



Inside Education: Exploring the art of good learning

Stephen O'Brien

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To learn more about learning – *what it is and how it works* – it is necessary to look inside education. *Inside Education* takes the reader on a journey of four 'live' education projects: the first all-Irish speaking, mixed-gendered, multi-faith primary school in the Republic of Ireland ideally suited to exploring learning identity; an alternative post-primary school for those who leave (or are left behind by) the formal education system also based in the Republic of Ireland and ideally suited to exploring personal learning; an early college school that enables students to simultaneously sit their high-school diploma and college exams based in Queens, New York and ideally suited to exploring learning success; and an adult education training centre that works with 'landless' movement members based in Brazil and ideally suited to exploring learning power.

Using a critical ethnography approach, each research narrative naturally unfolds/enfolds to tell a more complete learning story. All those interested in education are primed readers. By (re-)viewing their own learning outlook, they may begin to advance deeper critical ideas and debates in education. They may come to (re-)represent education, reminding public consciousness of its human stories, as well as its curious, intricate and powerful qualities. And they may (re-)discover 'other' roads to raise a scholar. Teachers, educational researchers, parents and guardians will be particularly interested readers.

'Inside Education is a thought-provoking, challenging and revealing journey inside the world of education and learning.? Its exploration of school and classroom practices in a range of different settings provides important insights into how we learn ? a central aspect of our education system which remains overlooked and understudied.? In doing so, it lays down a challenge to policy-makers and educators everywhere to think differently about the way we learn and, ultimately, help students fulfil their real potential.'

-Carl O'Brien, Chief Reporter for *The Irish Times*

'Inside Education is a stunning example of passionate scholarship that nonetheless refuses a redemptionist stance. The ethnography captures people and contexts and draws the reader into the four sites of learning in fluent and lyrical prose. This is facilitated by the extensive use of research notes deploying historical, comparative, literary, artistic and scholarly sources."

-Denis O'Sullivan, Emeritus Professor of Education, University College Cork, Ireland

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