

Book Review

The Critical Global Educator: Global citizenship education as sustainable development. Ellis, Maureen (2016). London: Routledge. 246pp. ISBN 978-1-138-88780-0

This book, which is based on Ellis's PhD thesis, makes several important contributions in the field of global education. As the author suggests in the first chapter of the book, through considering the diverse and contradictory philosophical, political, pragmatic, and civic origins of global education in the UK (32), she adopts the initialism 'GCESD' to represent the indeterminate and emerging field of global citizenship education *as* sustainable development. She thus offers a new cross-disciplinary and theoretical framework for critical global educators.

This book covers a vast research terrain across historical, philosophical, theological, psychological, sociological, and critical understandings of education in a global context. The author provides three research questions, which she revisits throughout the book, to help the reader navigate through this extensive work. These are important questions that are essential for scholars, policymakers, academics, and all those who are interested in the task of GCESD:

1. What conceptualization of a critical global educator is available from the literature?
2. To what extent can a methodological framework based on CHAT (Cultural Historical Activity Theory) provide a tool for self- or negotiated evaluation of critical global educators?
3. What factors influence the personal and professional development of the critical global educator?

The reader's entry into this research starts from the author's own autobiographical account of her upper-middle-class upbringing in India, her exposure to different cultures, her interest in education developed from missionary beginnings, and the subsequent professional dissonance she experienced as a linguist and a teacher (chapter 1). The author then successfully sets the context in which disempowered critical global educators are challenged to sustain professional efficacy, including by diminished political ambition and by the lack of a theoretical grounding that could furnish global citizenship education with a genuine status within fragmented policies and initiatives (chapters 2 and 3). Using a methodological framework

based on CHAT (chapter 4), an extensive research is conducted with more than five hundred respondents in the field of education (teachers, teacher educators, academics, and international NGO administrators; chapter 6).

Among the key research outcomes are: a Jungian mandala of philosophical and theoretical foundations for humanitarian education (chapter 3); a comparison highlighting inadequate government policy guidelines (chapter 5); and eight recommendations (chapter 7). These recommendations include calls for theorized multimodality, explicit political remit, and funding that stipulates multi-stakeholder, transdisciplinary global citizenship education as sustainable development.

At times this can be a challenging read. The language is sometimes overly poetic and dense. Several sentences and paragraphs throughout the book require unpacking to clarify meaning and comprehend the important arguments being made through this research. This is particularly relevant when the author brings up non-Western understandings that shaped her ontological perspectives: 'Acknowledging fresh doorways, extending arms passionately linking disciples to discipline, uniting locution, illocution and perlocution ... in dharmic performance, whirling dervishes approach *mysterium tremendum/fascins*, Lord of the Dance' (222).

The terms *dharma* and *vedic harmony* are raised at several points, including as part of the title of the concluding chapter, although with no substantive engagement. Instead, the all-too-often cited, largely Anglo-Saxon ontological, philosophical, and theoretical examples give support to the research and praxis in consideration. This both excites and fails in the prospect of bringing in the contributions being made by several scholars in the past and present on the use of less widely known perspectives in education. Perhaps in her subsequent work the author will engage with such theoretical frameworks that could also have a significant impact on empowering the critical global educator.

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