

**Bickmore, K., Hayhoe, R., Manion, C., Mundy, K., & Read, R. (Eds.). (2017). *Comparative and international education: Issues for teachers* (2nd ed.). Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars. Pages: 430. ISBN: 978-1-55130-951-4**

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Since leaving international teaching to return to university to pursue a PhD in Education, I have frequently worked with pre-service teachers in BEd courses in my faculty. On occasion, I have observed these teachers in elementary classrooms as they struggled and triumphed in the throes of navigating the complexities of the politics and the elements of culture, race, gender, and socio-economics that influence their teaching and students' learning. I have also helped teachers in different Canadian education programs prepare to teach internationally and have mentored them as they grappled with how to "fit" and "be" teachers in schools within different cultures and education systems. Not surprisingly, many of these teachers leave their BEd programs knowing they could easily collaborate on teams, design rubrics, or implement the newest ministry-mandated best practices for their subject areas. However, I am apprehensive about how well our education programs prepare teachers for the day-to-day realities of working with diverse student bodies, in complex school environments, and amongst ongoing educational change. My concern is not far from similar arguments by scholars in comparative and international education (CIE), a field that "challenges us to think broadly about the link between local practices and global issues" (p. 2).

The purpose of the second edition of *Comparative and International Education* is to be a resource for preservice and continuing teacher education and graduate education. The editors encourage educators to use comparative education for reflection on social issues of concern in their own classrooms and within local education systems. The book features contributions from many prominent CIE scholars worldwide. Their research features exemplar cases spanning countries in the Americas, Australia, Africa, Asia, Europe, and Middle East.

The authors show us that there is much to learn from other approaches to teaching, curriculum, and improvement efforts in a wider global context. The research questions and the global topics that CIE scholars engage with contribute to filling the knowledge gap for educators that I indicated at the beginning of this review.

The topics in this book include the child's right to education, alternative schooling, gender, curriculum and pedagogy, school improvement, Indigenous knowledge, multiculturalism, conflict resolution, and global citizenship. At the end of each chapter, authors bring the focus back to teachers themselves by recommending a list of sources for further reading, video resources, and 3-6 reflection/discussion questions.

*Comparative and International Education* begins with a preface outlining the additions to the second edition including: nine authors, two chapters (Chapters 8 and 12) and topics such as teachers' involvement in international education, and diversity and social justice education. Chapter 1, authored by three of the editors Kathy Bickmore, Caroline Manion, and Karen Mundy, serves as an introduction to comparative education and the evolution of the field to becoming CIE. Through a comprehensive, yet succinct historical overview, they articulate the value of CIE as a lens for viewing education systems and the undergirding philosophies. The remaining 12 chapters in the book are organized into three themed sections.

The first section is entitled *(Re)Forming Schooling: Philosophy, Policy and School Organization*.

In Chapter 2, Ruth Hayhoe and Jun Li highlight how, historically, religions and philosophical value systems have contributed to education and social change in a society. They model the “ideal types” (p. 30) of Plato, Dewey, and Marx as heuristics for readers to engage in comparative reflection on education and school systems in Europe and East Asia. In Chapter 3, Joseph Farrell, Caroline Manion, and Santiago Rincón-Gallardo compare Eurocentric education systems in the Global North with alternative, community based programs scattered throughout the Global South. The most compelling learning point for educators to reflect upon is regarding teachers’ roles in educational change in the Global South. In these Southern contexts, teachers are not barriers to reform; instead, they are deemed empowered, critical change agents who support student learning even with minimal resources and in some cases within broader, competing systems of education. Sarfaroz Niyozov examines perspectives on teachers and teaching in post-Soviet Central Asia in Chapter 4. Specifically, the author uses two cases studies of teachers in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to compare teacher pedagogical approaches. This chapter reminds educators of the need to pay attention to teachers’ lived experience and their voices. The insight garnered from Niyozov’s research speaks to the impact that context—and its embedded social, political, economic, religious, and cultural elements—has on the alignment between teachers’ beliefs about teaching, learning, and actual practice. Stephen Anderson and Malini Sivasubramaniam’s chapter highlights comparative perspectives on school improvement. They provide a historical review of school improvement trends internationally. With this chapter, they add depth and breadth to a well-grounded literature base in Chapter 1 but they also bring a comparative lens to the topic of professional learning into the broader discussions about CIE in this book.

Section two is entitled, Justice, Knowledges for Change, and Social Inclusion. I regard Chapter 6 as the highlight of this entire book and pertinent to current efforts around embracing indigenous pedagogies in K-12 and post-secondary contexts. To begin, Katia Sol Madjidi and Jean-Paul Restoule have written one of the most accessible, insightful, and responsive overviews of Indigenous ways of knowing and learning (IWKL) that I have read. They purposefully extend the foundational knowledge about IWKL by addressing a concern of many non-indigenous educators which is that they are willing to engage with IWKL but often feel unprepared to adopt indigenous pedagogies. Their advice is reassuring and invites teachers to try different indigenous pedagogies, without the risk of feeling as if they might misrepresent indigenous cultures and traditions. The authors remind us, “that the shift required is not to adopt the ‘cultural’ or ‘exotic’ elements of Indigenous ways” (p. 174). They follow this advice with a list of ideas for incorporating IWKL into classrooms. Their aim with this chapter is to provide support for teachers coming to know and appreciate the values and philosophies that undergird IWKL. Eloquently, we are encouraged to, “Use the whole world as your classroom, and all of its beings as teachers” (p. 175).

With Chapter 7, Kara Janigan and Vandra Lea Masemann contribute to the 30-year long conversation in CIE on gender and education. They model four theoretical, comparative approaches to studying gender and education using two cases of girls’ experiences in rural Eritrea and the history of gender equality in Ontario. Chapter 8 introduces the topic of Human Rights Education (HRE). Monisha Bajaj uses case studies in her research on HRE work in India and Bangladesh. She defines HRE in these contexts with practices that include innovative curriculum participatory pedagogies, and building strong relationships with learners “to assist them in recognizing and confronting the injustices that surround their lives” (p. 214). Such pedagogies are also exemplars for those who work with developing educators such as pre-service teachers. For instance, we might consider the supportive relationships we build with teachers and how we engage them in their learning experiences by honouring their lived experiences. In Chapter 9, Mark Evans and Dina Kiwan discuss global citizenship education (GCE) as a recent area of educational research. They present an overview of the characteristics of GCE and share some of the approaches to GCE in Canada, the Arab world, and UNESCO. For many teachers worldwide, the final section in this chapter on implementation/curriculum delivery approaches is particularly useful for considering the challenges and potentials for incorporating global citizenship into local curriculum. In the final chapter of this section, editor Kathy Bickmore reviews a body of international and comparative scholarship on education for democratic peacebuilding. As in Chapters 4 and 8, readers are provoked by a key take-away message: How are we considering various stakeholders’ voices and lived experiences in the educational endeavours we seek to understand, and improve?

The final section of this book is called, *Education in the World System: Globalization and Development*. In Chapter 11, editors Karen Mundy and Robyn Read examine the notion of education as a basic human right and highlight current discussions about the purposes and effects of mass schooling. They

engage with a series of long standing questions and debates about human rights regarding quality of education and schooling as socialization through “mass education” (p. 303) demonstrated through cases in the “Educational for All” movement in Tanzania and Kenya.

As one of the new additions to this second edition of CIE, Julia Resnik’s twelfth chapter explores the internationalization of schooling, including education in international schools. This is a timely addition given that internationalization of education is steadily increasing across all levels of education and that classrooms worldwide are increasingly more multicultural. Resnik’s discussion of the experiences of “mobile teachers” (p. 349) or teachers who teach abroad, will be of interest to educators seeking work in schools outside of their home countries. In the final Chapter of this book, Anna Chmielewski, Karen Mundy, and Joseph Farrell introduce the world of international education data which include the widely used, and often controversial, international large scale assessments (ILSAs) that countries collect as indicators of progress in their education systems. The authors suggest that educators read information about ILSA’s, and the ILSA data itself, with a critical eye. Often these assessments have limits and are not exempt from political and/or ethical issues when it comes to what is assessed and then what gets reported.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

With a quick scan of the table of contents it is noticeable that six of the 13 chapters are either authored or co-authored by one or more of the five editors. The editors are all solid CIE scholars. While such a strong concentration of their perspectives is slightly overrepresented, it does not detract from the quality of original research and writing, and the integrity of perspectives presented in the book. One of the greatest strengths of this book, especially pertaining to readers who are new to comparative education, is that the authors demonstrate comparative analysis in their own work. Such modeling gives credence to an undergirding theme for the whole text that engaging in comparative education is indeed a reflective, analytical process.

A small concern I have is that many of the video resources suggested in each chapter are YouTube videos, which can only be accessed through the internet and can be unpredictable in terms of long term sustainability. Therefore, I wonder how this might impact access to these additional resources for readers who do not have access to reliable internet or whether the links will still be available to readers much later in the future. Another critique is that many chapters provide thoughtful, reflective questions that prompt teachers to both contemplate content and actively think about their own biographies in relation to the assumptions and beliefs that they bring to the topics in the book (for example, Chapters 3, 6, and 7). There are a few chapters that provide questions that seem to prompt recall of information in the chapter rather than reflect on key messages. Since reflection is an imperative process for teacher learning and highly stressed in our teacher education programs, I encourage instructors who use this text with teachers to consider revising certain questions to encourage deeper reflection that prompts teachers to make connections between their past learning and their current learning as student teachers. Overall, the book makes a significant contribution to the CIE field and will be a useful resource for educators across global contexts. Teachers, administrators, faculty members, and policy makers who seek fresh, critical perspectives on educational change will be left inspired by the research and commentary on the many exemplar cases of teaching and learning across the global world.