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Review of *Global Citizenship Education in Praxis: Pathways for Schools*



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The book *Global Citizenship Education in Praxis: Pathways for Schools* addresses a timely, relevant and urgent theme for multiple stakeholders in education: Global Citizenship Education. Its foundational basis is almost an axiom of education nowadays in many contexts: students need to be helped to understand and actively engage with contemporary global societal issues, thinking and acting as global citizens; and teachers must help their students achieve this goal (Biesta, 2023; Schulz et al., 2023). But not only is the theme timely, relevant and urgent. It is also complex. As Davies et al. (2018) show, the philosophies that underpin current conceptualizations of global citizenship education are varied and conflicting, for instance, neo-liberalism and global capitalism; nationalism and internationalism; post-colonialism, indigeneity, and transnationalism, among others. The issues involved are intricate, for example, justice, equity, diversity, identity, and sustainable development. The perspectives and viewpoints through which these issues can be addressed are also varied and comprise economic, political, cultural, social, moral, environmental, and spiritual and religious dimensions, among others. Furthermore, issues in teaching and learning in global citizenship education traverse the curriculum, involving history, geography, languages, science, drama, social media, service learning, study abroad, activism, and more.

The approach taken in *Global Citizenship Education in Praxis* to address this complexity is novel and fresh on several grounds. First, it combines theory and practice of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) in a specific context, Rysensteen Upper Secondary school in Copenhagen, Denmark, thus showing how it can be implemented in practice. Attention to the school context is infrequent in the literature, more concerned with Higher Education and research (see Davies et al., 2018). Second, it is

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a whole-school approach that engages all school subjects ranging from foreign languages to science, geography, and history. Therefore, GCEd is not only *implemented* in the school but *integrated* into it. Third, the interest does not only reside in this school as a school of particular interest *per se* but also as an exemplary and comprehensive account of how this integration can be accomplished. It combines local and global perspectives as the GCEd programme, developed over a decade, has so far linked 15 partner schools in 14 countries (Argentina, Canada, China, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, India, Poland, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, Uganda, and USA). Fourth, it combines perspectives from the Head of the Global Citizenship Programme, Anders Schultz, and from its Pedagogical Coordinator, Mads Blom. It also integrates the voices of the real teachers who enacted the programme in their classrooms and the perspectives and the interventions of academics and researchers who supported and enriched the process. Finally, this book speaks essentially to teachers, school leaders and administrators, graduate students, and scholars but also, and importantly, to politicians.

After an introductory preface, in an initial chapter, Anders Schultz describes the historical development and conceptualization of the programme. He introduces the concept of *almendannelse*, central to Danish education for over a century, defined as “the idea that education is meant to be more than just preparing students for further education and to be part of the workforce; it is meant to form democratic-minded, knowledgeable, active and ‘whole’ human beings” (p. 3). To be noted, and surely very welcomed by practitioners, is a webpage that accompanies the book, www.gcedinpraxis.com. It contains samples of worksheets, texts, and other materials that the teachers have used in integrating GCEd in their classrooms in Rysensteen Upper Secondary school.

The book is then divided into two parts containing 13 chapters. Part I includes five chapters. In Chapter 2, Steen Beck provides an in-depth explanation of *almendannelse* in historical and contemporary perspectives that clarifies the concept to those unfamiliar with Danish education. Chapter 3, by Marie Højlund and Michael Byram, complements these perspectives by discussing the programme in light of other conceptualizations of citizenship, particularly those anchored to a Human Rights foundation and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In Chapter 4, Anders Schultz describes the programme in connection with Rysensteen Upper Secondary School. He ties theory and praxis by showing how the Programme has led to the internationalization of the school curriculum through cross-curricular and extracurricular activities. Chapters 5 and 6 offer research-based perspectives by Louise Tranekjær, who carried out empirical studies at Rysensteen in the period 2015–2018. Her research informs Rysensteen’s approach to education, in particular, the teaching and assessment of intercultural communication. The focus on planned, unplanned, formal, semi-formal and informal intercultural encounters is illuminating. After reading Part I, the reader will have grasped the spirit and foundation of the programme.

Part II, containing a pre-view of its content and eight chapters, is dedicated to reporting teacher experiences of *almendannelse* in praxis, including classroom-based accounts and teachers’ reflections. There is an innovative element, namely the fact that some chapters close with a commentary by Beck on students’ *almendannelse* and GCEd activities. The students at Rysensteen engage in study trips to different partner schools in different countries and are prepared for the intercultural experience in ways described by Mads Blom in Chapter 7, comprising different kinds of cultural encounters. Chapters 8–12 describe different cross-curricular experiences, for instance in the English classroom (Chapter 8 by Martin Lønstrup), Science (Chapter 9 by Poul Nyegaard), French (Chapter 10 by Laura Bjerregaard and Lotte Bolander), Natural Geography (Chapter 11 by Anders Folden Brink) and History (Chapter 12 by Mads Blom).

The book closes with two chapters with inspiring goals. In Chapter 13, Anders Schultz, Head of the Programme, discusses the directions that GCEd in praxis needs to take in order to guarantee its

sustained development not only in Denmark but beyond. The chapter is a call to politicians, and not only teachers and school leaders, to embrace and support GCED teaching. This involves a radical shift from accountability and performativity as driving forces in schools, towards *almendannelse* and GCED competences such as intercultural understanding, empathy, and active citizenship. In Chapter 14 Michael Byram remarks that while GCED teaching is absolutely necessary, it will never be sufficient. The reason is that there are “structural and enabling factors (...) [which] are a matter for a society as a whole and in particular for its politicians” (pp.142–43).

The book is reader-friendly and teacher-friendly. Each chapter includes a caption with an overview of its content. Several of the classroom-based chapters in Part II conclude with a ‘How to act’ section that is practical and engaging. These chapters refer the reader to the webpage where worksheets and teaching materials are to be found. The book would be equally valuable if included in teacher education curricula or used by teachers and teacher candidates on their own.

The richness and depth of the cases deserves special mention. Here it would have been illuminating to see different kinds of evidence in support of what was accomplished, for instance through the presentation and analysis of student artefacts and classroom-based interactions. Such an approach would have been of great value for the teacher, school leader, or head teacher interested in applying and adapting the programme in a different setting.

To conclude, the scope of the book could have been enriched if insights from the partner schools had been included in the volume. It would have been useful to hear how the programme was adopted in a particular school, how the partnership was formed and later developed and supported, how long the process took, what essential elements a school interested in becoming a partner would need to consider, what difficulties were involved (what worked, what did not, what lessons were learnt) and so on. Despite this omission, this book is to be celebrated for its potential in spreading Global Citizenship Education around the world.

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