

## Reading to Teach for Global Understanding

**Media Review Editor Carolyn O'Mahony**

In this issue of the *Journal of International Social Studies*, Alison Trinowski, Kimberli McMahan, and Maryanne Lipovski review books that colleagues might enjoy reading as background to teaching for global understanding. Trinowski reviews *EcoJustice Education Toward Diverse, Democratic, and Sustainable Communities* which was co-written by teacher educators in the United States but will resonate with teachers around the world who are dealing with issues of sustainability education in their own settings. A teacher and world traveler, McMahan found the latest offering from bestselling science author and UCLA geographer Jared Diamond, *The World Until Yesterday: What Can We Learn from Traditional Societies?*, gripping reading. Lipovski was reassured of the value of her quest to develop a truly global classroom by the words of Carl Hobert, author of *Raising Global IQ: Preparing Our Students for a Shrinking Planet* and director of the Axis for Hope Center at Boston University.

Such books as these can provide teachers with intellectual and practical resources for encouraging students to think about how they live on our planet. For example, teachers need help in convincing students who choose to spend their time in virtual communities and worlds that it is in their best interests to be concerned about their natural environment also. While wanting to teach for human dignity across societies, in a situation where resources tend to emphasize the joys and benefits of progress, teachers will appreciate examples of what people living in "developed" societies can learn from traditional societies. They need help in raising students' awareness that it is not only biodiversity that is being lost at an unprecedented rate but also cultural and linguistic diversity and the actual and potential benefits these diversities offer humanity. Students need to learn that globalizing organizations, institutions, and corporations profit from homogenizing technological advances that reduce linguistic diversity and the range of perspectives people may hold.

In the 1970s, with the rise of multicultural conversations, a decades old metaphor of the USA as a cultural melting pot was challenged. Instead, a cultural salad bowl or mosaic metaphor for American naturalization was suggested. Read as a group, these three books point to this kind of global identity for young people around the world. Books such as these remind teachers that they have a responsibility to help students, literally, smell the roses, to respect how the food they eat arrived in their bowl or on their plate, to be aware that there are people who do not share their world view, and that the choices that they make, or conversations in which they choose to participate, can change the lives of us all.

Carolyn O'Mahony

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### About the editor

**Carolyn O'Mahony** is Associate Professor of Social Studies Education at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. She teaches undergraduate K-8 social studies methods courses and graduate classes in comparative education, and international-mindedness in the International Baccalaureate Teacher Development program. Her current research focuses on how teachers develop global awareness and global pedagogical content knowledge. She can be reached at [omahony@oakland.edu](mailto:omahony@oakland.edu)

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Corresponding author email: [omahony@oakland.edu](mailto:omahony@oakland.edu)

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