

POLICY AND PRACTICE: A DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION REVIEW: FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL EDITION

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Antonella Acinapura, Niamh Gaynor, Bernie Grummell, Su-ming Khoo, Mags Liddy, Bernie Mallon, Gabriela Martínez Sainz, Gerard McCann and Stephen McCloskey (eds.) (2021) *Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review: Fifteenth Anniversary Special Edition*, Belfast: Centre for Global Education.

To celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the open-access journal *Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review*, eight members of the Editorial Board have each selected three (in one case four) articles to showcase the best writing on development education (DE) published in the journal between 2015 and 2020. The articles have been clustered into eight sections, covering a diverse range of topics including the general challenge of neoliberal policies, a political economy approach to DE (section one), post-colonial and global South perspectives (section two), the need for new directions (section three), policy landscapes (section four), human rights (section five), affective dimensions of environmental learning (section six), migration (section seven), and political alternatives (section eight).

The editors have compiled a compendium of articles that will serve as a highly useful source for practitioners and scholars alike. Broadly situated in a critical development studies' perspective (Peet and Hartwick, 2015), the book not only provides a comprehensive overview of all the pressing concerns in global society and DE, it also demands critical reflections on the key question of how power dynamics shape the field, and how it cannot be decoupled from broader economic analyses. Moreover, the book brings into conversation global learning and development education practices, which are often kept somewhat separate, but which must go hand-in-hand if 'global and development education' (GDE, a term suggested by Gabriela Martínez Sainz,

70) is to achieve its aspirations for socio-economic and ecological transformation.

As an international and comparative educationist with almost 20 years' experience as scholar and practitioner, I have had the great pleasure to review this impressive collection of articles that speak to each other in unique ways due to the editors' insightful and analytically rich introductions to each of the sections. Moreover, I found it heart-warming to witness through reading, the many initiatives and great efforts put into DE in many places (e.g., Khoo and Walsh, 74ff; Cirefice and Sullivan, 128ff; Boni, 224ff; Selby et al., 255ff; Bryan, 284ff –to name a few), which serve as great testimonies to the importance of action. Collections, such as this one, are quite important because they serve as reminders that we, DE practitioners and scholars, are part of a community that strives for global justice rather than isolated individuals toiling away in our respective institutions, which are often driven by other priorities and sometimes less sympathetic to the cause and urgency of DE.

The fifteenth anniversary edition of *Policy and Practice* maps the DE field from a variety of perspectives, paying attention to the successes and the challenges. Section one, led by Mags Liddy (21ff) celebrates, literally, Freirean praxis of education for social transformation, which is always oriented towards action, and links it to feminist struggles for highlighting how the personal is always already political (Eilish Dillon, 27ff). The choice of focusing on Freirean pedagogy at the beginning of the book befits the collection as it renews the journal's commitment to this critical framework. Section eight, led by Stephen McCloskey, picks up this theme again by drawing on insights from the context of Latin American. Section two, led by Gabriela Martínez Sainz (70ff). similarly sets the tone of the collection by foregrounding critical and postcolonial perspectives from the global South as a mechanism for shifting readers' perceptions and providing insights into alternative approaches to DE.

Niamh Gaynor introduces at the beginning of section three (123ff) another thematic complex that echoes throughout the book; that of the need for empathy, transnational solidarity, anti-racist awareness, and ecological sensibility, all of which necessitate a radical rethinking of how humans co-exist on a planet characterised by dwindling resources. This section seems reminiscent of Anna Tsing's (2015) exploration of the possibility of life in capitalist ruins, because Gaynor and the authors whose articles she selected take the brokenness of the world and the injustices that come with it as a starting point to recognise the entanglement of capitalism, poverty, political extremism, and ecological suicide, and to call for new directions in DE.

Gerard McCann (172ff) and the articles in section four continue the sobering analysis of the contingencies and uncertainties of development by characterising DE as a shifting terrain, which depends on a greater agility on the part of policy-makers to remain responsive to the needs of the populations most vulnerable to seismic shocks such as the global COVID-19 pandemic. This also requires, as suggested by Mags Liddy and Susan Gallwey and their reflections on the applicability of results-based approaches (RBA) in DE learning (178ff), sufficient flexibility in the tools used to measure the success of DE efforts and in the interpretation of data obtained from these tools, especially since DE learning aims at attitudinal changes that cannot be easily attributed to pedagogy alone. This section finds an echo in Dillon's reflection on how DE in Ireland has changed over time (107ff), an understanding which she finds necessary for the strategic shaping of DE.

Section five, led by Su-ming Khoo (212ff), honours the journal's long-term dedication to provide an openly-accessible hybrid space for DE practitioners and researchers to jointly reflect on their practice. Alejandra Boni's (224ff) and Khoo's (232ff) articles offer particularly useful insights into the practicalities and challenges of everyday action regarding human rights education as communal-collective and professional-individual efforts of resisting otherwise destructive policy environments. This section and its articles echo the fragility of DE initiatives enunciated already in section four with the important twist of offering hope as they highlight the value in this

work. The importance of continuing the work is equally pronounced in section seven, led by Bernie Grummell (301ff), in which articles reflect on migration as a core concern of DE throughout the world. Once again, the authors speak against simplified conceptualisations of global South and global North, and instead address the economic and historical entanglements, including misguided policies in the European context, as they affect migrants' lives. Helen Avery and Salam Said (318ff) make particularly clear the need for an international educational response to prevent radicalisation and by offering prospective futures to people fleeing from oppression and violence.

Apart from continuing the somewhat pessimistic tone concerning the social inequalities that characterises much of human existence on this planet today by adding the ecological dimension and highlighting again the importance of DE as means to mitigate the situation, Benjamin Mallon, in section six (250ff) links DE to the neighbouring field of environmental education (EE) - similar to Martínez Sainz's expansion of DE to include global learning (GDE) - forging once again a much-needed alliance. By focusing on the affective dimension of EE, section six adds another facet to the DE discussion of the book. It makes explicit the role of emotions in DE. To strive for transformational learning, DE needs to address feelings of despair, disappointment, and fear that learning about social, economic, and ecological inequalities can entail. Such feelings can easily lead to disengagement on the part of the learner. However, the collection of articles in this book makes clear that distancing from DE work is not a viable alternative. Rather, this current time of neoliberal dystopias or the 'twilight of development' (a term suggested by Khoo, 243) mandates a renewed commitment.

Overall, this is an impressive compendium, leaving only small things to be remarked upon. On a technical note, this collection of articles would have benefited from an index to facilitate reading across articles on cross-cutting issues such as gender, global citizenship, sustainability, colonialism and racism. The editors could also have teased out recurring themes more explicitly (including respective hints) or provided some guidance where to find specific topics and information on geographical regions in the introduction,

which brings me to a second aspect. On the one hand, the book and the majority of articles are written from an Irish and primarily European perspective, which is understandable given the disciplinary focus and geographical location of the journal, but which nonetheless marks a particular historical, sociopolitical, and ultimately cultural location. On the other hand, the editors are quite outspoken about their and the journal's ideological grounding in a Freirean political economy approach to education, which many readers will surely appreciate as it foregrounds issues of power and avoids the depoliticisation otherwise common in DE, but which again marks a particular historical context. Furthermore, Europe has a particular relationship with Latin America (and other regions, repeatedly discussed throughout, for example, by Eten, 91ff). The editors further include lessons from Latin America, which focuses on the potentialities of left-wing governments in forging radical responses to the onslaught of neoliberal austerity policies (section eight). From where I stand, and this might only reflect my own biases towards African studies, the editors missed an opportunity to highlight other geographical contexts; something that could perhaps have been remedied with a more explicit guide in the beginning as suggested earlier. What is more, the book's geographical specificities and onto-epistemological rootedness in largely European Union (EU)-(Western)-centric frameworks of education (despite, or perhaps precisely because of the Freirean grounding) could have been more openly acknowledged in the beginning of the book. This could have helped readers less familiar with Irish development traditions to situate the writing in a field increasingly challenged by calls for postcolonial reflections of power dynamics engrained in modes of knowledge production (cf. Andreotti, 2006; Abdi, Shultz and Pillay, 2015; Castro Varela and Heinemann, 2016; Ress et al., under review), and could have made the self-conscious reflections that resonate throughout the book even more powerful.

All in all, I congratulate the editors to this very successful book, which I enjoyed reading tremendously. I already see myself picking it up as guide to my own work, especially because of the unwitting twin-commitment to critical (abstract) analysis while maintaining the urgency for (practical) action. I therefore recommend this book to all readers, who straddle the

boundaries between DE practice and scholarship, and who frequently think beyond their own (national) horizons as they put themselves into the service of One-World justice.

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