EDUCATION: THE ROLE OF ‘OTHERS’

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Education is the solitary responsibility of schools, delivered behind closed doors within institutions that operate as silos. However, significance is continually attributed to the role of ‘others’ within education, which can be traced back to pre-state education. Various educational reports, policies and Acts have proposed a role for these ‘others’. They would supplement the work of schools, the home, the community and the individual. Their role was to respond to social issues and change including the fragmentation of society. Their ability to address individual needs appeared important to deliver a meritocratic system. Value is attributed to the specific skills and activities on offer which are different to the core business of schools. However the commissioning of these ‘others’ is viewed as costly. The potential outcomes deemed as negligible within a system dominated by standards, yet the invitations persist.

The paper focuses on the concept of the role and responsibility of ‘others’ or agents with relevance to learning and well-being of children and young people. It outlines pertinent educational policies, Acts and reports. It draws on themes from the data such as the desire for socialisation, character development, discipline and social control which suggests hidden reasons for invitation. The paper concludes by arguing that the relevance to the standards agenda and the cost of these activities may result in subordination. Different participation levels are now apparent into which these ‘others’ have been invited, including ownership of schools. However the reported lack of foundations for these relationships between schools and these ‘others’ has impeded previous success.

The paper draws on a literature review, which uncovered a range of ‘others’ or agents. Key terms were developed to describe these others, the activities offered and the relationship with schools. These core terms were employed to select relevant academic articles, reports and policies.

Theoretically a sociological viewpoint of society's social system will be utilised, to outline the individuals and groups who have a role and responsibility for the learning and wellbeing of children and young people. Durkheim's Consensus Structuralism was initially used to unpack the different groups and their role within society. Similar models were located within the literature and these were combined towards a new model based on self, socialisation and culture.