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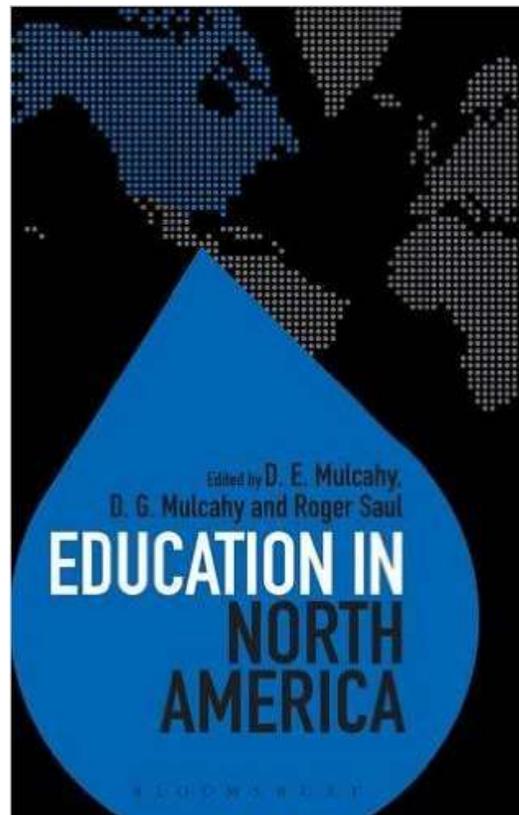
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Education in North America, edited by D. E. Mulcahy, D. G. Mulcahy, and Roger Saul, offers a comparative overview of Canadian and American education history, systems, and challenges, and does so by presenting an eclectic combination of policy, theory, and pedagogy. This book, one of approximately 16 released or planned volumes within the *Education Around the World Series* edited by Colin Brock, contains twenty articles roughly divided between Canada and the United States. Curiously, the traditional definition of North America as including Mexico and Central American geography to the Isthmus of Panama, is not the definition at work in this volume, so readers will need to look to other volumes or texts for a treatment of Mexican education.

I approached this volume from the perspective of an American reader interested in all things Canadian. Others, of course, could view the side-by-side contrast of American and Canadian education differently, depending on their perspectives, biases, or interest pursuing a comparative stance, but my reading of this volume offered several noteworthy findings.



One such finding was in the area of diversity in education. Part One: Canada contains a rich emphasis on diversity, with indigeneity, multilingualism, and immigration all addressed. Christou and Cousins' "Educational History Themes, Movements and Moments," addresses the diverse populations served by Canadian schools almost immediately, with the particular history of multilingualism, indigenous peoples, and immigration addressed explicitly through an informative historical discussion of Canadian educational foundations. Similarly, Abdi's "Difference, Educational Equity and Social Justice in Canada: Critical Analyses. Part One: Canada" suggests a rich vein of interest in diversity among Canadian scholars of education. In this regard, the editors of this volume were effective in communicating the nature of diversity in Canadian education.

Part Two tackles the entire landscape of U.S. education. In doing so, the editors were clearly beset with a number of difficult questions: What to include? What to omit? What to emphasize? What to explore as new terrain? These are difficult choices. While several chapters explicitly address foundational issues related to historical change in America, American urban versus rural demographic shifts, and American civil rights history, the attempted focus on diversity in this half of the book is less coherent and clear. Chapters range from broad historical syntheses, on one hand, to very specific case studies, on the other. Two chapters, Boynton and Redmond's "World Language Education: Connecting with The Rest of the World," and Ogden and Brennan's "International Education in the United States," are strong on their own merits, but seem out of place as considerations of hoped for outcomes in U.S. education, rather than widespread practices reinforced by policy and attitudes. Current political realities, for instance, suggest that many Americans remain adamantly opposed to the internationalization or linguistic

enfranchisement of diverse learners. Recent presidential campaign rhetoric, for example, has included some presidential candidates disparaging ethnic groups, or calling for their exclusion from entry to the U.S. The acceptance and popularity of these statements by at least a portion of American voters suggests that American attitudes toward ethnic and linguistic diversity are still troubled and complex, and that this complexity still stands in the way of the enfranchisement of diversity in U.S. schooling.

Some passages stand out, however, for their consideration of U.S. educational realities. Of particular note and interest is Casella's "Demographic Change and Suburban School Policy Challenges," which does an excellent job of reframing urban education through the lenses of city, suburban, and exurban demographic, economic, and policy experiences. Many readers will be fascinated by particular juxtaposition that this chapter sets up – between American suburban education and the challenges of economic, demographic, and linguistic diversity, in comparison with Saul and Nichols' "Canadian Teacher Training Revisited: Community-Based Education as a Response to Changing Times." The latter piece treats a novel teacher preparation approach to understanding the explosion of demographic change, diversity, and economic challenges in Canada's largest suburbs, those that surround Toronto. In other cases, Part Two of this volume is weaker in its consideration of the multicultural landscape of American experience; at times diversity in American education is represented in skimpy fashion, with federal policy and civil rights history doing much of the heavy lifting and specific examples missing.

The contrast between the two parts of *Education in North America* is most pronounced when we consider North American indigenous people. "Part One: Canada" reveals a central concern with Indigenous education, whether viewed through historical lenses, or in current policy

and practice. “Part Two: United States” offers almost no consideration of Native American education, and no single chapter considers the educational plight of the first Americans within the context of American educational history, policy, or academic outcomes. So it is that Walton’s “Transforming Indigenous Education in Canada: A Turning Tide,” is an important piece for the entire volume, considering as it does the history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, the embarrassments and cruelties of the residential school system that persisted into the Twentieth Century, and the prospects for better policy and pedagogical practice. This chapter could have been accompanied by a parallel treatment of Native American education, given rich work done by many U.S. scholars of Indian education, and given the movement toward language revitalization that holds promise in numerous Native American communities and schools. Pieces by Rury and Kolodny do important synthesizing work on the history of American educational philosophy, legal frameworks, and policy, but they neglect America’s first citizens, Native Americans, a problematic omission. By contrast, the discussion of Canadian educational foundations elsewhere in this volume builds explicitly on the history of the first people of Canada, its indigenous people, and considerations of policy and pedagogy follow from this consideration. Hopefully, this gap will inspire other writers to reframe U.S. educational foundations discussions so as to be more inclusive of our first Americans, whose continent this was long before European travel to North America.

The tension between local and federal control is in many cases an instance of parallelism between U.S. and Canadian educational experience. While the timing of this volume no doubt made for limited discussion of the advent of the Common Core State Standards and their impact on American classrooms, it is the case that numerous passages with Part Two of this

volume concern the complicated history and sets of policy moves that led to a current American “standardized curriculum.” Additionally, Part One adequately describes the history of nineteenth and twentieth century policy developments that made for a more national form of education in Canada, even as local control (in the case of Canada, provincial) is still nominally the status quo.

Abdi richly describes one policy development, Canadian multicultural educational provisions, in chapter 3, as do the editors in their overview of Canada. The Canadian Multicultural Policy of 1971 and the Multicultural Act of 1988 represent significant federal reframing of educational practice so as to create a more inclusive Canadian educational landscape. While Americans may be comfortable to one degree or another with multicultural education on a local level, and while educators in the United States have long made inquiries into multicultural theory and practice, No Child Left Behind and its legatee, Race to the Top, consider culture difference in terms of deficits and gaps, rather than assets and identity. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a moment in 2015 when American politicians and/or educational policy-makers would propose such a national framework for diversity in education. Perhaps some part of this can be attributed to the influence of official bilingualism in Canadian life, a reality that is unimaginable for many Americans, and which may actually be further from any kind of realization, given current federal mandates. Some Americans would argue that local control of culturally sensitive and competent teaching has been eroded by federal requirements that loom large over every pedagogical move in American classrooms. This juxtaposition is fascinating, and this reader found himself wanting more discussion; of course, this is a great strength of this volume, as it poses these contrasts for motivated scholars to consider, investigate, and address.

Readers of this volume may fall into one of three camps. Some may find great utility in directly comparing American and Canadian educational systems, policies, and pedagogical practices. This volume and hopefully, this review, reveal the numerous questions which merit further investigation. Others, especially those who work in educational foundations, may find the synthesizing analyses and arguments of several pieces to be of great use in preparing new historical discussion, reframing foundational theories of education in these two countries, or supplementing course texts in educational foundations coursework, particularly at the graduate level. Finally, some will find their way to this volume because several chapter contributions do great work applying theoretical constructs to particular educational challenges. Stemhagen's "Education for Social Justice in the United States: The Peculiar Case of Mathematics Education," is an interesting piece that seems a bit lost within this volume. Hopefully, diligent readers and researchers will find these pieces within this volume.

As I hope this review suggests, the editorial challenge of placing American and Canadian education side-by-side in a relatively slender volume is one not to be taken lightly,

and Mulcahy, Mulcahy, and Saul are to be applauded for their efforts for sampling topics in meaningful and interesting ways. Chapter selection for such an ambitious volume is a difficult task; similarly, editorial effort to establish focal themes is hard enough for one writer with one topic, let alone the comparison of two nations comprising an entire continent, and addressing every level of education, from primary experiences to higher education. Still, this reader wished at times the editors had been more successful in creating unified approaches to summarizing North American education. Additionally, while it makes good sense to treat American and Canadian education comparatively, the absence of Mexican (and Central American) treatment is puzzling. Even so, readers have reason to pursue the rich tapestry they have given us. By offering us a diverse album of "North American Education snapshots," a careful reader may discern patterns of commonality, divergence, and opportunity in this comparison of Canadian and American educational systems. Furthermore, the gaps, juxtapositions, and parallels offer all of us in educational research points of inquiry for new investigations and syntheses of what it means to call something North American education.

About the Reviewer

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An Assistant Professor of Literacy Education at the University of Minnesota Duluth, CW Johnson is most recently the author, with Burke Scarbrough, of "The Role of Video in a Literacy Collaboration to Re-Engage Struggling Students" in *Literacy Research, Practice and Evaluation; Vol 6; Video Research in Disciplinary Literacies*, edited by E. Ortlieb, L. Shanahan, and M. McVee. Mr. Johnson has degrees from Harvard University, The University of Minnesota, and the University of Missouri-Columbia.



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