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BOOK REVIEW

Teaching Culturally and Linguistically Relevant Social Studies for Emergent Bilingual and Multilingual Youth, by A. T. Jaffee and C. Salinas. Teachers College Press, 2024, 256 pp., USD 150.00 (hbk), ISBN 978-0-8077-8605-5

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Teaching Culturally and Linguistically Relevant Social Studies for Emergent Bilingual and Multilingual Youth edited by Ashley Taylor Jaffee and Cinthia Salinas from Teachers College Press is part of a series of books that focus on research and practice in social studies with Wayne Journell as the series editor. There are four parts to the book: Part I focuses on the experiences of *emergent bilingual and multilingual learners* (EBML) in culturally and linguistically relevant social studies classrooms and schools with a focus on Spanish and Arabic speakers; Part II focuses on current teachers' practices in these social studies classrooms with a focus on migration stories, family data stories and students researching their own histories; Part III focuses on developing future teachers' understanding of culturally and linguistically relevant social studies goals and objectives such as forging civic belonging in EBML students through feelings of loyalty, connections and belonging; and Part IV focuses on cultivating the foundations and futures of these types of classrooms through a critical consciousness of the contradictions inherent in Western, non-white governments.

The foreword by Noreen Naseem Rodríguez, a scholar who focuses on social justice in the social studies curriculum, takes us back to 1975 when Southeast Asian American refugees were coming into the United States due to our role in the Vietnam War. There was little acknowledgment of the Hmong immigrants, for example, who were integral to the American fight against communism in Vietnam. Rodríguez points to the lack of representation of Southeast Asian Americans in the curriculum today and the heavy presence of a Eurocentric

narrative in our social studies curriculum that is still dismissive of the immigrant youth sitting in U.S. classrooms. The book focuses on the need to integrate the histories, cultures, knowledge, languages, and experiences of emergent bilingual and multilingual students into our social studies curriculum—whether from Central America or the Middle East—and challenges straight-line models of assimilation. Instead, there is a focus on developing fluid, civic identities beyond nation-state boundaries by focusing on identity, race, and geography for EBML students. There is a call back to the concept of *funds of knowledge* throughout the book and an emphasis on the Indigenous cultural knowledge that EBML students bring to the classroom as assets (Moll et al., 1992).

The introduction by the editors, Ashley Taylor Jaffee and Cinthia Salinas, provides a strong theoretical framework for a culturally and linguistically relevant social studies education. There is a graphic organizer in their chapter featuring a Venn diagram with three intersecting circles that ground the book: a) culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogy; b) active and engaged cultural citizenship; and c) linguistically responsive teaching. The overlapping and intersecting elements in turn focus on culturally and linguistically relevant citizenship education, in which we should value cultural differences and become better citizens based on those differences. In this election year, the question of which types of democratic citizens are valued and whose culture is valued more is central to our contentious political discourse. Other tangential constructs cited in the book include critical race theory, Black feminist thought, cultural competency, critical consciousness and asset-based pedagogy. The book is heavy in theory and theoretical constructs and needs to spend some more time unpacking these constructs concerning social studies practice and what they look like in everyday, lived classrooms. Underneath these constructs, we see the valuing of the languages that students bring to the classroom, the need to create a sense of belonging for immigrant youth, incorporating community-based projects into the social studies curriculum, and an ethic of care that respects EBML students and builds trust, support and positive interactions. Translanguaging is also mentioned and focuses on how EBML students can access social studies texts, and knowledge, in multiple languages.

Another theoretical frame in the book is the intersection of space and place and how civic belonging can occur in hyper diverse learning spaces such as afterschool dance clubs, the park, and museums. However, the authors needed to elaborate on how the theoretical constructs mentioned (e.g., critical consciousness, translanguaging) are practically applied in social studies classrooms for EBML students. Examples of deeper engagement with

classroom implementation might help bridge the gap between theory and practice for readers. There are transcripts of dialogue between teachers and students, short descriptions of lesson plans and activities, and sample student work; however, these are only snippets and vignettes, and not enough space has been allotted for lengthy descriptions of the classroom discourse on how these constructs get enacted and the messiness of how they play out in real world classroom settings.

Furthermore, the authors and editors fail to mention their positionality and how they fit into the cultural worlds in which they are examining. For example, in Chapter 3, the author is a doctoral student, Mina Hernandez Garcia, who is examining an Arabic bilingual classroom and waiting to hear what the Arabic teacher (Ms. Sobh) translates into English, shifting between languages, which leads the reader to question whether the author is a native speaker of Arabic or a voyeur in a classroom who reinforces a colonial mindset of surveillance. As a reader, I wanted to know whether the author was a native speaker of Arabic and whether there was justification for the claims made as a cultural outsider. Hernandez Garcia models translanguaging strategies by encouraging students to talk and write in Arabic, asks biliterate students to read loud Arabic translations of texts from the curriculum, asks students to interpret what she said in English into Arabic, elicits responses in Arabic and then asks the classroom teacher, Ms. Sobh, to translate into English, all the while never revealing to the audience whether Hernandez Garcia is also an Arabic speaker. Two chapters focus on outside researchers examining Ms. Sobh's Arabic bilingual classroom with an emphasis on viewing the EBML students' cultures as assets, developing deep personal connections to their native countries like Yemen, analyzing the experiences of leaving their homelands for the United States and feeling displacement, and affirming that hearing social studies content in Arabic improves EBML students' ability to contribute to classroom discussions by creating a shared vocabulary for talking together. The reader would benefit from knowing the positionality of the authors, especially when the researchers' linguistic and cultural connections to the classroom communities are unclear.

The book validates the flexible use of multiple languages and allows both teachers and students to authentically shift back and forth and avoid the construct of double monolingualism which rigidly separates languages, arguing that such an approach undermines students by discouraging their genuine linguistic practices. Melissa Gibson's first chapter titled *Translanguaging as Embodied Civic Practice* celebrates an organic mix of Spanish and English rather than teachers policing a strict separation of languages, especially

in dual language programs, where one language is only spoken during a specific time of day and/or a specific content area. García and Wei's (2014) argument that translanguaging can be understood as an act of resistance to language as a colonizing structure is evident in the book as EBML students use their native language to support their learning in the social studies classroom. However, the book also makes generalizing claims about translanguaging without any supporting evidence. Gibson states that translanguaging allows for a "foundational civic knowledge in a far deeper and more nuanced way" than in a classroom with "forced monolingualism" and even claims that we must cultivate translanguaging as a valid civic practice (p. 27). Translanguaging is an *au courant* topic in bilingual education that has led to fierce debate in the field as to how children learn and master multiple languages best, how languages get enacted in the lived, everyday experiences within bilingual classrooms, the ideological divide between researchers who want each language to get its fair share of siloed time and space in the curriculum, and researchers who see the fluid movement between languages as a valid form of instruction and social interaction in a bilingual classroom. It is a complex topic that is covered in depth by other authors and is touched upon in this book.

Another area of critique is the amount of time that the researchers spend in the classroom observing and recording the bilingual teachers and EBML students. Most authors spend a short amount of time in the classrooms, such as the 14 weeks, 25 hours total in an AP research class covered by Deroo, Kahn, and Axelrod in Chapter Two. There is a large amount of data collected nonetheless from the researchers such as field notes, oral history interviews, large scale data comparisons of the EBML students' neighborhoods, and an analysis of archival materials from primary source artefacts. Data methods focusing on cultural ways of being and knowing include transmediation with poetry and the use of multimodal graphic novels, photo voice projects, and georeferenced padlet maps with community locations. There is also an emphasis on describing curriculum and instruction within these bilingual classrooms, such as whole-group read alouds, small group mini-lessons, and books that highlight linguistic complexity; however, this is not a curriculum guide and there are no scripted lesson plans, assessments, or resources. Some of the chapters display student work samples and graphic organizers, but this is a theoretical book with a spiraling focus on a social studies critical discourse that is repeated heavily throughout the chapters. For example, the book references critical dialogic education and critical dialogue, but we never get to see what this theoretical construct may look like in a social studies classroom with EBML students.

One of the most fascinating chapters in the book is by Monreal, Tirado, and Barrera grounding the concept of *rasquachismx*, a Chicanx concept of improvisational *movidas* rooted in making to do with what is at hand (*hacer para rendir cosas*). This challenges dominant understandings of cultural knowledge: "Rasquachismx blends theory and praxis in order to challenge Latinx (mis)representation in the social studies while also promoting expansive, transformative, resilient, and even playful Latinx (youth) political subjectivities" (p. 211). As a counter-narrative to white-normed conceptions of civic knowledge, rasquachismx allows teachers to accept and appreciate "deviant identities from the margins" such as *chola*, *jota*, and *traveisa*, low riders and graffiti, and to repurpose the position of the underdog—in this case, EBML students. Rasquachismx can manifest in how EBML students play with language and use it in creative, playful ways, therefore reclaiming Spanish and Spanglish. In this chapter, the EBML students use critical literacy skills and create a political poster with the Sun Maid raisin company and rename it Sun Raid, commenting on the working conditions of farm workers. The teachers used Chicanxs print, graphics, and other art mediums to engage in multilingual political resistance while the students remixed, reimagined, and reinverted injustices through political art: "Rasquachismx acknowledges the harshness of material struggle, the long histories of racialized inequalities, and the seemingly Sisyphean tasks of demanding sociopolitical change—seeking to outsmart adversity by wit, wile and street smarts" (p. 218).

The book ends with the hopes and goals of creating humanizing social studies classrooms for multicultural and multilingual youth. There are references to Latino Critical Theory, safe spaces for Spanish, and research that serves EBML students. There is a push for teachers to integrate lessons and units focusing on immigration and the testimonies of EBML students. The book offers suggestions and ideas as to how teachers can change the social studies curriculum to heal from trauma and harm and instead focus on the celebration and sustainment of multiple languages.

THE AUTHOR

Samina Hadi-Tabassum the Dean of the School of Education at Elmhurst University outside of Chicago. Her research focuses on the intersection of race, language, and culture. Her recent book publication titled *Black and Brown Education in America: Integration in Schools, Neighborhoods, and Communities* (2023) explores the relationship between long oppressed and exploited Black and Latinx minoritized suburban communities and highlights

the struggle of both groups to interact with each other and create better, more equitable lives—as well as the forces that oppose them. *Language, Space and Power: A Critical Look at Bilingual Education* (2006), her first book publication, describes the sociolinguistic and sociocultural life of a Spanish-English dual language classroom in which attention is given to not only the language learning processes at hand but also to how race, ethnicity, and gender dynamics interact within the language acquisition process. In addition to academic writing, Samina Hadi-Tabassum is a poet and a short story writer.

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