

Writing this review, in the closing moments of the latest round of American imperial policy in relation to the Middle East, it is appropriate to consider the wisdom of William Boyer who reminds us of the persistent failure of U.S. policy. Wisdom in the Old Frisian sense means to turn around. Boyer's overarching plea that teachers use education as a means to help achieve a reordering of a culture based on war, poverty, and ecological destruction is indeed timely. Placing the ecology first, developing social policy supportive of sustaining the world's eco-system and using the tremendous economic means at our disposal to implement such proposals involves the need to embrace wisdom, to embrace the turn around. Readers in all areas of education, formal and informal, will benefit from a careful reading of the wisdom proffered in *Education for the Twenty-First Century*.

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JOHN J. COGAN, PAUL MORRIS & MURRAY PRINT. (2002). Editors. *Civic Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Case studies across six societies*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer. 201 pp. \$85. ISBN: 0-415-93213-0.

Modern life means democracy, democracy means freeing intelligence for independent effectiveness – the emancipation of mind as an individual organ to do its own work. We naturally associate democracy, to be sure, with freedom of action, but freedom of action without freed capacity of thought behind it is only chaos. (Dewey, *Democracy in Education*, 1903)

*Civic Education in the Asia-Pacific Region* is a timely compendium. This book deals with fundamental issues over a wide-ranging geopolitical landscape. As the eighteenth volume in the "Reference Books in International Education" series, *Civic Education* moves beyond many of the more targeted and restricted titles that have traditionally highlighted this series. This latest addition combines, compares, and contrasts education practices in six varying societies that geographically ring the Pacific Ocean. In fact, it is this very diversity and lack of symmetry that marks this book as a major contributor to the evolving contemporary debates swirling around the illusive topic of civic (or citizenship) education.

From a structural point of view, *Civic Education* is divided into three interconnected sections. As well as providing the necessary detail related to the research design and protocols, chapter one describes the literature base dealing with civic education and introduces the reader to the three overarching research questions that drive the study:

- What are the governmental policies (written and unwritten) related to civic education in schools?

- How are policy intentions operationalized in the formal/informal curriculum of the schools?
- How does the implementation of civic education in practice differ from the stated policies?

Furthermore, this introductory chapter discusses how the term 'civic education,' in its many forms, is broadly viewed and defined. Acknowledging that there are many valid interpretations associated and embedded in the term 'civic education,' the authors have nonetheless chosen to use a broad and all encompassing definition. Specifically, Cogan, Morris and Print define civic education "as the formation through the process of schooling of the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions of citizens" (p. 4).

The authors, nonetheless, are quick to point out that they do not wish to establish a set of curriculum based rules and regulations that must be followed to achieve some lofty goal; in other words, they are apparently rejecting an instructional model that presupposes a set of definable and measurable skills that must be mastered. Rather, they see the quest for civic education in far more ethereal terms. That is, civic education in their view is the "means by which those aspirations, and the relevant civic knowledge, skills, and values, are planned and implemented through schooling" p. 4).

Chapters two through seven deal with the six selected societies; namely, four case studies from New South Wales (Australia), an investigation of two schools in Hong Kong, an overview of civic education in Japan, a case study centered in Taiwan, an investigation of three schools in Thailand, with the American Midwest being viewed through three selected school situations. Each of these separate chapters, while generally honouring the three overarching research questions of the study, illustrate civic education in their region via an analysis of five quite focused topics:

- General organization of public schooling within their own society
- History of civic education in their school/society
- Current official government policy towards civic education
- Local school policies and implementation strategies
- Similarities and differences within their own society

The concluding chapter in the book provides a very detailed analysis and summarizes the overall responses to the three general and overarching questions that framed the investigation. A number of tables and charts are used to portray the data and the reader is provided with a clear overview of the differences, similarities, and contrasts between and among the six selected areas.

In analyzing the various studies in the societies, the authors noted that schools were expected to help, in varying degrees, to begin the development process toward citizens who were informed, patriotic, active, and law abiding. Further, schools were to help inculcate values that fostered respect for the culture, traditions and history of the society as well as provide a platform whereby contributions to future development might germinate. In all, civic education appears to be seen in all of the investigated societies as a major endeavour with all-encompassing awesome responsibilities.

However, it is also clear from the investigations that each of the studied societies places a different emphasis upon civic education. In some, for example, the main thrust appears to be towards individual rights over collective impositions; others on the other hand appear to support a sustaining of social balance; while still others appear to target collective traditions over individual separateness. Nonetheless, each of the societies is grappling with the issue of civic education at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and attempting to deal with this potentially divisive topic at the same time as respecting the specific traditions and culture of the society itself.

Cogan, Morris and Print have edited a worthwhile collection. The issue of citizenship education is timely as many educational jurisdictions begin to grapple with this concept. No longer viewed as simple political structures or memorizing the mechanics of how laws and regulations at various levels of government are passed, the emerging notions of civic education are fundamentally deeper. As such, they defy quick and easy cookbook kinds of implementation strategies and, further, require much deeper synthesis for evaluation purposes.

The authors have done those of us who work in universities, ministries of education as well as in other institutional situations an invaluable service in providing a template of how six differing societies are attempting to reconcile the newly emerging civic notions with established culture and tradition.

#### REFERENCES

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