



# RECENSÃO CRÍTICA

## THE BLOOMSBURY HANDBOOK OF GLOBAL EDUCATION AND LEARNING

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Edited by Douglas Bourn<sup>2</sup>

*The Bloomsbury Handbook of Global Education and Learning* can be described as an impressive collection of a wide variety of perspectives from different corners of the world, written by well-established scholars and early career researchers, who are all engaged with Global Education (GE) in one way or another. On the publisher's website, Philip Bamber, eminent scholar in GE, characterized the book "as a landmark text in the field of global education". The aim of this handbook, as of any Bloomsbury Handbook, is to provide researchers and graduate students with an update on the research field, hence offering original insights along with historical overviews of the field. More specifically, this edition intended to be the first major publication in bringing together current issues and debates on GE. Overall, the book meets its objective by commissioning 30 essays to present an array of voices, although it can be suggested that an opportunity is missed to firmly include a radical politicized attitude within GE as well.

A major achievement of the book is indeed the wide range of authors contributing to this publication, which brings forward a comprehensive outlook of GE. The editor of this extensive collection is Douglas Bourn, who is a key figure within GE and Development Education (DE), as professor of Development Education at University College London (UCL) and by having many functions related to this topic, for example as co-director of the Development Education Research Centre. Some examples of contributors are Annette Scheunpflug, Massimiliano Tarozzi, Vanessa Andreotti, and Sharon Stein. The essays focus on the implementation of global learning in, amongst others, Ghana, Taiwan, Poland, and Brazil. The book contains a historical overview of GE, along with new philosophical and practical frameworks, and specific case studies.

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The extensive handbook is divided in six different parts based on thematic similarities in which the 33 chapters are categorized. The themes are historical overviews, theoretical perspectives, the impact of GE, the implementation of GE in Higher Education (HE) and at secondary and primary school, and finally, the being of a global citizen. The book presents different ways in which educational institutions, for instance teacher training programmes, and NGOs engage with and understand GE. Hereby many efforts are included, such as professional development initiatives, community service learning activities, and exchange opportunities.

Bourn emphasizes that a variation in focus and priorities in the distinct chapters occurs, which reflects the diversity of authors contributing to this voluminous handbook. In the introduction, Bourn explains the title Global Education and Learning: the inclusion of 'learning' implies a focus on pedagogy as well as "a sense of process, of engagement in understanding issues" (p. 3). Hence, Bourn points out to the reader that this handbook does "not aim to present some uniform approach to GE but to reflect the differing ways in which terms and concepts are interpreted" (p. 3). This is noticeable, as sometimes it may seem that authors are in disagreement with each other. Therefore, any researcher or student using the book is recommended to read the introduction, in order to understand that these contributions are reflecting the various interpretations of GE. Similarities in perceptions are there as well. The most prevalent one is the focus on social justice within GE, which encourages a critical attitude towards neoliberalism and western hegemony.

Essential essays are in the first part of the book, as they outline the history of GE but also indicate future directions. Chapter one describes GE as a desire mainly from European countries to teach their citizens about the world, in combination with an intention to include a social justice orientation introduced by DE. The intertwining of GE with DE results in the two terms used almost synonymously throughout this book, which is understandable from a practical point of view. It does, however, lead to some ambiguity between the two terms, thus more explanation about their distinctive aims and origins would have guided the reader better. Hence, there is a strong European influence on GE that cannot be denied; however, the shift to a critical approach in GE is co-credited to voices from South America, in particular to Paulo Freire. In chapter three, Wegimont, somewhat implicitly, problematizes Eurocentric dominance, as he suggests eight philosophical dimensions for a more adequate model of GE that address some of its challenges. Wegimont discusses the need for a theoretical foundation of GE, whereas, in chapter four, Scheunpflug focuses on the operationalization of the theory in order to measure the impact of GE with preferably meta-studies. In chapter five, the connection between Global Citizenship Education (GCE), a form of GE, and Paulo Freire is once again emphasized, as Ramalho illustrates how GCE is influenced by the transformative work of Freire.

These critical social justice orientated connotations are prevalent in the remaining chapters of the book. Chapter six is an interesting contribution articulating a postcolonial approach to GE for Higher Education (HE), as Stein encourages epistemic uncertainty among students to unlearn "investments in epistemic universality" regarding global challenges. Likewise, chapter 28, written by Sutherland, Suša, and Andreotti, includes a call for the development of activities that prepare learners to deal with epistemic disruptions in a way that allows for new relations to emerge, rather than the desire to regain epistemic privilege. Chapter seven and chapter 24 challenge the Western epistemic hegemony by establishing the Sub-Saharan African concept of *Ubuntu* as a household name in GE. Chapter eight and chapter 15 attempt to do the same for *Soka* (value-creating)

education originated by Japanese educators, as a way to relinquish an individualistic attitude and move towards a disposition of highlighting co-existence between individuals, other people, nature, and community.

Other chapters focus on the actual implementation of GE in different forms and places. The role of NGOs becomes more clear: as early advocates of an innovative value-based approach to teaching GE that aims to promote social change, for which they are perceived experts by schools as well. Nevertheless, Tarozzi shows in chapter 11 that the collaboration between schools and NGOs is not always without friction, due to their difference in aim and position in society. The lack of a political social action-orientated approach to GE by schools is a recurring theme in the respective chapters about Taiwan and Poland. Therefore, non-formal education might offer best practices that upgrade such a social action-orientated approach in GE. In chapter 29, Le Bourdon provides an example of a successful non-formal learning experience, which highlights the role of emotions in bringing about a feeling of global solidarity and collectivity.

Separate sections are dedicated to the implementation of global learning in formal settings, namely within HE and at primary and secondary schools. These contributions are again from very distinct regions of the world, with more than one chapter mentioning planetary citizenship. A clear example is chapter 16: Moraes and Freire discuss their application of planetary citizenship by referring to Santo's ecology of knowledge, which centralizes epistemologies from the Global South, hence including indigenous knowledge in collaborative learning projects. In contrast to chapter 25, in which Hunt takes a bottom-up approach by looking into how schools that claim to be engaged with global learning can actually be characterized. In short, a variety of topics and studies are considered in the essays that examine the actual implementation of GE in different levels of the school system.

Up to now, the diversity of interpretations and perspectives has been explored and celebrated in this review. As mentioned in Wegimont's chapter, the ambiguity of the term GE is a strength as well as a weakness. Therefore, the main point of criticism of this book is that rather contradicting interpretations of GE may appear in continuity. A point of dispute is the relationship between the Global North and the Global South in GE, as several contributions in the book describe transcontinental projects that can be considered at least questionable according to postcolonial scholars. Another point of friction is the aim of GE: some contributors affirm that GE should focus on civic virtues to foster responsible citizens, while others refer to the improved employability of students as a result of GE. Consequently, as the handbook wants to include a multitude of perspectives, it allows for contradicting interpretations to coexist, which may lead to prevailing criticism.

Another observation is that the interpretations and applications of GE seem to be carried out in a vacuum. Only a few articles directly mention the political climate in countries, for example the chapter by Pashby and Sund, which highlights the anxiety experienced among teachers to come across as "too politically correct" when engaging with a critical approach. Additionally, in chapter 20, Bamber advocates for a focus on teachers' personal dispositions, goals, and beliefs, because when educators are not reflective it might cause a reluctance to discuss controversial issues. It is these controversial issues, like racism, sexism, religious bigotry, and nativism, that cause and sustain present-day systemic inequities. Thus, for a pedagogy that claims to be about social justice, there is very little explicit mentioning and tackling of these issues. In particular because this handbook proclaimed to include a wide range of interpretations of GE, it seems that possibly more radical and politicized interpretations were overlooked. Perhaps due to a dependency on funding and the political

atmosphere in the United Kingdom at the moment, there was a choice made not to introduce those interpretations in this volume.

All in all, the book successfully emphasizes an interdisciplinary and inclusive approach to GE, expressing a clear desire to establish it as value-based education. The price of the handbook is around 120 euros, which is definitely an expensive purchase for graduate students, but similarly priced as other handbooks in the same series. One of the anticipated effects of the book is a focus on researching the impact of GE, in order to justify potential funding and space in the curriculum. As Scheunpflug acknowledges in chapter four, hard evidence of the benefit of GE is necessary in order to defend its existence. The articles in this handbook explored the implementation of GE in the Global South as well as in the Global North, hence further publications are expected to focus on the impact and effectiveness of global learning across continents.

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