

Histories of Education: Local/Global Discourses *An Introduction*

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The theme for ACCESS Volume 29, Number 2 is Histories of Education: Local/Global Discourses. This theme and the possibilities presented in the topics that contributors were invited to consider in the call for papers, encapsulate the significant but contested ideological, theoretical and methodological developments that have shaped the history and historiography of education over the past fifty years. As different approaches to scholarly endeavour in the field have struggled for space and raised questions about old certainties, new directions and dimensions of study have been generated to provide a more complex and comprehensive understanding of systems, institutions, policy and practice, their ideological underpinnings, and responses to them. These are reflected in the contributions to this issue.

There has also been much debate about the role of historical studies in education. That there is a role is not at issue. Educational studies have too often been presented in an historical void or against narrowly conceived historical snapshots. Some writers are uncritically negative about past initiatives while others continue to assume a Whiggish stance, which casts current arrangements as both inevitable historical developments and as the pinnacle of progress. So, should the main concern for the historian of education be to draw on contemporary understandings of limitations in the field to construct a more complete and nuanced record of the educational past? Or should the focus be to draw on lessons from history so that they may be applied in seeking solutions to contemporary problems? If there are lessons to be learned from the past, do they necessarily translate to answers for the problems of today? Perhaps what we can best hope for is to provide well-informed and critically argued foundational understandings from which to interrogate current reforms and debates and to negotiate possible ways forward. The articles presented in this issue of ACCESS reflect various responses to this debate.

The first three contributions examine issues of curriculum and its transmission in specific national and historical contexts. Joseph Watras, Professor at the University of Dayton in Ohio, takes as the point of departure for his historical inquiry into educational reform in late nineteenth and early twentieth century America, Philippe Ariès's provocative engagement with the 'discovery of childhood'. Rejecting the possibility that the 'discovery of childhood' led to the development of mass schooling in the USA, Watras considers instead its usefulness for making sense of the philosophical debates about pedagogy and curriculum, and the relative influence of the major reform movements that shaped National Educational Association policy documents and curriculum practice at this time. In a comprehensive examination of competing schools of thought, the author argues that the various philosophers and reformers were in conflict over how best to assist the education of the developing child, because they had different views of the nature of childhood and how children develop.

Kay Morris Matthews, Research Professor at the Eastern Institute of Technology, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand, brings the focus on curriculum innovation to colonial New Zealand with the story of Inspector Henry Hill's mission to develop a geography and natural science curriculum for schools. An avid scientist with a fascination for the natural environment of the educational district within which he worked, Hill had no doubt that school science should be grounded in

local scientific knowledge and examples. This is not a traditional celebratory story, though, of a young orphan lad gaining academic and professional distinction and knowledge of the colonial landscape to bring great benefits to teachers and pupils in his district. Rather, through the rich and varied sources on which she draws, Morris Matthews tells of an intrepid but culturally aware and respectful explorer, and of personal drive and struggle to implement a curriculum that was organic to the colonial experience.

Taking as a focus the link between national history and global politics, Filiz Meşeci Giorgetti, Assistant Professor at Istanbul University in Turkey, considers challenges experienced by Turkey in meeting the political, social and cultural expectations for full membership within the European Union. Adopting the stance that there is much to be learned from the past in seeking to address current problems, Meşeci Giorgetti demonstrates the power of educational texts in supporting political agendas. Through an analysis of a key civics text that was introduced into the country's Nation schools in the early Republican era, the author examines the narrowly conceived notions of nationhood and citizenship that were embedded in the text. The principles expressed through this text persist in current Civics and Human Rights texts, Meşeci Giorgetti suggests, rendering problematic the development of the supranational consciousness and inclusive ethos considered a requirement for the desired shift in global relationships.

Also interested in education for nationhood in a changing political context, Maxine Stephenson from the University of Auckland in New Zealand traces the role of teacher education in colonial New Zealand. Positing links between the development of national education and a politically centralising nation, the author examines the macro level dynamics through which provincial teacher education initiatives became part of the central state apparatus. The author is concerned also with the impact of the training experience and considers some of the rigidly defined micro practices which shaped the lives of the teacher trainees. Supported theoretically through the work of Michel Foucault, the author examines the processes through which provincially-orientated individuals were (re)constituted as citizens of the nation and prepared for their role, as agents of the state, in supporting the development of a national consciousness and in consolidating social cohesion through regulating the educational activities of children.

The view that historical analysis of learners and learning is an underdeveloped area of investigation is developed in the scoping of a new agenda for the history of education presented in the contribution from Gary McCulloch, Brian Simon Professor of the History of Education at the Institute of Education, University of London. McCulloch first establishes a need for greater conceptual clarity in the use of the term 'learning' as a social process, then argues for an approach to the history of education that places the learner central to analysis. Pointing to its relevance, given the current emphasis in global and national policy discourse on learners and learning, and drawing on recent research that demonstrates theoretical and methodological developments in the historiography of education, the author examines the potential for such a scholarly direction. Such sources as literature, biography, autobiography and family histories are introduced as offering important insights into the cultural and social nature of learning processes and experiences in different contexts.

In the final article, Susie Jacka, from Unitec New Zealand, directs attention to the experience of schooling and returns to questions about the nature of childhood in her examination of the range of meanings that were attached to children's upbringing and to the child-out-of-school in nineteenth century New Zealand. Arguing that the issue of truancy is one of several means of ordering reality into 'truths' amenable to liberal government, Jacka identifies some of these 'truths' as the belief that social order and national prosperity are reliant on children's attendance at school, that the state has the right and the duty to protect children against poor parenting, and that the child is an object that can be categorised and measured. These meanings positioned the child-out-of-school as one needing discipline and regulation.

Throughout history, the author argues, such meanings have been institutionalised in educational arrangements, and continue to be reflected in contemporary discourses of parent failure, school failure, and individual and social rights.

All of the articles featured in this issue of ACCESS demonstrate the importance of wider political, demographic, social and/or cultural contexts in shaping education policy, practice and experience at various points in time. They all relate to contexts that have consequential links to an imperial past and/or a global present and future. The final contribution to this issue, a book review by Dr Joce Jesson from the University of Auckland, of James Belich's *Replenishing the Earth*, reminds us of the importance of taking account of these wider histories. As Jesson notes, Belich's analysis offers a significant dimension to understanding the dominance of the Anglo-World. For historians of education interested in re-examining issues for education emanating from imperial relationships, especially given theoretical developments in the post-colonial context, this will be compelling reading.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Executive Editor, Professor Elizabeth Grierson, for the opportunity to have a Special Issue of ACCESS dedicated to historical issues in education. This is a welcome opportunity to bring together the work of scholars in the field from various parts of the world. As ACCESS was established from what was then the Department of Education at the University of Auckland, it is especially gratifying that Professor Gary McCulloch, an editor from 20 years ago, is amongst the contributors for 2010. Special thanks are due to all of the writers who have contributed to this themed issue in such thoughtful and thought-provoking ways, and to the national and international reviewers for their scholarly and valuable insights. It has been a pleasure to work with you all. Grateful thanks also to all readers, subscribers and contributors to ACCESS for your on-going support of the advancement of knowledge in areas of critical concern.

Finally, I would like to thank Gail Pope, Curator of Archives at the Hawke's Bay Museum and Art Gallery, for arranging access to the photograph of the Petane School, 1904, for the cover of this issue. I acknowledge also the permission granted for its use from the Collection of Hawke's Bay Museums Trust, Hawke's Bay Museum, Napier, New Zealand (Reference No: 5207). Situated in the Hawke's Bay Education Board district, Petane School, as pictured here, reflects some of the features of early rural schooling noted by Professor Kay Morris Matthews in her discussion of Hawke's Bay School Inspector, Henry Hill.

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