

Book review

Book review: *Policy and Practice: A development education review. Fifteenth anniversary special edition*, edited by Antonella Acinapura, Niamh Gaynor, Bernie Grummell, Su-ming Khoo, Mags Liddy, Benjamin Mallon, Gabriela Martínez Sainz, Gerard McCann and Stephen McCloskey

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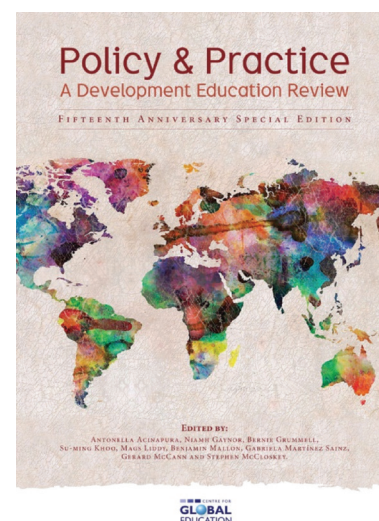
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As noted by its title, *Policy and Practice: A development education review* celebrates the work of 15 years of the Centre for Global Education, Belfast. The edition also pays tribute to the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, with 2021 marking 100 years since his birth. As noted by



McCloskey in the introduction of the edition, Freire's work has significantly influenced the wider field of global education and development education. The two terms are used interchangeably within the edition; however, for the purposes of this book review, I will be using the term 'development education', in line with the title of the edition.

Freire published extensively on critical pedagogy, but he is probably most widely known for *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1996), originally published in 1968. His thesis centres on the process of re-humanisation, the process of emancipation of both oppressed and oppressors, which according to him can only happen bottom-up through the struggle of the oppressed that have been de-humanised by the oppressors. A critical point towards re-humanisation is the awakening of the oppressed, them gaining critical consciousness of their situation or, as Freire describes it, the process of 'conscientisation'.

As part of the introduction, McCloskey outlines the journey of the Centre for Global Education in the Irish context, and the simultaneous development and evolvement of the field internationally. He demonstrates the bold influences of critical pedagogy and Paulo Freire's scholarship within development education, mirrored in recent publications (Bourn, 2020; Pashby et al., 2020). As such, according to McCloskey, this has significantly shaped the intent of development education as a pedagogical approach which seeks to challenge global inequalities and social injustices, as well as to stand against practices of neoliberalism and homogeneity.

Hence, the work of the Brazilian scholar is celebrated throughout the edition, with the first section being specifically dedicated to a more in-depth presentation of his work on 'praxis and social transformation', and its subsequent relevance to development education. The edition features a selection of articles that were published in the centre's journal over the past decade, chosen by members of the editorial board, and demonstrating how development education is particularly relevant to themes discussed by Freire, such as emancipation, empowerment and bottom-up social transformation. This is also demonstrated by the conclusion of the introductory chapter, where McCloskey emphasises the responsibility of global educators, in particular in light of contemporary challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, environmental challenges and the growing inequalities between North and South.

The edition is structured in eight sections edited by various scholars within the field and by editorial members of the centre. Each of these sections demonstrates some of the key ideological strands and common themes currently evident in the wider field of development education. They also follow a similar format: an introductory chapter written by the editor of the section presenting the debates relevant to the central theme of the section, followed by their choice of three articles previously published in the centre's journal. Section One takes a closer look at Freire's work on bottom-up social transformation and how this eventually links to themes of development education. Sections Two and Three reflect on more political aspects of development education. In the following four sections, a closer examination of key strands within the wider field are explored; these are discussions relevant to issues of policy (Section Four), human rights (Section Five), climate crisis (Section Six) and migration/refugees (Section Seven). Section Eight finally takes a geographical focus, exploring development education emerging from Latin America. Across all chapters, influences from Freire's work are strongly evident, from discussions about development education and conscientisation, to individual and/or community empowerment, as well as transformative possibilities through development education, thus underlining the impact of the scholar's work on the theory and practice of development education.

As noted in the wider literature within the field of development education, one of the main critiques focuses on the over-reliance of the field on voices of normative groups, especially of White-westernised perspectives coming from the Global North (Andreotti, 2016). However, the choice of articles presented in this edition engages to a great extent with groups, communities and individuals whose voices are usually under-represented in the scholarly work. Thus, the dynamic of under-represented groups towards their contribution to the wider field of development education and its continuous evolvement and development is demonstrated across the edition. Amplifying these scholars' work can only widen the field, making this a powerful stance in movement towards diversification and decolonisation of development education. For

instance, Dillon's article (27) in Section One explores feminist perspectives on interpreting development education. Furthermore, Gaynor's article (307) in Section Seven discusses how engaging and empowering migrant and refugee groups could eventually lead to reconceptualisation of the relationships between North and South.

The importance of considering local perspectives in interpreting development education is another key emergent theme across this edition. For example, Selby, Kagawa and Oberman's chapter (255) in Section Six presents an effective framework for responding to issues of climate change that were developed in a small islandic nation of the Caribbean. Similarly, Boni's article (224) in Section Five demonstrates how the framework of human rights was implemented within the context of Valencia, Spain through community engagement and participatory methods.

Another important theme emerging throughout the edition is the engagement of voices from the Global South, with Section Eight being exclusively dedicated to themes of development education emerging from the context of Latin America. The section demonstrates the important narratives and practices of re-imagining a world towards global social justice, within the continuous struggle against governmental normativity, as demonstrated in O'Connell's chapter (365).

Overall, the choice of articles in this edition demonstrates not only the importance and the imperative of considering wider perspectives, but also the value that each of these perspectives has in further developing our conceptualisation of the wider field of development education. This includes a range of values-based approaches, such as human rights, climate change or migration, as discussed earlier and presented in the edition. However, one needs to take into careful consideration that despite the significant effort made to include voices of the 'Other', dominant voices are still evident within this edition. For example, three articles by Stephen McCloskey were chosen and feature within the edition. Moreover, in agreement with McCloskey himself, who argues that at times development education is mainly theoretically discussed and does not aim for '*long term, systematically-oriented*' change (66), I wonder whether the voices of practitioners, for example teachers, would have further allowed us to conceptualise the field and its development, and to focus on further transformative prospects.

Overall, the edition offers a useful publication for those who want to immerse themselves in the wider field of development education, as well as for those who are already in the process of exploring further possibilities of the field. The edition engages with a wide range of voices and actors, and formal and informal forms of learning, and it demonstrates the transformative and empowering potential of development education, especially having taken into consideration the power that local contexts and under-represented groups are bringing to the field. Voices from the South are evidently noted, and the celebratory character of Brazilian Paulo Freire provides an appropriate tribute to the origins of development education.

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