

Editorial Vol. 6(1) October 2013

BESA was formed when a group of enthusiasts came together early in the academic year of 2004/05 with the purpose of promoting the development of Education Studies. The first conference was held at Chester University in the summer of 2005 and after a period of rapid development Educationalfutures: e-journal of the British Education Studies Association was launched in 2008. Now in its sixth volume Educationalfutures has gone from strength to strength with 2 editions per year, the occasional 'special' and from this edition the introduction of a book review section edited by Professor Stephen Ward. This expansion reflects the steady growth of Education Studies as a subject and the desire of both students and teachers to be part of the academic debate that this involves. The development of this new subject is particularly noticeable in the 'newer' universities. This perhaps reflects the change in emphasis in many of the schools of education in these institutions from being exclusively teacher training based towards a critical approach to the study of education. Such criticality in the study of education is essential for not only maintaining and developing academic standards but also, more importantly, in the protection of democratic freedom in our society. When looking over the previous volumes of Educationalfutures it is striking to see the breadth that this subject of Education Studies encompasses. It is also gratifying to note the number of international contributions, the range of research approaches adopted and the types of data collection employed by the authors. These things attest to the rich diversity within the global field of Education Studies which is something to be cherished and defended in these ethnocentric times of economic recession.

This edition once again reflects the breadth of education studies. The first four papers present a range of empirical research that focus on very different aspects of education from the compulsory and higher education sectors. The fifth paper is an analysis of literature that questions the effectiveness of education policy itself. In our opening paper Cath Walker, Grant Stanley, Milly Blundel, Diana Burton, Marion Jones, Steph May and Sue Walker report on an evaluation of the Everton in the Community Pan-disability Coaching Programme, an initiative concerned with enhancing the inclusion of children with disabilities in PE in schools across Merseyside. The authors critically locate this initiative within the wider context of the Big Society, where local communities and third sector

organisations are empowered to be involved in the delivery of public services. Kieran Hodgkin, Scott Fleming, Gary Beauchamp & Anna Bryant then take us to the interface between primary and secondary education by exploring the expectations and experiences of a group of 10-11 year old primary school pupils making the transition to an inner-city secondary school in Wales from one of its 'feeder' primary schools. In our third research article we move into the realms of higher education where Stephen Dixon, Richard Sanders and Stephen Griffin draw on an ongoing longitudinal study to provide an initial comparison of the digital literacy levels of Education Studies undergraduates against the rest of a university undergraduate population. Their early findings have shown that even though high proportions of all students commonly use more than one device to access internet-based services outside of their university, undergraduate technological skills are not as predominant as is often assumed. The widening participation background of this particular university may also mean that socio-economic differences in the student population may be a key factor in these initial findings

Our fourth research article by Jackie Greatorex examines a research based qualification for students aged 16-18 (the GPR) and the validity of tutor assessment of the student produced Independent Research Reports that contribute to this pre-university qualification. This paper raises crucial questions concerning the accuracy of assessment at what is another critical transition point for students from secondary and FE into higher education. In our final article Hope Nuzdor undertakes a literature review on change management in order to examine why many change initiatives in education often fail to yield the improvements their authors propound.

We are very grateful to our contributing authors for making this such a varied and challenging issue of Education futures. We hope you, the readers, find it as interesting as we, the editorial board, did when reviewing the papers.

Best wishes

The editorial board: Steve Bartlett, Sue Warren, Alan Hodkinson, Chris Wakeman, Stephen Ward.

