

Book Review

Teaching the Global Dimension: Key Principles and Effective Practice, edited by D. Hicks and C. Holden, Routledge, London, 2007, 212 pp., ISBN: 0-415-40448-7.

This review looks at *Teaching the Global Dimension: Key Principles and Effective Practice* with an eye to understanding its applicability in the Canadian classroom. Global education is a marginalized subject area that gets scant mention in Canada's provincial curriculum guidelines and receives limited financial support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and teachers' federations. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that Canada has not produced a comprehensive global education text. These gaps in Canada's global education landscape make Hicks and Holden's text a welcome source of theoretical and practical support.

Even with no comparable global education framework in Canada, the content reflected in the text – from the eight key concepts of the global dimension to the sections exploring the theoretical aspects and practical application in the classroom – are sure to resonate with Canadian teachers. The initial chapters of the text give educators both a broad set of conceptual and theoretical underpinnings to work with, as well as data that supports the idea that young people (and teacher candidates) have an interest in global issues, but have gaps in their understanding. A comparable study by War Child Canada and Environics Research Group (2006) – *Youth Opinion Poll: Canadian youth speak out on global issues and Canada's role in the world* – offers some insight into how Canadian youth are thinking about global issues (or not). However, at present there are no similar studies looking at student teachers' opinions about global issues.

The short chapters on the key concepts of the global dimension: conflict resolution; social justice; values and perceptions; sustainable development; interdependence; human rights; diversity; and global citizenship are impressively substantial in content. Each concept is illuminated, bringing into focus the complex ideas supporting them and the connections between these concepts and the classroom. In addition, each chapter ends with an activity that supports the understanding of the concept

and lists four or more resources that can be used as starting points. Canadian teachers will appreciate the equal emphasis the text places on both primary and secondary education activities, strategies, and pedagogy, as Canadian global education materials tend to be disproportionately focused on secondary education.

The text also emphasizes the point that anti-racism and other core equity issues need to be firmly embedded into global education perspective and analysis. Given that local level issues are often the most controversial, the text also encourages an engagement with global issues on a local level, allowing students to understand issues in a way that is tangible to them before making links to the more abstract global level. In Canada, global education resources are most often supported by international development organisations and agencies and so do not encourage the inclusion of local issues. This propagates the notion that the local is neither problematic nor connected to the global unfortunate 'other'.

The authors also bring together diverse strands of practice and theory that are the composite parts of teaching in the global dimension, and do not shy away from addressing the difficulties that one is bound to run into in this area of study. Until Canadians produce their own brilliant global education text, Hicks and Holden's can assist in filling that gap.

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Reference

War Child Canada and Environics Research Group. (2006). *The War Child Canada Youth Opinion Poll: Canadian youth speak out on global issues and Canada's role in the world*. Available online from: http://www.getloud.ca/documents/WCC_Youth_Opinion_Poll.pdf.