BOOK REVIEW

Armstrong, F., & Tsokova, D. (2019). *Action research for inclusive education: Participation and democracy in teaching and learning*. London, England: Routledge.

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When I first started my doctoral program, a good friend advised me to align each of my coursework assignments with my research. This piece of advice has stayed with me throughout my graduate school journey, so when I was given the opportunity to be a book reviewer, I knew that I had to choose a book related to my research. Armstrong and Tsokova's (2019) book was a perfect fit, as my research focuses on the inclusion of students whose first language is neither English nor French in Ontario's French Immersion programs. The voices of these students often go unheard, so my hope was that this book would provide me with strategies to amplify their voices through research. Fortunately, I was not wrong.

Action Research for Inclusive Education supports researchers working in diverse school contexts in developing inclusive cultures and practices. Through its participatory action research approach, it raises our consciousness of "where and what change is needed, leading to planned intervention that will ensure those on the margins ... can be connected or reconnected to the opportunities and excitements of teaching and learning enjoyed by their peers" (Armstrong & Tsokova, 2019, p. xv). The book is divided into fourteen chapters, each recounting the story of an action research project, taking place somewhere around the world. One such example was a collaborative action research project between the Head of English and the Head of Mathematics at an inner-city secondary school in England. A growing concern for educators in England was the need to raise student achievement levels in core subjects such as English and Mathematics. Given this preoccupation with raising attainment levels, teachers were not prioritizing inclusion; hence, "opportunities for developing inclusive approaches within the curriculum were rare" (Wakefield, 2019, p. 115). Yet, in this example, both educators saw their school's action research project as an opportunity to advance inclusionary practices in their respective subjects. Key to the establishment of these practices was Harris' (2013) "knowledge transfer model ... combining the creative pedagogies of ... researchers, teacher-educators ... and young people in ... collaboration" (p. 413).

During a session preparing students for their English examinations, the Head teacher assumed the role of a student, modelling how students should respond to certain questions. The students then evaluated the teacher's answer, noting what was done well and what could have been improved. During the following session, the "students were able to demonstrate a much better knowledge of the question, as well as improve their marks from earlier attempts" (Wakefield, 2019, p. 119). Additionally, given that the teachers provided the students with immediate feedback and the opportunity to reflect on their progress at each stage, the students were able to "evaluate [their] successes and participate in the co-construction of their own next learning steps" (Wakefield, 2019, p. 119). Indeed, during both the English and Mathematics sessions, students had the opportunity to critically reflect on their work and to progress in these core subject areas with the support of their peers and teacher. Furthermore, as Wakefield (2019) emphasized, during discussions, the teachers ensured that each individual student's voice was heard and that their understandings were articulated in their own words and in their own ways – a true reflection of inclusive education.

While reading this book, I found myself feeling both reassured and motivated. Like many of the students in this book, I too have felt silenced during certain periods of my education. However, as I reflect on the commitment and efforts of researchers and educators across the globe, I am left with a sense of comfort that students *will* be heard. At the same time, as I reflect on the positive impacts of inclusive cultures and practices, I am further motivated to conduct my doctoral study. Through this research, I hope to contribute towards the creation and strengthening of culturally and linguistically inclusive classroom spaces in the Canadian French Immersion context.

In conclusion, I would recommend Armstrong and Tsokova's *Action Research for Inclusive Education* to any individual with a genuine interest in or a desire to learn about the impacts of action research on inclusive education. The stories of commitment, collaboration and creativity are as informative and important as they are heart-warming and inspiring. In fact, I would encourage the editors to publish a second edition, so that readers like myself can follow the progress made through the various ongoing action research projects discussed in this book. My one critique is that while I have loved learning about educational systems and practices in countries like England, Greece and Singapore, I would have also liked to read about projects being conducted in Canada – something this book was lacking. Could this be an opportunity for researchers like myself to share our contributions? I would like to think so! In summary, this book receives my stamp of approval! ■■

REFERENCES

- Harris, A. (2013). *Peered and tiered learning: Action research as a creative cultural pedagogy*. Routledge.
- Wakefield, S. (2019). A collaborative action research project within a data-driven culture: Improving teaching and learning through social constructivism in England. In F. Armstrong & D. Tsokova (Eds.), *Action research for inclusive education: Participation and democracy in teaching and learning* (pp. 113-123). Routledge.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

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