



Book Review: *Developing Community-Referenced Curricula for Marginalized Communities* by David Baine

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BOOK REVIEW

DEVELOPING COMMUNITY-REFERENCED CURRICULA FOR MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

BY DAVID BAINE

VECTOR BAINE, 2017. 257 PAGES

\$27.25 (PAPER)

ISBN 978-0-9688701-3-6

Caroline Ndirangu, who enthusiastically authored a book review for this special issue, passed away in late September 2019. Caroline was a faculty member at the University of Nairobi's School of Education. Her research and teaching focused on education in emergencies (EiE) and curriculum studies. Her areas of expertise included the theory and practice of EiE, the protective role of EiE and policy, and research and advocacy in EiE and reconstruction.¹ Among her many partnerships, Caroline had recently collaborated with Elisabeth King and one of this issue's guest editors, Jo Kelcey, on a study of secondary education for youth affected by humanitarian emergencies and protracted crises in sub-Saharan Africa, and with former *JEiE* board member Mary Mendenhall and guest editor Sarah Dryden-Peterson on a study of refugee issues in Kenya. Caroline embarked on each of these projects as a meaningful contributor and team member and embraced the spirit of collaboration and learning that is at the core of the EiE field, and *JEiE* mission. Caroline's passing is an enormous loss to the EiE community and, moreover, a huge personal loss to all who knew her joyous spirit. We send our condolences and warmest wishes to Caroline's family and friends, and sign off in the way Caroline always concluded her Skype calls and emails: "Be blessed."



Developing Community-Referenced Curricula for Marginalized Communities by David Baine offers insights into the field of curriculum that address a long-neglected area in curriculum development worldwide: curricula for marginalized communities. Baine offers innovative and systematic methods for developing curricula for marginalized people living in refugee camps, on indigenous reservations, in urban slums, and in rural areas of developing countries. This timely book is based on a strong empirical and theoretical foundation, which is important in the EiE context because it offers marginalized communities in emergency contexts the opportunity to seamlessly introduce essential individual

¹ More information about Dr. Ndirangu's scholarly contributions is available from her Google Scholar profile: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=misT-E0AAAAJ>.

community skills within the host country education curriculum. Baine rightly points out that a community-referenced curriculum can teach the knowledge, skills, and attitudes people require to function effectively in the communities in which they currently live and are most likely to need in order to thrive in their future lives (p. iii).

The book is organized into six chapters that offer a well-researched, in-depth, step-by-step development of a community-referenced curriculum. The content is enhanced by relevant case studies, some of which are almost ready for implementation. The first chapter of the book is an introduction to the meaning and concepts of this type of curriculum, as well as the rationale for developing a community-referenced curriculum. Baine observes that in developing countries, particularly in rural areas and indigenous communities throughout the world, the quality of education is typically defined in terms of the “performance of students on academic achievement tests without making reference to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes to function effectively in their daily lives” (p. 5). Developing a community-referenced curriculum after analyzing the community in which the learners live would identify “functional tasks required for them to perform effectively in that community” (p. 19). Baine introduces five major stages in the development of community-referenced curricula, which he elaborates on in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 details the first stage of developing community-referenced curricula. Baine starts by reviewing the minimum essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes in each subject-referenced curriculum in common areas such as science, literacy, numeracy, and health that students should be “taught [at the primary school level] to enable them [to] perform effectively in their current and future environments” (p. 30).

Chapter 3 details the second and third stages of developing community-referenced curricula. This is essentially the core of the book, which provides innovative and systematic methods of in-depth analysis of the community, such as mapping the community environment and identifying functional tasks in the current and future environment. Each step has a ready-to-use framework and well-researched practical examples from marginalized communities within the context of emergencies.

Chapter 4 provides details on developing instructional modules for a community-referenced curriculum. Recognizing the need for resources, Baine leaves nothing to chance; in a four-step guide on the preparation of instructional modules,

he provides a generic format (pp. 157-58) that shows how various elements are integrated into the community-referenced curriculum within the existing curricula. He also recognizes the need to offer a balanced curriculum; according to UNESCO (2015), curricula are too often overloaded, hence the need to blend the needs of the learners with their environment. For instance, Baine puts a special focus on functional skills in the early grades, which I believe would greatly benefit students who are likely to be in school for a short time. This is usually the case for marginalized groups in the context of EiE, where there is a high dropout rate among primary-level students.

Chapter 5 gives insights into innovative and rarely used alternative methods of instructional delivery that would benefit learners in the EiE context. Baine discusses these in two main sections: technological methods, and personal methods. The main methods are a talking book device, interactive radio, “Pikin-to-Pikin Tok Radio translation of child-to-child talk in Sierra Leone” (p. 170), mobile phones, computers, mentoring, peer tutoring, and cooperative learning. To promote further understanding, he also gives useful examples of best practices for these instructional methods in marginalized communities.

Finally, chapter 6 tackles the unique issues of implementing a community-referenced curricula and how to overcome them.

The book is well structured and an easy read, despite its length. It certainly keeps one engaged with the many practical examples from real-life contexts. It is a useful book for a variety of groups: undergraduates, graduates, curriculum development personnel, classroom teachers, international organizations involved in research, in funding and development, in training and development, and practitioners in the field of EiE. It also can serve as an important go-to reference/handbook that effectively opens up the world of *Developing Community-Referenced Curricula for Marginalized Communities*.

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