



**Teaching Hispanic Children.** Toni Griego Jones and Mary Lou Fuller. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2003. 160 pp.

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Toni Griego Jones and Mary Lou Fuller discuss three principles they assumed when writing their book:

1. Teachers and prospective teachers care about all children, including Hispanic children.
2. Teachers have a desire to teach all children, including Hispanic children.
3. Teachers are interested in knowing more about how to be successful with all the children entrusted to them, including Hispanic children (p. xi).

These assumptions situate readers of this text in the authors' premise that the challenge to changing subtractive views of Hispanic children that predominate in schools to more additive ones lies in providing teachers both information and a reflective space for an examination of their beliefs. The label Hispanic is used as an umbrella term that encompasses primarily Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Central and South Americans. Both authors write from their on-going commitment and dedication to assisting teachers in understanding the issues related to teaching Hispanic children.

Griego Jones and Fuller present a broad range of information about Hispanic populations that classroom teachers can translate into a knowledge base for transforming classroom practice. In addition, they insist that teachers must acquire a reflective stance to fully utilize the provided information: self-reflection is a necessary dimension of the desired transformation. An entire chapter is dedicated to outlining how beliefs impact teachers' learning, where teachers' beliefs come from, and finally, the research on teachers' beliefs about racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities including those specifically related to Hispanic students. I found this information very useful for the work of teacher educators. I agree with the authors that teachers must examine their own beliefs regarding teaching children of diverse cultural backgrounds.

The text is designed for teacher educators to use with teachers, both in preparation and in-service. In describing their purpose, the authors state, "The book is full of information about Hispanic populations, but the focus is on the teacher and what teachers should know and understand to teach Hispanic students effectively" (p. xii). Their task is certainly immense, one which they undertake by providing information that is pertinent



to Hispanic populations including current demographics; historical contexts; the role of language and culture in schooling, families, and communities; and a description of informational resources.

The authors are to be commended for addressing the implied challenges presented to teacher education. The authors' efforts to address the majority of the teaching force—predominantly white, female and middle class—are certainly laudable and valuable. The changing demographics facing schools in the United States demand this effort. In addition, the authors call attention to the fact that during the 1970s and 1980s, after the initial activism of the Civil Rights Movement, there was a brief increase in racial/ethnic minorities going into teaching. During the 1990s and beyond, fewer minorities are becoming teachers. This trend, coupled with the current federal policy expressed by the *No Child Left Behind Act*—with increased accountability and greater emphasis on pushing children into *English Only* classrooms—places greater demand on majority culture teachers to become knowledgeable about the issues of educating Hispanic children. This book supports teachers in working toward the urgent task of rethinking classroom practices, and restructuring schools to meet the unique needs of Hispanic children.

But a weakness lies within the book's strength. The authors attempt the immense task of providing a broad range of information in a mere 137 pages. The book provides a useful structure that can be adapted to a course for those unfamiliar with the issues surrounding the education of Hispanic children. It necessarily must be supplemented with further readings on the topics presented, as well as in-depth discussions, in order to develop a more substantive dimension. To their credit, Griego Jones and Fuller present valuable examples of practical applications within the information they provide. They do this by including two very effective features in their text. The authors reflect on salient issues presented in the chapters from their own personal and professional experiences. In addition, they include a useful theory-practice link by providing suggested activities at the end of each chapter, some of which seem very useful for both reflective and pedagogical purposes. I especially liked the activities they suggest for an examination of stereotypes regarding racial/ethnic groups.

Although the authors present an already familiar discussion in their first chapter regarding the changing demographics of teachers and schools in the United States, the information is also distinguished by containing a brief discussion on identity labels and the diversity associated within the Hispanic population. This information is an example of some of the ways that they provide a critical lens on schooling for Hispanic students. I believe Griego Jones and Fuller were a bit cautious in presenting this sociopolitical dimension, perhaps based on their extensive experience in teacher education.

Finally, it would be beneficial for the authors to continue the theory-practice link and include a chapter on ways that teachers can move toward praxis in their work in classrooms. Through praxis, teachers can envision ways that they can enact change even outside of their individual classroom practice, in school, community, and district levels.



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In short, I found *Teaching Hispanic Children* very informative and useful, especially for engaging the complex discussion of how to restructure classrooms and schools to meet the needs of Hispanic children in schools.

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