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.

John Fitz, Brian Davies and John Evans, *Educational Policy and Social Reproduction: Class Inscription and Symbolic Control* (London, Routledge, 2006), 157pp. £22.99, ISBN 0–415–24005–0 (pb)

As I come to write the first sentence of this review I have to confront the diffi- culty of saying what this book is about. It is a book with plenty of interesting things in it. It is a book I will certainly recom- mend to my students. It is, in some ways, a timely book. But it is also a book that does not deliver everything it promises. It offers both 'a theoretically informed look at British education policy over the last 60 years' and 'a synthetic analytic descrip- tion of class inequalities in English education' over the same period. The exciting and tantalizing theoretical possi- bilities outlined in the first chapter, a language for policy analysis drawn from the work of Basil Bernstein, are made sporadic use of in the remainder of the book as a discursive commentary rather than being integral to the discussion of practical and historic inequalities. This is a pity. Nonetheless, I got a lot out of this book and ended up with several pages of notes and ideas – always a good sign!

The Bernsteinian framework is sketch- ed with a lively clarity and the potential usefulness of this, particularly in making sense of contemporary education policy directions, is very evident. Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 are respectively about the post- 1944 Education settlement, selection and class opportunity 1944–64, comprehen- sivism and patterns of education and social mobility. These chapters provide an extremely useful synthesis of research findings and are a powerful reminder, both of the recent and continuing history of class (and gender) inequality in English education and the impressive, and often neglected history of class inequality research in British sociology of educa- tion, which 'remains one of the discipline's finest moments' (p. 45). This is one of the reasons why the book will have value for students. Educational research in the dig- ital age more often than not works to erase research histories. Nonetheless, this historical account also has some limita- tions. It is primarily expository rather than theoretical; it suggests rather than

demonstrates a relationship between class and policy and does not address very fully the ways in which policy comes to be classed. Also, despite a brief discussion of grouping by ability, the seminal work on internal class differentiation in schools by Lacey and Hargreaves is not mentioned; although, to be fair, the authors express their 'greatest regret is that we stay out of classrooms' (p. 15).

Bernstein re-emerges in Chapter 6 to provide a form of reflection on what has gone before via his developing account of the complex relations between family, work and school on the one hand, and the recontextualization of policy texts on the other. The ways in which these conjoin in mechanisms of 'sifting and sorting' and 'privileging practices' and resource distribution, which together constitute a very particular 'pedagogic discourse' is also discussed. Chapters 7 and 8 bring policy up-to-date, examining respectively the Conservative and Labour education regimes. Oddly, Chapter 7 does not make any significant use of Bernstein's later work on neo-liberal and market education policies and their attendant identities. Chapter 8 attempts to relate the earlier analysis of inequalities to the current policy ensemble but suffers both from a lack of relevant data and being overtaken by events: a problem for all of us when trying to write about moving targets. Policy is now fast, fumbling and is not well represented by single-stranded analytic forays. The deployment of the Bernsteinian tools here, and an interpretation of the changing boundaries of the esoteric and the mundane, and the de-construction and re-construction of the official and pedagogic re-contextualizing fields (p. 99), together with a discussion of educational autonomy (and new kinds of relations to the economy and the labour market), and the changing configurations of the special relations of time, space and text in recent education policies and new educational identities, could have delivered more. It would also have been pertinent and felicitous to have seen some re-engagement with contemporary research in the sociology of educational inequalities. In particular, some links made between the discussion of middle-class advantages in Chapter 6 and recent work by Tim Butler, Mike Savage and Fiona Devine on middle-class families and class reproduction through educational 'investment'.

I liked and enjoyed and was frustrated by this book in equal measure. I wanted to know much more about how it is that: 'Class conditions, demands and interests lie at the centre of educational policy' (p. 10) and how 'education preserves structural relations between social groups but changes structural relations between individuals' (p. 11, quoting Bernstein) within the current ensemble of education policies. Perhaps I want too much and should be content with the good things that are done in the book. I suggest, very seriously, that you read the book and make your own judgement. I can assure you that you won't be wasting your time.

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Ken Jones, *Education in Britain 1944 to the Present* (Oxford, Polity Press, 2003), vi + 202 pp. £15.99, ISBN 0–7456–2575–4 (pb), £50.00, ISBN 0–7456– 2574–6 (hb).

This is no conventional history of education, although the scaffolding of the book is chronological, based on the tenure in office of governments since 1944. The post-war settlement before 1951 gives way to Conservative rule until 1964, a period of crisis and reform until 1979, the Conservative revolution to 1997 and New Labour's accommodation to a changing world of economics and politics since 1997.

This traditional division conceals a highly original treatment of school education intertwined at all points with questions of nationality, culture, political philosophy and economic imperative. No previous survey has brought out so clearly the tensions inherent in the education system at all points since 1944, emanating from political policies which have themselves been paradoxical and sometimes contradictory. It has often been conventional, instead, to stress the relative consensus in education policy among the political parties in the 1960s, and a similar confluence between Conservatism and New Labour since the 1990s.

The tripartite system which emerged after the Second World War, under the most socialist of Labour governments which we have had in the United Kingdom, saw senior Labour members generally endorse the selective grammar schools, ostensibly selecting on merit, which had provided many of the brightest of them with an opportunity for a rewarding education and career. Despite the illogic inherent in the notion of 'grammar schools for all' in a tripartite system, it took some time for the growing awareness of inequalities of both social class and ability entrenched in this selective system to influence policy. When it did so, in the swing to comprehensive schools in the 1960s and 1970s, freedom for local authorities and teachers in a partly politicized profession with its own radical agendas, combined with the assimilation problems and opportunities of an increasingly multi-racial society to produce their own reaction.

The impetus for reassertion of central control, based partly on prejudices epitomized in the Black Papers, and embodying strengthening notions of cultural restorationism, provided the opportunity for Conservative governments and powerful civil servants to counteract the liberation of the 1960s. In one sense this reached its apogee in the 1988 Education Reform Act, but the Act also embodied more graphically than ever the paradoxes and tensions underlying educational provision. Market forces were to prevail, but only in the context of an unprecedented centralization of curriculum and testing. The National Curriculum was to reinforce British national values, but in doing so had to recognize the increasing sense of nationality in Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Equally clearly delineated, and analysed particularly incisively, are the principles of New Labour education policy. Dedicated to the notion that the education system must be geared to the needs of the 'knowledge economy' in order to compete internationally in an increasingly

globalized economic structure, standards must be regularly monitored by means of a rigid testing regime exercised on a centralized curriculum, as under Conservative govern- ments. The market (specialist schools, city academies, parental choice) is somehow needed to provide a framework for that flexibility deemed necessary for the concern with social inclusion which Labour has attempted to graft on to the Conservative system. However, not only do tensions remain – they are as endemic as ever. Despite all the palliatives, social exclusion of certain class and ethnic groups from educational success is still entrenched. The middle classes, as always, manipulate the system to their increasing advantage. Cultural restorationism in a United Kingdom of four countries (the author has reservations about 'nations') has resulted in a more clearly defined national identity in Wales, Scotland and Ireland than in England. Perhaps most significant, devolution is allowing educational divergence on an unprecedented scale. This both reflects and accentuates differences in society in the home countries, and allows highly significant comparisons to be made between, say, Wales and England which undermine some central tenets of the English system. For example, the abandonment of league tables and dilution of the testing regime in Wales has not led to a decline in measurable standards of achievement relative to England.

My gloss on some of the central themes in this important book will indicate that there is food for thought on every page. We now expect that histories of British education include sections on the four UK countries. What is particularly gratifying for a Welsh reviewer is that the author, of impeccably Welsh parentage, now a professor in Keele, has integrated the recent histories of these countries in a unique cross-cultural and social analysis which is only one of the particularly stimulating features of this excellent book. It is supported by a wealth of allusion and a rich range of reference.

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Trisha Maynard and Nigel Thomas (eds) *An Introduction to Early Childhood Studies* (London: Sage Publications, 2004), 266 pp., £65.00, ISBN 0–7619–7073–8 (hb), £19.99, ISBN 0–7619–7074–6 (pb).

This is an authoritative text that provides a wealth of information, rooted in theory and research, to support students and practitioners in their work with young children. The need for a text that addresses the multi-professional nature of the work has grown with the development of a more coordinated approach to training and provision of services.

Through its well-organized structure the book offers the reader a clear overview of each section, theme and chapter. There are four key themes emphasized throughout: the social construction of childhood, the interaction of nature and nurture, working with the whole child and seeing children as subjects. These are reflected in the seventeen chapters of the book, which are organized in four parts: The Developing Child,

Perspectives on Childhood, Policy and Provision for Young Children and Developing Effective Practice. Each chapter contains introductory material, followed by more specialized issues, which are presented in clearly headed subsections. The format is easy to follow with some particularly helpful features to support further study: a concluding summary at the end of each chapter, followed by questions and exercises, an annotated reading list and recommended websites. Some chapters balance theory and practice by including case studies or practical exercises.

The first section of the book begins with an informative overview of theories of cognitive development. While connections are clearly made between significant issues and theorists' views, the use of academic terminology from the outset requires a level of understanding that cannot be expected equally from students seeking an introductory text and those who are more experienced students and practitioners. However there is a useful glossary of terms at the end. The second part reflects on images and experiences of childhood in different cultures, periods of time and social structures. This highlights the importance of considering children's development from a cross-cultural perspective, and raises contemporary issues related to globalization and international contexts. It also explains the historical developments that have influenced beliefs about childhood in the last 200 years. From a sociological viewpoint children's lives are considered in the context of the family, the world of work and the wider world in which they live.

The largest section of the book is Part 3, in which the focus is on policy and provision with respect to the education, health and welfare of young children. This includes a number of recurring themes, several of which are related to the general theme of difference and change over time and across cultures. Having seen in Part 2 how difference and change affect our perspectives of childhood, this part reflects on influences on policy development and services. Consideration is given to the shift from parental responsibility to an emphasis on listening to children's views and developing greater community involvement. The need for integration of services related to children's care, health, welfare and education is stressed. Separate chapters explore the background to care services for children, key aspects of the law in England and Wales as it relates to children, early childhood education, inclusion and Children's Rights, child protection, health and well-being. It is in this section that differences in policy in England and Wales are touched upon, although further differences have emerged since the book was written, as this is a time of rapid change in Early Childhood provision.

The influence of international and UK research is reflected throughout the discourse, different pedagogical models are explored and the concept of a universal model for early childhood education is challenged, mindful of the increasing awareness of the importance of valuing and respecting diversity. The development of inclusive practices within schools is tracked through successive legislation from 1945 until the present day. The summary of current issues in relation to special needs highlights the need for train-

ing opportunities, continued research, a higher profile for Early Years workers, equity of access to needs-led provision and clarification of the 'qualifications' framework. Child welfare and child protection are examined, taking into account Family Support services, the requirements of the Children Act (1989), and the changes to the child protection system as a result of the Laming Report (2003). Models of health care are evaluated in terms of preventative and health promotion programmes that address some of the complexities that determine child health.

The concluding chapters focus on the reflective practitioner, encouraging readers to develop their understanding of the relationship between theoretical knowledge and effective, ethical practice. In particular, the chapter on inter-agency and multi-agency working raises many very valid issues that are equally applicable throughout the early childhood field. Overall, this makes a valuable contribution as core textbook.

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Ian Roffe, *Innovation and e-Learning: e-Business for an Educational Enterprise* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2004), 334pp. £30.00, ISBN 0–7083–1757-X.

The success of an educational enterprise is subject to the same business principles as all other enterprises, and, therefore, its chances of success depend on its ability to provide a quality service at a price that meets the requirements of its market niche. Furthermore, it must provide learning content which its customers will trust and value. These are the core business principles on which every educational enterprise will rise or fall. The introduction of new and innovative technologies does not change this fact of business life; however, innovative technologies do offer new opportunities and threats for the business, and how a business responds to innovation technologies can expose crucial strengths and weaknesses.

Ian Roffe examines educational enterprises from this thoroughly pragmatic standpoint. He argues that the educational enterprise must, first, provide the right 'supply' (for an educational enterprise this is the learning content); secondly, identify and meet the demands of its target niche; and thirdly, develop a responsive technological and business infrastructure. Although he does cover pedagogical issues, they are not the thrust of this book, and those looking for guidance on learning design will be better served if they look elsewhere. Educators and business people seeking to build a sustainable enterprise, on the other hand, will find practical guidance from an experienced learning technologist.

Roffe begins the book with two chapters defining and describing the concept of the educational enterprise, and outlining the major themes to be carried through in later chapters. The rest of the book neatly divides between the paired concepts of education and enterprise. Chapter 3, 'the extension of learning' summarises the history of e-learning and raises key issues that have arisen in the development of e-learning systems,

including the concepts of co-presence, transactional distance and how e-learning and conventional learning are blended together in practical terms. This summary is then supplemented with overviews of many of the major pedagogical theories and their implications for e-learning, and with descriptions of most of the technologies (both hardware and software) that are available for use by the educational enterprise.

Arguably, however, the most valuable section of the book is contained in the last seven chapters, which explore core business principles and how they should affect the operation of the educational enterprise. Roffe covers a great deal of ground, from innovation to marketing strategy to human resource development. This breadth of material comes at a cost, however, and there is a disappointing lack of depth in the coverage. This is not necessarily a weakness, as the topics are well explained and references are provided for further study. Also, he does delve more deeply in some sections, as in those on perceived user-value and on innovation, both of which cover valuable territory.

Roffe's method throughout the book is to first examine his topic in the abstract, without consideration of its application within the educational enterprise. So, for instance, he looks first at innovation in enterprise, before then looking at how innovation can assist the educational enterprise. Likewise, in the chapter describing pedagogical theory, he first defines the abstract theories before applying them to the innovative context of e-learning. This seems eminently practical, and makes much of his argument easy to follow. By this fore-grounding of 'traditional' theory and practice, however, he misses some issues that a successful e-learning enterprise must grapple with. The Internet, web and information technology in general have had a profound effect on education and have opened possibilities that could not have been imagined without them.

There are two ways to implement innovative technologies. One is to do the same things in a new way that adds value to the process. A photocopy handed out to the class becomes a web address handed out to the class or a class discussion becomes an online chat. Same act, different medium. Roffe does a valuable job of documenting the issues and practicalities they raise for the enterprise. The second way to implement an innovation is to do something completely new. The open commons licence, open courseware, and open source software, for instance, are having a profound effect on educational enterprises. They are altering concepts of ownership and Intellectual Property Rights, concepts of importance to the educational entrepreneur as they go direct to the issue of cost and intellectual capital, yet these are entirely new concepts that have only became conceivable through the growth of digital media and the Internet's web of information.

Educational entrepreneurs would do well to begin with this volume to ensure a sound business basis to their enterprise, but they should be ready for the unexpected opportunities and threats that the new technologies bring.

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Leslie J. Francis, Mandy Robbins and Jeff Astley (eds), *Religion, Education and Adolescence* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2005), 272pp., £45.00, ISBN 0–7083–1957–2.

A symbiosis exists between conferences and researchers. This book consists of a selection of papers presented at the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values (ISREV), held in Norway in 2002. But this is not just a book for the specialist researcher. The generalist will also find much of interest. The first six contributors draw on the Religion and Values Today database, which contains the views of nearly 34,000 young people from England and Wales. The second half of the book investigates religion and religious education during adolescence in Europe and Israel.

Francis's opening chapter examines the physiological implications of prayer amongst a group of 13- to 15-year-olds. He indicates that the person who indulges in this practice tends to see a 'purpose in life', and that attributing meaning and purpose to one's life is a 'central component of psychological well-being'. One of the implications of these findings is to bolster the argument for the retention of acts of collective worship in schools; a view not shared by all. Astley reminds us how creationism versus evolution remains a live issue for many. He tells us that the espousal of creationism (and this is most likely to be by young female churchgoers) is detrimental to an interest in science and, more interestingly, those who see it as central to religion have a negative attitude to Christianity as they get older.

Lankshear's contribution provides ammunition for those on both sides of the debate on 'faith' schools. He tends to refrain from speculation, which might be in the best academic traditions but makes for less interesting reading. Given the current divisions about homosexuality in the Anglican Church, Halsall's chapter on the 'feminization of the Anglican Church' should make lively reading, but she steers away from making a direct connection between this issue and her research, and presents data with limited explanation and interpretation. I was left wanting to be told more about personality traits and predispositions. Belief in God is a strong inhibitor against smoking for it is God rather than cigarettes, which gives life meaning (Robbins). Perhaps the government should consider a new warning on packets. The chapter by Kay on religious experience and religious education gives a welcome concise survey of the place of spirituality. The connection between the spiritual, the religious and the moral remains contentious. Whilst some of his analysis of the data might be regarded as speculative, Kay makes a valuable contribution to the debate.

The second part of the book opens with one of the most absorbing contributions. Here we discover that 'religiosity' is more stable amongst German adolescents than church membership would lead us to think. Streib shows how lifestyle impacts on religion and the challenge this presents for religious education. Given the bombing outrage which occurred in London (after the publication of this book), reporters and politicians would do well to read the chapter by Sahin on the religious life and attitude towards Islam of

a group of Muslim adolescents from Birmingham. A significant number of young Muslims retain a positive image of Islam despite not praying regularly as their religion requires. They are resistant to what they see as 'white culture' being as Sahin puts it, 'in but not of the multicultural society'.

Not all research leads to remarkable findings, and neither should it. The chapter by Rich and Leslau is a case in point. After a brief guide to the education system in Israel they found that there were few spectacular changes in behaviour and beliefs of students. Ziebertz argues for an inter-religious model of learning in religious education after dismissing, not always convincingly, the mono- and multi-religious models, while Birkedal's exploration of faith in God and Christian practice among adolescents in Norway states the somewhat obvious that young people are not a homogenous group. It is the motives, aspirations and concerns of potential teachers of religious education which are considered by Everington, who shows that the inclusion of citizenship in the curriculum in England, far from being a perceived threat to RE, should be seen an ally.

Francis helpfully extracts key conclusions from the twelve contributions which show that there is still a great deal of interest and personal commitment towards religion amongst adolescents, albeit more individual and, thus, invisible than it was in the past. There should be something for everyone with an interest in young people, religion and education in this book. It will often confirm what you already suspected, sometimes surprise you, but above all will help you arrive at an informed position based on research.

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Egan, B. (1990). 'Design and technology in the primary classroom: equalizing opportunities', in E. Tutchell (ed.), *Dolls and Dungarees*, Milton Keynes, Open University, 36–45.

Farrell, C. M. (1996). 'Territorial justice and the provision of nursery education in England and Wales, 1981–1994' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Glamorgan).

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General policy / Polisi cyffredinol

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