



October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015

ISSN 1094-5296

Hayashi, Akiko, and Joseph J. Tobin. (2015). *Teaching Embodied: Cultural Practice in Japanese Preschools*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

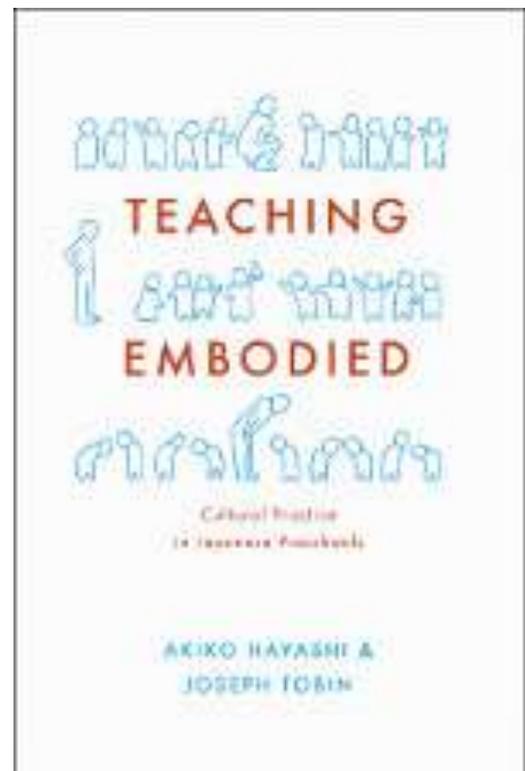
Pp. vii + 187

ISBN: 9780226263106 (paper)  
9780226263076 (cloth)  
9780226263243 (e-book)

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In *Teaching Embodied*, Akiko Hiyashi and Joseph Tobin bring closure of sorts to the earlier *Preschools in Three Cultures* project by conducting microanalysis of the videotaped preschool scenes themselves, as well as analysis of new video-viewing interviews with educators. For those of us who have long followed this project, it is satisfying and rewarding to see these authors dig into these rich visual sources on implicit cultural practices in teaching.

For those unfamiliar with the prior projects, *Preschool in Three Cultures* (Tobin Wu & Davidson, 1989) compared the responses of educators in Japan, China, and the United States to scenes from preschool classrooms videotaped in a school in each country. In *Preschool in Three Cultures Revisited* (Tobin, Hsueh, & Karasawa 2009), researchers returned 20 years later to the same schools and also to new schools in each country, again interviewing educators about video clips from the preschools and adding an important longitudinal dimension to the analysis. Hayashi, a “Japanese psychologist-turned-anthropologist,”



participated in the *Preschool in Three Cultures Revisited* research.

I confess that I am not a neutral reader. I have tracked this project from its beginning, while attending to similar analyses (Ben-Peretz & Halkes, 1987; Spindler & Spindler 1987) and emulating its methods myself (Anderson-Levitt, 2002). Not surprisingly, I was involved as a reviewer of *Teaching Embodied* before its publication. However, I think even readers unfamiliar with the prior comparative studies will find this volume engaging and enlightening on the topics of teaching and of cultural practice.

*Teaching Embodied*, unlike the prior studies, focuses specifically on Japan, and specifically on how preschool teachers supported children's social-emotional development. The authors carried out new research, first by reanalyzing the transcripts of the prior interviews with Japanese teachers and directors, and then by reediting and reanalyzing video records they had made in a Tokyo preschool for the 2009 study and in a Kyoto preschool for the 1989 and 2009 studies. They added videos made in Meisei preschool for the deaf, a unique school teaching strictly in sign language. Hayashi and Tobin then re-interviewed many of the teachers and school directors at each school, asking them to comment on often fresh or re-edited scenes. Parts of some analyses have previously appeared in *Comparative Education*, *Ethos: Journal of the Society for Psychological Anthropology*, and *Asia-Pacific Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education*, but about half of the volume is new.

Each of the six central chapters works as a stand-alone analysis, focusing on a distinct concept or process. However, the theme of teaching as cultural practice runs throughout the book. Chapter 2 explores the concept of *mimamoru*, "teaching by watching and waiting," as an explanation of the decisions teachers sometimes make not to intervene when children fight. Here, illustrations from Meisei preschool for deaf children vividly reinforce illustrations from the other schools already familiar to readers of the *Preschools in Three Cultures* books. The discussion of *mimamoru* leads to the concept of *amae*, a need to be nurtured, and thence

to discussion of a “pedagogy of feelings” in Chapter 3. The authors show how teachers encourage children to learn *amae* and *omoiyari* (empathy), emphasizing how they value children’s “embodied experience of emotion,” including feeling sad and feeling physical pain and discomfort. Chapter 4, “The Pedagogy of Peripheral Participation,” shifts our attention from children at the center of disputes, such as girls fighting over a teddy bear, to what one teacher had called the “gallery” of other children watching emotionally charged scenes. By re-editing their videos, Hayashi and Tobin came to recognize what the preschool teachers had already pointed out, that children on the periphery were actually active participants in encounters and were also learning vicariously by participating on the edge. This chapter, then, offers material for reflecting on learning as peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger 1991). Chapter 5, “Learning Embodied Culture” explores Japanese preschools as “places where Japanese young children learn to move, use, and position their bodies in characteristically Japanese ways and therefore, in a crucial sense, where they become Japanese.” The authors contrast formal bowing forward with informal tilting of the head and body sideways, and show how one boy struggled between the two registers as he tried to get a girl to accept his apology. With reference to Erving Goffman and Marcel Mauss, and hence to practices not specific to Japan, they also illustrate how children learn within the first few months at preschool to coordinate their bodies (“intercorporeality”) so that even when rolling on the floor in a fight they avoid hurting each other with elbows and knees.

For those of us who study teachers and teacher education, Chapter 6 on teachers’ expertise is especially rich. (Like Chapter 5, it offers previously unpublished analyses.) Reporting on interviews in which teachers and their colleagues looked back at their teaching as captured on video 10 years earlier, Hayashi and Tobin show what kind of expertise teachers develop *after* the fifth year of teaching. As teachers learn to take their time and to trust children, their practice becomes less self-conscious and more embodied. Here a metaphor

introduced early in the volume becomes meaningful: Preschool teaching is like playing soccer in that it “demands of its expert practitioners the ability to combine, on the fly, a repertoire of embodied skills to cope with constantly changing situations, no two of which are precisely alike” (p. 11). And how is this expertise developed? Through “experience (maybe),” say the teachers; by trying and failing many times and by getting feedback from directors and colleagues. Interestingly, ideal feedback is gentle and vague, such as, “That was a tough situation, wasn’t it?” or more simply yet, an unfinished phrase, “It’s a bit ...” Although the Japanese guidance is even subtler and more restrained, I am reminded of D’Andrade’s observation of U.S. adults learning through what he called “guided discovery,” that is, trial-and-error learning gently nudged by just a bit of procedural advice and labels for mistakes (1981).

Chapter 7 on “Preschool Practices and Educational Policies,” which draws on a discussion with four preschool directors and head teachers, makes the point that the ministries of education and of social welfare, which oversee the various kinds of preschools, provide minimal explicit guidance. As one director put it, “They trust us.” The final chapter, inspired by the methods Latour calls actor-network theory, is called “Reassembling the Cultural.” It reassembles the six preceding analyses by showing how each concept or process must come into play for a fuller understanding of a single episode (in this case, the teddy-bear fight).

It is not easy to write about the slippery concept of cultural practice. On the one hand, culture is too easily reified as a thing that makes people—usually other people, *those* people—do things. On the other hand, it is difficult to recognize the cultural in our own practice because we know that each person and each situation varies, and that beliefs and practices are far from universally shared.

In the prior Preschools books, comparing across three countries made it easy for Tobin and his colleagues to demonstrate the importance of a cultural analysis. Cultural differences made culture visible. There was no denying that the practices in the videotaped Japanese classrooms sometimes

surprised or even shocked Chinese and US viewers, as classrooms from their countries sometimes took Japanese viewer aback. In *Teaching Embodied*, Hayashi and Tobin still rely a little on cultural differences to help readers *notice* cultural practice, since most readers of this English-language volume will be outsiders to Japan. As they write, “It is up to outsiders like us to notice in what ways the version of being happy and well-adjusted that is taught and learned in Japanese preschools is a particularly Japanese version” (p. 14).

However, because *Teaching Embodied* focuses strictly on Japan, the authors seek to make cultural practices visible mostly by pointing to similarities rather than differences. They demonstrate similarities across different educators who have had no contact with one another. Most striking, as noted above, is the similarity between the signing teacher at the Meisei preschool for deaf children with teachers at the regular schools when she explains her practice of watching and waiting. They also observe that although each preschool develops its own way of doing things, often under a strong director over a long period of time, to Hayashi and Tobin the preschool practices looked quite similar. You might think that the similarity was in the eyes of the beholders, but I am convinced by this claim because, as an outsider, I saw basic similarities in forms of reading instruction in over two dozen first grades in France where the teachers saw variation.

In a more sweeping claim, Hayashi and Tobin also point out that just as teachers teach children by watching and waiting (*mimamoru*), watchful directors and senior colleagues trust younger teachers to figure out solutions mostly on their own. They see a further parallel in the ministries’ hands-off and trusting approach to overseeing preschools. When they asked school directors about this, a director agreed that the Ministry of Education guidelines, without ever using the word, “have an atmosphere of *mimamoru*” (p.142).

The idea of *mimamoru* in three different realms of education intrigues and puzzles me as an anthropologist. This is not a “pattern of culture” applying across all of Japan à la Ruth Benedict.

Hayashi and Tobin demonstrate how in government-run schools for the deaf, unlike Meisei preschool, teachers do not at all engage in watching and waiting (although some said in interviews they wished that they could). More importantly, the authors note that patient, watchful waiting while students figure things out is *not* the way that primary and secondary teachers teach, nor is it the way they learn to teach, in Japan. Thus intriguing questions of where this cultural practice is shared and how it came to be learned and applied to preschools by Ministry officials emerges for some ambitious scholar to explore further.

*Engaging Cultures* is well written and often a delight to read. Nearly 200 photographs accompany and illustrate the text. The descriptions are so clear and the still photos so well presented that I don't think reader need to see video excerpts on which the microanalysis is based. However, for the purposes of teaching, showing video clips is powerful, and draws students in to read the book. Therefore, I hope some clips can be posted on a web site and made available freely for teaching. Meanwhile, readers with access to *Comparative Education Review* can see short segments from two relevant scenes (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/media/10.1086/598691>) as media accompanying a discussion of *Preschools in Three Cultures Revisited*.

As noted, this volume makes a contribution to the study of teaching and learning to teach, while challenging anthropologists and educational researchers to reflect on the concept of cultural practice. It also contributes to the anthropology of Japan and to visual anthropology. I would recommend it or at least some of its chapters as a text in teacher education courses (not just social foundations and anthropology of education, but perhaps methods courses), and as a text in psychological anthropology. Because it is accessible, chapters would also work well in an introductory anthropology course.

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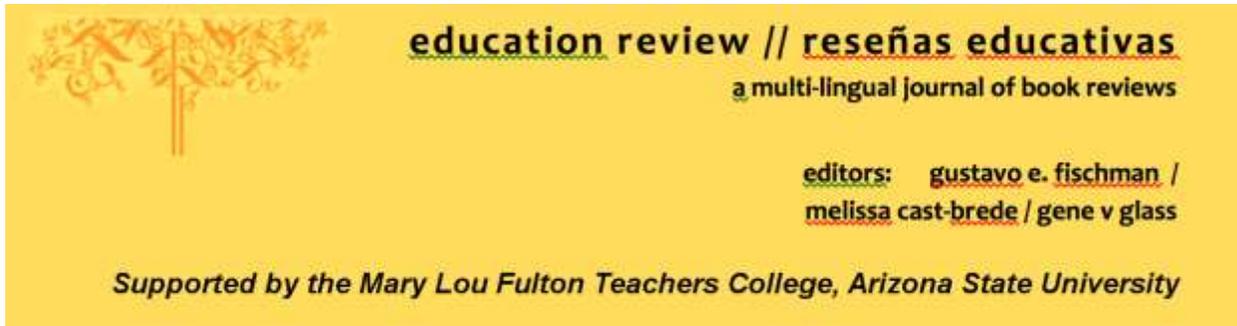
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