

Book Review
**Growing a Soul for Social Change:
Building the Knowledge Base for Social Justice**
Edited by Tonya Huber-Warring

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The premise that education can counter injustices in the world is what this edited volume reaffirms. Editor Tonya Huber-Warring walks us through diverse theoretical and philosophical positions that the 33 authors featured in this volume articulate to craft a collective narrative relevant to enriching social justice education. The 20 featured essays highlight unique locations that inform knowledge bases entrenched in the theory and practice of education. Despite the uniqueness in experiences, and indeed theoretical and practical orientations discussed, Huber-Warring still manages to coalesce diverse themes to lay out a conceptual framework that offers the reader the ingredients and tools of *growing a soul for social justice*.

The book is organized in four parts with five chapters in each part. The subject headings of each part derive from G. Pritchey Smith's 15 Parameters of the Knowledge Bases for Diversity (pp. xii-xiv). The selected four parameters of knowledge bases for diversity are used to further develop a conceptual framework to understand how they have been used to address social justice issues. The benefit is an expanded discussion of theory and practice of social justice education as informed by the various international authors' teaching and research experiences. For each parameter, the editor lays out five chapters to heighten major themes supporting the premise of social justice education in context of Smith's knowledge bases for diversity.

Part I:***Foundations of Indigenous, International, and Global Education***

Factors that constitute knowledge in indigenous, international and global educational settings are discussed. The essays in this section of the book identify several pragmatic approaches to building knowledge base for social justice, as follows:

- Developing the ability of educators to connect local and global issues and experiences
- Promoting dialogue to open borders that are traditionally and historically closed
- Encouraging educators to develop courage to create narratives of personal experiences
- Promoting scholarship that is informed by how educators center self-understanding as the basis of self-awareness
- Utilizing local resources and tapping into indigenous knowledge
- Taking into account the risks associated with Western hegemony in the name of international and global education

The pragmatic approaches to promoting social justice issues discussed draw from the authors' decades of work in diverse educational contexts and *real-life* experiences: diverse religious settings, economically disadvantaged communities, multiracial/multicultural settings, and global education. These experiences make the arguments advanced credible.

Part II:***Principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching and Culturally Responsible Curriculum Development***

This section of the book identifies core areas of consideration in ensuring culturally responsive teaching and curriculum development. To this end, the authors advocate for specific strategies that make teaching and learning meaningful to students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Firstly, educators are urged to adopt interdisciplinary approaches to enhance the understanding of democracy as encompassing political, economic, ecological and cultural democracy. It is argued that this holistic approach to viewing democracy allows for the recognition of the intersection of numerous components that define democracy. Another principle to promote culturally inclusive teaching identified speaks to methodological approaches deemed appropriate to understanding nuances of language, culture, identity and power in researching diversity issues in schooling.

The two methodologies discussed at length are *ethnography* and

cross-cultural narrative inquiry. The research projects referenced reveal the strength of these methodologies in the ways that they present lived experiences of culturally diverse students. Moreover, emphasis is placed on methodological appropriateness in generating findings that inform education policy and practice for culturally inclusive education. The essay examining the challenges of reading and English composition writing among students in Botswana illustrates the need to recognize students' lived experiences and the culturally sensitive responses needed. English is not the native language and as such students may not readily relate to models *foreign* to their cultural settings. The solution offered includes culture-specific strategies that prioritize the modeling of writing assignments/topics to reflect students lived experiences. The significance of students lived experiences is underscored in the last chapter in this section in an essay on international student teaching programs. The experiences that students gain from participating in such programs are presented as a vehicle for student teachers to connect with cross-cultural settings. The added value of this educational experience is highlighted in the ways it liberates education rather than domesticates it. Overall, the essays are theoretically grounded and benefit immensely from expanded discussions on cross-cultural research methodologies and culturally sensitive classroom strategies.

***Part III:
Sociocultural Identities and Contexts
of Human Growth and Development***

This section brings together perspectives that operate in multidimensional ways to define what constitutes the practice of education in promoting human growth and development. Generally, the five essays identify cultural self-awareness, enhancement of community inclusion, leadership identity development, and emotional intelligence as pivotal in actualizing foundations for human development. They illuminate ways that educators and students can respond to social justice issues at community, national, and global levels.

The discussion allows readers to engage with diverse knowledge bases that impact the practice of education to facilitate peace and social justice. For example, readers are urged to recognize the role of science and spirituality as contributing "more loving citizens to the world" (190). This, to some extent, is contrary to the commonly held view that science and spirituality are oppositional. Another intriguing concept discussed as a resource for new knowledge is the value of *Tribes* and its benefits for pedagogy. This concept is presented as valuable to enhancing community *inclusion* as opposed to *exclusion*.

In my view the authors do a good job of offering suggestions to advance human development. Likewise, they identify ways to transfer the knowledge bases into actions and practices that work for social justice. One way proposed is to expand knowledge of students about themselves and their identity development in order to become fully aware of issues of social justice globally. The responsibility is not solely placed on students but also on teachers.

The essay on emotional intelligence in the classroom clearly delineates specific behaviors [expected of teachers] that contribute to a more nurturing educational environment as perceived by students in historically disadvantaged school environments. It is revealed that teachers' emotional competence and hidden resources such as their feelings, beliefs, perceptive abilities, values and attitudes are regarded as major assets in the classroom environment (p. 265).

The strength of this section lies in the way it does not romanticize the foundations of human development. It presents good arguments about factors that positively and negatively impact human development. There are two essays that identify drawbacks of human development in impacting social justice. One such drawback is ethical dilemmas encountered by students as well as educators. The argument presented advances the view that maturity in ethical thinking leads into an awareness of life purpose that dictates appropriate decision making taken regarding moral actions. The second drawback is discussed in an essay that identifies problems that negatively affect human development among girls and women in Nigeria. Recommendations offered have implications for pragmatic approaches to curriculum development that focus on ensuring equal access to education by girls and women. Overall, this part of the book would do well to have chapter 13 as the last chapter in the section given the argument that the author advances about awareness and understanding of global interconnectedness. Also, the discussion on emotional intelligence would have benefited from an expanded discussion on the impact of apartheid on the lives of students and teachers.

Part IV.

Experiential Learning

This section is comprised of five essays that coalesce diverse experiences to create a theoretical formation that enhances the understanding of experiential knowledge and its impact on teaching-learning. The strength of this section lies in its sophisticated look at, and analysis of, the role of memory, practical personal knowledge, personal narratives, benefits of study abroad programs, service-learning pedagogy, and performative pedagogy in creating knowledge that accounts for how teachers and

learners come *to know*. By drawing from theories grounded in various historical, cultural, personal, and global contexts, the editor provides a convincing way into the process of creating knowledge that fosters the *growing of a soul* for social change. The key terms that emerge from this section to give character to experiential education include (a) *practical personal knowledge*, (b) *critical self-reflection*, (c) *global consciousness*, (d) *memory*, (e) *connecting local and global issues*, (f) *mobilization for action*, and (g) *participation*.

The structure of *Growing a Soul for Social Change* is accessible. The four parts of the book assemble essays that are theoretically grounded and contain rich information, knowledge, and tools for educators to foster change in the education realm. However, there are two downsides of the structure that could interfere with comprehension of the content and flow of the sections' themes. For example, some chapters are too lengthy and carry overwhelming data that could easily become information overload to some readers. Despite the organizational hitch, *Growing a Soul for Social Change: Building the Knowledge Base for Social Justice* does show how educating for social justice can counter injustices in the world. This book is an important text for students in education, educational research, intercultural communication, and human relations courses, and those using service-learning pedagogies.