At the end of that chapter, Audrey Osler reminds us that not only do young people experience injustices in schools but they also have practical solutions to offer about tackling racism, promoting diversity and encouraging equality. Where this takes us is thinking about how schools, young people and their families can work together to promote social justice. An interesting topic of enquiry for a practitioner or a researcher?

Reference

Rutter, M., B. Maughan, P. Mortimore, and J. Ouston. 1979. *Fifteen thousand hours: Secondary schools and their effects on children*. London: Open Books.

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Struggle for the history of education, edited by Gary McCulloch, Abingdon, Routledge, 2011, 139 pp., £24.99 (paperback), ISBN 9780415565349 (hardback); ISBN 9780415565356 (paperback)

Struggle is a term not easily associated with the history of education, either in the form of its products or its practitioners. Struggle connotes strikes, occupations, marches, demonstrations, barricades and sometimes – armed insurrection. With one or two notable exceptions, historians of education during the period covered in this book have tended to be, like many others in the field of education, either conservative in outlook or apolitical, which in many respects, amounts to the same thing. Struggles are also often, like the current Occupy Movement, usually against something and often less clear about what they are for. It is in this context that the question arises in relation to McCulloch's curious title, what is the struggle for the history of education against and what is it in favour of? Put crudely, it would seem from this book, that the answer to the latter question is its survival and to the former question, those things that threaten its continued existence.

It was Adams, Principal of the Institute of Education's forerunner, the London Day Training College, who warned that there was no more 'tyrannical idol' than a 'metaphor that has taken the bit between its teeth'. Seemingly immune to Adams' admonishment, McCulloch extends the struggle trope across seven substantive chapters and also returns to it in his conclusion. The struggles are organised as a binary opposition. The first four chapters refer to exogenous struggles for social progress, social change, social equality and educational reform, whereas the final three, for theory and methodology, the struggle for new directions and the struggle for the future, are endogenous.

An account of the recent history of the sociology of education, which faces similar challenges to those encountered by the history of education, found that the diagnosticians of its morbid symptoms tended to emphasise either internal or external explanations (Brehony 2001). Few attempted to combine the two. McCulloch, while conceding that in the early years of this century, the external position of history of education was 'weak' in many countries and 'increasingly marginal to educational research', claims that internally it maintained its position as 'an entrenched community of knowledge'. Noticeably, internal criticisms of aspects the direction the field has taken, such as those from Herbst, Depaepe, and Lawn

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and Furlong, are all rapidly repulsed in favour of a Panglossian reading of its state of health. This is controversial, not the least because like the sociology of education (Lauder, Brown, and Halsey 2009), history of education is faced with a crisis of reproduction due mainly to its ejection, in the 1980s, from courses of teacher training which still constitute much of the main 'business' of departments of education in universities.

The politics of this development and the distinct lack of struggle attendant upon it by universities and education departments, both of whose autonomy were diminished by the rise of a centralised teacher training curriculum in England, is barely registered. In a book emanating from the Institute of Education, where once the politics of knowledge was such a prominent research focus, this is a surprising absence. Notably, about as much space is devoted to the 'internal environment' in this conjuncture. This highlights the paradoxical growth in journals and learned societies internationally that led, McCulloch claims, to the growing isolation of the field, especially from the disciplines of history and the social sciences.

Alongside the inside/outside organisational device, McCulloch's discussion is arranged chronologically, beginning in Chapter 2 with the first half of the twentieth century and ending in the current twenty-first century period, which is the focus of Chapter 8. The narrative announced at the outset is of the transition of the history of education from a 'foundation discipline of education studies' to 'its supposed lack of relevance to current and practical educational outcomes' (10). Inserted into this chronology is a narrative of McCulloch's own journey in the field, which began in New Zealand to which he went in 1983 having obtained a lectureship at the University of Auckland and which continued by him going successively to Lancaster and Sheffield Universities in the UK, before obtaining the newly created Simon Chair in the History of Education at the Institute of Education in London. Furthermore, he chronicles his participation in numerous national and international learned societies and 'extensive editorial work' in the field and concludes, not without some justification, that he has been 'directly responsible' for its 'further development' (8). There is always a danger of solipsism when historians of any description insert themselves as actors into their histories. That this is not necessarily the case is amply demonstrated in Eley's fine book on his life in History which traces the rise of social history, its disruption by feminism, the emergence of 'race' as a focus and the 'cultural turn' (Eley 2005).

The debates that accompanied these shifts and the pyrotechnics they gave rise to barely intrude on the sheltered world of the history of education as described by McCulloch. Postmodernism receives few mentions and is so sketchily represented that readers unfamiliar with its main propositions are unlikely to grasp what the fuss was about. Likewise, feminism is largely absent from the account, in spite of the fact that feminist historians of education have been at the forefront of theoretical innovation and political commitment in the field and have breathed a considerable amount of *élan vital* into history of education's ailing body.

Instead, McCulloch presents as his starting point a critique of what he terms the 'traditional approach to the history of education' (11). This was distinguished by 'a liberal-progressive' approach to the history of education that 'celebrated the spread and growth of education', that relied little on social science methods, was 'presentist', empiricist and top-down. Curiously, McCulloch provides no examples of this evidently flawed approach from the UK in this chapter but turns instead to the US and the work of Ellwood Cubberley. The latter's alignment of his histories with the desirability of the expansion of public education and the centrality of its beneficent role in securing the national welfare provoked a reaction in the fifties and sixties that led ultimately to the 'revisionist' tendency among historians of education. This led to them pointing out that public schooling was repressive and functioned as a means of social control that worked to support social divisions of 'race' and class. McCulloch notes the fact that some of the revisionists held Marxist perspectives, which while true,

disregards the fact that Marxism in the US has shallow roots and was frequently only engaged with superficially. This makes his use of the undifferentiated label of Marxism problematic.

By way of an example of Marxist theorising, McCulloch cites Bowles and Gintis' work on schooling, which advocated a correspondence between social divisions produced by schooling and the social relations of production. This version of reproduction theory was heavily criticised by others as crude and functionalist and soon revised by its authors but McCulloch does not discuss this critique or reproduction theory's development in a more complex form in the work of Bourdieu but instead makes a detour to New Zealand to chart the fortunes of revisionism there.

In the next chapter, McCulloch stages a further confrontation. This time it is between the 'old' history of education represented by, among others, the hapless public school master R.H. Quick, who was among the first historians of education in England and Sir Fred Clarke, whose sociological approach to the history of education foregrounded its social determinants, particularly social class. This chapter is entitled 'The struggle for social change' and considers two responses in addition to Clarke's, to the question of how far education can contribute to social change. These emanated from Olive Banks and Raymond Williams, writers whose connection with the field of the history of education was at best tangential and at worst accidental.

In these chapters, McCulloch overtly displays his sympathies and preferences, an approach that also characterises his chapter on Simon. As the holder of the Simon chair, he regards the representation of his formidable body of work, 'in a balanced and critical manner that seeks to understand his work in its historical context' (9) as part of his mission. His critical approach, however, is attenuated somewhat by his equivocal approach to Simon's leading role in the Communist Party during the period when it was a tool of Stalinist repression. Moreover, having criticised Whig histories of education that saw the development of state schooling as an instance of the ever-onward March of progress, McCulloch failed to realise the extent to which Simon's histories were a Left version of Whig history in which the struggles of the labour movement secured greater and greater advances. While the Social-Democratic post-war settlement still persisted, this was a plausible account but as soon as it came under attack in the late 1970s, the alleged inevitability of working class advance in education became an indefensible proposition. The same was the true of Simon's Enlightenment belief in the power of education and state schooling, which was challenged by others, labelled Marxists by McCulloch, who held that state schooling could also contribute to the reproduction of class inequality and class cultural control. In addition, the contextualisation, or historicisation of Simon's work leads McCulloch to conclude that due to feminist critiques and the rise of interest in 'race'. Simon's preoccupation with class analysis was of its time, a time now surpassed and class inequality is no longer worthy of consideration in the history of education.

Chapter 5 looks at the relation between the history of education and policy making during the period beginning in the 1970s. McCulloch concludes that this has largely been a 'largely thankless and often dispiriting task' (70). However, he does not appear to think that this might have something to do with rise of neo-liberalism that captured both the Labour and Conservative parties and neither does he consider the possibility that policy making is not a rational process whereby knowledge produced in the academy is unproblematically translated into policies, without the intervention of relations of power, of domination and subordination.

The marginalisation of history of education in the policy-making process gave rise to the search for 'fresh ideas and new directions' which are discussed in Chapter 6. The description of these theories and methods point to the ever increasing fragmentation of the field as

its sense of purpose and direction becomes more and more unclear. The end of the Grand Narratives of educational progress and emancipation seem, on this account, to have left the field disorientated.

In Chapter 7, McCulloch presents the effects of the new theories and methods on such diverse topics as curriculum history, social disadvantage and exclusion, teaching and learning and unaccountably education and empire. Unaccountably, in one of his few ventures into politics in this book, McCulloch devotes uncritical space to the notion that the British Empire was beneficial to those it subjugated. It is tempting to speculate whether the contemporary inhabitants of Iraq and Afghanistan feel similarly about having been the recipients of the projection of British military power.

In spite of these 'new directions' McCulloch identifies, he concludes in the penultimate chapter that the strategic position of the field is still weak. Advocating in the book's conclusion that the field, in institutional terms, 'must continue to search for a suitable place that it can call home', he identifies the main threat to the field's survival but proffers little by way of a solution.

This is an insider's account and given his central location within the field's academic and institutional networks and hierarchies in the UK, McCulloch's perspectives on the field are worthy of serious consideration. A question that persisted while reading this text is 'who is its implied reader?' This concept placed at the centre of the aesthetics of reception by Iser (1974) encourages us to consider the reader the text requires. This is a self-proclaimed insider's text that requires other insiders – generally those already in the field – to interpret and make meaning from it. Another possible audience is those concerned with the future of education as a discipline and, at a higher level of abstraction, the future of the social sciences and the Arts and humanities in the post-Browne university system, but this is too introverted a text to be likely to appeal that far beyond its field. Even 'insiders' may be too wide a category for this is a very personal perspective that is highly selective, admittedly of necessity to a certain degree as the book is rather short.

Nevertheless, the lack of discussion of work from the history of education's golden age in the UK is disappointing. If Simon was predominant in this era, fine work influenced by the social history movement represented by Harold Silver, John Hurt, Roy Lowe and many others was also being produced. Another notable absence is any consideration of the work done on the state and education. The work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham is a prominent example, which owed much to Johnson, one of the few trained historians to write on the history of education. Within this genre may also be placed Andy Green and Ken Jones. Finally, absent from the discussion of theory is the work of the philosopher Paul Ricœur, whose work in relation to historical research is drawn upon extensively by Johnson and his co-authors (Johnson 2004) and by Gardner, one of the very few figures active in the history of education to engage theoretically with the practice of history itself (Gardner 2010).

These absences reflect on McCulloch's view of the field, which in spite of the personal reflection, remains difficult to pin down. He writes persuasively that history of education, 'has gained strength when it has articulated a strong and clear narrative or rationale' (113) but fails to provide such a narrative in his book. Whether it was progress, a notion prominent in the work of Hegel and Darwin, Social Democracy, or Marxism in its various manifestations, a strong narrative or rationale required a political movement to give it shape. In the growing oppositional movements emerging out of the current bankers' crisis, the seeds of a new political context in which the history of education, together with education's other foundation disciplines, may be glimpsed. Without a strong narrative, McCulloch's cautious optimism may well be misplaced.

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Language teaching in blended contexts, edited by Margaret Nicolson, Linda Murphy and Margaret Southgate, Edinburgh, Dunedin, 2011, 279 pp., £18 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-906716-20-2

This book is intended for language educators working mainly with adult learners in blended learning contexts. Blended learning and teaching in this volume is defined as 'a combination of forms of instructional technology, including traditional forms of learning used in conjunction with web-based, online approaches' (5). The three editors, and indeed all of the contributors, are experienced language educators based at various branches of the Open University (OU) in the UK. As the OU has a reputation as a leader in distance education in the UK, it seems appropriate that a book of this nature should have originated from this institution. As the editors point out in Chapter 1, the context and nature of teaching and learning are changing dramatically as a response not only to advances in technology, but also to societal demands and changes in employment patterns. In order to be able to meet the needs of learners – many of whom will be mature learners with various other demands on their time – institutions need to explore creative teaching and learning options and still provide quality language education.

The book is organised into five sections, each highlighting important factors to consider when offering blended learning options. Section 1 (the learning context) contains four chapters that unpack elements essential to any learning context – not just those associated with blended learning. This examination of good practice in language education serves to remind educators that the same educational principles apply even if the learning environment is unconventional. The four chapters give specific ways in which educators can provide meaningful learning opportunities in such blended contexts. For example, in Chapter 2 the authors emphasise the role of choice and even outline a possible course outline. This is a very valuable chapter for those in the process of planning or reviewing a blended learning course. Chapter 3 focuses on the importance of understanding social practices and learner participation patterns in general. One of the important messages of the chapter is that it is not always easy to identify and account for diversity in teaching and learning situations, as the usual identity markers may not necessarily be available. The authors give some practical suggestions for task-design in blended contexts that accommodate diversity. Chapter 4 gives