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Education, Equity, Economy: Crafting a New Intersection

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Reviews (II)

George W. Noblit & William T. Pink (Series editors) (2016). *Education, Equity, Economy: Crafting a New Intersection*. Springer: Switzerland.

In their 2016 book “Education, Equity, Economy: Crafting a New Intersection”, George Noblit and William Pink start an open discussion around the need to re-think key aspects of the educational reforms in our current globalized and neoliberal societies. As the title of the book suggests, they urge to “craft” a new way of developing educational policies and educational practices that not only seeks higher levels of achievement or lower levels of inequality, but which also contributes to build up and “a new economy that rewards all well”. They argue that leaving any of those elements out of the formula (education, equity or economy) leads to insufficient solutions that are more likely to benefit the powerful and wealthy. And for such an endeavor they suggest organizing the discussion around three analytical “tools”: 1) *Recognition*, of the elements of existing educational realities that may be used as steppingstones for future initiatives; 2) *Critique*, that allows identifying the problems and contradictions associated with the current *status quo*; and 3) *Possibility*, seeking to visualize pathways that lead to greater inclusion and equity through education. Following such order, the book is organized in three main sections, each containing a compilation of works (10 in total) by different international authors who share their analysis of several educational realities.

Following Noblit and Pink’s framework, I will start by recognizing some of the features that I found more enriching from this book. First, all three sections offer a wide range of international experiences (specifically from Australia, Finland, Italy, Mexico, the US and Sweden) that give the reader an overview of the challenges that different educational systems are facing worldwide, and describe some initiatives that have been carried out in those

contexts to pursue equity. The topics analyzed by each author are very diverse, ranging from the relation of food, nurturing and learning, to the opportunistic use of natural disasters to impose neoliberal principles and expand the white domination in public education, to the empowerment of students through teaching math skills and knowledge as a means of advancing towards equity and opportunity for all. Some of those works not only describe the situations but analyze the impact of certain interventions on the educational outcomes. This diversity of contexts and topics assures that most readers find interesting one or more of the experiences presented in the book. Furthermore, the pieces of research included in the book were developed using different methodologies that are properly described in each section, which provides the reader with ideas of how educational realities can be analyzed through varied scientific approaches.

Maybe the only critique that could be made to the book is the following. Presented as a book, the compilation of works that are included in each section (*Recognition, Critique and Possibility*) resemble more of scientific journal articles than book chapters. In fact, some of the authors (the least of them) refer to their contributions as articles while others (the most of them) do it as chapters. This would be a minor issue if the different chapters spoke to each other, adding coherent sets of ideas to a broader framework of analysis with a common objective. However, this doesn't seem to be the case. Instead, each chapter focuses on a particular case study, isolating their analysis from the debates that take place in the other chapters. While this may be a deliberate editorial decision, the consequence is that the reader may not find a guiding line that connects all chapters, blurring the main focus of the book, i.e. crafting a new intersection for education, equity and economy.

That said, it is worth mentioning that this book opens up an interesting ground for discussing possibilities of change in different national educational systems. According to Noblit and Pink, this is the first of a book series yet to be written in which the authors of each individual chapter will be encouraged to write a book on their own expertise and case studies.

Hopefully the present book will be the steppingstone for a broader debate that leads to a comprehensive proposal that includes a set of coherent practices and recommendations linking education, equity and economy.

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