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Guided by sociocultural theory with a broader orientation to social justice, the second edition of the book by Nieto attempts to engage educators in a critical dialogue, inquiry, and reflection on the role of “culture” (Nieto, 2009, pp. 136-146) in an increasingly culturally diverse and educationally inequitable society in the U.S. With the same goal and conceptual framework as the first edition (Nieto, 2002), this volume adds a few new chapters that highlight the recent accountability movement and the hybridity of identity. The volume contributes to the field of study by continuing a decidedly critical, theory-grounded perspective on culture and school education.

The book consists primarily of the articles and book chapters the author has previously published (sometimes with her coworkers) in the past decade. In the total of 15 chapters (not including the Introduction), the author divides

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them into 4 different sections. Part I *Setting the Ground Work* (Chapter 1-6) critically revisits the sociopolitical contexts and its relevance to school reform and multicultural education. Part II *Identity and Belonging* (Chapter 7-9) underscores the centrality of identity on learning and success. Part III *Becoming Critical Teachers* (Chapter 10-11) raises questions about teachers' responsibility in face of inequitable political realities. Part IV *Praxis in the Classroom* (Chapter 12-14) intends to offer insights about how to go affirm diversity in practice.

Before Part I, the *Introduction* offers a thorough overview of the book and expounds several key concepts in sociocultural theory. Chapter 1 starts with a profound question about the purpose of school in an age of "functionalism." Nieto proposes two primary goals that should guide all educational practices: (1) "to provide all students of all backgrounds the opportunity to learn through an equitable and high quality education (2) to help students become critical and productive members of our democratic society" (p. 30).

Chapter 2 is a brief chapter inviting the readers to rethink the impacts of using labels to categorize people, for example, "NE" or "ELLs." Having raised readers' sensitivity to culture stereotyping, Chapter 3 extends the critiques to the sociopolitical contexts in which myths and ideologies against immigrants and difference permeate. Subsequently, the author proposes a multicultural education framework that demands equitable learning opportunities for immigrant students, emphasizing equity before equality and replacing the deterministic term "achievement gap" with "resource/expectations gap." Meanwhile, she mentions how the current NCLB policy has dictated educators to work within the standards and left more poor children behind. With the discussions of the political realities and multicultural education positioned side by side, the readers are able to explore the challenges and opportunities surrounding multicultural education.

Chapter 4 continues the discussion on the features of multicultural education which can "prepare student for active membership in a democracy" (p. 77). ME is defined as

being “antiracist education,” “basic education,” “important for all students,” “pervasive,” “education for social justice,” “a process,” and “critical pedagogy” (p. 68). Positioning public education as “the front line of the larger battle for equality and social justice” (p. 105), Chapter 5 concentrates on the public education contexts and illustrates how various theories and programs have been employed to explain and remedy the school failures confronted by culturally diverse students. For example, the strivings for desegregation, bilingual education, and multicultural education have been a constant battle. Despite the broken promises in the past, the chapter concludes with an optimistic hope for public education, calling the nation to commit its resources and moral to public education. Continuing the theme of bilingual education, Chapter 6 argues that a more inclusive multicultural education should encompass education for language minority children, reexamining the boundaries between disciplines. Building on the past research of Thomas and Collier (1997) and Corson (2003), Nieto highlights the correlation between bilingual programs and minority students’ academic achievement. Minority language education therefore is not only about language diversity but also “an issue of educational equity” (p. 127).

In Part II, Chapter 7, Nieto discusses the nature of culture and its implications for learning. In defining culture, the author posits that culture is “dynamic” (p. 137), “multifaceted” (p. 138), “dialectical” (p. 144), “embedded in context” (p. 139), political, “socially constructed” (p. 142) and therefore “learned” (p. 143). Also highlighted in this chapter is the use of ethnography to explore the critical role of “cultural discontinuity” in schooling experiences. Shifting from a heavy dose of theoretical discussion, Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 employ students’ voices to exemplify that identity matters and identities intersect. Mainstream curriculum, pedagogy, school policies, and categories can be oppressive to students’ identity development. Chapter 9 in particular provides an illuminating example of a transracial adoptee raised by white adoptive parents. The case resonates with Chapter 2 and signifies the imperative need for us to look beyond categories.

Part III mainly addresses teachers, with Chapter 10 posing fundamental multicultural questions to teachers and reinforcing the structural inequality argument discussed in the previous chapters. In Chapter 11, Nieto further proposes that an effective teachers should have “(1) a sense of mission, (2) solidarity with, and empathy for their students, (3) the courage to challenge mainstream knowledge, (4) improvisation, and (5) a passion for justice” (p. 231). An interesting case study— “Why We Teach” Project— is introduced and unfolds some inspirational narratives from teachers committed to social justice and the ethics of care.

The book concludes with Part IV providing a relatively short discussion on praxis as its ongoing dedication to its target readers, the teachers in the classroom. Chapter 12 discusses four different levels of multicultural education, including tolerance, acceptance, respect, and affirmation. It is noted that in the last level, “conflict is not avoided but rather accepted as an inevitable part of learning” (p. 257). Following the author’s belief in antiracist multicultural education, Chapter 13 uses a white teacher’s narrative to accentuate that being nice is not enough. “Critical care” should include active engagement in “students’ actual personal lives” and adamant commitments to remove “the institutional barriers they encounter” (p. 266). Finally, Chapter 14 recapitulates the importance of “affirming diversity” in educational practices.

This book is noteworthy in that through theory-grounded discussions and a few evidential narratives, it consistently encourages the readers to imagine and create an equitable reality, taking a proactive approach in social betterment instead of letting status quo paralyze us. She breaks down theories into components by revisiting key terms like experience (p. 7), identity/ hybridity (p. 9, p. 211), context (p. 13), equity (p. 45), achievement gap (p. 46), and culture (p. 136), all of which help educators to re-conceptualize the role of “culture” in education on a more concrete level. Nieto also tries to engage the readers in this critical dialogue by posing philosophical questions along with her analysis. Educators confounded by school failures may be encouraged to pursue a more in-depth, critical, and systemic analysis of

the current educational structure and political contexts. Others unaware of educational inequality across the nation may be challenged to recognize other silenced realities. Another innovative part about this book is that it offers examples (Chapter 2 and Chapter 9) about “cultural chameleons” (p. 201) and encourages educators to recognize identity as hybrid, heterogeneous and complex. Most of all, demonstrating a genuine commitment to social change, Nieto has attempted to make the academic text more accessible to practitioners by providing follow-up sections such as *Critical Questions*, *Activity for Your Classroom*, *Community-Based Activity and Advocacy*, and *Supplementary Resources* at the end of every chapter. Readers interested in praxis may find these resources a good complement to the theory-laden discussion.

Overall, the volume is stimulating and represents an important contribution; however, it could be strengthened with newer insights from the author. Because it is primarily a collection of the researcher’s previously published pieces, some chapters often overlap and are propitious regarding the conceptual framework and political orientation. The organization of the book results in a somewhat disproportionate distribution of chapters within each section. For example, although the book is intended for educators, the discussions on praxis are brief, whereas the number of the chapters in Part I, which focus on the sociopolitical context, has doubled in the second edition. Nieto may have tried to address this by offering supplementary resources for practitioners at the end of each chapter; however, it would be useful to provide a few more case studies, particularly successful ones, such as those presented in Part IV. I believe a good balance of discussions on the conceptualization and implementation of multicultural education would make the book more engaging and motivating to front-line practitioners.

Despite its importance, some may also find the emphatic use of “race, ethnicity, and language as the major lenses to view and understand multicultural education” (p. 40) limiting and detached from the author’s later arguments, which focus on culture as multifaceted (see p. 138) or “Identities are in flux

and more complicated than static labels can hope to convey” (p. 209). The complexity of issue related to identity could also be further developed by exploring other cultures such as single parenthood (cf. Polakow, 1993), adoption, consumerism, gender, religion, socio-economic class, etc which oftentimes intersect with the racial/ethnic categories. Another place where culture that could have been further problematized is the conceptualization of “linguistic diversity” in Chapter 6. Although the author stresses the importance of the “native languages” for immigrants, the possibilities of hybrid linguistic forms such as Chicano Spanish could also have been explored (Gonzalez, 2001).

I have discussed several strengths and areas where the volume could be further developed. Given the complexity of issues related to the broad issues the author attempts to address, this effort is generally successful in capturing the complexity and fluidity of cultures and include both theory and praxis in one single book. Overall, Nieto accomplishes her goal in potentially engaging the readers in critical, informed discussions on educational inequality with both theory and telling stories from teachers and students. Since it is an intellectually stimulating piece that poses more questions than answers and more macro- critiques than contextualized solutions, I would especially recommend this book to graduate students who have some teaching experiences yet are baffled by the educational inequality in public school system. I would also recommend the book to a team of educators perplexed by school failures because the book can serve as an advanced guide to their collective, critical reflections on educational practices.

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