

Book Review

Intercultural Student Teaching: A Bridge to Global Competence

Patti Marxsen

Kenneth Cushner and Sharon Brennan, Eds. *Intercultural Student Teaching: A Bridge to Global Competence*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007. 246 pp. ISBN 1578865794 | 978-1578865796, \$75.00 (hbk.); 224 pp. ISBN: 1-57886-580-8 | 978-1-57886-580-2, \$32.95 (pbk.)

Let's face it. Not only is the one-room schoolhouse a thing of the past, a teacher without a global perspective is the twenty-first century equivalent of a dinosaur strolling through a soon-forgotten forest. In an important new book entitled *Intercultural Student Teaching: A Bridge to Global Competence*, the "global profession" of teaching is described as if it were a new country. Gone are the local charms of cultural unity. Gone is the comfort zone of students who look and think alike. Craig Kissock of the University of Minnesota opens with a blunt but essential question aimed at colleges of education across America: "As an educator of teachers, are you preparing professionals who can effectively educate any child anywhere in the world, now and for the next forty years?"

The pages that follow explain how this zinger of a question might be addressed by sending student teachers abroad, or at least into unfamiliar cultural situations. Thanks to well-written chapters by experienced educators and revealing excerpts from student-teacher journals, this book delivers both inspiration and information. By the end of chapter 1, "The Value of Learning to Teach in Another Culture" by co-editors Sharon Brennan and Kenneth Cushner, one begins to wonder why it has taken so long for this approach to teacher training to take hold.

As they assess the state of opportunities for teachers in training, the authors acknowledge those early creators of field experiences in places as diverse as Kenya, China, Europe, and Central America. Among them, the Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching (COST), has sent over 110 young men and women to the same

school in Christchurch, New Zealand, over the past 20 years. The International Teacher Education program at California State University has over a decade of experience in placing bilingual student teachers in nearby Mexican schools. And Indiana University's School of Education spends two or three semesters preparing prospective teachers for 17 weeks on the Navajo Indian Reservation.

With a note of gratitude to Brazilian educational philosopher Paulo Freire, this book reminds us that learning is always embedded in culture. Our global society calls for new definitions of education and, with it, new definitions of teaching. If we expect our children's horizons to extend beyond their own back yard, we need teachers who have crossed that "bridge to global competence" so eloquently promoted in this fine book.

Patti Marxsen is a writer, former French teacher, and former Project Manager for The Boston Research Center for the 21st Century.

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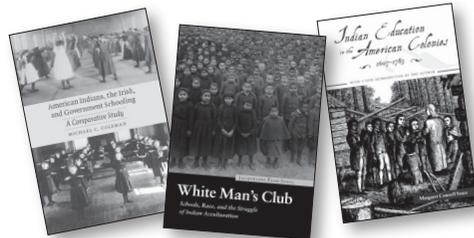
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