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Book Review

Encyclopedia of peace education, edited by Monisha Bajaj, Charlotte, Information Age Publishing, 2008, 177 pp., US \$39.99 (paperback), US \$73.99 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1593118983

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In the *Encyclopedia of peace education*, Monisha Bajaj draws on the field's leading scholars to offer diverse perspectives on what peace education is and to provide a comprehensive understanding of the field's historical foundations, key perspectives, central concepts and frameworks, and its future. The volume begins with an introductory chapter from Bajaj, followed by four sections: 'The historical emergence of and influences on peace education', 'Foundational perspectives in peace education', 'Core concepts in peace education', and 'Frameworks and new directions for peace education'. Each section contains an introduction and questions to guide the focus of the reader. Many of the anthology's contributors are well respected in the field and have written books on the topics they address in the volume. These contributors include prominent peace education scholars like Johan Galtung, Ian Harris, H.B. Danesh, and Nel Noddings. Chapters summarizing the impact of John Dewey, Maria Montessori, and Paulo Freire on peace education are also important additions to the anthology. The volume's 16 chapters that follow the introductory chapter are compiled from an online encyclopedia with over 40 entries. Bajaj explains that chapters were selected because they identified "critical points of engagement" (3) relevant to scholars, students, and teachers in peace education.

In her introduction to the volume, Bajaj specifies two key elements of peace education: 1) positive social values and skills can be imparted through education and 2) the transformative nature of education can provide spaces where students are inspired to take action for peace. She argues that peace education's purpose is to cultivate critical consciousness of direct and structural violence that merges "hope and action towards peace" (141). Throughout the volume's chapters, contributors advocate for educators to support students in connecting peace education content to the various forms of violence they experience, to help them work towards action for peace. Davies, for example, emphasizes action as one of four key components of global citizenship education for peace.

An important contribution of the volume is its critical engagement with the problematic nationalistic orientation in education systems and its argument for challenging them through instruction that emphasizes human rights, disarmament, and a global culture of peace. This approach is evident in Howlett's description of Dewey's focus on subverting nationalism through the study of geography and history that emphasizes understanding other cultures. It is also clear in Snauwaert's analysis of political realism as an ideology valuing morality only within the borders of nations and the importance of peace education that transcends borders. Noddings emphasizes expanding people's circles of care beyond just their inner circles (i.e. the nation) through the use of dialogue and discovery of common interests, and Mirra focuses on global human needs instead of militarism that glorifies the strength of the nation. Davies also argues that education systems should encourage students to recognize their nation's role in conflict and explore actions they can take to address this role, rather than prevent them from protesting against it. This theme is critical for peace education because it encourages action for peace that is for the betterment of human beings throughout the world, not just the nation where students live.

The target audience of the volume is "students, scholars, and practitioners of peace education" (2), and it appeals to each of these three groups. Students will appreciate the concise and accessible writing style of the contributors and the short summaries on key thinkers and concepts in the field. The glossary of terms and the more than 70 suggested further readings at the back of the anthology are also great resources. Scholars will find the volume useful because it synthesizes various bodies of literature related to peace education and extends the breadth of the peace education field by including chapters on similar fields such as global citizenship education, comparative and international education, and futures education. For practitioners, the book is an important reminder to match the form of peace education with its content by providing space for dialogue, and that

students' informed action for peace should be the final outcome of peace education.

Where the volume falls short is in its top-down approach, evident through its focus on the UN, human rights, and disarmament education. Bajaj critiques this tendency in her chapter on "critical" peace education and argues for generalizations to be built from the bottom up on localized effective peace education practices. However, in spite of her critique on the overly top-down and Western orientation of peace education, the only example in this volume of localized peace education is H.B. Danesh's chapter discussing his unity-based model used in schools throughout Bosnia. The volume would have been strengthened by generalizing from a few examples of specific conflict contexts to build the core content of the encyclopedia.

Another shortcoming was the absence of conflict resolution education from the discussion of core concepts in the volume. Although conflict resolution was briefly addressed in a few chapters, it would have added value to the volume to have a chapter devoted to this topic and its role and compatibility with peace education, as many scholars consider conflict resolution to be a key part of peace education (e.g. Harris 2004; Reardon and Cabezudo 2002).

In summary, *The encyclopedia of peace education* is an excellent resource for understanding the foundations of peace education from some of the top thinkers in the field. It describes a number of key concepts and maps the relationship between various similar fields. It advocates for the importance of matching peace education's form with its content, a global focus for building peace rather than a national one, and the need to cultivate agency in students to support them in actions that address structural or personal violence. These are all valuable contributions to peace education.

References

Harris, I. 2004. Peace education theory. *Journal of Peace Education* 1(1): 5-20.

Reardon, B., and Cabezudo, A. 2002. *Learning to abolish war*. New York: Hague Appeal for Peace.