

Book Review

Global Learning and Sustainable Development edited by Helen Gadsby and Andrea Bullivant, Routledge, London, 2010, 192pp. ISBN: 9780415584098

The introduction of cross-curricular dimensions to the Key Stage 3 curriculum in September 2008 within England signalled a growing recognition of a need for greater connectivity in young people's learning. Developed in response to this changing policy, *Global Learning and Sustainable Development* is the first in a series from Routledge exploring cross-curricular teaching themes in secondary education, including creativity and critical thinking, technology and media, identity and cultural diversity and enterprise. The authors, drawn from Liverpool Hope and De Montfort Universities and Liverpool World Centre, also aim to address what they see as a wider shift in education, namely an increasing recognition of the global learning needs of young people growing up in the twenty-first century. This book aims to support teachers in meeting these needs. It sets out to explore the theoretical, historical and educational contexts of the dual concepts of global dimension and sustainable development, and to offer practical guidance on implementing these in mainstream secondary contexts.

A historical overview of global learning by Andrea Bullivant tracks the emergence and development of issue-based educations, including global education, development education, peace education and citizenship education. She highlights the contested, overlapping and evolving nature of these terms and traditions. In doing so, she offers a starting point for teachers wishing to develop a better understanding of the global dimension and sustainable development, and of why and how these concepts have emerged into use. Through encouraging teachers to frame their practice in schools in the context of a contested and evolving field, this chapter echoes the editors' call for teachers to take a 'critical approach', one which involves considering the values and perspectives they promote and the extent to which resources meet the needs of learners in their school. Phil Bamber's chapter, em-

phasising the pervasive but ambiguous nature of the concept of global citizenship, similarly offers readers the opportunity to reflect on different approaches to citizenship and influences on citizenship education in the UK. This includes an exploration of contrasting notions of education for global competitiveness and education for global cooperation. He raises some thought-provoking and challenging questions for educators: how do we approach complex and controversial issues such as terrorism and immigration? At what age should children consider global issues that expose less desirable aspects of our shared humanity such as child labour and abuses of human rights?

The approach of these chapters is in contrast to that taken in the second chapter of the book, focused on current policy and practice. Here, the English Department for Education's 'eight key concepts of the global dimension and the eight doorways in the National Framework for Sustainable Development' are presented, without reference to their origin as 'the' approach to the teaching of these concepts. Much reference is made to what students 'need' to understand, with little reflection on these assertions. Issues that are stereotypical of the field, such as child labour and fair trade, are suggested as example topics, and schemes such as the International Schools Award and Eco-Schools are put forward with comment focusing on their logistics rather than a consideration of the perspectives they promote on the global dimension and sustainable development.

This lack of dialogue between theory and practice is echoed throughout the book. For example, Andrea Bullivant provides an interesting discussion of the ways in which post-colonialism offers a theoretical framework for viewing development. She asserts that the tension between dominant views of development as a straightforward path to modernity and the views of those who seek to challenge this is one that teachers need to be aware of. However, what this means in terms of classroom practice is not detailed, although school links and fundraising are briefly pointed to as activities which may reinforce stereotypes through failing to consider the causes and complexities of the inequalities they are attempting to address. Chapter 5, by Alison Clark and Anne James, on curriculum planning for global learning, offers clear pointers to embedding the global dimension and sustainable development in the curriculum, including emphasising the benefits of appointing a global champion; and considering different approaches to organising learning including discrete lessons, merged subjects and special events. The chapter is purely logistical, offering no discussion of the content of learning, and no cross-referencing between different practical and theoretical approaches.

Ensuring dialogue between theoretical debates and practice is a challenge for global learning more broadly. Indeed, it could be argued that it is neither possible nor desirable to provide a single set of answers on what this relationship should look like in embedding global learning and sustainable development in the secondary school curriculum. Teachers must navigate different values, perspectives and approaches

to work out what meets the needs of learners within the context of their school. In this endeavour, *Global Learning and Sustainable Development* offers a number of interesting practical teaching resources. In their chapter on developing a European dimension in education, Audrey Beaumont and Nicola Savvides put forward a conceptual framework that brings together the Department for Education's eight key concepts of the global dimension, and the Curriculum Authority's framework for Personal Learning and Thinking Skills. Their aim is to provide teachers with scaffolding to plan and deliver a European dimension to students' learning. They offer examples of ways in which the exploration of trade routes can fit into individual subjects. Steve Padget and Lorna Pout suggest a range of 'provocations' to help teachers in their approach to the cross-curriculum dimension. They emphasise the importance of dynamic dialogue between and among learners and between learners and their teacher. For example, they describe an activity in which groups create an action plan for reconstructing life in a town struck by an earthquake. The activity is underpinned by a visual approach to group discussion in which learners write their ideas on individual sticky notes as they emerge, and can then explore and change the spatial relationships between their ideas.

Ideas such as this can provide scaffolding for projects of different scale and intensity, in single lessons or for learning 'off-timetable' across a year group. In doing so, such cross-curricular learning opportunities support students' abilities to make connections between subjects and help them to make sense of a world that is more diverse and interconnected, more complex and changing. As educational policy continues to shift and change, the focus on cross-curricular themes, which is the impetus for this book and series, may be receding. The other driver for the book, the recognition of the global learning needs of the young, is consequently more central. However, young people themselves, and their needs, seem somewhat absent. Helen Gadsby touches on the way in which global issues are an integral part of children's lives, but this is largely assumed throughout the rest of the text.

Katherine Brown is a doctoral student at the Institute of Education, University of London.