

Book Review: Contesting Global Education

Reynolds, R., Bradbery, D., Brown, J., Carroll, K., Donnelly, D., Ferguson-Patrick, K., & Macqueen, S. (Eds.). (2015). *Contesting and constructing international perspectives in global education*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

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Contesting and Constructing International Perspectives in Global Education, is an edited book addressing a topic that has significance for the peaceful and sustainable future of humanity. The editors have set out to seek a diverse range of perspectives around conceptualizations of global education and the global citizen. In doing so they have created a space for both Western and non-Western voices to champion the potential of education to be instrumental in fostering a cosmopolitan global consciousness, as well as economic competence. While the strength of the book is the broad and realistic re-imaginings of educating for global citizenship (GC), perspectives from the Global South and indigenous philosophies would have been a valuable inclusion. A key theme is the underscoring of the objective of global education (GE), indeed its *raison d'être*, in facilitating development of knowledge, skills and values deemed essential for GC, in both teachers and students. This is held up against current prevalent ideas around teaching for citizenship, such as service learning and charitable campaigns, both argued to maintain the status quo, and perpetuate both local and global inequality and inequity.

The impetus for this book is explained as the nebulous and contested nature of (GE) and (GC) that has, to date, been rendered both over-theorized and under-implemented. This lack is argued to lie at

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the root of the failure for GE to be included in any significant way in pre-service teacher education, in school curricula, or to be operationalized in school classrooms. Setting the book against a backdrop of global challenges including climate change, conflict and inequity, one of the book's greatest strengths is as a countering agent to the increasingly marketized and neoliberal discourse around education. In pushing back against neoliberal objectives, the contributing authors offer a substantial contribution to the field, and have reified many of the conceptual ideas around GE and GC—offering a roadmap from theory to practice. However, whilst acknowledging that this was not the stated aim of the editors, this is an area that could have been strengthened—offering more concrete pedagogical strategies for teachers may have served to enhance the book. That minor caveat aside, the book's strength is its broad appeal and potential for application. It is relevant and practical for different audiences, including students, academics, teacher educators, pre and in-service teachers and policy makers. This book is an excellent resource that provides a comprehensive overview of the field of global education, and manages to draw together some of the contested notions surrounding the concept. In structuring the sections thematically, the editors have woven sometimes disparate conceptualizations and ideas for praxis into a complementary consolidation. By placing GE within peace education, environmental education, cosmopolitanism and human rights education, the editors have advanced the consolidation of the notion of GE. It is certainly a step forward for the actualization of GE in classrooms.

The book commences with a theoretical analysis of existing and emerging theories of GE and GC. Contextualizing GE within increasingly neoliberal education policy, Pike draws on the tenets of cosmopolitanism. Interconnectedness, shared humanity and global human solidarity underpin his proposal for a rethink not only on how, but why we *do* schooling. Reynolds' chapter contextualizes notions of GE through the exploration of literature across different sectors of education, from early childhood through to tertiary, and into community education. Bringing non-Western voices to the conversation, Landorf and Feldman's chapter concludes that the time for questioning and theorizing around the concept of global citizenship is past; that what is essential now is to explore how GE can move out of the realm of theory and be operationalized in the classroom through "respecting local needs as well as global issues and concerns" (p. 50).

The second section of the book challenges how skills and values for global citizenship can be incorporated into national narratives, with research from South Africa, Indonesia, Ireland and England. Key themes throughout are how to connect the local to the global for a practical GE, and

underscoring the essential role played by the teacher. In fact, it is constantly reinforced that to teach for the skills, attitudes and knowledge for GC, the teacher must be similarly equipped and possessed of such consciousness. Utilizing information and communications technology (ICT) to enhance connectivity in the geographically and culturally diverse Indonesian archipelago forms the basis of the chapter by Kusmawan. Liddy, writing from an Irish perspective, advocates for a stronger focus on the political sphere in classrooms, particularly through local issues that link to the global, and argues for critical analysis of the power structures that maintain inequities. Davies offers a theory of the “global dimension – meaning the world’s interconnectedness” (p. 89). His research explored how this cosmopolitan philosophy can be included in pre-service teacher training, as a counter to the rhetoric of far-right nationalistic movements that threaten social cohesion in the wake of large scale Polish immigration in England.

In section three, entitled "Empowering Citizens for Global Education", three contributors offer practical ways and means of doing just that. Addressing the idea of schools as sites for democratic reform, Calvo de Mora challenges the existing discourse of relationships of schools with their communities. As spaces for “democratic social relations . . . anchored to the wider social and cultural environment” (p. 107), he outlines a model called Learning Cycle of Democracy that presents as a workable model to establish multi-stakeholder partnerships between schools and the community for collaborative learning and problem-solving. Macqueen and Ferguson-Patrick ask how we can “employ global education for lasting change” (p. 115), and offer insights gained through empirical research with Australian pre-service teachers. Bradbery and Brown promote utilizing children’s literature as a multimodal delivery method for a values stance towards teaching for the common good. Citing research around the benefits of using children’s literature as a platform for teaching for values such as sustainability, peace, tolerance, diversity and kindness, they list a range of children’s books (although for this reviewer, the omission of *The Lorax* by Dr Zeuss (1971) is an oversight).

In deconstructing global education in section four, two authors make salient points around the potential for *Othering* through existing citizenship programs, namely service learning and charity drives. Martin and Pirbhai-Illich explore the impact of different ideologies on policy goals for educating for citizenship. They posit that programs such as service-learning can take on a “neo-colonial form” (p. 135) that they reinforce classed and racial attitudes without challenging the power structures that maintain the inequities. Carroll offers an Australian perspective of the inadequacy of current curricula and schooling practices in the globalized world. She presents a Four Step Model of

Global Literacy to “recalibrate the curriculum to focus on skills and concepts needed for active engagement in the global village” (p. 157).

Section five segues neatly with five chapters around "Transforming Curricula for Global Education". Two of the chapters have a focus on educating for a culture of peace: Elmersjo through the teaching of History, and Toh via whole school emphasis on developing intercultural understandings. Toh offers “visions, possibilities and challenges in promoting GE from the perspective of peace education” (p. 219). Donnelly and Grushka’s chapter reports on a pre-service teacher course focused on human rights and social justice through an “arts-led critical global education agenda” (p. 173). They have developed a model to develop students’ “global cultural literacy” (p. 175) through digital technologies, with broad application in a range of learning environments. Print outlines representations of GE in curricula and presents the challenges and future direction for facilitating GC through current schooling systems. The penultimate chapter delivers a critical analysis of the disparity between hegemonic neoliberal discourse in Australia around the purposes of schooling and aspirations to global citizenship in policy and the new national curriculum. In doing so, Carroll challenges the reactionaries who call for a return to "basics". Whilst not offering a solution, Carroll does provide a robust rationale to continue to push back to ensure our young people have the capabilities for the global village to remain a viable worldview.

This book ultimately offers several platforms for future research. Much of the impetus for such research rests in several clearly defined pathways, to continue to explore, not only conceptualizations of GE and GC, but the emerging and corresponding pedagogical practices. In our increasingly globalized world, this book convinces that the time for theorizing is over and what remains is the need to ask: what does teaching for global citizenship actually look like in the classroom?