England's citizenship education experiment: state, school and student perspectives, by Lee Jerome, London, Bloomsbury, 2012, 254 pp., £75 (hbk), ISBN 978-1-4411-2224-7

In England's citizenship education experiment, Lee Jerome takes us on a carefully charted journey through policy conception, formulation, implementation and realisation. At its heart, the book provides an examination of the social welfare policy of New Labour's period in office within which Jerome identifies three discourses that make up a trope of the 'new citizen'. These discourses relate to: (1) responsibilities as well as rights, (2) active participation and (3) the relationship between the individual and the community. These are then used to analyse the evolution of citizenship education policy through the Crick report and the Ajegbo review, carefully delineating some of the changes and continuities in official conceptions of citizenship education and some of the unresolved tensions in statements of policy.

Having established a detailed theoretical background, Jerome then explores the implementation of this policy identifying some of the practical and ideological issues as the abstract conception of citizenship was translated into a curriculum subject. He then uses two case studies as well as a wealth of other research, including the NFER longitudinal study into the implementation of citizenship, to show how schools realised the curriculum in the everyday educational experiences of children.

Jerome skilfully draws this exploration to a close by considering the extent to which citizenship education in schools reflected the Government's aims for the subject. Given the ambition of the citizenship experiment to transform the democratic landscape in terms of the political engagement of young people, the conclusion is somewhat pessimistic, but in terms of an enrichment of children's educational and social experiences within and beyond school we can be more positive.

The first chapter of the book outlines the philosophical background to citizenship education within the liberal tradition outlining the key formulations of communitarianism, civic republicanism and deliberative democracy. This provides a clear and concise underpinning to the theoretical discussion outlined above – a useful introduction to the conceptual 'field' of citizenship including a table showing the limits of liberalism and the consequent questions that arise (13). Jerome then establishes an analytical toolkit drawing on a range of models for implementing social policy analysis. The toolkit utilises the leaps identified by McCowan (2008) to analyse the development of the citizenship education programme in Brazil. Whilst this serves Jerome's approach well, the toolkit could make more of the process of consultation in developing social policy, both in its surface sense of gathering stakeholders' opinions and also in the way it may soften up its participants to accept policy less critically. This does not detract, seriously, however from the power of Jerome's analysis.

The part of the book which gave me most pleasure was the use of case study to explore the implementation and realisation of the citizenship curriculum. Here, as in the best case study analysis, those of us who have played a part in this process are able to critically compare our own work with that of the teachers and students in the case study schools. This may lead us to agree or disagree with Jerome's conclusions but actively involves us in the exploration of the theoretical discourses reviewed above.

It is a shame that the case study schools were demographically similar given Jerome's correct insistence that 'any policy can only be understood within the political context in which it arose' (xix). A more culturally diverse school population would have represented

the social and political context of the 'new citizen' more fully and may have given rise to different findings and conclusions about the implementation of the citizenship curriculum. As any of us who have been involved in school-based research know, however, getting access to schools is very problematic. Wiser to use schools where data is rich and forthcoming than those where it is sparse and poor.

Particularly interesting here is the use of pupils as researchers: in its own right an act of democratic citizenship through student voice. The theoretical justifications to such an approach are clearly explored (31–34). The benefits being that the research strategy can be shaped by young peoples' insider perspectives on citizenship education from an early stage; questions can be phrased in ways that pupils will understand; a large amount of data can be collected which may benefit from less formal student to student approaches; data can be interpreted using the student researchers' knowledge of the context; and pupils are empowered through the development of their own critical and analytical citizenship skills. The approach, moreover, 'honours the spirit of article 12 of the UNCRC which promotes the involvement of young people in decisions that affect them' (33).

This strategy clearly paid off. Amongst other things, the student perspective highlighted the importance of teachers in framing the subject and a preference for conversational lessons that built on the interests of the students (160). Perhaps disappointingly, their responses indicated that they see citizenship as a preparation for a future status rather than a process 'in which young people are seen as citizens in their own right during their time in school' (161 and 162) – an attitude that is unlikely to promote high levels of participation or a commitment to civic republican ideals. (164). In terms of rights and responsibilities, the students' responses lead Jerome to conclude that 'Whilst students report having 'done' rights and responsibilities in class, there is little evidence in their responses that they have any clear understanding about this area and certainly no evidence that there is any significant political/conceptual understanding being developed through Citizenship lessons' (178). In terms of Identity and Diversity, the student responses show a growing unease at the low-level racism evident in their interviews and negative attitudes towards immigration. 'Whilst young people tend to profess they are committed to inclusive values, the ongoing negative attitudes towards immigration (and immigrants) implies that there is a serious need for schools to address these issues' (200).

As the book went to press, there was growing uncertainty about the future of citizenship in the curriculum. At the time of writing this review, we knew that the subject was secure even if the content of the curriculum will cause concern to many. Lee Jerome's book clearly establishes that 'Citizenship can help young people develop a sense of efficacy and the case studies reported here indicate that there is an appetite for Citizenship education among teachers and many young people. Therefore, there are grounds for remaining optimistic that citizenship education could contribute to a broader political project to support democratic citizenship' (229).

It is a shame that such an insightful and clearly structured book that provides such a good introduction and model for curriculum research for undergraduate and postgraduate students should bear such a hefty price tag. I hope the publishers will issue a paperback edition soon.

Reference

McCowan, T. 2008. "Curricular Transposition in Citizenship Education." *Theory and Research in Education* 6: 153–172.

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Imagining the University, by Ronald Barnett, London and New York, Routledge, 2013, xi + 188 pp., £29.99, ISBN 978-0-415-67204-7

In this deeply thought-provoking and searching book, Ronald Barnett analyses the concept and practice of the imagination in relation to the idea of the university. In his own words: 'My main quarry in this book is how we think about the university and how we might imagine it' (90). The book is an unraveling of the multiple structures of imagination.

He argues that the task of the imagination is as much practical as it is ideational:

'*Head in the clouds, and feet on the ground*: this could be said to be the motto of this book. Ontologically grounded…but yet with the imagination entering – soaring into, even – the realm of the infinite: this is the stance being urged here, in the struggle to understand the university and its possibilities' (123).

A summary of the book's contents is set out in the form of 15 theses in the *Introduction*, and the text is regularly punctuated by helpful repetition and summaries of the author's key ideas. The book is divided into four parts:

Part I: *Imagining the university*, in which the idea of the imagination itself, its possibilities, virtues and limitations is examined both in general terms, and specifically in relation to construing the university.

Part II: *Structuring the imagination*, in which ideas of the university are classified and categorised along three axes and the complexities of the task of imagining the university are anticipated.

Part III: *Forms of the imagination,* in which four different forms of the imagination are examined in relation to conceptualising the university: the ideological imagination, the dystopian imagination, the persuasive imagination and the utopian imagination.

Part IV: *Being imaginative,* in which the question of what it is to be imaginative in the university is considered through the criteria of adequacy that an imaginative idea of the university should address and satisfy. These criteria are applied to the author's idea of the ecological university.

This book is a demanding read, in which reasoned argument fuses with passion.

Barnett examines the difficulties involved in sustaining the complicated balancing act of *head in the clouds, and feet on the ground*– whether for universities themselves or for the various individuals within them – both theoretically and practically. The main theoretical framework he draws on is the critical realist philosophy developed by Roy Bhaskar. From this insightful and revealing perspective, Barnett explores the challenges to the imagination of identifying possibilities for the university at three interconnected levels of its being: the real, the actual and the empirical. He designates his own intellectual position as being one of a practical critical realism that is also imaginative. At the level of educational practice, the philosophical stringency of the text is leavened with many instantly recognisable illustrative