



Removing the Margins: The Challenges and Possibilities of Inclusive Schooling. George Sefa Dei, Irma M. James, Leeno L. Karumancherry, Sonia James-Wilson, and Jasmin Zine. Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 2000. 299 pp.

GAIL MCGREGOR *University of Montana*

gmcgrego@selway.umt.edu

The authors of this text address one of the biggest challenges in the field of education today--creating schools where all students are valued, feel a sense of belonging, and have access to instruction that is responsive to the needs of diverse learners. The passion with which these individuals approach, explore, and write about issues of equity in schools is evident to the reader even before the first chapter begins. The Preface and About the Authors sections provide a perspective on the book's focus, and the values and background of its authors. As emphasized in these beginning comments, as well as in subsequent chapters, complex issues of equity in education cannot be readily interpreted in the absence of an understanding of context.

For that reason, I feel compelled to identify the lens through which this review is framed. I am a special educator who has spent many years involved in efforts to create meaningful opportunities for students with disabilities to be included in and allowed to attend neighborhood schools in their home communities, attending school alongside their peers and siblings who do not have disability labels. I was thrilled to read that the authors sought to "move beyond traditional definitions of inclusive schooling as dealing only with issues of 'special education' " (pg. xii), identifying the multiple sources of diversity that have created groups of students who are marginalized in many of our schools today. For this reason, I was equally disappointed when I discovered that the multiyear study that is the basis of the information presented in this book focused almost exclusively on issues of racial/ethnic diversity. My statement of disappointment is not intended in any way to undermine the importance or contribution of the work that is reported. Rather, it is more a reaction to the fact that I found the introductory framework and ideas so compelling, that I was sure that I had finally stumbled upon the work of professionals from disciplines outside of the field of disability with a vision of inclusion that encompasses students with disabilities. Although I know this does exist (e.g., Capper et al. 2000), it is certainly the exception rather than the rule at this point in time.

With that baggage revealed, there is much for the reader to gain from this work. In addition, a companion Teacher's Guide is described by the authors as "laying out a practical approach to inclusive education" (pg. xii). As someone who works with



teachers in the field, I would be very interested in seeing the companion piece and looking at how the information synthesized in this text is distilled into practical implementation strategies. After providing an overview of the theoretical foundations (Chapter 1) and research methodology (Chapter 2) of this multiyear investigation, the next six chapters of the book (Chapters 3 through 8) address seven themes that their data analysis identified as recurring ideas throughout this longitudinal work. Although the authors identify their intention to focus on the "implications of these themes for school pedagogy, curriculum and classroom instructional change" (pg. 43), I would look to the companion Teacher's Guide for a presentation of this information in a way that is more immediately applicable to those working in the schools. Although I found the ideas in the chapters stimulating and most interesting when illustrated by examples from their ethnographic work, I think many readers would characterize much of the discussion as theoretical. The last chapter of the book is a helpful synthesis of the ideas tied to the themes emerging from this research, with some clearly identified implications for practice.

References Cited

Capper, C. A., Frattura, E., & Keyes, M. W. 2000

2000 Meeting the Needs of Students of All Abilities: How Leaders Go Beyond Inclusion. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

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