

## You, Me and Diversity

Anne M. Dolan

IOE Press/Trentham Books, 2014. £24.99

This book's sub-title – *Picturebooks for teaching development and intercultural education* – does not do it justice. This wide-ranging book offers an overarching view of what it is to be a reader and how, as a reader of a range of texts, one can become 'a reader of the world' – a stance that explicitly espouses the philosophy outlined by Paulo Freire more than 40 years ago.

Although picture books in primary schools are the focus of the book, Dolan develops a much more extensive brief; most of the ideas and the philosophical rationale are readily transferable to a secondary context. Indeed, she provides an innovative curriculum core that is rooted in social awareness and political justice whilst offering a model of literacy across the curriculum that is sharp in both theory and practice.

In Chapter 2, there is a useful definition of intercultural education as a process that 'respects, celebrates and recognizes the normality of diversity... and promotes equality and human rights whilst challenging unfair discrimination', and this is expanded through a series of themes that relate to 'global knowledge', 'global poverty', 'the environment and sustainable development', 'aid and trade', 'globalisation' and 'interdependence'. All these themes are rooted in issues related to identity, culture, value systems, human rights, migration and refugees; it difficult to think of a time in recent history when such themes have resonated more loudly across everyday discourse.

In Dolan's curriculum framework there are three components – 'Respect', 'Understanding' and 'Action' – all of which have more detailed elements that are clearly described and supported by a rich diet of examples and suggestions for the classroom. The real attraction of this book is that, as well as offering a wonderfully clear and much-needed theoretical perspective and a cogent curriculum map for school leaders, it also gives detailed support for the classroom teacher. Every element of the suggested curriculum has an extensive, annotated list of books (published or reprinted after 2000) that are age-related: there is also a range of useful advice about how to approach different topics and to mediate individual books, and a list of resources (journals, websites and blogs) to help schools with their selection of texts.

The worries that emerge in the final chapter about teachers' lack of knowledge related to children's fiction – particularly global literature – and their over-dependence on a small selection of writers are valid, and one can only hope that a book like this will prove to be influential in helping to overcome this problem.

This inspirational text offers a rich and stimulating alternative to the Goveian, utilitarian orthodoxies that are infecting so much of the school system at the moment. It should be on every booklist for trainee teachers and integrated into the staff development sessions of every school. It is without doubt one of the most useful – and timely books for teachers to emerge over the past ten years.

John Hickman

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## Teach Now: Becoming a Great English Teacher

Alex Quigley

Routledge, 2014, £16.99

This is a very useful book, and would be a very good buy, for any beginning English teacher. Aimed firmly at new and training teachers, and written in an extremely accessible and engaging style, it is full of good advice and a multitude of excellent ideas about teaching. It is also much more substantial than the catchy title might lead one to expect.

It is, quite rightly, a very practical introduction to English teaching with the emphasis on concrete ways of doing things in the classroom. However it is very much more thoughtful than a list of 'dos and don'ts' and deals with the very real challenges of beginning English teaching, acknowledging the demands of planning, assessing and managing the classroom, and honestly addressing the complexities and difficulties of teaching during that overwhelming onslaught of lessons that is the experience of all novices. Each chapter also has vignettes from serving teachers, giving a valuable additional set of insights to help the reader – and the book offers further resources on the web.

The first two chapters – 'English Curriculum Essentials' and 'Pedagogy Essentials for Great English lessons' – offer a thoughtful overview of English as a current school subject. Whilst there is no detailed attention to the vexed *history* of English, there is occasional and helpful mention of the politicised nature of the subject and the endless external interference it suffers from – enough for trainees to sense the battles ahead. The rest of the chapters cover the range of areas all trainees want to know about, and the book concludes with sound advice on applying for and securing that first job.

There is some useful advice on the need to network, and Quigley acknowledges the value of 'specialist organisations like the excellent NATE' [p.56], perhaps underplaying the fact that NATE offers a continuity and unbiased professional expertise that the increasingly isolated islands called schools can no longer provide, a situation much exacerbated by the erosion of local authorities.

This is a really good introduction to English teaching – lively, inspiring and also comforting; it was especially good to see the author's emphasis on 'making lists' throughout the book: 'Give yourself a comforting sense of control by making to-do lists' [p.213]. This surely is wise advice for all of us.

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