

International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning

Editorial

This issue has two main themes, explored through four articles with different perspectives. The first two articles focus on the theme of transdisciplinarity in the context of higher education and on arguments for the transformation of knowledge and different understandings of citizenship. The third and fourth articles concern national education policies or programmes, with critical assessments of how and whether they take a sufficiently critical approach to education on global issues.

Su-Ming Khoo's article is concerned with inter- and transdisciplinarity approaches within higher education as a means by which universities can contribute meaningfully to a more sustainable future. She argues that the type of knowledge needed to shift society towards such a future is complex and requires work both across discipline boundaries and beyond academia. She discusses three approaches to inter- and transdisciplinary work – systemic, dissenting, and pragmatic – and looks critically at the limits to disciplinary knowledge and the potential for inter- and transdisciplinary responses. Her article then considers how projects on sustainability offer spaces for such work, and argues that such projects require a degree of clarity about the intention of the work as well as processes that are truly inclusive and collaborative, which give space for alternative and dissenting perspectives. Finally, she contends that this is only really possible with a form of integral leadership.

Silvia Elisabeth Moraes and Ludmila de Almeida Freire offer a Brazilian perspective on transdisciplinarity by drawing on a university project entitled 'Planetary Citizenship and the Ecology of Knowledges: Interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity and internationalization in the university curriculum', in which projects were developed using a transdisciplinary approach to global themes chosen by students. In their article, the authors see the ecology of knowledges as constituting a dialogue between dominant Western forms of knowledge and other knowledges that have traditionally been excluded from the university context, and planetary citizenship as an emerging citizenship wherein life on the planet is the origin, context, and aim of university projects. Drawing on the work of Santos on the sociology of absences, they consider ways in which monocultures have ensured the invisibility of different

knowledges. They maintain that the present global context provides a perfect moment for the development of planetary citizenship with an ecology of knowledges, given that global issues are a concern for Western and other populations, but that responses to these issues to date have not offered new perspectives.

Hiroyuki Yumoto's article reflects a concern of this journal to understand approaches to development education and global learning in different national contexts. In the context of an increasing focus on issues of citizenship, Yumoto offers a critique of current Japanese education policy. After providing a brief history and contextual discussion on development education and citizenship education in Japan, he maintains that the current interpretation of citizenship is increasingly 'patriotic.' Within the context of a debate about the political neutrality of education, he argues that the current government in Japan is advocating political intervention in education, whilst maintaining that 'neutrality of education' is important. He challenges this through a discussion of the tensions between these positions and of the consequences for teachers and learners. He advocates development education as a political form of education: not one promoting a particular political perspective, but one aiming to develop citizens capable of contributing to a more equitable global society.

Finally, John Huckle's article examines the Global Learning Programme in England, a government-funded programme working across primary, secondary, and special schools. He provides detail about the programme, its aims, and the various tools that have been developed for schools to use to promote global learning. He then poses the question as to whether the programme offers space for critical thinking, or whether it reinforces dominant neo-liberal perspectives. After considering a range of indicators and theoretical perspectives that reflect more critical approaches, Huckle offers a critique of the core guidance provided by the programme. He concludes that, for teachers already familiar with critical theory perspectives on pedagogy, the programme does enable such approaches, but that for others there is more that could be done to facilitate the introduction in schools of more critical ideas on global issues and development alongside mainstream ones. In summary, he suggests that the programme is more open to counter-hegemonic content than other critiques have suggested.

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