“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but rather the one most adaptable to change.” With these words, Leon C. Megginson was describing Darwin’s theory of natural selection, the survival of the fittest. Chartered teachers are strong, and intelligent of course – their status proves this. Showing themselves to be adaptable to change is something most will have been practising over many years with each new education initiative and the creative thinking of successive politicians - never more so than now. Our resilience has made us what we are; we all possess the qualities needed not only to survive the changing climate in which we find ourselves, but to dare to thrive in it.

Contents
Royal College of Teaching: a new dawn south of the border? – Antony Luby.............................2
Reflections of a Recognised Professional – Linda Murray..............................................................4
What exactly is Pedagoo? – Fearghal Kelly..................................................................................4
Comenius Inservice Visit to Germany – Cathy Francis.................................................................6
Mentoring for Success - Sheila Waddell.........................................................................................7
Assessment at Transition – Dorothy Coe......................................................................................10
Book review - Antony Luby...........................................................................................................11
Using Case Study in Education Research – Lorna Hamilton, Connie Corbett-Whittier.........13
Royal College of Teaching:
a new dawn south of the border? – Antony Luby, Chartered Teacher

‘Do you hear the people sing?
Singing a song of angry men?
It is the music of a people
Who will not be slaves again!’

So sings Enjolras in the wonder that is Les Misérables. And yet, it has a sad resonance with the plight of our colleagues south of the border. Just over a decade ago I completed a year’s teaching in a secondary modern in England; and it was a tough shift. Incredibly, a version of the 11+ was still in place and the more able pupils were ‘creamed off’ to the local grammar school. At the beginning of their secondary schooling these pupils in the secondary modern were being branded as “failures.” They knew it. They resented it. And, sorry to say, many of them lived up to this label. Indiscipline was rife and the school was struggling to come out of “Special Measures.” Thankfully, it eventually succeeded.

One of my positive memories, though, is that of admiration for fellow teachers giving of their best in trying circumstances. And since my return home I’ve always had an interest in events down south. My interest is now transforming to mounting concern. The latest edition of The Times Educational Supplement comments about the extreme grievances noted in a survey of Teach First participants. As it points out, these teachers are “…exceptional graduates from top universities who have given up the chance of lucrative private sector jobs to teach in schools serving the country’s most disadvantaged communities.’ And their complaints are damning. There appears to be a growing culture of “cheating, bullying, intimidation and secret performance management systems.” But what can we do?

I would suggest that like Enjolras we should be angry: I am. I must admit that my first instinct is that I’m glad I no longer teach in England; and then I feel a sense of shame; and then anger that fellow teachers can be treated in such a fashion. And like ‘angry men’ we should heed the words of Combeferre:

‘Will you join in our crusade?
Who will be strong and stand with me?
Beyond the barricade
Is there a world you long to see?’

The ‘crusade’ down south is a movement to establish a Royal College of Teaching. This is partly in response to the abolition of the General Teaching Council England less than a year ago. But mainly, it is borne from a desire to wrest the profession of teaching from excessive governmental interference. And, tacitly, the UK Government appeared to have recognised it had overstepped the mark. As Charlotte Leslie MP commented on the publication of an Education Select Committee report: ‘The absence of a professional body like a Royal College… has left a vacuum that politics has filled’ (Telegraph 01 May 2012). In recent months there have been meetings at The Prince’s Teaching Institute and The College of Teachers in which like-minded educators have commenced plans to reclaim this “vacuum” through establishing a Royal College of Teaching. The prime focus of such a Royal College would be teacher professional development; and it would have a UK-wide remit. And this remit is not a threat but an opportunity for Scotland. We have much to contribute as we are
supported by our own General Teaching Council that, in its advice notes on PR&D, views ‘...active professionalism as an aspiration for all teachers’. Indeed, GTC Scotland wishes to see a ‘...cultural shift that will encourage and empower teachers to take responsibility for their own professional learning’. So let’s get active.

At present, there are around 1 600 Chartered Teachers in Scotland and Wales. Additionally, there are an incredible 43 000 teachers who have achieved – or are en route to - Chartered (London) Teacher status. Adding to this mix, more than 4 000 Advanced Skills Teachers spread throughout England; and subject associations for Science and Mathematics – then we are speaking of almost 50 000 teachers. A high percentage of these teachers, who have invested heavily in their professional development, could be attracted to joining a Royal College of Teaching. And a Royal College representing such numbers is a force that no Government can ignore. But the main focus of a Royal College is not to combat with Government – necessary though this may be. Rather it is to offer a vision and a means for teachers’ professional development. This vision of active professionalism, mooted by the GTCS, is explained succinctly by Moore (2012) in Teaching and Learning: Pedagogy, Curriculum and Culture as teachers ‘...perceiving themselves as researchers and theorists as well as practitioners. 'Under the auspices of a Royal College of Teaching the membership grades of Associate, Fellow, Senior Fellow and Principal Fellow would be determined by achievements in practice (teaching and curriculum development); research (scholarship and research); and theory (publications). For example, a Principal Fellow could be required to demonstrate with regard to practice a minimum of 15 years teaching service + leading role in successful implementation of curricular initiatives at regional/national level or development of widely used curricular resources. The research requirement could be attainment of higher degree with strong research component e.g. MPhil, EdD, PhD. And theory could be demonstrated through publications in recent academic or professional journals.

These are challenging but necessary requirements if a Royal College of Teaching is to attain the status necessary to become a main player in representing the views of the teaching profession with regard to teacher professional development. And this would just be the first step. The dire circumstances recorded by Teach First participants suggest that it would have much work in the future. But for this generation of teachers – and those to follow – we need a Royal College of Teaching. And we need it now.

Antony Luby, RCRE Service, Aberdeen City Council

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Leslie, C., 2012. Teachers should be given a Royal College education. The Telegraph, 01 May, 2012.

Reflections of a Recognised Professional – Linda Murray

On Tuesday 29th January 2013, I received my certificate for Professional Recognition in Creativity at a ceremony held in the Scottish Parliament.

This is my second PR award and I have been struck by the level of interest it has generated in my colleagues. They are beginning to see that these awards are not elitist but a celebration of all that we do: each of us has a passion for our profession and PR offers us the opportunity to celebrate this through action and reflection.

My first application (Outdoor Learning) would never have been submitted had I not been mentored by my friend and colleague Dorothy Coe (CT). She helped me to see past the jargon and duplication within the paperwork and through many in-depth discussions of the learning that took place (mine and that of the children) I was able to find my way through. I am delighted to say that the application process this time around was more straightforward as the form has been refined and the duplication removed.

Professional Recognition is not so much about the rather lovely certificate in the rather lovely GTCS blue folder, but about the process required to get there. We have many discussions with colleagues about our work but here we are offered the opportunity to think deeply about how we go about this. It certainly helped me to focus on what I do and why; I spent purposeful time in researching my passion and reflecting on how this impacted on my learners, colleagues and education in a wider sense. I would encourage anyone who feels this to consider applying for Professional Recognition: the results are so rewarding. Work with a colleague or find yourself a mentor: don't be afraid to reach out and ask for help – I did!

What exactly is Pedagoo? – Fearghal Kelly, Chartered Teacher

"Learning is a social experience, so professional growth is usually fostered through exchange, critique, exploration and formulation of new ideas. Language interaction in supportive and challenging collaborative contexts is often indispensable. With the help of sympathetic others, the open-minded teacher-learner can scaffold his or her way to new states of knowing, feeling and acting in the interests of pupils." Dadds (1997)

No matter how hard we try to explain it, people still often ask us "what exactly is Pedagoo?" I suppose on one level it is still evolving and those of us who created and run the community are still working this out for ourselves.

At its simplest, Pedagoo is a collaborative blog. A place where teachers can share and discuss practice in a bit of depth without the hassle of creating and maintaining their own blog. Over time, though Pedagoo has developed into so much more than this. Our presence on twitter has grown at an exponential rate, largely thanks to our weekly positive hashtag #PedagooFriday. If you're not familiar with twitter, teachers from all over the
country (and indeed the world) end the week with their highlight from their classrooms and add the phrase '#PedagooFriday' to the message allowing anyone who's interested to see it and join in. We've also begun to meet up and learn from each other in the real world at our collaborative events in Glasgow, Aberdeen, Newcastle, Fife, London and who knows where next!

For me, Pedagoo has taken the emergent networks of teachers which were forming through blogging and twitter and added a layer of community to the interactions. It's provided a focal point for teachers who are keen to develop and share their practice to come together and learn from each other - which is why I love the quote from Marion Dadds above as a way of explaining what we're trying to achieve. Also, as it exists without any real funding [web hosting is provided as a favour and the site is run by volunteer practicing techers], it helps demonstrate the potential we have as a profession to collectively support each other.

A question we're often asked is "do you need to be on twitter to join in?" and the answer is no! All you need to do is create an account on the website and you're ready to share. It's free, it's easy, and most importantly it's helpful. Check it out for yourself!

Access the website at www.pedagoo.org and join here www.pedagoo.org/join
If you're on twitter follow us @pedagoo or 'like' us on facebook www.facebook.com/pedagoo

Fearghal Kelly | @fkelly


Ed:
A stunning example of the power of Pedagoo to inspire original, creative and engaging lessons can be found at http://www.pedagoo.org/2013/01/is-this-a-cheap-plastic-shuttlecock-i-see-before-me/ English teacher, James Theobald takes an idea from the #PedagooFriday tweet below and turns it into a brilliant series of lessons described by Neil Winton as "quite simply one of the most inspiring ideas I've encountered for teaching plays."

Yr12s prepare for Tabletop Shakespeare: using everyday objects to explore 'Twelfth Night' #PedagooFriday http://t.co/4CTeTC
December 14, 2012 7:40 pm via Twitter for iPad  Retweet Favorite

@micahraph
Mr Raphael
Cathy Francis, a Chartered Teacher from St Thomas RC Primary, recently spent a week working in a German primary school in the small town of Plaue in the middle of Germany. The visit was funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme* and Comenius is one of the most popular international education programmes for UK schools, colleges and local authorities. Although some schools in Moray have partner schools across Europe this opportunity is specifically for teachers to pursue international professional study either through attending a conference or course or in this case job shadowing a colleague overseas. The contact came about through Cathy meeting and working closely with the newly appointed Plaue Head Teacher, Frau Listing, during St Thomas PS recent two year Comenius School Partnership with her previous school.

“I went out in the first week of December with a remit of discovering how German teachers deliver Ecoschool initiatives and especially how they make use of their outdoor spaces. Another aim was to share teaching and learning techniques with peers. I hope to use some of the ideas I saw, back here in Keith, with the children and staff from St Thomas.

The Staatliche Grundschule Plaue is a similar size to St Thomas and the whole staff, even the janitor, although new to hosting an international visitor couldn’t have been friendlier. I spent time observing and working with children from all ages groups in all classrooms. I visited the theatre with the children and played with them in the snow in their brilliant playground. I helped the school prepare for their biannual Christmas Market and greatly enjoyed meeting the parents whilst assisting the children sell their wares at it. I noticed that all the teachers have a great aptitude for art and craft activities and all have a real awareness of and value their local environment both indoors and out. This enthusiasm obviously rubs off on the children.

The school’s EcoSchools work is led a by a teacher co-ordinator. She works closely with the pupils’ Ecocouncil. There are parents co-opted to assist where necessary, just like St Thomas! The group is very successful and holds at least eight green flags, one awarded each year. I made a visit with the Eco co-ordinator to a neighbouring school which was recommended as a school of good practice. It was an amazing place although almost totally covered in snow. The school at Steinheid had developed a beautiful nature garden which is open to tourists in the summer. There was a parent built outhouse which hosts a water pump for children to work by hand to circulate collected rainwater from school buildings to irrigate their plants. In one corner of the playground was a sensory walkway with a combination of sand, stones and bark for the children to walk around on.

On the last two days of the visit we held video conferences back to Scotland with links to Portessie Primary School and St Thomas. In reaction to seeing St Thomas primary 6 and 7 pupils clustered around the webcamra back in St Thomas, one of the German pupils was heard to comment that he thought there were an awful lot of Scottish people in Scotland!!
My entire visit was a great success and I cannot recommend this type of activity enough. I learned a great deal from spending time in other teachers’ classrooms and working with enthusiastic and inquisitive children. I hope the staff and children appreciated the insight I was able to give them into Scottish Education. It was a privilege to go and I’d like to thank everyone who made my visit possible. I have already used some of the ideas I saw overseas in my own teaching and look forward to developing more. I hope to attract funding for a Comenius School Multilateral Partnership project to commence next academic year for us all to enjoy...It will be with us before we know it! “

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For more information please visit [www.britishcouncil.org/comenius](http://www.britishcouncil.org/comenius)

Excerpts from Cathy’s fascinating reflective diary will be published in the next ACTS newsletter.

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**Mentoring for Success - Sheila Waddell, Chartered Teacher**

My first experiences of mentoring were in a city comprehensive in the West End Glasgow where the programme was designed to address underachievement by S5 pupils. The head teacher was keen to improve the exam results of a significant minority who were pulling the school down the league tables. Mentoring, it seemed, was the answer.

However theory and practice often differ, and while many staff were keen to volunteer their time, a significant number of pupils in need of mentoring were not, while pupils who were already on target to succeed were often the ones who came forward. In the end the former group of pupils were “strongly encouraged” to “volunteer “, and while many did, others refused point blank. The lesson from this was that in order for mentoring to succeed, participants needed to be motivated to take part.

The mentoring generally took place before the start of the school day, at lunch-time or after school, and teachers taking part had a pack with sheets for target setting. Teacher and pupil agreed a number of targets for the following week and then the pupil signed at the bottom after these had been agreed.

Generally the targets were met, but the mentoring developed well beyond this, with pupils being mentored coming to see their mentor as a useful source of advice and help. Over the course of five or six years I became involved in tutoring pupils in English after they had failed their prelims, filling out driving licence applications, helping pupils complete CVs and college applications, supplying references for part-time jobs and helping them to liaise with the careers officer. One pupil I mentored even ended up applying for Cambridge University, and although she did not gain entry, she ended up going to Edinburgh University.
Sadly this scheme came to a halt as teachers, burdened by ever-increasing workloads, withdrew from the scheme. However it was briefly resuscitated by a Pastoral Care teacher for S4 pupils who were judged to be underachieving. Once again I took part and the boy I mentored went from scoring a 4 in his Standard Grade English prelim (his main area of difficulty) to obtaining a Credit pass. Other teachers taking part helped their pupils to obtain similar results.

Unfortunately increased class sizes in S1 and S2, plus the demands imposed by the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence meant that many teachers now felt they didn’t have the time or energy to volunteer to be mentors and so the scheme came to an end.

This session an opportunity came up for me to be involved in another mentoring project and so currently I’m involved in the Intergenerational Mentoring Project at Springburn Academy. This was set up two years ago with a different objective: to provide pupils from deprived areas to enter higher education, the professions or highly skilled employment.

The percentage of young people from Glasgow’s poorest areas who succeed in entering higher education or highly skilled employment is very low, and research within Strathclyde University indicated that these young people have narrow social networks, with little access to those with experience of higher of higher education, the professions or highly skilled employment.

More recent research also shows that volunteer mentoring, particularly with supportive adults, can have a positive impact on young people and their educational development. In response to this, the University worked in partnership with Springburn Academy to develop and deliver one-to-one adult mentoring to pupils. The programme, which has now been running for two years, is focused on delivering one-to-one adult mentoring to pupils keen to enter higher education, the professions, or highly skilled employment and offers them personal, social and academic support.

Mentoring usually takes place at lunch-time or after school and mentors come from a wide range of backgrounds, with a particular demand for mentors with a background in education, law, science, engineering and medicine. My own involvement came about because I was a journalist in a previous incarnation and for the first time a pupil had said he wanted a career in journalism.

After an introductory meeting at the school with a Depute Head teacher and briefing from Strathclyde University staff last September, we were introduced to the pupils we would be mentoring. Most of the mentors had been involved the previous year, and some were continuing to work with the same pupil for another year. However my pupil had only just entered S5. But I realised this experience of mentoring would be significantly different from my previous ones, because in this instance the school had identified the twenty-three pupils with the best chance of success – these were not under-achievers.

My pupil, whom I will call Pupil X, was one of the best in the school and was a successful footballer with a keen desire to be a sports journalist. He had already won a prize in the “Young Sports Journalist of the Year” competition, and had undertaken a successful work experience placement at a weekly newspaper. Unlike pupils I’d mentored in the previous set-up, timekeeping, attendance, motivation and behaviour simply were not issues. I was also worried about the fact that he wanted to be a sports journalist, as that had not been my specialist field, would I be able to provide the specialist help required?

However when it came to finding out information about university courses, Pupil X did need assistance. I helped him to find out information about courses at the University of the West of Scotland and Caledonian University.
and we looked at entrance requirements, which included a portfolio of work. I also looked at examples of his English essays and asked him how he coped with the interpretation section of Higher English. The latter was, he admitted, “very difficult” and of course he needed at least a B (and preferably an A) pass to get into most courses.

Since then I’ve been going over past papers and looking at a lot of language work with Pupil X. Over the holidays I asked him to write a literature essay on “Macbeth”, because he had only just scraped a pass in a short prelim. When I looked over his work, it was clear that he was making the classic mistake of retelling the story of the play, instead of answering the question asked. I’ve also helped him prepare interview questions for an article for the pupil publication “Shout It!” and gone over basic advice on carrying out interviews. We’ve also discussed possible short placements and work shadowing on sports desks in Glasgow offices of newspapers.

The previous year’s mentoring resulted in a significant improvement in exam results at Springburn Academy, and hopefully this year’s programme will do the same. There has also been a significant increase in the number of pupils entering higher education – up from 5 to 30 in the last four years. Strathclyde University also carried out a survey to find out what pupils wanted from mentors and the wish list included things like: help with difficult subjects, tutoring, help with personal statements, careers advice – very much the kind of things mentors were doing.

Apart from that, the University ran a financial seminar for pupils and has passed on information on organisations like the Brightside Trust and information on programmes like Aspiring Professionals (which works to help pupils from poorer backgrounds to gain entrance to university) to mentors. Because of the success of the scheme at Springburn, Glasgow City Council is providing some financial support for the scheme, which will be rolled out to two more schools next year, with plans to cover six schools in deprived areas in the future.

The big advantage of mentoring is that pupils obtain one-to-one support and advice, something that is very difficult for them to gain access to otherwise. Once good rapport has been established between a mentor and a pupil, the pupil will often admit to areas of difficulty and ask for help or support in a way that he or she generally is not confident enough to do in a classroom situation. This is a win-win situation for the pupil and the school, because areas of difficulty can be addressed and solutions generally found.

Teachers are under a lot of pressure because of staff cuts and the pressures of implementing a Curriculum for Excellence, but if time can be found for mentoring, it is something that really can pay off. More mentors are currently being sought for the Strathclyde University project, and it really does offer an excellent CPD opportunity.

For further information on the Intergenerational Mentoring Project, or to become a mentor contact Alastair Wilson or Katie Hunter at mig.project@strath.ac.uk

Further reading
Mentoring in secondary schools: impact and effective practice available at www.usethekey.org.uk
This project set out to explore how shared understandings of the purposes and potential of assessment at transition between primary and secondary might be developed most effectively.

Underpinning the document is the drive for progression of learning through Curriculum for Excellence. The report gathers evidence from the literature and from practice and draws up 4 priorities for action. The authors’ conclusions reflect the intuitive knowledge of many experienced teachers that collaboration, discussion and sharing of information around transition across stages are critical both to improved pedagogy and progression in learning; the report stresses that time should be protected to facilitate such discussions.

The authors find that assessment must be a planned part of teaching and learning, through a range of tasks designed with assessment needs in mind; these will help learners and teachers to make connections between previous learning and the curriculum. The authors found clear evidence that pupils can be active partners in assessment. The absence of final summative testing in primary schools meant teachers there were more likely to think in terms of learners identifying paths and moving towards shared expectations of their learning. Assessment cycles needed to be repeated to ensure the validity of judgements about achievement.

Trust in the professional judgements of fellow teachers is essential and can be built through carefully developed moderation towards a shared understanding of the meaning of assessment language. Professional judgements are more likely to be trusted if they are evidence-based.

The evidence from practice revealed a strong desire on the part of learners and teachers at all stages for more two-way discussions about assessment and next steps.

Many teachers looked for guidance on what a body of work at a particular level looks like, and how progression can be identified, but the authors’ points for action emphasise that these must evolve from professional discussions amongst local clusters of professionals. Collections of annotated examples may be helpful, but “levels are meaningful only if they are related to a body of evidence of learning and cannot be assigned to individual pieces of work.” This moderation is seen as a fundamental part of a teacher’s role and its value cannot be matched by standardized testing.

The authors make suggestions regarding intelligent accountability, particularly the validation provided by shrewdly selected evidence and use of the reflection cycle. They suggest that those with responsibility for policy
promote self evaluation and the use of evidence about the quality of learning and teaching, referring to levels only at key points (they suggest P4, P7 and the end of broad general education.)

They warn against proliferating small targets in a checklist approach which would undermine the wider aspirations of Curriculum for Excellence to equip our young citizens to learn effectively, both for their own fulfilment, and to play their part in ensuring social justice.

Teachers reading this report will recognise and agree with much of its content. Its strong confirmation of the value of teachers' professional judgment is welcome, and is a vital message for those parents, employers and politicians with understandably genuine concerns about the ability of the system to prepare the next generation for the world of work. Its rejection of standardized testing and use of levels as an effective means of ensuring progression in learning leads to a reminder of the worthy aim of Curriculum for Excellence to produce socially mature citizens and individuals who are responsible and confident.

Book review - Antony Luby
Book review by Antony Luby, ACTS Committee

In Chapter 1 Moore gives a succinct overview of four of the ‘giants’ who have contributed to our understanding of theories of teaching and learning: Skinner, Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner. One may quibble about Moore’s selection but not with the masterly way in which he summarises and critiques their pedagogic theories. I found his discussion of Bruner’s work to be particularly insightful and helpful. Moore (2012: 21) refers to spiralling:

...the process by which the learner constantly returns to ‘previous’ learning and understandings in the light of new learning and new experience. Just as this new learning and experience compel us to reconsider and reconfigure previously held concepts and understandings, so those previously-held concepts and understandings help us to make sense of new experiences and conceptualisations as they occur.

The context appears to be pupils’ learning but I found it struck home with regard to teachers’ professional learning. Having just completed a substantial action research project I was perplexed by my own confusion. At times I found myself in a situation comparable with the outset of my early teaching career: enthusiastic but lacking experience and knowledge. At other times I was reliving pedagogic initiatives which had impacted profoundly upon my professional learning. Indeed, my perplexity was such that I compared it with Through the Looking Glass effects of ‘...mirror themes, opposites and time running backwards...’ (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Through_the_Looking-Glass) However, according to Moore (2012: 21) Bruner has a kinder interpretation that ‘encourages the learner to take steps backwards as well as forwards...’ This insight alone has made reviewing the book a worthwhile experience.

Chapter 2 is entitled ‘Teaching, learning and education’ and Moore delves purposefully into the very purposes of education. What is it for? Moore ruefully comments, that for many it has become a ‘political football’ played by those who lack expertise. He makes a telling point is that ‘...teachers and headteachers have had to contend with a bewildering array of… “morphological changes” i.e. changes that alter the surface appearance or fine detail of the curriculum… but are in no way suggestive or indicative of radical change...’ (Moore 2012: 32-33)
For the author, this tinkering approach, especially from Government, has bedevilled education. Indeed, he argues, it has produced a situation whereby there is often a serious mismatch between teachers’ perceptions of the purposes of education and those of Government.

Continuing the spiralling theme from the first chapter it is disconcerting to note the still ongoing debate about content Vs process. On this point I would take issue with the author. Despite glittering examples from curricula devised in the Far East – Singapore and Hong Kong – the argument is redundant: it is content and process. In this fast-paced, changing world it is clearly important that pupils develop skills (process); but it is equally important that they engage with high-quality content (knowledge). I recall an educational adviser in the Scottish Borders speaking passionately about this in the mid-1980s. Indeed, it was the sterile debate between content and process that had prompted her return to classroom teaching: both are important.

Following on from this, Moore (2012: 44) discusses curriculum and control, and claims that ‘Pedagogy which seeks to promote exploration and discovery is simply not allowed the time and space that is essential for its effective practice.’ That Borders adviser would disagree; and she would demonstrate from a range of classroom practices that it is possible for pupils to engage in exploratory learning, based on high quality content, within a restricted time-frame. Those evidences were produced twenty-five years ago but, as Moore (2012: 170) points out in his tribute to Vic Kelly, ‘…curriculum arguments… that were being engaged with nearly thirty-five years ago are still so relevant today.’ And this is a strength of this book; it offers a broad sweep of topics and invites you to debate them.

‘Teaching, learning and language’ is the theme of Chapter 3; and not an area with which I am strongly familiar. Helpfully, Moore provides concise summaries; some suggested activities and suggested readings at the end of each chapter. These are useful for initiating discussions and further reading not only for students attending higher education; but also teachers participating at in-service programmes. This chapter is summarised as being concerned with:

- Teacher’s use of language;
- Recognition and development of students’ language skills;
- Language Across the Curriculum;
- Linguistic variety and linguistic repertoires; and
- Critical literacy.

In Chapter 4, ‘Teaching, learning and culture,’ Moore deals expertly with meritocracy and its impact upon the curriculum as it is fashioned for social engineering. In particular, he writes a masterly essay on the work of the French anthropologist and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu; and gives and insightful analysis of Bourdieu’s concept of ‘habitus’ and ‘field’ with regard to his theory of cultural bias. This is illustrated beautifully with Abdul’s love story and the accompanying warning about inhibiting story-telling that does not ‘…conform to the culture-specific criteria enshrined in the English National Curriculum or public examination system’ (Moore 2012: 95-96). Throughout this chapter Moore cogently argues that school curricula are not neutral; rather they tend to be biased towards a dominant group. And he concludes with a challenge to teachers: what steps can we take to reduce cultural bias in the classroom?

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Chapter 5, ‘What makes a good teacher?’ opens with an evaluation of the usual suspects – charismatic or competent or reflective? Of particular interest, though, is Moore’s support for the teacher as researcher and theorist. I fully endorse his claim that:

Teachers should perceive themselves as researchers and theorists as well as practitioners. Action research (original emphasis) is a particularly valuable way for teachers to evaluate and critique their own current practice and to move in an informed and principled way towards more effective future practice (Moore 2012: 136).

His ‘suggested activities’ 1-3 offer excellent starting points for teachers and schools who may be considering action research as a means of further improvement.

In the final chapter, ‘Teaching, learning and the curriculum,’ Moore revisits the Borg maxim that “resistance is futile.” For many teachers wearied by a plethora of top-down curricular initiatives this may well appear to be the case. But it may prove necessary if teachers are genuinely to become researchers and theorists who devise pedagogy. For pedagogy may be promulgated in official government documents; and it may be dissected in academic circles; but it only comes alive with teachers. Other topics such as democratisation of the classroom, multiple intelligences, accelerated learning and open learning are skilfully outlined within the closing pages: but they seem almost like an appendix given the overall quality of Moore’s depiction of pedagogy, curriculum and culture.

This book review will appear in the next issue of Education Today 63(1) Spring 2013 and it is reproduced with kind permission of The College of Teachers.

Using Case Study in Education Research – Lorna Hamilton, University of Edinburgh, Connie Corbett-Whittier, Friends university, Topeka

This book provides an accessible introduction to using case studies. It makes sense of literature in this area, and shows how to generate collaborations and communicate findings.

The authors bring together the practical and the theoretical, enabling readers to build expertise on the principles and practice of case study research, as well as engaging with possible theoretical frameworks. They also highlight the place of case study as a key component of educational research.

With the help of this book, M-Level students, teacher educators and practitioner researchers will gain the confidence and skills needed to design and conduct a high quality case study.

Dr Lorna Hamilton is a Senior Lecturer in Education Research at the University of Edinburgh. Dr Connie Corbett-Whittier is an Associate Professor of English and Humanities at Friends University, Topeka, Kansas

This excellent book is a principled and theoretically informed guide to case study. (Professor Andrew Pollard)

Comprehensive yet detailed, this highly interactive text has a critical edge and is a useful tool for teaching. It provides accessible guidance for reflective practice – and it is a good read! (Professor Anne Campbell)

This book offers a comprehensive and convincing account of the value of case study in educational settings. What comes across is the way this approach can bring to life some of the complexities, challenges and contradictions inherent in educational settings (Professor Ian Menter)
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