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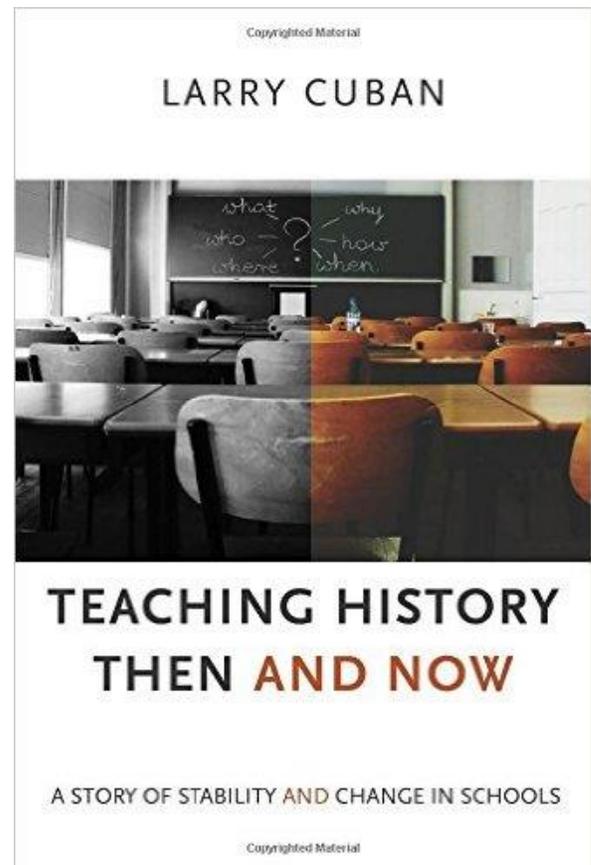
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Larry Cuban, Professor Emeritus of Education at Stanford University, is the author of 25 books and numerous journal articles that examine a range of educational issues including classroom teaching, the history of school reform, and the use of technology. He worked as a high school social studies teacher for 14 years, a district superintendent for seven years and a university professor for 20 years. In his latest book, *Teaching History Then and Now: A Story of Stability and Change in Schools*, Cuban revisits Glenville High School in Cleveland, Ohio, and Cardoza High School in Washington, DC, where he taught history during late 1950s and 1960s. His goal was to compare past and current practices at these two schools and use them as a microcosm to examine stability and change in history teaching in urban schools over the past six decades.

As a scholar of educational history and school reform Cuban skillfully situates the stories of these two schools within their



broader sociohistorical contexts. His decision to base his research in the districts where his career began gives the book an added personal dimension and makes it more compelling. Cuban's heartfelt journey provides the reader with deep insight into how teaching, teachers, and educational change evolved over time.

In the first chapter, Cuban takes us back to Glenville High School in 1956. Glenville was located on Cleveland's East Side which was 90% African- American. Glenville High School's population was 99% African- American with a mixed socioeconomic base, which included middle, working class and poor families. Cuban's experiences as a novice teacher in the late 1950s have a familiar ring to anyone who has ever taught and/ or worked with new teachers. Cuban's education courses at the University of Pittsburgh stressed progressive, student-centered education. However, when he arrived at Glenville, he found the workload, five classes of 30 students and multiple preps in US and world history, overwhelming. This workload, coupled with part-time graduate work, led him to revert to a traditional teaching style of lecture, textbook readings, and worksheets.

As the school year progressed, faced with student disengagement and personal dissatisfaction, Cuban began to experiment with content and pedagogy. He started by altering course content, adding African- American history and current events to the curriculum. He introduced primary sources and created document based lessons to teach historical thinking. He also introduced project based learning, discussion and mock trials. In his seven years at Glenville he developed comprehensive curriculums with study guides in both American and world history. In addition, he authored a textbook in African- American history. When he left, he was convinced that dedicated, knowledgeable teachers armed with innovate pedagogy and relevant content could alter the landscape of poor urban schools and bring about social change.

His idealism led him to Washington, D.C., where in 1963 he took a position working in an experimental, school-based teacher education program at Cardozo High School in 1963 for returned Peace Corps volunteers interested in urban education, the Cardozo Project in Urban Teaching, (CPUT). The second chapter describes his experiences at Cardoza, where Cuban served first as master teacher and later as director. He taught two US history classes, developed curriculum, taught after school seminars, and supervised four of the 10 teacher interns who taught two classes a day.

Cardoza, like Glenville, was a predominantly African- American school. While Glenville served African- American students from mixed socioeconomic backgrounds, the student population at Cardoza was mostly poor, and the average class size was 45 students... District of Columbia schools were highly politicized and bureaucratic, and all students were subject to a rigid, four-tiered, tracking system based upon standardized test scores. Master teachers and interns were assigned to all four tracks, and the most general and basic US history classes, the most difficult to teach, were evenly divided among master teachers and interns.

Cuban and the interns found that for students in the lower tracks, negative school experiences, disengagement from the academic subjects and limited literacy skills were the norm. Finding ways to motivate these students and structure lessons to meet their needs was a challenge for master teachers and interns alike. Cuban learned that the problems the students faced were embedded in the larger issues of persistent poverty and racism and that change within schools was strongly connected to the district's organizational structure and educational policies. From his experience at Cardoza, Cuban realized that while skilled teachers and engaging lessons are important, bringing real change to urban schools is far more complex.

Following these school vignettes, Cuban leaves the everyday world of education

and provides an overview of what he calls the background context, the history of the reform movements seeking to change how social studies teachers teach history. He traces the major battles in the social studies/ history education wars from the early 20th century to the present and focuses upon the ongoing debate between advocates of the heritage and the historical approaches to teaching. Proponents of the heritage approach believe that the goal of history teaching is the transmission of a fixed chronological narrative that inculcates civic pride and patriotism. In contrast, advocates of the historical approach reject the idea that there is a single historical account and seek to teach students to master historical thinking skills so they can evaluate historical narratives based upon the proper analysis of evidence and better understand the complexity of the past and the present. While Cuban favors the historical approach, he believes that the tensions in history education, while ideologically based are further complicated by what he refers to as the paradox of public schooling—the nation’s desire that its schools conserve community beliefs, values and traditions and at the same time provide students with the knowledge and skills to change these same values, traditions and beliefs (p. 93). He believes that these contradictory goals are especially pronounced in a history/ social studies curriculum that has citizenship education as its aim.

Cuban examines three historical cases in depth: the New Social Studies Movement of the 1960s, the battle over the national history standards in the 1990s, and the current incarnation of the historical approach, “the New, New History,” exemplified by the historical thinking curriculum developed by the Stanford History Education Group. He believes that the failure of first two movements to create wide scale change in the pedagogical practices of history teachers can be linked to same forces that plague educational reform in general, which I expand on below.

On his return to Glenville and Cardoza High Schools, Cuban found that

despite numerous attempts at reform, little improvement in the overall academic performance of the students occurred at either school. He attributes this to reformers “unrealistic expectations and simplistic views of change” (p.159) and their narrow vision of the purpose of schooling as human capital development. He proposes that the underlying assumptions of the current reform movement—the notion that change occurs in a top-down linear manner and that raising standards and instituting high stakes tests will automatically lead to improved teaching practices and students who are college and career ready—are incredibly naïve.

Cuban believes that the majority of reformers either ignore or minimize the impact of the macro-context: the community’s demographics, the district organization, its policies and politics, and in the case of Glenville and Cardoza, the persistent poverty and racism that is a part of the environment. He argues that reformers lack an understanding of the teacher’s role as gatekeeper in implementing curriculum reform. By failing to consult teachers and consider their needs, their expertise, and their understanding of the students, reformers further undermine their education reform goals.

In addition, Cuban also thinks that reformers fail to see the complex manner in which stability and change coexist within a given school, district or individual classrooms. He shows that at both Glenville and Cardoza, reforms designed to promote incremental change, such as add-ons to the existing structure (new courses, new technologies, new curriculum standards) and reforms geared towards fundamental change, such as changes that alter the structures themselves (schools within a school, vouchers, charters, massive online instruction) do not meet the reformer’s goals of improving student performance. Cuban argues that while reformers concentrate on intra-school reform they miss a fundamental aspect of schooling, what he calls the “grammar of schooling.” These are the

aspects of schooling that persist and their impact remains unquestioned: the 180-day school year that meets 6 hours a day, self-contained age graded classrooms, the isolation of academic subjects, and departmental organization (p.183). The grammar of schooling and poverty, which increased in Glenville and remained constant at Cardoza, endure at both institutions.

Against this pessimistic back drop, Cuban visited the classes of history teachers at both schools and found that practices at Glenville were largely unchanged, while practices at Cardoza changed over time. At Cardoza, two teachers incorporated elements of document-based historical analysis and another teacher used the material developed by the Stanford History Education Group, the New, and New History very successfully in his classroom. Ironically, the teacher did not learn about the materials in a methods class or through professional development; he came across the resources accidentally on the web and felt they met his needs.

For Cuban the situation at Cardoza is a cause for optimism. He believes that the Stanford History Education Group could be more effective at altering how history is taught because it is designed to meet teachers' needs within the grammar of schooling. The free website provides challenging lesson plans that are aligned to the common core standards and designed for use in a 50-minute period. The primary and secondary source materials are short and user friendly and adapted for struggling readers and English Language Learners. While the website has logged over two million visits, there is no way to know if this translates into classroom use. According to

Cuban's analysis of available data on history teaching in the schools, he estimates that only 15 to 25% of history teachers, including AP teachers, use document-based lessons on a regular basis with their students.

As a history education professor, who stresses document-based teaching in my methods classes, I find that about 40% of my students use these methods after they graduate. From what I gather from their anecdotes, they tend to follow directives from the history department at their schools. After reading Cuban's analysis of stability and change at Glenville and Cardoza, an implicit question remains for me. If document-based teaching were to become the prevalent method for teaching history, would it affect student outcomes and performance in a meaningful way?

While Cuban focuses upon history education, his analysis of stability and change in the public schools has broader ramifications. Any reader concerned about the future of education could benefit from Cuban's thoughtful and sophisticated analysis. As Cuban states one of the key limitations of the current reform movement is its narrow focus on human capital development and the underlying belief that schools will behave like the marketplace. He shows that focusing on high stakes testing, charter a vouchers, while ignoring the micro-context: community demographics, district organization, policies and the teacher's role as gatekeeper leads to a simplistic analysis. As Cuban clearly demonstrates, educational change is a complex multidimensional phenomena and if we want to promote real change, we must examine schooling in context.

About the Reviewer

Linda Kantor Swerdlow is an Associate Professor at Drew University's Master of Arts in Teaching program. Her specialization is history, social studies and global education. She has written articles in her field and presented at national and international conferences. Her new book *Global Activism in an American School: From Empathy to Action* was recently released by Rowman and Littlefield.



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