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Studying Educational and Social Policy: Theoretical Concepts and Research Methods, by Ronald H. Heck

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upon students by examining not only the presence of campus ministry, but also the administration's efforts to promote a comprehensive idea of Catholic education. Chapters 9 to 11 inform the book's third part, assessing the impact of adapting institutional culture, and providing a range of practical ways to assist students, faculty, and others in positions of leadership to grow in knowledge and commitment in both personal and institutional Catholicism.

Should schools find their institutional identity falls within the functional boundary points of Catholic cultural intensity—as set out by Morey and Piderit—the authors offer suggestions for improving Catholic cultural identity. Granted, the authors themselves establish a baseline definition of Catholic culture, creating a normative, though potentially unrealistic, concept of what too little or too much Catholic culture is suitable for the market. Readers could argue that the authors' definition of Catholic culture forces the data collected from both phases of the study to conform to this definition, validating the methodological assumptions behind the study. Yet, many administrators were unable to offer a definition of Catholic culture upon which their institutional expectations and goals could be based. This pervasive failure to conceptualize Catholic cultural identity demonstrates how unlikely administrators are to save Catholic higher education institutions without the efforts and participation of faculty, students, parents, and the wider Catholic community. *Catholic Higher Education: A Culture in Crisis* is a detailed and thoughtful study of a growing crisis that Catholic colleges and universities have difficulty defining, let alone engaging.

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Studying Educational and Social Policy: Theoretical Concepts and Research Methods

Ronald H. Heck
Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004
\$39.95, 381 pages

Reviewed by Betsy Ferrer

“Policy analysis is an important, but problematic, window on the educational world because it may illuminate or obscure what it views” (p. 318). Schools

are increasingly impacted by policy research. Political initiatives such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 grow out of research on policy and education, and funding is often tied to demonstrating success. *Studying Educational and Social Policy: Theoretical Concepts and Research Methods* presents an introductory text for master's and doctoral students in educational policy. The text is divided into four parts: an overview of the policy process, conceptual frameworks and theories, policy research methods, and an epilogue that reviews many of the approaches discussed.

Part 1 delves into the nature of policymaking and its impact on education in detail. This section also points out the unique challenges in researching policy. "Policy research originates in action and is fed back into action, whereas theory-based research originates in the disciplines and is fed back into disciplines" (p. 11). This can be problematic because policy directly impacts what is taught and how it is taught. However, there is often considerable lag time between research conducted and practical implementation in a classroom or school. Also, policymakers often lack the time and the knowledge to evaluate the validity of a given research study.

The impact of federalism on policymaking is also addressed. State and local governments act as policy institutions within the larger federalist system. Education has been impacted by phenomena such as immigration, urbanization, the end of segregated schools, and the recent efforts to promote choice and vouchers.

Part 2 delineates different conceptual frameworks that serve as lenses through which educational research can be seen. These frameworks include political culture, punctuated-equilibrium theory and advocacy coalition framework, economic and organizational perspectives, and new approaches such as feminist theory and postmodern perspectives. This last category represents an exciting area of research because these approaches look at groups that have been marginalized or silenced in some way and thus have an opportunity to create a more just approach. "This discussion illuminates a concern with not only improving educational practice, but also promoting social justice and democracy, for example, by including alternative knowledge or discourses that have been subjugated, neglected, or missing" (p. 316).

Part 3 presents current methods for policy research as well as some new approaches aimed at avoiding "blind spots" created by over-reliance on one particular method of research, such as collecting exclusively quantitative data through surveys. This section includes detailed quantitative approaches accompanied by helpful charts and diagrams with additional data in the appendix for practice with various statistical computer programs. The section also includes descriptions of more qualitative approaches such as focus groups,

interviews, and ethnographies borrowed from other disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, and sociology. These approaches are significant in that they broaden the scope of educational research to include information on how meaning is created in social contexts.

The final section provides an excellent summary of all of the approaches discussed. It also elucidates the purpose that educational policy research should serve.

Hence, we cannot ignore the moral nature of what educators do. To make a difference in schooling will require the sustained commitment of groups of policy-makers, practitioners, and scholars to identify, prioritize, and study significant policy problems; and proposed solutions in a variety of settings, under varied conditions; and using diverse methods of examination. (p. 316)

A table of all of the lenses covered throughout the text is provided along with their design, units of analysis, goals, strengths, and weaknesses. This table would be of particular use to students when designing studies. It would allow them to choose the lens that best suits their research.

At the end of each chapter, the author provides a summary and exercises. The summaries tend to be short and highlight key areas of focus, but do not summarize all of the important facts. The exercises are well written and make good use of Bloom's taxonomy. Students are asked to describe, explain, and apply the information to contexts that would be relevant to their particular field of interest. These exercises could be a useful assessment to check for understanding and could also be easily adapted for group work in a class setting.

The most significant strength is the discussion of conducting research itself. A phenomenon is altered when it is studied. It is difficult to conduct policy studies as a hard science. Heck adeptly addresses these theoretical concerns throughout the text. However, this can also be a weakness. The text serves as a comprehensive introduction to studying policy, but it assumes a general understanding of some research and statistical terms and would not be user friendly as a "how to" guide for setting up research designs.

Analyzing policies may shed light on issues in education or create blind spots. Having an understanding of the quality and validity of the research conducted will help policymakers and educational leaders make sense of the data and apply it in school settings. Teaching master's and doctoral students to conduct studies accurately and in light of theoretical concerns will ensure that these designs are well thought out and applicable. Heck's text would be

appropriate for graduate study and should be supplemented with a text on statistical procedures and methodology.

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All Deliberate Speed: Reflections on the First Half Century of *Brown v. Board of Education*

Charles J. Ogletree, Jr.
W.W. Norton & Company, 2004
\$26.00, 365 pages

Reviewed by Carrie Jane Williamson

All Deliberate Speed was written with the purpose of explaining the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, “discuss[ing] the important work of lawyers who started the legal fight for racial integration” and reflecting on personal experiences related to being what Ogletree refers to as a “*Brown* baby”(pp. xiii–xiv). This autobiographical account debates the authenticity of the original historical *Brown* decision as well as the idea of segregation in modern society. While perceived as primarily an issue in the South, the second *Brown* decision urged desegregation with “all deliberate speed” throughout the country, even in Merced, California, the birthplace of Charles Ogletree. Ogletree’s foremost argument is that all deliberate speed is an attitude that has been interpreted as “go slow” (p. 299), which diminishes the impact of *Brown* to end segregation.

Ogletree recounts life as a child in Merced and the limited effect *Brown* had on his early education. However, as Ogletree aged, he found himself making his mark on American history and especially that of African Americans. As a child, he moved from one under resourced school to another, lying low as not to cause much of a stir in a time of racial unrest. In high school in the late 60s, he was a pioneer for Black students. He conveys the reality of being one of the first Black lifeguards in Merced, voted class president his senior year in high school, and among the first generation of African Americans to attend an institute of higher education. He was accepted into Stanford University, which paved his way to Harvard Law and the Supreme Court. As