

# Book Review

*Liddy, M. and Parker-Jenkins, M. (eds) (2013)*

*Education that Matters, Peter Lang*

*Education that Matters* is an accessible book that is easy to engage with, containing examples of how development education (DE) and education for sustainable development have been approached by practitioners in the Republic of Ireland. The research projects, ideas, and examples showcased can, however, be universally applied. Over the course of the book's ten chapters, a case is made for the importance and relevance of DE through the exploration of different ways educators can and have engaged with it. These include engaging with DE through curriculum subjects like art, ICT, and business studies, as well as whole school approaches. Critical pedagogy, especially Paulo Freire's ideas, loom large throughout the book.

Two chapters in particular make for insightful reading. The first is 'A Question of Knowledge' by Mags Liddy and Roland Tormey. In this chapter the authors investigate the practicalities and potential obstacles facing post-primary schoolteachers who contemplate teaching DE. They address the lack-of-expertise rationale regularly highlighted as a barrier to teaching DE. Liddy and Tormey convincingly argue that many teachers teach a subject they don't have a degree in, yet those teachers don't consider that an impediment and DE should not be seen as an exception. The second half of the chapter is dedicated towards demonstrating how utilizing team teaching, and adopting an interdisciplinary or integrated curriculum approach, can mitigate teachers' insecurities and allow colleagues to build on their particular strengths and existing knowledge. The second insightful chapter is by Martin Fitzgerald, titled 'Development Education: Moral Challenge or Educational Opportunity'. Fitzgerald looks at the experiences of student teachers of business and religious studies and Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Civic Social and Political Education (CSPE) at Junior Certificate level. The teachers carried out a piece of action research in which they taught DE through their respective subjects and reflected on the experience. They found that the schools they were in showed little academic interest in undertaking DE, despite extra-curricular engagement by pupils in various types of 'environmental awareness campaigns'. The chapter also looks at how DE was approached through business and religious studies, as well as the tensions involved in incorporating DE into higher education. Other chapters explore

DE through documentary films, starting from a local level, and the very nature of DE as a concept.

The aforementioned chapters stood out because they engaged with the realities of teaching DE in schools and with tackling head-on the challenges of doing so. The authors' reflections provided food for thought as well as showcasing practical suggestions on how to address the challenges. Despite the rest of the book's attempts to address DE in real school environments, various chapters were low on insightful information or went beyond highlighting the obvious. It made for a frustrating reading experience as there was clearly a desire to keep the information relevant to practitioners but somehow those chapters came across as insubstantial. In such sections much of the information seemed generic, with the DE perspective shoehorned in. The chapter on ICT did, however, provide many examples of useful websites for educators to explore and, in giving a gentle introduction to useful contemporary software and programs, would also be beneficial to any practitioners with minimal ICT knowledge.

*Education that Matters* has good intentions and should be applauded for tackling DE in such an accessible manner, making it a decent starting point for anyone new to the world of DE. It would be great to see ideas of *Education that Matters* being picked up and taken further by other books aimed at practitioners working in schools.

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