

Review of: "The Young Pioneers of Cuba: The Formation of Cuban Citizens through Civic Education"

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Reviewer(s) details

I have enjoyed reading this article and thinking about it. My first reaction was simply a question: Does not civic education everywhere inculcate a society's cultural beliefs and norms in the young in an effort to create 'loyal' citizens who enjoy a sense of belonging to that society? Second, is Cuba's education as presently described not also a form of oppression? Do the learners have a choice in what they are taught? Do the teachers have a choice in what they teach? Third, there is now a huge comparative literature that explores the content of a country's textbooks for bias, exclusions, or heavy-handed messages. One does not have to look beyond North America, the USA, Canada, or England to ascertain from an analysis of textbooks the messages that young people are 'supposed' to hear, if not understand. For more on this topic, go further to India and Pakistan for the textbook research of Professors Ratna Ghosh and Ayaz Nasseem, among others.

Perhaps one main difference between nations lies in the fact that some, such as Cuba, purposely EXCLUDE teaching the young to be critical of their own society, while others such as Canada purport to do so, at least in most provinces, in the

name, for example, of accepting the fact of human diversity – ethnic, racial, religious. In parts of Canada, such as the province of Quebec, the issue of diversity is confused: on the one hand, the government seeks a kind of uniformity around the idea that this is an officially French ‘nation’ while pointing the finger at speakers of English and some immigrants as responsible for making this goal of uniformity difficult. Since Quebec is but one province within Canada, all of which has the right to run their own educational systems, it is interesting to examine the Quebec government's approved textbooks for what aspects of history are emphasized and which are left out.

With Cuba in mind again, it will be interesting to see how its education system deals with the evident contradiction that young people are exposed to, at least in the urban areas: tourism, the Internet, rampant capitalism.....deemed so far to be more and more ‘oppression’ from the West.

It would help this article if the authors would check for a repeat of ideas, even of exact wording. It should be possible to rephrase exact quotes from teachers or students so that the same words are not used in the analysis.

Supplementary data

No data was added.