

generation of under 25-year-olds who will struggle to find employment even with the necessary qualifications.

The authors' call for a revision of the relationship between education and the labour market is, I accept, a necessity but in doing so, amongst their targets, they take aim at 'academic post-modernism' (96). Whilst not falling back to the dichotic position of simplistically campaigning for a return to subject-based teaching, they do question what they term the social sciences employment of 'discourses of fragmented incomprehensibility' (96). Ainley and Allen proceed to do so by citing from (amongst other sources) a newspaper article written by sensationalist social commentator Frank Furedi. Whilst I would agree that academic language can tend to be inaccessible at times – this is something I believe all academics called to exhibit research impact must acknowledge – I could not accept the kind of sweeping statements about the nature or form of contemporary parenting practice or youth perspectives being suggested. There is a challenge laid down to academics and social commentators today that is twofold: first, it is to continue to open our work to a variety of audiences by using means which are as inclusive as possible; secondly, it is to recognise the polemic when it is presented and strive for engaging a richer debate about the future, in this case, of education. Criticisms of what is/was known as postmodernism cannot merely claim that critical (and often theoretical) attention is value-lite and/or impractical. This position ignores the constitutive nature of language and the potential for pragmatic analytic awareness of our use of discourse to change our ways of life.

Lost generations could be read in a number of ways but central to its purpose is a reminder that education is about change. For a family relatively new to UK education systems the future, if it holds its current trajectory, looks incredibly bleak. But Ainley and Allen implore those with an investment in education to reconsider and reconfigure what is in store. Theirs is an alternate narrative founded in an empowering view which sees education as a means to promoting collective responsibility via community action. This purposeful call to act is concerned with issues of social justice placing these within a realm of sustainability. That is, they see social justice as a continuously re/defined ends to which communities need to be explicitly committed. These are resonant ideals but whether my family can afford to remain in the UK fighting this ongoing battle is a serious and agonising question. It always is when the future of your children is on the line.

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The Routledge international handbook of English, language and literacy teaching, edited by Dominic Wyse, Richard Andrews and James Hoffman, London, Routledge, 2010, 556 pp., £125 (hardback), ISBN 978-0-415-46903-6

This is a book about the nature, remit, delineation, research and policy ideologies of the school subject we call 'English', one of the foundations of compulsory schooling since its introduction. As a subject, English is established, respected and often unquestioned. It is also nebulous, ill-defined and controversial. What are pupils meant to be learning in school English classes and why?

This is a collection of work, a truly awesome bank of articles, each dealing with a particular aspect of this amorphous subject *and* each rehearsing in micro the themes of the handbook: the definition, research, policies and practices of English as taught and learnt in schools. What is equally impressive is how the collection as a whole (and each individual chapter) does not simply

rehearse definitions before moving on to other concerns, but rather demonstrates how the issue of definition is at the very core of research, policy and practice. Acts of definition and exploration echo throughout each paragraph of each chapter. What is English?

English is a language learnt, taught and studied, with personal, local, national and global uses and significance. It is a subject taught and assessed in schools, universities, and adult education institutions. It is studied as a foreign or additional language. It is a tool for analysis and something to be analysed, a multi-modal form of communication. It is a literary tradition, a cultural value-base, and a critical literacy. It is a subject which includes or excludes, defines and redefines, drama and the moving image. It is a mass of overlapping circles, valued, taught, learnt and researched differently in different contexts and at different times. But, this handbook presents a wider, richer and better-informed definition in the form of five main sections: 'Reading'; 'Writing'; 'Language'; 'Teaching English, language and literacy'; and 'English, language and literacy teaching: Countries as contexts'. I will try to provide a flavour of each.

In 'Reading', Bearne and Styles' 'Literature for children' evokes a conflict between the richness of children's literature and the potentially un-stimulating, ill-conceived nature of current classroom practice. They define both literature and children, review research in this area and ultimately argue that 'the role of literature is to stimulate the imagination and its affective properties; it is essential for children's emotional as well as intellectual development' (27). 'Handwriting and writing' (Medwell and Wray), in 'Writing', examines contrasting views of the relationship between handwriting and other aspects of writing. Does a focus on handwriting slow down or distract from the potentially 'more important' composition element of writing development, or could it be true that only through automaticity in handwriting can the young writer's mind be 'free' to compose? They review interdisciplinary research (reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of English itself) to link difficulties with handwriting with other writing difficulties. Several implications emerge, including that the role of handwriting needs to be better understood and that *how* handwriting is taught is as important as whether it is taught. With a similar eye to the relationship between physical movement and learning, in 'Language' Franks examines 'Drama in teaching and learning language and literacy'. He analyses the role of drama in different phases of education, how play and improvisation relate to learning more broadly, as well as the significance of drama in the development of the meaning-making processes of language and literacy.

For me, the highlight of 'Teaching English, language and literacy', and of the entire handbook, is Burn's 'A very long engagement: English and the moving image.' This chapter could be seen as a prototype for the collection itself: defining, exploring, redefining, analysing and concluding, while opening up as many questions as it resolves. Burn starts by introducing a 'battle of values' (354) within English education: a mistrust of film and media studies (as easier, lesser, lazier...) vs. the belief that these are integral aspects of a multimodal English curriculum. He explains that he is examining the study of the moving image in three ways: 'as an adjunct to the teaching of language and literature', as a subject to be studied 'in its own right', and 'as part of a more widely-conceived notion of literacy' (356). Each are covered through an investigation of research, policy and teaching practice, leading to a plea for teachers to engage with this wider view of literacy and cultural participation, to cross 'semiotic, cultural [and] pedagogic' 'bridges' (364) to better understand narrative in its various forms. The final section, 'English, language and literacy teaching: countries as contexts', pulls these aspects of English (from literary study to handwriting, drama to computer games) into country-specific investigations, such as the teaching of English as a foreign (but increasingly less foreign) language in Scandinavia or Shah's examination of English and bilingual education in the multilingual context of India.

There is little to say about possible lacks in this collection. I personally wanted to read more about the study of English in universities, if only because it informs school teaching through the nature of the degrees most English teachers hold (anyone else interested in this topic should

read the excellent new *Edinburgh introduction to studying English literature* (Cavanagh et al. 2010)). I also hoped to find more reference to adult literacy teaching, where issues of critical literacy (such as those explored by Janks in Chapter 23) are central. Yet, the editors are clear that their scope is English in schools. I will conclude, then, with their conclusion and its reminder that policy, practice and research are themselves problematic clusters of meaning. What leads to something being researched? What foregrounds something in policy? What influence do research and policy really have on practice? And practice on research and policy? The conclusion notes a changing relationship between research and teachers' practice, with teachers increasingly informing research, while also having more opportunities to access research findings. It also returns to the issue of *types* of research (what counts as 'legitimate' research?) and examines the relationship between policy and research fashions. Perhaps most importantly for the strange case of English, it touches upon the fact that research is both determined by, and goes on to inform, the conception of a subject. Finally and crucially, its last paragraphs foreground the role of the teacher, because only through teacher (and learner) reflection can we get 'inside' (536) learning, literacy and literary processes.

Reference

Cavanagh, D., A. Gillis, M. Keown, J. Loxley, and R. Stevenson. 2010. *The Edinburgh introduction to studying English literature*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

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The research mission of the university: policy reforms and institutional response, edited by Patrick Clancy and David Dill, Rotterdam, Sense Publishers, 216 pp., £35 (paperback), ISBN 97-90-8790-995-6

We are used to the admonishment 'never judge a book by its cover'. However, before beginning a review of this edited collection, I feel compelled to mention the somewhat startling cover photo of this book, which appears to show a close-up of a glassy fish eye. A puzzling choice. Things were greatly improved by turning the first page for that reason alone. Luckily, I also soon discovered that Clancy and Dill have put together an informative and wide-ranging volume on the research mission of the university and its relationship to innovation policies at a national level. The collection is based on selected papers presented at the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers (CHER) Conference in Dublin, 2007. In their introduction, they set out four particular areas of interest: funding, research evaluation, knowledge transfer and doctoral education.

In the first chapter they provide a helpful historical overview of the role of research in the academy, pointing out that the initial mission of the university was to prepare the elite for the professions, followed by a post-Enlightenment emphasis on scientific enquiry, with only a much later emergence of the Humboltian notion of the unity of research and teaching from the early nineteenth century. The notion of universities making a contribution to industry or economic development emerged later still, beginning with contributions to agriculture in the later part of the nineteenth century. The emphasis on technological innovation related to World War II is covered, leading to consolidation of a science-based 'linear model', which was highly influential