

Innovations in Educational Ethnography

Theory, Methods, and Results

Edited by

George Spindler
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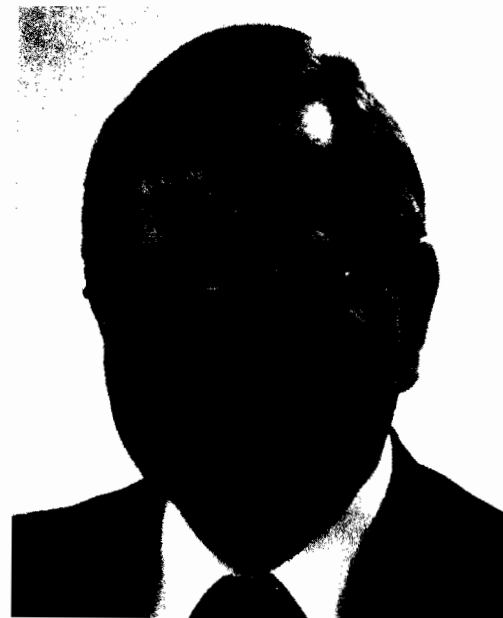
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Henry (Enrique) T. Trueba

October 29, 1931–July 17, 2004

In memory of our friend and colleague, his words,

*"So onward dear friends and colleagues,
beacons of hope, tireless workers,
and leaders all!"*

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Preface

If schools are for all children to flourish, then the individual child can be our unit of concern, but not our unit of analysis or reorganization. Why should kids be the focus of change when it is the rest of us—the culture that is acquiring them—that arrange their trouble?

—McDermott and Varenne (chap. 1, this volume).

The above quote, from Ray McDermott and Hervé Varenne, sheds light on the purpose of this book. Herein lies a series of research articles that focus on and/or exemplify how ethnography, a research tool devoted to looking at human interaction as cultural process rather than individual psychology, can shed light on educational processes framed by the complex, internationalized societies we live in today. We invite you to read these pieces not only because each creates a thoughtful and enlightening journey, but also because the issues they raise are important to both educators and ethnographers.

We live in a society and a world in which education has become increasingly pivotal in determining individual opportunity. This has focused the attention of politicians, parents, and other citizens, as well as educators and researchers, on how to achieve equity and quality in education. The uneven school success on the part of various races, classes, and genders challenges the premises of our society, which would view itself as fair and democratic. In addition, both in the United States and abroad, increases in immigration in all countries and in schooling opportunities within third world countries have