International Perspectives on Intercultural Education. Kenneth Cushner, ed. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998. 387 pp.

BARRY OSBORNE, James Cook University

Kenneth Cushner's book is courageous and innovative. It examines 13 national education responses to the challenges of dealing with cultural diversity. To this end, Cushner asked each nation's contributing authors to provide

- a brief description of their national system,
- descriptive data on the country's ethnic demographics,
- a discussion of perceived obstacles to addressing intercultural issues in schools and solutions to overcoming these obstacles, and
- information about how teacher preparation institutions address these issues.

He begins by explaining why he asked these questions. Cushner also explains that a range of terms are used across countries to discuss dealing with ethnic diversity—multicultural, cross-cultural, international, and intercultural education. So it is courageous to draw comparisons across diverse contexts and diverse ways of seeing, and thus tackling, the challenges of intercultural education. The authors handle the first two tasks well but are somewhat uneven on the last two. Although Cushner does not provide regional headings, he has grouped them as follows.

Australasia and South East Asia. Chapter 2, on Australia, deals with policy changes, particularly those relating to multiculturalism, languages other than English, and racism. It describes as "patchy" (p. 27) responses by teacher education institutions to expanding diversity, although many encourage "intercultural sensitization" (p. 28). The authors conclude that while Australia seems to have "shaken off much of its racist past" and improved its school curricula, it remains vulnerable to "groups disaffected by the dramatic social and economic changes [accompanying] globalization and economic rationalism" (p. 33). Chapter 3, on New Zealand, is light on details about teacher education programs. However, it provides a good overview of the history of Pakeha/Maori relations to frame responses to subsequent migration, policy shifts on cultural issues, Maori initiatives including "Te Kohango Reo" (which is successfully revitalizing indigenous cultures and language), and moves toward Maori autonomy. The authors argue for language policy covering community languages as well as English as a second language, but they do not deal with teacher preparation. Chapter 4, on Malaysia, with all its stratified diversity, explains that cultural issues are dealt with indirectly because of fear of fanning the conflicts of 1969: "The need for intercultural education exists. [It is] a massive task. . . . and teacher education is the

place to start," even though "no hint of the necessity of intercultural education is acknowledged" (p. 88).

Europe. Chapter 5, on the Netherlands, shows that there are strong policies on instruction both in the first language and in Dutch as a second language. However, practices are not entirely effective (pp. 106–107), and changes are being mooted to move first language instruction to after-school hours. Cultural minorities are underrepresented among primary teachers. Chapter 6, on Britain, highlights general policies to deal with racism and ethnic diversity and emphasizes that "student teachers, and no doubt teacher educators, are often inadequately aware of the multicultural and antiracist education issues" (p. 134). Chapter 7 explains that in Spain there is considerable diversity, which includes gypsies. Attempts to deal with intercultural issues, racism, and civic education are recent and underresearched. Chapter 8 highlights the linguistic and religious diversity of Romania, much of which has existed since the Middle Ages. Studies of intercultural issues "have been completely neglected" (p. 179), and teacher preparation does not "address" such issues either (p. 182).

Africa. Chapter 9, on Nigeria, highlights not only the complexity of but also the interrelationships among politics, education, and ethnicity and describes formal and informal responses to these challenges in a nation with "negligible . . . national consciousness" (p. 206). Chapter 10, on South Africa, also attests to the enormous challenges confronted recently in trying to deal with structural inequalities in wealth, access to schooling, health, and housing across diverse and numerous minorities: "Teachers, as well as educational authorities were completely unprepared to deal with the new situation" (p. 221). Although there are "positive indications" (pp. 223–227), considerable obstacles remain, and some suggestions are made for the future. Chapter 11, on Ghana, places intercultural education across five major "culturally distinct groups" (p. 242) with 28 main languages in the context of having to expand education to all. Teachers are ill-prepared for the task (p. 251).

North America. Chapter 12 highlights America's growing diversity (p. 261), pluralist nature—in the face of segregationist policies until fairly recently—and inequality in school outcomes across class and ethnic lines. Again there is concern that the ethnic origins of the "teacher corps" are not keeping pace with the increasing diversity of the school population (p. 275), while few teacher education programs are including multicultural issues (p. 277). Conversely, theorizing multicultural education is strong, and some programs are working. Chapter 13, on Canada, highlights the dilemmas of First Nations and bilingual education and describes soft options of learning about minorities without providing access to school success (p. 315); but while it argues

against dealing with race, it fails to mention racism or power differentials related to inequality. "Multiculturalism does not flourish in schools" (p. 315), and accordingly, teacher preparation needs change to improve multicultural education.

In the final chapter, Cushner concludes that there are common issues emerging from the 13 brief and probably contestable overviews. These include the need to deal with pluralism, including indigenous people, refugees, and immigrants (and guest workers) while taking into account power differentials and linguistic diversity and while incorporating inclusive curricula. Successful resolution may include diverse teacher recruitment and appropriate preparation as well as national commitments to prioritize intercultural issues. This innovative and challenging book builds a basis for developing such a commitment.