
Disabling Policies? A Comparative Approach to Education Policy and Disability,
G. Fulcher, Falmer Press, 1989, 287pp
Reviewed by Dianne Snow

Disabling Policies is an ambitious enterprise which draws on the experience the author gained as the main policy analyst for the controversial 1984 Victoria Ministerial Review of Educational Services for the Disabled. Within the contours of the book Fulcher seeks to address some serious shortcomings in both the special education and policy literature by: providing a comprehensive comparison of policies on special education across several countries; examining these policies using a sophisticated theoretical framework; and ultimately, highlighting the political nature of integration. Given the range and complexity of these tasks it is not surprising that they are met with varying degrees of success.

The backbone and strength of the book is the collation and finely textured analysis of policy statements on the education of students with disabilities in Scandinavia, Australia, America and Britain. A wealth of information on legislation, recent major reports, education department policy statements and other related literature is provided, which special educators will find particularly useful. Also of interest is the analysis of this information. Fulcher dismisses standard practices like disputing the dominant medical model on disability and arguing for a relocation within an educational model, or, wielding the American Public Law 94-142 or the British Warnock Report as the measure of all things integrational. Instead she argues that 'disability' is both a socially constructed and a disputed category, and suggests five main discourses which inform its construction - namely medical, lay, charity, rights, and corporate discourses. This provides a powerful tool indeed for interrogating and comparing policy statements. We find, for example, that PL942-142 is shaped by the conflicting discourses of a medical model, the political theme of needs-charity, a submerged theme of professionalism, and an overt discourse of rights. On the other hand, Scandinavian educational policy tends to reflect more consensus and is informed by a dominant pedagogical discourse. Not only does this analysis make meaningful sense of policy documents but, as Fulcher points out, it has clear implications for the way policy implementation proceeds.

Unfortunately these strengths are weakened greatly by the way that 'policy' itself is conceived and theorised within the introduction. Within this critical first section of the book the reader is taken on an excursion through the policy literature and recent sociological theory. Here some insightful comments are certainly made - such as misleading dichotomies between theory/practice and policy formulation/policy implementation, and domination by a wieldy model of policy as something that happens from the top-down. Yet the way power is then conceived is incredibly difficult to actually pin down. According to Fulcher policy is, for example, both written and enacted, made at all levels of the educational sphere, and something which is 'inserted into the educational apparatus'. Although the reader is left with the overwhelming impression that policy is important and that it is not simply about written documents, there are few other connecting clues as to exactly what it might be. More disappointing than this conceptual messiness is that in the final analysis education policy becomes anything that has to do with educational endeavour, and, the power relations involved in policy are rendered invisible.

This problematic theorising of policy is exacerbated further in the comparative analyses. Here policy largely becomes an analysis of written legislation and recent reports. Instead of challenging and reconceptualising the policy formulation/policy implementation dichotomy (and although using the Foucauldian notion of 'discourse' which challenges duality), Fulcher ends up reinforcing it. This is indeed a shame, because the book has some important and useful comments to make about the effects of written policy as one form of contested educational practice on other educational practice.

The book has other problems as well. Firstly, although disability and its discourses are theorised very lucidly, additional discourses like 'pedagogy' crop up suddenly and inexplicably within the analysis. Secondly, assessment of policy implementation is based almost exclusively on the available published literature for each country. While we might sympathise with the pragmatic difficulties in gaining access to a vast array of other sources, much of the information on which analysis is not 'matched'. Although comparative educationists may find the thrust of the book exciting and interesting, they will undoubtedly have some reservations about the data used. Related to this is a third point. If the reader expects to find an array of detailed statistical information within the various countries they will be disappointed. Statistics are provided, but both they and the ensuing analysis focus on one or two 'states' within each country. Hence Scandinavia is represented by Denmark and Norway, America by California, Britain by England, and Australia by Victoria. Although Fulcher takes some pains to explain that these are not representative, there is still an irritating tendency for generalisations to be made about each country on the basis of one or two arguably unusual states. Finally, selectivity has also occurred in respect of the sources used - a selectivity that goes beyond pragmatics. Given the importance of recent special education reports to the book, and being familiar with the Australian literature, I was greatly surprised that Fulcher failed to even mention the most recent major report which examined integration policy and practice in every state in that country (the 1987 Report to the Commonwealth Schools Commission on Integration in Australia). This is a serious omission indeed, which casts a dubious pall over the other sources used.

Despite these problems, *Disabling Policies* nonetheless makes some innovative and provocative insights into both special education and the policy process. At the very least it elaborates and supports Fulcher's earlier argument that the policy process itself can disable 'special' students. Overall there can be no doubt that this is a fitting publication for the end of a decade in which strong sociological critiques of special education began to emerge. It provides some exciting beacons for new directions while showing that we still have some way to go.

Theory of Education, Margaret Sutherland, London, Longman: 1988 pp182
Reviewed by Michael Peters

This book is the third published in the 'Effective Teacher Series' edited by Elizabeth Perrott. It has, therefore, been written with a specific audience in mind. The chapter headings for example - The Child Centered Approach, Rights and Responsibilities of Parents, The Curriculum for Schools - presumably are meant to reflect this practical orientation.

One must wonder, however, as to the extent to which Margaret Sutherland sacrifices content to practical purpose. Her introductory chapter, 'Theories of education', will serve as an example in this respect. She begins with the observation that 'theories do make a difference' as though the notion of theory, its role and importance, must be defended against a hypothetical position which sees it as an optional extra.

There is no sign in this chapter of recent philosophy of science or its application to education: to now well-known arguments designed to demonstrate the theory-ladenness of observation; nor of arguments showing the way that theoretical supposition works implicitly in educational practice. The example Sutherland uses - Nazi education - shows no appreciation of the distinction between ideology and theory or of the role of ideology in constituting teaching practice. 'Scientific' theory for Sutherland appears to be based on an outmoded empiricist philosophy of science which indicates a lack of appreciation of social theory and of the role it plays in education. At one point, for instance, the author indicates how theories of education differ from 'scientific' theories. They differ, we are told, because there are 'limits to the kinds of experiments we can carry out with human beings'(p.3).

The second distinguishing feature, she asserts, is that in 'theory of education we make value judgements'(p.4). This sort of view does violence to the notion of theory in education. It perpetuates outdated and stereotypic views of science and downgrades the social sciences. This may be the result of a deliberate decision to sacrifice detail for the sake of a non-specialist audience. Nevertheless, in the reviewer's opinion, any book on theory in education written in the context of Thatcher's Britain without which does not mention the effects of New Right theory in guiding current educational reform almost amounts to professional negligence. There is no mention at all of Marx, of the body of Marxist and left radical critique of schooling in Britain, of the critical ethnographies of sociologists like Paul Willis, of theories on the role of the state.

The orientation is one of 'safe', non-political and ultimately domesticating subject-matter. Perhaps the constraints imposed by the series partially accounts for Sutherland's practical guides for teachers and teacher trainees, although it is the belief of this reviewer that such readership demands can be met without ignoring developments in the literature, and without simplifying theoretical issues arguably to the point of distortion. Why is it that in order to produce a text to help teachers 'become more effective' some authors believe they must water down theory and exclude more difficult, politically sensitive material?

Other chapters are open to similar criticisms. 'The child-centred approach' looks at its beginnings, canvasses the ubiquitous 'stages of development', drawing on over-simplified discussions of Rousseau and Piaget. It does also question the category of 'the natural' and then embarks upon a summary of child centred teaching methods and materials. The chapter then looks at curriculum change in religious and sex education, and examines the issue of whether education should be compulsory, specifically noting Illich's deschooling argument. Finally, the teacher's role in child-centred education is considered and the chapter ends with the author addressing herself to the question of whether child-centred education 'works'(p.32ff).

In this chapter, which to be fair is written concisely and with teacher interests in mind, Sutherland concludes by indicating that there is not enough empirical evidence to show whether 'child centered theory' works. One might question, however, whether such theory is open to test by empirical evidence. What does it mean to say that empirical evidence can determine the truth or otherwise of this theory? Is it a unitary body of theory? To what extent does it rest on metaphysical foundations not open to empirical verification? These questions are not addressed, nor are recent psychological studies (eg. *Changing the Subject* by Valerie Walkerdine and colleagues), inspired by poststructuralism, which have begun the task of critique of an individualising psychology underlying child-centred conceptions.

Other chapters are similarly deficient, despite the range of writers and ideas introduced, and the incorporation of a number of interesting overseas examples. The book does not serve its stated purpose and its contents are not defensible on any grounds given its potential readership.

Language Planning and Education in Australasia and the South Pacific, Richard Baldauf, Jr. & Allan Luke (eds), Clevedon, Multilingual Matters: 1990 pp x, 364.
Reviewed by Roger Peddie

Language policy is a major issue in the areas named in the title of this volume. Australia has a national policy in place, and most Australian states have their own policies. New Zealand's education ministry is working on a national policy over the next twelve months, and in many other large and small countries in the region, language planning and policies are viewed as critically important. This welcome anthology includes papers from the 'Language and Identity' subsection of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science Conference of 1987, together with four invited papers (by Kaplan, Lo Bianco, Thomas and Gonzales). The

volume is a significant contribution to the study of language policy in the region, although there are one or two curious gaps.

As with so many conference selections, the editors clearly faced the problem of how to augment the presented papers with other contributions to produce a balanced view of the issues addressed. The selection of invited papers does help, but a New Zealand reviewer can only express amazement that in a volume using the title 'Australasia' there is no paper at all on language in New Zealand. Perhaps less surprising, but still worth noting, is that Polynesia is represented by just one paper (Baldauf on the two Samoas), while the section on 'Southeast Asia' contains nothing on Indonesia. Like New Zealand, Micronesia is not represented at all. While in one sense this may seem a minor quibble, in another sense scholarly works arguably ought to have titles which appropriately reflect their contents.

A different kind of gap is the absence of a paper relating to migrant languages in Australia. While the three papers on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are both informative and most welcome, perhaps a paper by Clyne or Ingram (for example), on other language planning issues would have provided the balance noted earlier as desirable.

The book is divided into four main sections: a general section dealing with planning issues, and sections on Australia, Melanesia and Polynesia, and Southeast Asia. A brief concluding paper rounds off the volume.

The first section 'An Overview of Language Planning Issues and Change', contains three papers. Kaplan gives, as might be expected, a polished introduction to language planning. He correctly signals the dangers in planning being given by default to the education sector, but could perhaps have stressed more strongly the inevitable impact of political and ideological factors on the planning process. These factors are, however, addressed directly in the challenging paper by Luke et al., although their conclusion - which is basically that politically aware planners should probably not attempt to plan - leaves unaddressed the argument that those same factors would work indirectly to ensure that existing power structures be maintained. Baldauf's paper (oddly placed before that of Luke et al.), does point out that planning occurs, and gives an interesting analysis of the relationship of language planning to education. While establishing well the importance of education in language planning, he is not so clear on the range of effects such a link in the planning process might have. Overall, this is a well-written and helpful section, though much of Lo Bianco's paper (Section II), seems to belong here too.

The three regional sections offer much that is of interest. Lo Bianco's paper, as noted already, contains much of general theoretical import, as well as a useful first-hand summary of the development of Australia's National Languages Policy. Most of the other papers also raise theoretical issues, but much more briefly. Partly for this reason, and partly because collections of papers can offer fragmented views, it would have been helpful to have had introductory or overview chapters to draw out some of the common themes and issues. Given the fact that many of these themes and issues are cross-regional, there are grounds for thinking that a thematic organization may have in some ways been better than the division by regions.

Several papers, for example, argue for the legitimate status of creoles or pidgins as an appropriate language of instruction. Kale reviews the status of Torres Strait Creole; Keesing and Jourdan mount a similar argument for Solomon's Pijin; Kale, Smith and Swan & Lewis examine the role of Tok Pisin; while Thomas argues for Bislama. On the other hand, several papers deal with issues relating to bilingual education (e.g. Black, Baldauf, Ozog, Jones and Gonzales). As it stands, the reader becomes very aware of such issues, but the final very brief paper by Luke and Baldauf does not explore sufficiently the rich comparative material which could have easily been extracted.

Similarly, the volume cries out for a paper which develops or at least considers a theoretical model for the role of English in the various settings examined. English in education, in the media and as a language of power or prestige - as well as its international status - appear as sub-themes in

paper after paper, yet nowhere are these ideas pulled together in a way which could have challenged and interested many readers.

Two papers deal specifically with the evaluation of language programmes. While perhaps not strictly falling under the heading of 'planning', it is good to see this issue addressed directly. Both Egginton & Baldauf and Gonzales reach the arguably correct conclusion that multi-dimensional models of evaluation are necessary in the language planning area. There seems, however, to be little importance attached to a lot of recent development in programme evaluation which does not begin with the interests of major (= planners and/or government) stakeholders. Kale's 'Agenda for a bilingual education program' (p.120f), actually provides an interesting model which would make sense to an evaluator working from an illuminative or learning community perspective.

These criticisms should not be seen as detracting from the value of the individual contributions to the volume as published. The papers provide a series of detailed, well-documented, and often fascinating case studies of language issues and language planning in the region (it still seems strange to have three papers on Tok Pisin and none on te reo Maori!). Not mentioned so far are three annotated bibliographies of recent work published on language issues for the three regional areas covered by the book. These are an extremely useful part of a work which, despite its flaws, is a most worthwhile addition to international literature on language planning and language policy.

Social Education: Principles and Practice. Chris Brown, Clive Harber and Janet Strivens (eds.), The Falmer Press, 1986.

Reviewed by: Tony McNaughton

This book must now in the light of the recent changes on the education scene in Great Britain be seen as an historical document which records a range of curriculum developments that occurred in the British education system over the last thirty years in the broad field of social education. The series editor (P.H. Taylor) was able to say in 1986 that there was still evidence in many British schools of a genuine concern to provide a social education for all their pupils despite the current trend towards a concentration on vocational education. This was the case in 1986 when the education system was for the most part managed by the Local Education Authorities which provided the organisational frameworks and the resources which allowed teachers to influence the curriculum for all the educational institutions under LEA control. The only limits to this control by teachers were those set by the examination and assessment system. Many of the developments in the social education curriculum had occurred as a part of the 60's curriculum reform movement which has now been upstaged by the latest major educational reform of the Conservative government, the 1988 Education Reform Act. The full range of curriculum effects of the ERA are still to be determined but it is certain that the Primary School curriculum will be dominated by core subjects (Maths, English, Science, Technology) and Secondary Schools will be left with only 10% of their time for any additional (to core and foundation) subjects including those which come under the heading of social education.

The future of social education subjects and topics within subjects in New Zealand is also uncertain but in the meantime this book should be of interest to New Zealand teachers for two reasons. The nine curriculum approaches described in Part II (Development Education, Political Education and Peace Education, Media Studies, Health Education, Moral Education, Education for Family Life, Pre-Vocational Education, and Urban Studies and Community Education) have appeared in some form of another in secondary and a few primary programmes as topics and themes in Social Studies, Liberal Studies, Peace Education, Work Experience, Geography, English, Health Education and Home Economics programmes. The systematic way in which most of the British social education programmes have been developed and the, in some cases, substantial research funds that were, especially in the 60's, available for such curriculum developments, have provided a

series of useful curriculum models for us to compare with our own. Some of the social education curricula in Britain acquired status and a significant place in some secondary timetables by being examined for the old G.C.E. and C.S.E. qualifications. Two of them which have no counterpart in New Zealand, namely Political Education and Moral Education, were developed coincidentally with long-term research projects. All of them owe, because of their emphasis on controversial issues and the conflict of values and attitudes entailed in discussions on these issues, a considerable debt to the experimental work of Lawrence Stenhouse in the handling of controversy in classrooms.

The other reason for New Zealand teachers being likely to be interested in this book is in the detailed consideration given in Part I to principles of organisation, method and assessment that have been analysed from the practical experience of various social education curricula from the early 60's. Many of these principles will be familiar to those New Zealand teachers who remember the 1987 Curriculum Review. If this review and its recommendations are implemented in the 90's then this statement of the state of social education in Britain in 1986 should be of some practical value. If on the other hand we head in the direction of Britain's National Curriculum as incorporated in the Education Reform Act then books like this are likely to have little relevance except to record thirty years of a series of experiments in social education.