

Shaffer, T. J., Longo, N. V., Manosevitch, I., & Thomas, M. S. (Eds.). (2017). *Deliberative pedagogy: Teaching and learning for democratic engagement*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press. 372 pp.

Review by Fay Fletcher

In *Deliberative Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning for Democratic Engagement*, Shaffer, Longo, Manosevitch, and Thomas (2017) have curated a collection of works intended to demonstrate deliberative pedagogy as “a way of teaching and learning for democracy . . . [and] an essential component of the future of teaching and learning in higher education, especially arguing for this kind of civic purpose in how colleges and universities understand their mission” (p. xxi). They challenge the reader to turn familiar classroom activities, “ordinary routines” (p. xi), into activities that “prepare students to do the work of citizens” (p. xi). They call on educators and institutions to incorporate deliberative pedagogy in their classrooms and *beyond*. In the introduction, Longo, Manosevitch, and Shaffer define deliberative pedagogy as “a democratic educational process and a way of thinking that encourages students to encounter and consider multiple perspectives, weigh trade-offs and tensions, and move toward action through informed judgement” (p. xxi). As someone whose career has focused on social justice education, equity, and the privileging of marginalized cultures and knowledge systems within the post-secondary learning environment, I am intrigued by the priority given to multiple perspectives—the triangulation of engagement, deliberation, and community-based participatory research. As a classroom instructor whose teaching impact is often measured through student evaluations, I also appreciated the weighing of risks (temporary discomfort, student resistance, course evaluation) against the benefit of “space-making: creating and holding space for authentic and productive dialogue, conversations that can ultimately be not only educational but also transformative” (p. xxi) and equipping learners with the skills and knowledge to lead those conversations.

Part 1, Theory and History of Deliberative Pedagogy, provides valuable foundational information, including theoretical influences and models that shed light on the pedagogical approach. Martin Carcasson introduces readers to Kaner’s model of participatory decision making, providing readers with an opportunity to “think through” the learning path from divergent thinking to the messiness of multiple completing positions to convergent thinking.

The goal of changing views about others' perspectives as opposed to changing people's minds sets a critical, realistic expectation.

In Longo and Gibson's chapter, "Talking Out of School: Using Deliberative Pedagogy to Connect Campus and Community," the authors very intentionally build a bridge between the acts of deliberation, deliberative democracy, and their contribution to solving complex problems with community. For those who see value in privileging other ways of knowing, participating in the cocreation of knowledge, and recognizing the valuable role of stories, this chapter opens space for the application of deliberative pedagogy in this work. The foundation for this approach is laid by Longo, Manosevitch, and Shaffer in the introduction:

Through the sharing of information and knowledge, and careful listening to people's personal narratives and perspectives, public deliberation can transform individuals' understanding and grasp of complex problems and allow them to see elements of an issue they had not considered previously. (*p. xxiv*)

Part 1 provokes the reader to reflect on their own teaching practices and the ways that institutional systems may (or may not) be supporting learning for participation or leadership roles in deliberative democracy.

At this point, I am intrigued by the possibilities of deliberative pedagogy in my teaching activities. Part 2, *Classroom Practices: New Ways of Teaching and Learning*, is well placed in this regard. The authors answer the question "How?" through their personal stories of deliberative pedagogy, set in a variety of learning environments from undergraduate to international to discipline-specific applications in communications and science. Although not overly complex in terms of the issues or context within which the deliberative activities take place, be it classroom or conference, these success stories of deliberative pedagogy offer phases or stages of learning. In each case, students are first introduced to deliberative democracy (e.g., theories of public deliberation, deliberative democracy, or deliberative reasoning) and/or are given resources that ground the issue of interest (e.g., framing guides on climate change). Once students identify an issue of interest, they research and write issue briefs in preparation for an experiential activity, like a campus forum, student conference, or in-class deliberative practice.

An increasingly important discourse of local and global importance that could benefit from this framing of multiple perspectives is overlooked in Part 3, Comparative, Gender, and Cross-Cultural Deliberative Pedagogy Practice. Examples of comparative and gender deliberative pedagogy are well represented in the chapters written by Strachan and Al-Atiyat, as are examples of cross-cultural deliberative pedagogy from the international perspective in chapters by Lukianova and Musselman and by Hammer. Notwithstanding these contributions, the volume overlooks an important cross-cultural relationship close to home. Indigenous and non-Indigenous people's histories, experiences, and perspectives on topics of national and international concern, including resource extraction, the environment, law and legal systems, education, health, and community social and economic development, contribute to ongoing mistrust. The omission of an example of this cross-cultural deliberative practice is a missed opportunity to contribute to Indigenous–non-Indigenous relationship building.

Part 4, Deliberative Pedagogy and Institutional Change, provides several examples of collectives of people (e.g., academics, centers, and institutes) that “operate at the intersection of the campus and the community . . . [to] . . . nurture and strengthen public life while at the same time enriching higher education” (p. 128). Although not taking away from the exceptional achievements presented in this section, it leaves unanswered the lingering question raised by London of whether the value of this work is “adequately recognized” and will continue to get the support it needs from institutional leaders (p. 132). Promotion and tenure policies that make innovation in teaching and community engagement risky for early-career academics, and the growing focus in post-secondary education on workplace preparation, are just two of the many potential barriers to the integration of deliberative pedagogy across the academy. If we are to realize the goals of deliberative pedagogy, how do we, as individuals and as a collective, participate in changing the culture?

Part 5, Bridging Campus and Community, picks up the call for framing problems or issues not only in expert terms but in terms of “what people hold dear” (p. xi). Assuming this phrase refers to an interpretation and framing from the perspective of those affected by the problem or issue of concern, this approach is well aligned with community-based participatory research and participatory action research, which also make their way into the preface written by Thomas. This collection of stories, like those in the other sections, is thoughtful about breadth and depth of application of pedagogy.

In each case, the author takes the pedagogical approach beyond the classroom, bridging the prevailing divide between campus and surrounding communities.

The book concludes with Part 6, *Assessing Deliberative Pedagogy*. This section begins with a presentation of deliberative pedagogy as a means for achieving both the civic and economic goals of higher education and as the means for collecting the evidence of its impact using quasi control groups and longitudinal data (Harriger, McMillan, Buchanan, and Gusler). The assessment then takes readers to a rubric for assessing individual learning outcomes (Mehltretter Drury, Brammer, and Doherty) and concludes with a discussion of language and power (Gimenez and Molinari). Moving beyond postsecondary and government expectations for assessment, formative and summative assessments inform the practice of deliberative pedagogy.

Shaffer et al. successfully engage the intended audience of faculty members, academic professionals, and administrators who want to see community partners flourish through deliberative pedagogy efforts. I have not employed deliberative pedagogy in my classes, despite its appropriateness to my philosophy, teaching approach, and learning goals. The authors have not only sparked my interest, but encouraged me to bring deliberative pedagogy to my colleagues as a strategy for achieving our community engagement goals and defining our unique role within the academy. Although there are differences between postsecondary systems and prevailing issues from one state to another, even one country to another, there are many more similarities. The applicability and transferability of deliberative pedagogy to current sociopolitical events, the changing student body, and the critical importance of youth engagement in civic deliberation make *Deliberative Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning for Democratic Engagement* a worthwhile read and a resource to share with others who want to link meaningful work and learning between campus and community.

About the Reviewer

Fay Fletcher is the associate dean, academic and student affairs, and professor in the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta. Her research interests include the integration of research and teaching in partnership with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people for improved social, economic, health, and education outcomes. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Alberta.