

Teaching Global Citizenship: A Canadian Perspective

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Book Review/Recension d'ouvrage

Teaching Global Citizenship: A Canadian Perspective

edited by Lloyd Kornelsen, Geraldine Balzer, & Karen M. Magro

Canadian Scholars' Press, 2020, 248 pages

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Teaching Global Citizenship is a thoughtful and thought-provoking collection that provides sound philosophical and practical underpinnings for anyone looking to incorporate global citizenship education (GCE) into their classroom or to shift their practice towards one which is more place-responsive on a global scale. Written and edited by a mix of K-12 classroom teachers and post-secondary education faculty, the overarching themes of this book are evident even in the ways in which the editors opted not to homogenize the essays but, rather, to work with the assemblage of voices so that each chapter retains much of the narrative character and tone of the contributing authors. Through this editorial choice and the selected essay topics, readers gain a strong sense of how they too might connect themselves and their students to both the local (e.g., self) and the global in thoughtful and meaningful ways. This attention to whose voices, experiences, and lenses shapes the fields of CGE and education in-general is part of what makes this an exemplary resource for educators in all places and roles.

GCE provides a coherent model for Social Studies education amidst the myriad competing aims of this interdisciplinary field; the CGE lens is one that features prominently in history and human geography curriculum in many Canadian provinces. Although presumably intended primarily for teachers of the humanities, given its dominant

themes of community building and place-responsive learning, this particular volume is one that has clear applications across curricula and grade levels. Relationships and a sense of connectedness are key themes throughout K-12 education; research such as that included in this collection, which focuses on simultaneously building these connections locally and globally, has potential to help teachers at all levels consider ways in which they too might support their students' sense of themselves as global citizens with privileges that stem from being part of their local and global communities as well as responsibilities to these same groups. The material rises above humanities education to effectively comment on guiding philosophies for the broader field education.

Although it is not positioned specifically to do so, this book makes a strong argument for CGE as a model of contemporary education, highlighting the value of interdisciplinary connections between subject areas, the importance of reciprocity when engaging in global exploration and participatory citizenship (and how to do so without fear, regressing, mythologizing, imposing, or colonizing), and modelling how becoming a teacher is an unending process of building a frame of mind. It guides the reader in considering how one might simultaneously lead learners to work locally for meaningful change while also venturing out and connecting to their larger world, where the inherent messiness of normative difference, "plurality as the law" as Chapman (p. 52) calls it, is recognized and celebrated through multiple forms of expression and a focus on exploration over evaluation (i.e., process over product). Asking us to consider, "do we want better students, or do we want better humans?" (Schoen, p. 168), the contributing authors help us determine how we might support students in engaging with their specific contexts in ways that help them connect to their learning and their larger world in meaningful ways and, subsequently, inform their humanity via themes of equity, sustainability, connection, awareness, justice, responsibility, identity, and innovation. Schools are positioned as places to encounter each other and the world, where each of us is asked to consider the opportunities and requirements presented by our own "place in the world" and determine how to act accordingly.

The broad applicability of the material included in this book does not lose specific relevance for educators whose work does tend to focus on Social Studies. In the Canadian context, Social Studies as a distinct category of study is a common delivery method for history, geography, and civics education, although the prevalence of history education is evident in most provincial curricula. Regardless of the packaging, Social Studies in

Canada relies on historical thinking concepts as both a conceptual framework and means of guiding skill development and student competencies. These concepts—historical significance, primary evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence, historical perspectives, and ethical dimensions—became well known and influential among curriculum development teams in large part due to the work of Peter Seixas and others on the nation-wide Historical Thinking Project and appear in part or full in almost every provincial or territorial curriculum in Canada. Educators looking to embed more GCE into their curriculum will therefore likely do so with historical thinking in mind. Rather than a choice between conceptual models, GCE presents a special relevance as an extension of historical thinking. It is not enough to know how history is constructed (by working through the historical thinking concepts), or what is important to learn (by sifting through the possibilities of content); Social Studies teachers need to have a why. While other candidates for why exist, such as the ‘educated citizen’—which can often be read as the ‘informed consumer’ in many provincial curricula—a compelling case can be made for global citizenship as a deep purpose behind Social Studies. Centering practice around GCE makes space for students to take on important focal points such as critical media theory, climate change, and inequality (p. 23), and the claiming/reclaiming of power through community building. GCE explores the tensions between patriotism, nationalism, and globalism, and positions global citizenship primarily as a state of mind, from which all other features of GCE-related learning flow.

GCE as introduced by the authors may also provide a useful consideration for the ‘where’ of Social Studies. Locating and situating teachers’ own practices is important but often overlooked work. This book makes a case that programs embarking on global learning should be grounded in place, and that a global perspective begins with a local perspective: “visionary educational initiatives should begin with knowledge of the bioregional characteristics of the land” (p. 35). The possibilities inherent in local communities become waypoints towards active citizenship; as students make connections with their local contexts and communities and come to see place as a living entity in relation to story, they develop the mindset that makes GCE a natural extension of their learning. *Teaching Global Citizenship: A Canadian Perspective* will encourage educators to view humans as entangled with each other and our larger systems, and sets up students’ learning around identity, positionality, and the progress from individual transformation to social change. It is a volume well worth reading for any educator.