girls, says Ghuman, are captive to the will of their family; when intergenerational conflicts occur they are often worked through by compromise. The book also addresses the issues of South Asian achievement, attitudes to schooling and socio-economic class relations; indeed, all of the important aspects of identity formation.

This book will be used by a wide variety of professionals. Its solid conclusions and policy-related future recommendations make it profitable reading for researchers and teachers alike. Similarly, the book will also be useful to students interested in studying ethnic minority groups. The glossary of words and terms, evaluation of the methods and the useful introduction to the processes of immigration will have practical value within a variety of disciplines. The synthesis of all these elements makes the book compulsive reading. I can only regret that this enlightening study was not available when I began my own related research.

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