



Multicultural Education for the 21st Century. Carlos F. Diaz, ed. New York: Addison-Wesley Longman, 2001. 243 pp.

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In this anthology, 15 chapters range from general discussions of conceptual issues within the field of multicultural education to specific educational matters such as learning styles, gender effects, assessment, and prejudice reduction. The chapters are brief and provide more of a survey of issues to consider rather than an in-depth analysis of them. Thus, the edited volume offers a starting point for understanding some of the philosophical and practical implications of multicultural education.

Carlos Diaz opens the volume with a brief introduction and a chapter that describes the state of education in the United States and the changes needed for the third millennium. There are chapters by well-known scholars in multicultural education, such as James Banks, who outlines the goals, possibilities, and challenges of multicultural education; Geneva Gay and Cherry McGee Banks, who focus on teachers' role and practices; Christine Sleeter (with Rodolfo Puente) and Sonia Nieto, who discuss the need for multicultural education to center special education and language diversity respectively; and Valerie Ooka Pang (with Andre Branch), who describes the impact of school climate in creating effective urban schools. Some chapters deal with specific issues such as learning styles (by Karen Swisher and Dilys Schoorman), gender effects (by Jane Bernard-Powers), immigrant students (by Dilys Schoorman), assessment (by Patsy Ceros-Livingston), the role of school in deterring prejudice (Ilene Allgood), and education for human rights (Ricardo Garcia). Although many of the chapters discuss implications for teacher education, only one chapter, by Angela Rhone, directly discusses teaching multicultural education (specifically from a foundations perspective) to prospective teachers. Diaz also writes the last chapter, in which he responds to some of the conservative critiques of multicultural education.

The chapters vary in their definitional approach to multicultural education. Some authors focus solely on race and ethnicity, whereas others address gender, language, immigrant status, and disability. The authors also differ in their practical implications—although some suggest additions to curricular representation or bridging between school/mainstream and nonmainstream cultures, others discuss the necessity for structural transformation in order to achieve equitable education for *all* students (once again, however, *all students* means different things to different authors). The concept of culture is treated differently, as well. Although all of the authors who write about



cultural diversity make the claim that cultural differences should not be generalized to deny individual differences, some of the authors then do just that by specifying cultural traits of racialized groups, such as African American, Hispanic, and Asian students. The chapters also vary in their quality of writing and scholarship, as well as their ability to "inspire critical reflection and lively debate" (back cover).

The fact that Diaz, as the volume's editor, does not offer any clear guidelines to the aims and use of the volume can be seen as either a strength or a weakness. Readers can approach the wide range of chapters as distinct pieces and utilize them as supplemental readings for an introductory social foundations or multicultural education course. However, I find the impact of this volume weakened by the lack of thematic organization and coherent purpose, which the editor could have provided. After the first few chapters, I began to wonder: Why *this* set of chapters? The collection would have benefited from a narrative guide as to how the various chapters advance multicultural theory and practice. For example, where is this volume located within, and what does it contribute to the existing literature in the field of multicultural education? The chapters are in no particular order and exist as distinct pieces rather than as an interchange of multiple perspectives. Although each chapter is informative, it is not clear how they connect with each other. For example, how do the chapters complement and challenge each other? In some instances the readers encounter redundancy among the chapters. In other instances conflicting ideas suggest productive opportunities for a stimulating and critical dialogue among the authors. Instead, the authors seem to have no knowledge of what content is covered in the other chapters, which would have allowed them to respond to each other.

The fact that the volume is scattered with such diverse and distinct chapters is not necessarily an inherent weakness. However, such a format critically requires the editor to guide the readers to see the relationships among and the implications of these differences. A potential strength of edited volumes is in compiling chapters that, when read together, achieve a purpose beyond what the chapters offer on their own-- whether it is to support a thesis, to present multiple perspectives, or to present various parts of a whole. *Multicultural Education for the 21st Century*, as a volume, does not fulfill this potential. However, as a collection of distinct chapters on selective issues within the field of multicultural education, it provides teachers and students in introductory social foundation and multicultural education courses important and interesting issues to consider.

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Anthropology & Education

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