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Book Review of Further Education and the Twelve Dancing Princesses (Daley, M., Orr, K. & Joel Petrie. 2015)

Anne Murphy

Technological University Dublin, anne.murphy@tudublin.ie

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Further Education and the Twelve Dancing Princesses

Editors:	Marie Daley, Kevin Orr and Joel Petrie
Year of publication:	2015
Publisher:	Institute of Education Press, UCL Institute of Education, University College London, Trentham Books
ISBS (paperback)	978-1-85856-640-5
Pages	178

It is always a delight to find a book about education with a quirky title that suggests seriously amusing content. Indeed, the paperback version has twelve dancers on the front cover, though perhaps not all of them are princesses!

The five testimonials on the first page from Stephen Ball, Jacky Lumby, Paul Mackney, David Powell and Lynne Sedgmore - all well-known commentators on further education in the UK – are particularly glowing:

'An inspiring pedagogy of resistance is emerging here'.

'It provokes, inspires and renews commitment to the values that draw people to further education.'

'Using fairy tales and dance to represent FE as a space of struggle, of possibility, the book will energise and inspire readers with stories of creativity, resistance and imagination.'

'It highlights the need to challenge the prevailing political and neoliberal paradigms which restrict our educational ideals and possibilities.'

The Preface by Frank Coffield explains how the Brothers Grimm became embroiled in public resistance to reduction in constitutional freedoms in Germany in the 1830s and how the stories of the princesses were written. Coffield briefly sketches the tradition of resistance by educators to

similar denials of legal rights and civil freedoms elsewhere and links these themes to the twelve chapter of the book. Indeed, Coffield was an appropriate author for the Preface given his own track-record of prodding and provoking the education system in England throughout his own academic career.

The Introductory Chapter by Joel Petrie continues the story telling format with heading such as:

Once upon a time...

The Cinderella Sector

And they all taught happily ever after?

So the chapter unfold with narratives, anecdotes, testimonials, commentaries, photographs and drawings written by experienced practitioners in FE.

The Final Chapter, *Conclusions: Leading a merry dance through times of change and challenge*, by Yvonne Hiller, is both thoughtful and thought-provoking. She uses four lenses to unite the themes of the book: identity; agency; tensions; deliberative spaces.

Overall the book is refreshing, challenging and a very enjoyable read. Even though the context is England, it could be usefully understood and enjoyed as a cautionary tale in other countries with similar FE traditions, and indeed with very different traditions.

Reviewer: Dr Anne Murphy,

Higher Education Policy Research Unity (HEPRU), Dublin Institute of Technology