



## **Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives**

James A. Banks, Ed, Jossey-Bass (2007).

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A quick internet search of college and university mission statements reveals a growing emphasis on educating for responsibility, citizenship, multicultural perspectives, and global awareness. Especially in recent years, initiatives of organizations such as the American Council on Education and the American Association of Colleges and Universities have sought to foster American higher education's engagement with global learning and citizenship. College faculty face the formidable task of developing curricula and learning experiences aimed at helping students grow into responsible citizens who appreciate diversity, understand global interconnectedness, and are prepared to act sensitively to both local and global concerns. To achieve these lofty goals, there is a great need for high-quality resources to support faculty development.

Just such an excellent resource, James Banks' edited volume *Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives*, grew out of The Bellagio Citizenship Education and Diversity Project. In 2002, educators from around the world met to identify shared problems and issues related to multicultural and citizenship education; to identify and describe important research that could be of help in developing educational programming; to explore and exchange promising practices and to develop possible guidelines. According to Banks, the book represents one part of a larger project whose goal is "to reform citizenship education so that it will advance democracy as well as be responsive to the needs of cultural, ethnic, and immigrant groups within multicultural nation states." Twenty-six authors from ten countries have contributed chapters to this wide-ranging study. Chapters address overarching historical, philosophical, and theoretical issues along with a large number of specific challenges, goals, and strategies for multicultural and citizenship education in selected countries.

Banks introduces the volume by delineating a major concern for education: "Multicultural societies are faced with the problem of constructing nation-states that reflect and incorporate the diversity of their citizens and yet have an overarching set of shared values, ideals, and goals to which all citizens are committed." The increasing diversity experienced in many nations around the world due to rising migration and mobility presents new and serious challenges to citizenship education. A tension between diversity and unity runs through the chapters, tying them together thematically while also allowing readers to see how differently countries around the world approach (and have approached) these dual challenges through formal and informal education.

This book is valuable for a number of reasons. The three general and overarching chapters of Part 1 help readers develop a vocabulary within a historical and conceptual framework. The authors lay out contemporary challenges for multicultural and citizenship education in the midst of competing trends toward both nationalism and globalization. They also explore changing and contested concepts of citizenship and identity, sketch historical approaches to dealing with racial and ethnic differences in a variety of national contexts, outline different models of citizenship education, and raise important questions for educators to consider.

Issues and questions raised in Part 1 take on relevance and shape in the body of the collection—Parts 2-6—which consist of in-depth case studies of the history, current state, and future directions for diversity and citizenship education in the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Brazil, England, Germany, Russia, Japan, India, China, Israel, and “the new Palestine.” These studies not only inform readers about historical and contemporary educational approaches in different countries, they also, by virtue of their thoughtful and intentional juxtaposition, bring important commonalities and differences to light. Traditional immigration nations contrast with new immigration states; the legacies of slavery and colonialism play out in a variety of ways depending on context. I appreciated reading a book dedicated to global perspectives which not only signaled its focus in its title and its attention to representative nations of five continents, but which actually consisted of the work and the voices of authors from many of these countries.

Finally, this book is valuable in its attention to curriculum and, to a lesser extent, pedagogy, particularly in Part 7, the concluding chapter by Walter C. Parker, though one might wish for a second volume dedicated in its entirety to the topics of global approaches to curriculum and pedagogy for diversity and citizenship education. Parker’s thoughtful concluding chapter draws on and analyzes the previous chapters and then explores implications of approaching diversity and citizenship education from the perspective of the different “milieus” in which teachers and students operate. He closes the chapter and the volume with an appeal for multi-national collaboration in developing shared curricula, even while recognizing the significant challenges this work would involve. Nevertheless, he maintains, such collaboration would potentially produce better, more thoughtful multinational efforts at addressing serious global problems (such as racism and discrimination, climate change, the growing gap between the world’s rich and poor, the spread of infectious disease, etc.); it could enhance each participant country’s self-knowledge by providing outside perspectives; it would involve peer review from global partners; and, most lofty of all, it might help produce a kind of “planetary ‘public’” sphere.



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