



Teacher Identity and the Struggle for Recognition: Meeting the Challenges of a Diverse Society

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Teacher identity is shaped by recognition or its absence, often by misrecognition of others. Recognition as a teacher, or the strong and complex identification with one's professional culture and community, is necessary for a positive sense of self. Increasingly, teachers are entering educational settings where difference connotes not equal, better/worse, or having more/less power over resources. Differences between discourses of identity are braided at many points with a discourse of racism, both interpersonal and structural.

Teacher Identity and the Struggle for Recognition examines the nature of identity and recognition as social, cultural, and political constructs. In particular, the contributing authors to the book present discussions of the professional work necessary in teacher preparation programs concerned with preparing teachers for the complexities of teaching in schools that mirror an increasingly diverse society. Importantly, the authors illuminate many of the often problematic structures of schooling and the cultural politics that work to define one's identity – drawing into specific relief the nature of the struggle for recognition that all face who choose to enter teaching as a profession.

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Editorial Review

Review

In this book, Patrick Jenlink has collected a provocative set of essays about the meaning and nature of teacher identity in today's acutely political educational climate. With striking clarity, the essays make two arguments: that invisibility based on cultural difference is a deep threat to public education, and that constructing pedagogy and curriculum for America's schools based on recognition can be a powerful antidote. (Marilyn Cochran-Smith, Cawthorne professor of teacher education for urban schools, Lynch School of Education, Boston College)

The novelty of this important book is in the way it presents teacher identity within the context of society and culture. It poses a unique perspective of the teacher as a whole, as a professional, and as an individual – not only in the classroom, but also in society and cultural contexts. As such, it is a teaching-learning text for teacher educators in addition to all those who care about making the person visible in a global, multicultural society. (Professor Hanna Ezer, Levinsky College of Education, Israel)

One of the first realizations most educators with social justice ambitions make is that teachers who are wont to interrogate their own identity positions are more likely to reproduce inequities in the classroom. Patrick Jenlink and a diverse array of contributors construct an impressive topography of identity that can help educators, educational leaders, and scholars alike understand the varied terrains of identity and do the work necessary to enact such interrogations. Jenlink's book builds nicely on his previous works on the cultural recognition and the struggle for identity in America's schools. (Kris Sloan, associate professor and chair, Teacher Education Program, St. Edward's University, Austin, Texas)

This book invites the reader on a journey of metamorphosis through personal reflection – evoking a passionate re-commitment to the human race through action with regards to social and moral responsibility. The voices held on these pages seek to unravel the threat of invisibility while returning significance to one's search for identity. A profoundly important and necessary book – not just for teachers, but also for all engaged in the development of others. (Terri Hebert, assistant professor, School of Education, Indiana University South Bend)

About the Author

Patrick M. Jenlink is Professor of doctoral studies in the Department of Secondary Education and Educational Leadership and Director of the Educational Research Center at Stephen F. Austin State University. His scholarly interests are focused on moral literacy and leadership.

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