



Beyond the Classroom Walls: Ethnographic Inquiry as Pedagogy. June A. Gordon.
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In *Beyond the Classroom Walls*, June Gordon offers readers food for educative thought in the form of more reform-minded teacher education practices. Whereas other researchers write theoretically about using ethnographic inquiry as a learning tool, Gordon puts words into action, describing her pedagogical approach across a variety of teaching contexts. Gordon illuminates for the reader "how critical dialogue as pedagogy creates opportunities for increased awareness of our multiple identities as we simultaneously interrogate our assumptions of the Other" (p. 129). The text allows a reader to imagine the ways critical ethnographic inquiry can serve as transformative pedagogy, particularly in teacher education. One primary focus of Gordon's work is the importance of connecting teachers to the communities in which they teach or will teach, an approach too often ignored and, further, too often ill conceived—particularly in preparing teachers to teach diverse students. Gordon's description of her work with her students—as they participate in activities such as reflective inquiry, community exploration, and home visits—allows readers to perceive possibilities for transformative practice with potential to impact students of teaching, and their future students and colleagues, in a range of settings.

In each of the book's nine chapters, Gordon reports on her students' classroom work and the use of ethnographic research as both a learning tool and a means for students to discover, embrace, and mesh their multiple and varied identities, and those of others. The distinctiveness of each chapter lies in the particular teacher education context explored in each, among them a military base, a traditional undergraduate university setting, a course for veteran teachers, and an alternative teacher education context. Her students across these contexts range from undergraduates, to graduate students, to in-service teachers, to students who might themselves be perceived as "at-risk" by those perceived as privileged. Gordon highlights her teacher preparation work in urban settings, appropriately noting the need to enhance the educational experiences within these underserved communities and better prepare current and future teachers to do just that. Of particular import is the work she does to help students who are often marginalized in post-secondary educational settings make the connections between their home and academic identities, thus allowing for an easier transition into the world of both higher education and, in particular, the world of teaching.



Although Gordon connects the chapters by utilizing similar ethnographic approaches across the various contexts about which she reports, she does not draw a clear enough connection among these chapters, a technique which surely would have been beneficial and welcomed, providing a comprehensive portrait of the utility of ethnographic pedagogy more broadly. Instead, the chapters read as separate, distinct stories of experience, some fitting the larger narrative better than others. Still, the variety of contexts suggests that there will be enough fodder within the text to speak to a variety of readers teaching in multiple settings, preparing teachers to work with urban and poor youth.

In each chapter, Gordon carefully outlines her pedagogical approach, detailing for the reader the various ways she introduces students to ethnographic work with a critical perspective. The Introduction and the Afterword each frame well Gordon's work. The Introduction links her work to larger theoretical frames including critical and feminist pedagogy, as well as critical ethnography. The Afterword reminds the reader of the central components of Gordon's classroom work: trust, engaging research, difficult dialogues, continuous assessment, and intervention. These components allow Gordon and her students to explore challenging terrain, such as preconceived beliefs and assumptions about at-risk youth and their communities.

Gordon's approach to teacher education is illuminating and rich. One is convinced, to an extent, that the students in Gordon's courses are indeed transformed by their ethnographic work. Gordon introduces her students to communities that are new to them, and challenges them to reexamine communities they believe they know well—their own. Students approach these tasks first from a reflexive standpoint and then from the standpoint of participant observers. A significant part of the work the students do is critical interviewing and observation as a way to transform their views about both self and other. The work is enhanced by the interaction between the students as they gather and analyze their data. Although we get the full story of the classes from Gordon's perspective, we do not often enough hear the students' perspectives. The text is uneven in this regard. For example, whereas chapter 8 is full of students' words, other chapters lack these rich voices. Instead we hear Gordon's perspective, which, though critical, obscures the voices of her students. A follow-up text, written by Gordon's students, would better illustrate how students were transformed in and through their ethnographic inquiries.

Throughout the text, Gordon reminds the reader that there are reform-minded ways to practice teaching and teacher education, convincing us of the central and critical role of dialogue and self-reflection. Gordon's dialogue with her students and with us as readers, even as she recounts her personal misconceptions, is refreshing, honest, and an important model for teacher educators. She includes her own transformation as a participant in the communities in which she teaches and lives as part of the larger story. We in teacher education would do well to model our work on hers, likely making ourselves vulnerable in the process. Gordon's text will further the conversations in courses in which we prepare teachers to work in diverse communities, either their own or those of others.



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