

Review

Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives

Edited by James A. Banks

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John Saltmarsh, University of Massachusetts, Boston

Since World War II, nation-states throughout the world have become more racially, ethnically, religiously, and culturally diverse. This is certainly true in the United States, where today most immigrants in come from nations in Asia and Latin America. The US Census Bureau projects that ethnic groups of color will make up 47% of the population in 2050. This demographic shift is apparent in our classrooms, raising a number of epistemological, curricular, and pedagogical issues. In particular, this shift “raises questions about the limits and possibilities of educating students for effective citizenship” (xix). *Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives* aims to address these questions. An important point, echoed in several chapters of the book, is that within a diverse society, a citizen’s identity is “multiple, open, and dynamic....Identity, culture, and citizenship is each relational, socially constructed, dynamic, and polymorphic” (216). In our age of global migration and demographic transformation, with people of different cultures and ethnicities engaging in a variety of social, political, and economic relations, introducing students to the knowledge, skills, and values needed for civic engagement becomes a vital necessity.

The importance of this book for those who have been cultivating the fields of service learning and civic engagement is in overcoming the pervasive—and perplexing—divide between multiculturalism and civic education in American higher education. Despite the fact that efforts to promote multiculturalism and civic engagement share many values, there has been little overlap between the work of scholars and practitioners in the two fields. This book represents what Reve Joshee, the author of the chapter on citizenship and multicultural education in Canada, calls an important

shift to a new period that “provides a unique opportunity to unite and strengthen the work in both multicultural and citizenship education” (127).

This book is part of a project designed to reform “citizenship education so that it will advance democracy as well as be responsive to the needs of cultural, ethnic, and immigrant groups within multicultural nation-states” (xxi). The sixteen chapters in the book, organized into seven sections, were originally presented as papers at a conference on “Ethnic Diversity and Citizenship Education in Multicultural Nation-States” held at the Rockefeller Foundation’s conference center in Bellagio, Italy, in 2002. Participants were from twelve countries: Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Israel, Japan, Palestine, Russia, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The volume is edited by James A. Banks, scholar of multicultural education and Professor of Diversity Studies at the University of Washington. In this project he has brought together scholars, representing many cultures and nations, in a work that emphasizes transformative knowledge construction and makes explicit the value premises of all knowledge while connecting knowledge to action in order to improve society. Banks introduces the project, framing its definitions and dilemmas. Key issues and concepts are put forward and defined: citizenship, democratic education, international migration, multicultural societies, transnational communities, and unity and diversity in the context of globalization. Banks also addresses the synergy between civic education and multiculturalism:

Citizenship education should help students from diverse cultural, racial, ethnic, language, and religious groups to critically understand and examine their cultural identifications and attachments. It should also give students the option to maintain their cultural attachments and identifications as well as the option to endorse other cultures and identities. ...Citizenship education should also help students acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to function in communities other than their own, within the national culture and community, as well as within the global community. (7)

He and the other authors advance the concept of democratic citizenship education as a new initiative of education reform in the context of globalization.

The last chapter addresses curricular implications and considers a “collaborative, multinational effort...to identify subject matter for a curriculum for democracy in diverse societies under the conditions of ‘globalization’” (431, 441). The author proposes “five

subject matters for core positions in a multinational curriculum for diversity and democracy: historiography, comparative constitutional studies, comparative ethnic studies, comparative poverty studies, deliberation" (442). Translating conceptualization and analysis into curricular design is a critically important task. The most exciting attempt at this is offered by Reve Joshee, who presents Canada as an alternative to the U.S. She outlines "a pedagogy of peace" through which "educators are called upon to understand and address the underlying causes of cultural and structural violence" (151). A pedagogy of peace is grounded in the understanding that "social injustice of any kind is a form of structural violence...; cultural violence includes the denial of the traditions and cultures of a people" (150). A pedagogy of peace also implies that while globalization is a key issue, so is Americanization, and with it the dominant presence of U.S. militarization.

What is missing is an overall analysis of key issues identified in the chapters on various nations and regions represented in the book. The closest thing to a comprehensive comparative analysis of the essays is the brief forward by Will Kymlicka, who observes that "in order to avoid a potential backlash against multicultural education, it is increasingly being sold as a way of enhancing the cultural capital and economic opportunities of all students, including students from the dominant group, in a context of increasing globalization." He notes the concern of one of the authors that "this cosmopolitan conception of multiculturalism may become increasingly disconnected from any project of social justice at the level of the nation-state" (xvii).

For scholar-practitioners who are sowing the seeds of civic learning, this book will be somewhat disappointing in that it does not address concrete strategies for curricular construction or the use of effective pedagogies "to educate students so that they have the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to help create and to live in a public community in which all groups can and will participate" (12). The book is heavy on what needs to be done and light on how to do it. As one author noted in his chapter, the overall emphasis is on "the knowledge side of a knowledge-participation dialectic that altogether makes for 'enlightened political engagement'" —this despite an obligatory bow to John Dewey when Banks reaffirms that "democracy needs to be experienced by students in order for them to internalize democratic values and beliefs" (452, 10). The next part of this project should address effective strategies for teaching and learning associated with the knowledge, skills, and values of diversity and citizenship education.