



BOOK REVIEW

Community Education, Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion (2nd Edition)

Lyn Tett

Dunedin Academic Press (2006). Pp.vi+90. Pbk. £13.50

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Reviewer: Mhairi Freeman

The second edition of Tett's book should prove a profitable read for all those wishing to increase their understanding of developments within community education over the last 30 years. The author draws on both political and conceptual thinking to provide a useful framework for the exploration of the purpose and practice of community education and the role of lifelong learning in supporting a more inclusive society. In terms of both content and style it is a clearly written overview of contemporary issues and should be of interest to a wide audience including undergraduate and postgraduate students and reflective practitioners.

The book is structured into six chapters, the first two of which set out the context for the discussion that follows. Chapter 1 focuses on the development of community education in Scotland, its conceptual origins and how these have impacted on the role, purpose and practice of community education. This provides a useful introduction to some of the main themes that are re-visited in further chapters. The

second chapter begins to deconstruct lifelong learning policies; the focus on economic development as the outcome of lifelong learning is reviewed critically and opportunities for challenge and more inclusive approaches are suggested. In chapters 3 - 6, the author develops her argument that community education has the potential to contribute to the development of a more equal, democratic society and discusses some of the challenges presented by widely accepted ideological and economic forces. Practical examples are given, through exploration of case studies in chapter 3, for ways in which approaches to lifelong learning that explicitly value and use the life experiences of individuals can empower communities and potentially lead to democratic renewal.

The links that are drawn between practice, policy and underpinning values and assumptions make this an engaging read. While acknowledging the challenges faced in community education, the author provides a sense of the impetus and opportunity for change.
