Contesting social mobility: ECTs shaping positive life chances in peripheral schools

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Education and peripheral communities

Peripheral (coastal) schools attract a deficit narrative

Recruiting and retaining high calibre teachers: ECTs and senior leaders (See et al., 2020)

Low achievement rates when compared with urban peers (Odell, 2017)

Inadequate student transition rates to higher education (Donnelly & Gamsu, 2018).

Recent Policy Initiatives

✓ Education Investment Areas

✓ Opportunity Areas

✓ Initial Teacher Training Expansion Pilot

✓ Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential WP 2017

Factors impacting schools

Stokes et al. (2020) identified the high proportion of disadvantaged white families typically clustered in these communities.

The 'taken for granted' guaranteed rapid social mobility

The consensus:

'A desire to stay on at school and to attend (any) university, and to aim for a job which requires qualifications and skills is taken to be indicative of *higher aspirations* while leanings towards early school leaving and a lower skill job is taken as a sign of *lower aspirations*'. (Kintrea et al., 2015, p. 667)

Peripheral coastal places

Q study: Educators and ECTs' views on aspirational futures in peripheral coastal communities

Four viewpoints hypothesised from the teachers' data:

(Zipin et al., 2015)

<u>Viewpoint 1</u> aligns with the taken for granted goal: students should attend HE and seek a 'good' job that requires qualifications and skills.

❑Acknowledge that there are many barriers to finding employment in the locale, but confirm that jobs create a way of life. Something is better than nothing.

 'careers events, work experience, placements, coaching, qualifications, HE transitions'.

Three viewpoints challenge employment as the only (appropriate) focus for futures

Viewpoints 2,3,4

❑ Build capacity in teachers and students: preparing together for what the unknown future might bring.

❑ Spark curiosity for life: teachers encourage students to seek a good life.

❑ Know the community: teachers must understand and work with the extremes of wealth and poverty in the area.

Metro-normative approaches to employment/social mobility ignore 'the particularities of places and assume the needs of such schools as given' (Roberts & Green, 2013, p. 768).

Responses in situ expanding on Viewpoints 2, 3 and 4

- ECTs adopt place-based / place-sensitive materials and content.

- ECTs included via community activities centred on the school site: eg. breakfast clubs

- ECTs' personal development for shifting their mindset e.g. walking-with for 'bringing to mind' and 'decentring' from their own pre-conceived (metro-centric?) perspectives.

'Emergent aspirations'
(Zipin et al., 2015, p. 236)

...potentially fostered when educators and young people build on lived experiences, value local community knowledges and develop new perspectives regarding flourishing futures.

Walking-with to uncover peripheral places

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