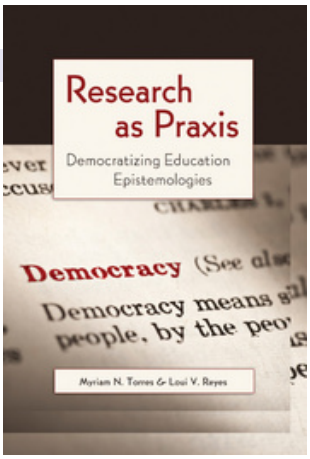
Torres, Myriam N. / Reyes, Loui V.

Research as Praxis

Democratizing Education Epistemologies



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Book synopsis

Research as Praxis is an exposé of the philosophical, theoretical, and methodological principles and assumptions of Research as Praxis (RAP) as an alternative paradigm of education/social research to the resurgent exclusionary hegemony of the positivist epistemology. The ultimate purpose of RAP projects is to serve the public interest, especially the well-being of students and educators. This is in contrast to projects that serve merely instrumental purposes, like trying to raise achievement test scores. Improvement of well-being can be achieved if research participants are able to participate democratically on an equal footing with researchers in deciding what to study, why, and how to do it, and how to use this knowledge to engage in collective action and dialogic understanding to solve problems and improve their situations. By acknowledging participants' agency and valuing their knowledge and experiences, we increase the chances that research results and experiences will be highly relevant and responsive to participants' needs and growth, as well as to other communities and society at large. The authors draw on the participatory research traditions, especially those experiences made available by researchers, activists, and public intellectuals from the so-called Third World – Latin America, India, Bangladesh, Africa, and the Maori indigenous people from New Zealand. Inspired by those experiences, RAP inquirers blur the boundaries among research, education, and activism, and instead interplay them at all times. This book will be useful to researchers, educators, and graduate students in education, social sciences and services, and humanities.

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About the author(s)/editor(s)

Myriam N. Torres, a multidisciplinary educator by training, is Associate Professor of Language, Literacy, and Culture in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at New Mexico State University. As recognition for her numerous publications, she has been given the Dean's Award for Excellence in Research at her institution.
Loui V. Reyes is Associate Professor of Early Childhood and Bilingual Education in the College of Education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, at New Mexico State University. He earned his PhD in curriculum and instruction with specializations in early childhood education and bilingual/TESOL education, and has pursued post-doctorate studies in educational learning technologies.

Reviews

«In 'Research as Praxis: Democratizing education epistemologies', Torres and Reyes offer a beautifully written and intellectually well-grounded challenge to researchers: To critically examine how power relations permeate our research, who benefits from our work, and ultimately whose voice matters. Rooted in a clear vision of freedom and participatory democracy, Research as Praxis, lucidly articulates an alternative to positivism. This book should be required reading in all education doctoral programs.» (Christine Sleeter, PhD, Professor Emerita, California State University Monterey Bay)

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«This is at once a cutting critique of scientific research in education and a constructive exposition of one of its alternatives, namely research as praxis through which the possibility of radical participatory democracy comes alive. This text exemplifies the conceptual and rhetorical unmasking of the scientific orthodoxies that perpetuate de-humanizing, neo-liberal, and self-serving, market based approaches to educational reform. Kudos to Myriam Torres and Loui V. Reyes.» (Angela Valenzuela, author, 'Subtractive Schooling and Leaving Children Behind')

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Peter Lang - International Academic Publishers
Moosstrasse 1 - POB 350
CH-2542 Pieterlen / Switzerland

Tel. ++41 (0)32 376 17 17 - Fax ++41 (0)32 376 17 27
e-mail: info@peterlang.com
Website: www.peterlang.com