

# Resource reviews

## *GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION TO KEY CONCEPTS AND DEBATES*

### **Review by Douglas Bourn**

Edda Sant, Ian Davies, Karen Pashby and Lynette Shultz (2018) *Global Citizenship Education: A Critical Introduction to Key Concepts and Debates*, London: Bloomsbury

This volume, aimed as an introduction to Global Citizenship Education to undergraduate and Masters' level students, is one of a plethora of books on this subject to be published in the English language over the past three years. Recent research by the Development Education Research Centre (DERC) for the Academic Network of Global Education Researchers (ANGEL - [www.agnel-network.net](http://www.agnel-network.net)) identified over 400 academic publications, books, articles, PhDs and research reports covering this area published in the last three years. Therefore, the importance and contribution of this volume by some leading figures in the field of Global Citizenship Education needs to be considered alongside this wealth of material and the extent to which it adds value to this rapidly growing educational field.

Some of the authors of this volume have been involved with others in the *Palgrave Handbook of Global Citizenship and Education* (Davies et al., 2018). Karen Pashby and Lynette Shultz are also well-known for a range of articles and publications on global citizenship within higher education. All of the authors have a strong track record either in citizenship or Global Citizenship Education. Reflecting the backgrounds and experiences of the authors, the focus on both reviewing the academic, policy and practice literature comes from mainly the United Kingdom (UK) and North America (primarily Canada).

The volume is divided into three parts: key questions, concepts and dimensions; key educational frameworks; and key issues in research and practice and in teaching and learning. The book is accessible and, in each chapter, there are descriptions of key concepts and themes with an annotated bibliography and suggested activities for students. This structure is useful, but the overall question I had upon reading it was: would I recommend this book as a key reading for the students on a Masters' programme on development education? The answer is probably 'no' because much of the text appears to be written more for undergraduate students. It is very descriptive in tone with perhaps too many long quotes in each chapter and a series of personal observations. What is difficult to ascertain is any sense of critical debate on the key issues.

Global Citizenship Education has become the dominant phrase in some European and North American discourses for learning about global and development issues. It has replaced terms such as global or development education and I was hoping to see a strong rationale for why this has happened. There was a passing reference to the value of Global Citizenship Education compared to say global education by saying that the latter emphasises ways in which education is universalised, while the former 'questions the type of citizenry that we, as a global society, should educate' (131). Whilst this could be one interpretation of the differences and comparative value of these terms, there are of course many other distinctions. It could be argued that Global Citizenship Education has just become the new buzz phrase and has been picked up by international bodies, such as UNESCO, but in practice its interpretation in many cases is little different from that of many of the discourses in global and development education.

There were aspects of the volume that I did find particularly valuable, such as the usage of Biesta's categorisation of purposes of education as qualification, socialisation and subjectification and relevance to Global Citizenship Education. The discussions on Global Rights and Duties and Global Identities brought in some discussions that have all too often been ignored in the discourses. However, I had hoped this volume would enable

students to be given some background information, different perspectives and approaches to Global Citizenship Education. In this, I was disappointed.

The volume tried to cover too much territory. Part One is the strongest where it looks at rights, identities, local, national and global citizenship. Part Two reviews what has been called the adjectival educations, including the relationship of global citizenship to development, global, character, peace, citizenship and education for sustainable education. Each chapter looks at a particular area but at a very superficial level and each chapter relies heavily on one or two key texts. I had hoped the volume would try and discuss why Global Citizenship Education has become such a popular topic and recognise its roots and connections to both policy initiatives at a national or international level or how themes and concepts have evolved and what has influenced these changes. There is very little of this in the volume. The influence and importance of UNESCO's work in this area is barely mentioned. Nor is there much discussion of the different ways policy-makers have used and responded to Global Citizenship. Just reviewing the different uses of the term in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland would have posed many valuable questions about the respective roles of policy-makers, practitioners and researchers.

A key issue in debating the term Global Citizenship Education is the relationship between the three words. This volume does look at each term separately and shows their linkages but I was left rather confused as to what the key message is. For example, is the emphasis on Global Citizenship and Education the ways in which debates about Global Citizenship can have an influence on education, or is it about something completely new and distinct as an educational field or pedagogical approach?

What I also found very disappointing from reading the volume was the lack of recognition and attention given to the influence and importance of the work of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), be they international agencies or local organisations, like Development Education Centres in the UK. Global Citizenship Education would not have the status and strong body

of thinking behind it without the excellent work of organisations like Oxfam, various NGOs in North America and grassroots organisations across Europe. They are mentioned in passing, particularly in the chapters on community action and teaching and learning methods but they are not analysed or discussed in any detail.

Finally, I want to make some comments about the two chapters on research and evaluation. Here the volume does make the valuable point that, whilst there has been more research in recent years, there is a need for more longitudinal-based studies. But what the authors of the volume have not recognised, or perhaps not aware of, is the wealth of research-based literature in this field in the past five years. I am aware, for example, of at least fifteen PhDs that cover this area that have been produced since 2014 and a wealth of academic articles covering topics and themes from all regions of the world. I also, however, found the chapter on evaluation disappointing as it emphasised more technical examples of evaluation and did not mention that academic studies have increasingly shown the value of evidence-based research to inform and shape evaluation.

This volume, in its defence, is trying to cover a vast area and one that is rapidly changing. One of the exciting things about Global Citizenship Education is that it is a very lively discourse with many different perspectives and approaches. Its importance cannot be denied in a world of Brexit economic nationalism and the resurgence of xenophobia. But what can happen, and it does happen all too often with volumes like this, is that they end up being little more than a useful introduction to the topic. I would use the volume with undergraduate students if they were looking for an introduction to the area but suggest it should be seen as no more than an initial taster. For Masters' students it is perhaps useful as background reading but what I would see as much more valuable is the Palgrave Handbook (Davies et.al., 2018) and other volumes on the same subject by Torres (2017), Tarozzi (2016), the excellent Peer Reviews by Global Education Network Europe (GENE - [www.gene.eu](http://www.gene.eu)) and the wealth of material produced by the Global Learning Programmes across the UK.

In discussing Global Citizenship Education, any author has to note that the ideas and practices around the area overlap with global education, global learning and development education. You cannot separate one from the other because I would maintain that in both Europe and North America, for example, there is no clear difference in approach or perspectives in how these different terms are being used.

### **References**

Davies, I, Ho, L, Kiwan,D, Peck, C L, Petersen,A, Sant, E and Waghid Y (eds.) (2018) *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Citizenship and Education*, London: Palgrave.

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