

BOOK REVIEW of *International mindedness: Global perspectives for learners and educators*

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BOOK REVIEW: Lesley P. Stagg (Ed.). (2013). *International mindedness: Global perspectives for learners and educators*. Urbane Publications. ISBN: 1-909273-04-X. 432pp

International mindedness: Global perspectives for learners and educators is a reference work for learners and educators as well as researchers. It endeavors to provide a global perspective on international mindedness (IM), international education, internationalism and their roles in the era of globalization. It is thought-provoking, highlighting that IM is a rich area for further exploration. In the foreword, Stagg, the editor, states that the world is moving from a “Billiard Ball Model” in which nations rarely bump into each other, to a “Tangled Web Model” where nations are intertwined through their global relationships. The global migration of families and individuals has sparked the need for international education and a better understanding of the concept of IM.

The book consists of 13 chapters. Some are grounded in current research in the field of IM and others are based on the experiences of the authors. Each chapter takes the reader on a journey of understanding IM from multiple perspectives. From the reviewer’s perspective, the book is based on two aspects of IM: the institutional dimension and the individual dimension. Chapter 1 (Plotkin) explores definitions of IM. Chapter 5 (Bristowe) seeks a definition that encompasses the Global Dimension of IM, with the Global Dimension Wheel composed of eight areas: Global Citizenship, Conflict Resolution, Diversity, Human Rights, Interdependence, Social Justice, Sustainable Development and Values and Perceptions (p. 138). Bristowe focuses on sports as a means of social change and discusses project-based approaches to enhance students’ educational experiences of global issues. In this regard, Plotkin states that being internationally minded indicates a disposition toward cross-border thinking. He associates two main principles with IM: open mindedness and open heartedness.

The book highlights different ways of achieving IM at the institutional level. In Chapter 4, Bayliss discusses strategies to achieve IM in the early years at the level of school and classroom. For example, schools can prepare children to be able to make sense of the meaning of diverse events and celebrations rather than simply viewing them as a break from the normal routine, providing opportunities for greater inclusiveness of parents in

school activities. Chapter 6 (Lockart) suggests that IM should be “woven into the everyday fabric of the school through the work of its teachers and students, inside their classrooms” (p. 79). More examples are provided for subjects such as language, physical education, science, mathematics, and arts.

At the level of individual experience, in Chapter 8, Hall shares her experience of IM in New Zealand, the United Arab Emirates and Japan, illuminating the significance of a school’s core philosophy, effective leadership and teachers in impacting the school’s international culture. Chapter 9 (Fannon) discusses IM in the field of art and provides teachers with a roadmap on how to integrate art in encouraging students to think beyond their cultural and physical borders. Linking IM to arts is a creative way of thinking as it highlights how far we can reach when promoting students’ IM. In Chapter 10, Ranger draws upon his research on IM at the institutional level in India, focusing on school leadership and its role in developing internationally minded students.

In Chapter 11, Hayden and Thompson argue that if IM is to have global impact, it should be developed in both national and international schools. In suggesting that 15th and 16th century explorers were internationally minded, the chapter identifies three eras of globalization: countries globalizing (era 1), companies globalizing (era 2), and individuals collaborating and competing globally (era 3). The authors argue that the emphasis in the present era of globalization is on the IM of individuals. Chapter 12 (Duwyn) suggests that the school curriculum should address the requirements of building universal civil society as well as individual learners able to comprehend their role in the global world, with the nurturing of a robust world citizen identity as the foundation of any educational project. In the last chapter, Stagg confirms that it is important to distinguish between what is national and international and highlights some of the key descriptors that help build the international climate and positive character. She concludes with some examples for developing IM, for example, the concept of getting old is variously defined in different cultures.

International mindedness: Global perspectives for learners and educators provides a cornerstone that allows us to untie the multifaceted components and implications of IM. We recommend this book for all stakeholders, including teachers, curriculum designers, school leaders and parents. It paves the way for readers to grasp what it means to have a real global mindset by offering the diverse viewpoints and experiences of 14 authors. It provides practitioners with innovative concrete suggestions of school-based practices to enhance students’ and parents’ IM. While the book does not provide a straightforward or conclusive definition for IM, we can see this as an invitation to the readers to create their own interpretation of IM in the specific contexts in which they work. That said, the chapters were not organized in a clear, meaningful sequence, though it is hard to separate the “tangled web” of experiences and practices at the level of individual, program, organizations and institutions. Indeed, perhaps the chapter organization highlights the complex reality of IM.

Beyond practitioners, the book is also a rich reference for researchers who are exploring the area of IM in education locally, regionally, and internationally. It shares the viewpoints of contributors across the globe and incorporates various experiences from countries such as India, the United Arab Emirates, Japan and New Zealand.



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