

Global Citizenship and National History Textbooks

by

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I. Identity

Are you a citizen? Of what?

- What are you? Who do you identify with?
- Levels of collective identity—family, community, clan, tribe, nation, state, region, all humanity (or all beings, the universe)
 - Or gender, class, religion, sexual orientation ...
 - Or profession, role ... - e.g., university professor, doctoral student
 - Or relationship ... - e.g., wife and mother
- Issues with identity
 - The box problem
 - Essentialization of identity
 - Participation in multiple communities
- Increasing importance of identity
 - Identity-based conflicts
 - Movement of peoples
 - Even traditionally mono-cultural countries
 - Rarely do ethnicity and nation-state correspond precisely
- Who we are has social, political, cultural, economic implications

Ib. Nationality, Identity & Citizenship

- In international contexts, nationality is important indicator of identity, rights, obligations, citizenship
- Nation-states have their pros & cons
- Pros
 - Bigger than family or clan
 - Work well in some places; can provide citizens with a good life
 - Have armies – for defense
- Cons
 - (Inherently) insecure – Anderson’ s “imagined communities”
 - Aggressive
 - Have armies – for offense
 - Rarely is fit between ethnicity and state perfect
 - Work badly often in many cases; oppressive if don’t fit in the
 - Nobody’ s in charge

II. Education systems

- Schools are the pre-eminent institution of modernity & nation-state
- Education systems
 - established & run or overseen by (nation-)state
 - socialize kids into the (nation-)state
 - Stories – explicit (history), implicit lessons
 - Rituals, practices, visuals; Common experience
 - emphasize national and “modern” identity
- In doing so, they tend to deemphasize sub-national and super-national identities
 - ” minorities,” localities, other language speakers, immigrants, various “others” or “othereds”
 - those outside the (nation-)state
 - but not really global identities, at least in any comprehensive way
 - In some ways, anti-global

IIb. Things (nation-)states need to do— implications for schools

1. Build or reinforce the idea and memory of the nation
 - “Imagined communities”
 - National story or stories
2. Explain/deal with variation, or diversity or difference
 - Internal and external – who are we, who are we not, who are they?
3. Explain conflict and war
 - What happened? Why? Whose fault, what was “our” role? What was “their” role?
4. Create good citizens
 - What’s a good citizen in _____? What’s the proper relationship between a citizen and nation-state? The globe? Humanity?
5. Teach/train/inculcate/socialize new generation

IIc. Ten dilemmas of the state

- How to legitimate nation, state, government
- How to deal with inconvenient past
- How to deal with moral complexity
- How to deal with contested, unresolved, “active past”
- How to deal with ambiguous nationhood
- Whether (and how) one can be critical and also loyal
- How to deal with internal contradictions, controversies
- How to mobilize popular commitment (to nation)
- How to delimit understanding of dangerous words
- How to address perennial national “insecurities”

III. My project: School textbooks

- Analysis of textbooks, especially history, civics, and social textbooks provides insight into:
 - Implicit social and political curricula of schools; what countries want kids to know and think (usually from reference point of country)
 - Textbooks are quasi-official documents
- Textbook analysis looks systematically at
 - What is said, unsaid; How it is said
 - How text squares with “reality”
- Textbook analysis asks
 - How are different groups portrayed?
 - (How) do portrayals shift during rapid social/political change?
 - What’ s the role envisioned for the student vis a vis history? Learning?
 - Is the truth shown as known, fixed and singular?

IIIb. General approach

- Focuses (mostly) on:
 - School textbooks – quasi “official” narrative
 - National level – school curricula mostly national
 - History, geography, civics (or equivalent)
 - Secondary level
 - Changes in portrayal during periods of rapid social, economic, political, or cultural change
- Comparative – about 45 country cases
 - Written by national experts
 - Differences in apparently similar places – how and why US & Australia differ in presenting histories of indigenous peoples
 - Similarities in apparently different places – post-independence textbooks in Turkmenistan and post-Ataturk Turkey

IIc. General approach (cont.)

- School textbooks
 - Official
 - Facts, figures, events
 - Frame
 - Narrative – who we are, where we came from
 - Who is child in relation to nation & its history
- Comparisons & synthesis across cases
 - To surface and make general patterns visible
 - To understand specifics of particular cases
 - To understand cases of “positive deviance”
- Must remember the instructional context
 - Intended curriculum → teacher → implemented
 - Implemented curriculum → kid → acquired
 - All in context of all the education that takes place out of school

IV. Traditionally, history education

- Has tended to:
 - Emphasize transmission of knowledge
 - Favor political and constitutional history and wars
 - Focus predominately on events and personalities
 - Assume the national historical narrative coincided with history of largest national grouping and dominant linguistic, cultural community
 - Reflect and help foster dominance of men
 - Rely on content-rich chronological survey of national history
 - Emphasize retention as mode of learning
 - Rely on a single, authoritative narrative

IVb. History education

- Has also tended to:
 - Glorify leaders, wars, events
 - Emphasize the stories of men
 - Teach a triumphant national story—even if that means dignity in noble defeat
 - Emphasize national ideals (even if sowing seeds of future challenge)
 - De-emphasize or ignore unflattering facts
 - Leave out counter-narratives or details contradicting dominant narrative
 - Ignore minorities
 - Assume the nation-state as focus of identity
 - Essentialize national identity
 - Help create enemies
 - Nurture national wounds
 - Emphasize memorization, or “critical thinking” that fails to challenge basic story

IVc. Recently, history education

- Has tried to balance teaching students about the past with providing students the means to “think historically” about the past
- Emphasized analysis, interpretation and synthesis of evidence from multiple sources, primary & secondary
- Recognized that most historical phenomena can be interpreted and reconstructed from a variety of perspectives, reflecting
 - limitations of the evidence,
 - subjective interests of those who are interpreting and reconstructing it &
 - shifting cultural influences
- But hard-going in context of more primal social and political needs/forces

IVd. Current thinking

- Recognizes that in past, history education has mostly been taught from a mono-cultural, ethnocentric, and exclusive perspective
- Focuses more on history of social categories and groups previously ignored—women, poor, ethnic minorities, children, families and migrants
- Tries to prepare children to live in a world of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, where there may be no overarching shared value system or ways of understanding things
- Challenge
 - To teach that there can be multiple, true, and contradictory narratives
 - But not all narratives are equally true
 - And how to deal with those primary social and political forces

V. National dilemmas

- How to deal with a discredited past
 - e.g., internment of Japanese-Americans in WWII
- How to deal with a past that's still present
 - e.g., post-conflict Liberia or Rwanda; civil war in parts of US
- How to deal with new diversity
 - e.g., “guest workers” in Germany
- How to deal with an unsatisfactory present
 - e.g., stories of restoration
- How to explain defeat
 - e.g., Germany and Japan post WWII;
 - USSR post Cold War;
 - U.S. post Vietnam
 - Serbia post Dayton

Vb. National dilemmas (cont.)

- How to explain victory
 - e.g., U.S. and Soviet Union post WWII
 - U.S. post Cold War
- How to build national identity in a new state
 - e.g., Post-Soviet republics;
 - African states post Independence
- How to build national cohesion in a multicultural state
 - e.g., U.S., Canada or Australia versus Netherlands, Spain, Italy, France
- How to manage competing or contradictory trends
 - e.g., Pakistan vis a vis cosmopolitanism, India, Islam and the West
 - Singapore vis a vis economic development and Asian values
- How to portray the nearby “other”
 - e.g., Israel & Palestine
- How to build cross-national, even post-national, identity
 - e.g., post WWII Europe

Vc. Dealing with discredited past

- Discredited pasts
 - Must be generally discredited. (Would dropping of atomic bomb would be a candidate in U.S.?)
 - Examples (but not intending to equalize or minimize suffering)
 - US: Treatment of native peoples; Slavery; Internment of Japanese-Americans
 - Cambodia: Pol Pot regime & Khmer Rouge
 - Japan, Germany: World War II
 - Argentina's dirty war
 - Discreditation process takes time (though interesting process to watch)
 - Most societies have things events which are discredited by some, and not by others
 - Talking about difficult past is particularly difficult after recent conflict
 - Rwanda, Cambodia, Liberia

Vc (cont). Discredited past (cont.)

- Common patterns
 - Ignore or misrepresent
 - Downplay ...
 - Treat as exception
 - Emphasize other things
 - one's good intentions
 - one's victimhood (Japan, chosen trauma)
 - situational circumstances
 - Justify– because of greater wrong
 - Blame others
 - That was then
 - Sanitize
 - Bury it in the middle of other stuff
 - Acknowledge difficult past, but fail to link to possible reoccurrence in present
- Exceptions
 - Learn from the past (really understand how it happened in past, how it might happen again or here or by us)

Vd. National stories

- Pakistan
- Lithuania
- Japan
- National Textbook Commissions in Europe
- Argentina
- France
- U.S.
- Rwanda
- South Africa
- UK portrayal of Crusades
- Israeli texts
- Palestinian texts

VI. THE FIVE TASKS:

Task 1. Nation-building

- What role does education play in supporting the nation, when...
 - A new state is created – Turkmenistan
 - A state is revived after – Lithuania, Israel
 - A state (too) successfully integrates itself into the global economy – Singapore
 - Immigration forces a crisis of meaning of the nation – France
 - A country faces tensions between diversity and unity – Canada
 - A country comes into majority rule – South Africa
 - A country becomes independent – Ghana
- Larger collectives

VI. Task 2. Dealing with diversity and difference

How does a nation and its education system deal with different groups within society? Three approaches:

- **Assimilationist** – It educates all children within single institutions operating according to values of the dominant tradition; Minority needs and interests often neglected – U.S.
- **Separatist** – Separate institutions serve different constituencies with homogeneous populations, institutions may or may not acknowledge broader diversity outside the institution – Bosnia
- **Integrationist** – Children are directed to common/shared institutions with diversity represented within institution – Canada

VI. Task 2 (cont) Approaches to pluralism (when different groups interact)

- **Conservative pluralism** – education environments emphasizing similarities between people
 - Stresses commonalities
 - Avoids overt expression of cultural or religious identity, which are private
 - Avoids display of religious, cultural symbols
 - Workplace/learning environment seen as ‘neutral space’, controversial issues avoided
- **Liberal pluralism** – more emphasis on accepting differences among people
 - May become preoccupied with ‘exotic cultures’ and politically correct ‘celebration of diversity’
 - Workplace/learning environment may contain diverse symbols of identity
 - More willing to acknowledge difference as potential for conflict
 - Uncomfortable at addressing underlying causes.
- **Critical pluralism** – recognizes similarities/differences between people but also acknowledges differences in status, privilege, power relations within society & between societies
 - Willing to identify underlying causes & explore possibilities for action to address social injustice
(Smith & Vaux)

VI. Task 2 (cont). Portrayal of difference/diversity

- How do textbooks show diversity beyond the nation?
- How do textbooks show “us” ? “Them”? “Other”?
 - As one type or as diverse as we are
- How do textbooks show other groups? Common patterns:
 - More or less invisible/visible
 - Through eyes of dominant group
 - As “other” not like “us”
 - Less than fully human
 - Human like us
 - Essentially the same as us
 - Different but ok
 - Not quite as _____ as us

VI. Task 2 (cont). Developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS)

Ethnocentric -- involves the interpretation of events and behavior from one's own cultural viewpoint

1. Denial

- assumes there are no real differences among people from different cultures

2. Defense

- differences are viewed suspiciously, possibly threatening to self-esteem and identity.
- inferiority of other cultures or superiority of one's culture
- sometimes Reversal – one's own culture is inferior, other cultures superior

3. Minimization

- over-generalizes similarities between self and other, allowing cultural differences to be trivialized and so "harmless"
- human similarity or "physical universalism"
- universal values or "transcendent universalism"

VI. Task 2 (cont). DMIS – 2

Ethnorelative - one's own culture is one among many viable constructions of reality

4. Acceptance

- Recognition of deep cultural differences in languaging, nonverbal behavior, and styles of thinking and communicating.
- “Goodness “ is assigned to different ways of being in the world.
- Acceptance does not mean "agreement “

5. Adaptation

- Expansion of one’ s perspective and skills to incorporate other ways of communication
- Does *not* mean a person "assimilates “ to a dominant pattern by giving up his/ her own cultural values, beliefs, or practices
- Cognitive frame-shifting, behavioral code-switching

6. Integration

- Attempts to integrate one's multiple cultural identities into a new whole
- One's identity does not fit into one cultural frame

Constructive marginality
DMIS)

(Milton Bennett,

VI. Task 3. Explaining conflict & war

- Conflict and war are like sex
- War is often defining national event – whether won or lost
- Some instructive types of portrayals
 - Images of self & other in ongoing conflict
 - India & Pakistan
 - Israel & Palestine
 - Portrayal of discredited pasts
 - Germany
 - US
 - Poland & Lithuania
 - Peru , Argentina

VI. Task 3 (cont). Explaining conflict & war 2

- Informative portrayals
 - Defining traumas – “chosen traumas”
 - Serbia
 - Korea
 - Recent internal conflict
 - Cambodia
 - Rwanda
 - Liberia
 - Societal fault lines
 - Japan
 - US

VI. Task 4. Teaching all this

- Nature of knowledge
 - Fixed or constructed
- Conception of history
 - Fixed truth or (periodically) renegotiated and interpreted
 - One history or multiple
 - Known or periodically reexamined
- Role of student
 - Memorizer or active interpreter
- Role of education
 - Pass on received wisdom or continually seek new wisdom
- Agency
 - Does student receive history or help create it
- Citizen of what?
- Can one have multiple citizenships?
- What if they conflict?

VI. Task 5. Creating good citizens

- What' s a good _____ citizen?
 - In Japan
 - US? China? Vietnam? Indonesia? Malaysia? Liberia? Kenya? South Africa? Germany? France?
 - How does a good citizen in _____ differ from a good citizen in _____?
 - How has that understanding changed over the last _____ years?
 - Are there any disagreements over good citizenship in _____?
 - What would it mean to be a good global citizen?
- What in your view are the attributes of a good citizen?
- What' s missing from all this?
- Can a person be a good global citizen as well as a good national citizen? Are there any conflicts?

VII. Games nations play

- Exception
- Someone (else) did it.
- They're not like us; we're not like them (othering).
- We're special!
- Ignore
- How we suffered!
- Danger!
- Restoration
- We just don't talk about that.
- What a noble nation we are!
- Necessity
- Freedom doesn't mean you can do anything you want.
- If this is right, and that is different, then that must be wrong.

VIII. Remaining/Final thoughts

- Are there examples of collective identity without negative “othering,” that are multi-cultural, ethno-relative, inclusive?
- Will human beings ever permit an in-group with everyone in it?
- Is it possible for national textbooks to teach global citizenship?
- Is nationalism always bad? How to deal with need to belong? Will belonging to humanity ever really satisfy?
- (How) Can school textbooks help school kids make sense of a world where many people get current event info from tv, internet, talk radio?
- Generally, textbooks (and schools more generally) follow changes in society rather than lead them. Under what circumstances can textbooks (and schools more generally) lead social transformation?
- Textbooks can contribute to inter-group conflict, directly by actively misrepresenting a subdominant group, or indirectly, by not commenting on existing injustices.
- Textbooks teach national ideals, often to build pride—what a noble people we are! But the contradictions between ideals and reality can spark change.

Thank you!

Questions?

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