

CONTESTING AND CONSTRUCTING INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES IN GLOBAL EDUCATION

Review by Douglas Bourn

Ruth Reynolds, Deborah Bradbery, Joanna Brown, Kay Carroll, Debra Donnelly, Kate Ferguson-Patrick and Suzanne Macqueen (eds.) (2015) *Contesting and Constructing International Perspectives in Global Education*, Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

In recent years there has been a growth in publications on the themes of global learning, development education, global citizenship and global education. This edited volume, produced by academics and researchers from two universities in Australia, provides an important addition to the discourse around global education. Whilst most of the authors are based in Australia, there are also contributions from North America, Europe, Africa and Asia and it is a conscious attempt to promote a range of perspectives on global education, both in terms of definitions and concepts but examples of practice.

In addition to a useful introduction from the editors on interpretations of global education, the volume has seventeen short chapters under five themes:

- Temporal and Spatial Views of Global Education;
- Telling National Stories of Global Education;
- Empowering Citizens for Global Education;
- Deconstructing Global Education; and
- Transforming Curricula for Global Education.

Among the authors of the various chapters are well known figures within global education who are likely to be known to readers of this journal. They include Graham Pike, Mags Liddy, Fran Martin, Trevor Davies and Hilary Landorf.

A strength of the volume is the richness of perspectives, evidence from research in Canada, Australia, the UK, US, South Africa, Sweden and Indonesia. Examples include studies on training of teachers, relevance of global perspectives to children's literature, study of history and use of digital technology. A recurrent theme within the volume is the issue of terminology and relative merits of concepts such as global citizenship and global education. I found the chapter by Landorf and Feldman on reviewing the literature on global citizenship particularly valuable. Among the strongest chapters are those that review the curriculum and current debates in Australia, particularly in relation to changing political and educational priorities and how concepts can be interpreted and used.

Mags Liddy's chapter is the only one that brings in directly the debates within development education. She rightly poses the need for development educationalists to address politics and power. Whilst the volume has a number of merits, particularly in raising the profile and summarising examples of debates and practices on global education, it also has a number of weaknesses, some of which are recognised in the introduction. One of these is that despite the range of authors, the volume has very few non-Western examples of discussions on concepts and examples of research and practice of global education. For example, it would have been valuable to have seen some chapters looking at what concepts like global citizenship mean within discussions on education in South and East Asia and global education and related themes in sub-Saharan Africa. There is a lot of published material on these themes in a range of journals that have different starting points to many of the chapters in this volume including that of the role of social movements, the importance of indigenous knowledges and contribution of Eastern philosophies to global outlooks.

Another weakness of the volume is that because global education has come to mean so many different things, there is perhaps too wide a variation of topics and themes discussed particularly as each chapter is rather short. I also found a number of the chapters that claimed to suggest there was a lack of research on global education and global citizenship, notably Print, seemed unaware of the wealth of recently published research on these themes. For example, I am aware of about ten PhDs that have been published on global citizenship and global education since 2005, most of which have been followed up through books and academic articles. The impact of journals such as *Policy and Practice*, *Critical Literacy*, *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*, *ZEP* in Germany and other online journals in Spain and Portugal does not appear to have been recognised.

Global education in many countries has been heavily influenced by the desire of both policymakers and civil society organisations to secure greater understanding and engagement with global and development issues. The work of the Global Education Network Europe (GENE) and the European Development Awareness and Education (DARE) Forum and similar networks in the US and Japan have contributed to this. But none of the chapters make reference to the wealth of evidence that has come out from these bodies.

There are a number of common roots to conceptualisations of global education, for example Hanvey and Tye in the US, Selby and Pike in the UK and Canada, and also the European definitions, influenced primarily from discourses within development education. These roots are noted but the relationship between them and the influences of theorists such as Paulo Freire and, more recently, Henry Giroux are not explored.

Despite these criticisms, I still find the book valuable and an important addition to the discourse around global education. Most of the chapters are accessible and provide some valuable information and evidence. The questions posed at the end of the editorial on the need to encourage

greater debate on global citizenship and relevance to needs of national curricula are very important today. Many of the chapters demonstrate the value of global education to educational needs of societies and communities, and it is good to see reference to themes such as peace and human rights particularly in the volume.

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