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BOOK REVIEW

Family, School and Community in the Pluriverse of Current Education

Eds. Lavinia Nădrag, Fazel Ebriham Freeks Tudor-Cosmin Ciocan, Alina Gălbează
(Buzarna-Tihenea) (Editura Universitară 2025) open access 278pp

Review by Renee Rheinbolt-Urbe, PhD¹

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As an educator and researcher operating outside the traditional Anglo-American academic centres, I have always been passionate about voices from the Global South getting a rightful place in the conversation, the reason for choosing OCRPL as my doctoral home in 2018. That is why contributing to *Family, School and Community in the Pluriverse of Current Education* felt so meaningful. This book is a bold and necessary answer to the call for a truly decentralised knowledge production, bringing together grounded research from the margins of Europe to the heart of Africa and Latin America. It does not just talk about the ‘pluriverse’; it *becomes* it.

My connection to this volume is both academic and personal. As a contributor from Colombia, I helped shape its core conceptual framework, including suggesting the ‘pluriverse’ title. This represents more than jargon; it signifies a paradigm shift from Western pedagogy’s universalising tendencies toward celebrating contextually situated knowledge. This aligns with my view of multilingualism not as a problem but as a divine gift—initiated at Babel in contrast to imperial efforts from Nebrija’s 1492 standardisation of Castilian to today’s English hegemony (Chapter 8).

The book is structured around two complementary sections that fulfil the primary editor Lavinia Nădrag’s vision: to ground research in practical application. Part 1, ‘Teaching & Learning in a Multilingual and Multicultural World’, explores pedagogical approaches for diverse, real-world classrooms. Part 2, ‘Social Issues concerning Education’, examines how broader societal challenges intersect with educational practice and policy. Both sections move from theory and original studies to generate good practices and recommendations. The editors have woven together a tapestry of

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researchers from three continents who share their insights and lived experiences towards this practical end.

The themes explored are as vast as they are relevant. The book's journey spans from examining teachers' personality traits in Romania (Chapter 1) and reflective practices in higher education (Chapter 2), to the sophisticated integration of artificial intelligence (Chapters 3 and 12). The AI discussion is particularly timely, addressing how 'students should become AI literate' while maintaining a 'balance between technology and traditional methods'. The research demonstrates how AI can enhance educational resilience, helping students 'understand different materials at school' while requiring careful implementation to avoid 'wrong or fragmentary content'.

The theme of parenting is explored in three chapters. Chapter 7 grounds character education in the communal wisdom of Ubuntu philosophy, emphasising the crucial role of parents. Chapter 9 analyses how parenting styles directly manifest in classroom behaviour and management strategies, advocating for sustained communication between parents and educators. Meanwhile, Chapter 10 gets practical, exploring the modern challenges of digital parenting in managing screen time and bridging digital literacy gaps and their direct implications for academic success.

The research spans an impressive global landscape, from Romania's educational contexts and South Africa's post-Apartheid educational reality to Nigeria's linguistic diversity challenges. Asian perspectives emerge through India's multilingual frameworks and China's minority language policies, while Latin American contributions include Brazil's cultural diversity initiatives and Mexico's Indigenous language programmes. The volume's reach extends to North American policies, European multilingual frameworks, and Oceania's innovative approaches like New Zealand's Māori-medium education.

A chapter that stands out for its profound empathy and innovative approach is Chapter 13, 'Navigating Identity and Inclusion: Educational and Faith-Based Perspectives on Multiracial Families'. This chapter is especially close to my heart, as it discusses the delicate process of identity formation and cultural tension for mixed-race and multilingual children. This is a journey I have navigated personally. What makes this chapter so unique is its robust theological foundation, drawing on Christian teachings like Galatians 3:28, which proclaims equality for all regardless of race, ethnicity or gender. It demonstrates how theology can complement psychological and educational theories, showing that faith is not an add-on to education but can be a core part of supporting some of our most vulnerable students and families.

While the volume successfully demonstrates pluriversal scholarship in practice, readers might wish for more explicit dialogue between the diverse theoretical frameworks presented across chapters. As each chapter is so different from the other, I can find it overwhelming and must only focus on one at a time. Nevertheless, the

theological thread woven throughout this secular academic work proves deeply compelling (Chapters 7, 8, and 13).

For Christian educators 'in all corners of the world', this volume is nothing short of a gift. It provides a robust, scholarly alternative to the limited choices we often feel we have between secular multiculturalism and reactionary Christian fundamentalism. It demonstrates, with empirical data and theological depth, that celebrating linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity is not a theological compromise but a faithful response to the God who initiated diversity at Babel and encapsulated it in Galatians 3:28.

This makes the book an essential resource for:

- Christian parents seeking to understand their role in a complex educational landscape and navigate digital challenges
- Students studying education who are preparing to serve in multilingual classrooms
- Christian schools seeking biblical frameworks for teaching in multilingual contexts and navigating the relationship between education and AI
- Mission organisations thoughtfully rethinking their educational approaches in diverse cultural contexts
- Theological educators integrating decolonial perspectives with historical Christianity
- Church leaders developing educational ministries that reflect divine diversity
- Community leaders seeking practical strategies to bridge the parent-school divide

Family, School and Community in the Pluriverse of Current Education transformed my own perspective. It is more than an academic volume; it can be read as a testament to vibrant, authentic Christian witness that has the potential to show the world a faith that joyfully celebrates the rich diversity God created, rather than one that fears or suppresses it. Aleksandra Matulewska, in the foreword, expresses succinctly, "Education in the pluriverse is not about conformity; it is about embracing difference, navigating complexity, and working together toward equity, inclusion, and human flourishing."

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