

## BOOK REVIEWS

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LEN BARTON, and FELICITY ARMSTRONG (eds.). 2007. *Policy, Experience and Change: Reflections on Inclusive Education*. Dordrecht: Springer. 199 pp. ISBN 9-781402-051180.

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Nationally and globally, the subject of inclusive education has remained topical over the years, and has been discussed increasingly in literature by academics and policy-makers.

This book, the fourth volume in the series on *Inclusive Education: Cross Cultural Perspectives*, is a collection of contributions and case studies from Canada in North America, England, Ireland, Spain, Cyprus and Italy in Europe, Libya from the Arab States, Australia and India from Asia, Zimbabwe from Africa, and Trinidad and Tobago from the Caribbean. It also contains an Introduction. Published by Springer, it is co-edited by two scholars from the Institute of Education at the University of London, Len Barton and Felicity Armstrong. It is refreshing to note that not only have the co-editors selected the contributors, they had been specific with their requests that “contributors record a sense of how what they describe has affected them personally”.

The rich foreword contributed by Professor John Swain aptly summarises the book’s endeavour to sharpen our understanding of inclusive education and the ways in which it differs from integration and other concepts that have developed over the years. It is particularly pertinent to note his observation that perhaps “the problems of integration are simply being recast as problems of inclusion” while also acknowledging the shift of focus “from the needs of individual young people, the industry of special education needs, to education system at national and school levels, be it structure, management, assessment or curricula: the system that grades, selects, set child against child, school against school and justifies social inequality and injustice”. The book is therefore situated within the broad context of the series which is committed to “exploring the meaning and function of inclusive education in a world characterized by rapid social, economic and political change”. The series also pledges that “the question of inclusion and exclusion will be viewed as a human rights issue, in which concerns over issues of equity, social justice and participation will be of central significance”.

The book identifies salient issues such as developing special curricula for special needs, attending to children with mental disabilities, examining the

relationships within segregated mainstream schooling, identifying the voices of the excluded and the marginalised and recognising other major areas of enquiry.

The titles are provocative: “It’s a Fit-Up! Inclusive Education, Higher Education, Policy and the Discordant Voice”; “To Be Or not To Be Included – That is the Question: Disabled Students in Third Level Education in Ireland”; “Educating the Other: A Journey in Cyprus Time and Space”; “The Lethargy of a Nation: Inclusive Education in India and Developing Systematic Strategies for Change”; “The Rhetoric of Inclusive Education in Libya: Are Children’s Rights in Crisis?”; ‘Made in Italy’: *Intergazione Scolastica* and the New Vision of inclusive Education”. They engage the continuing attention of the reader, inviting those who had merely intended to browse through the volume to pay full attention to the discussions raised. The style is uniformly elegant and the prose is consistently lucid, easy and pleasurable to read.

The chapters understandably vary both in quality and depth. The contributors range from professors, faculty deans and doctoral students. Nevertheless, they all collectively and without exception maintain a scholarly focus, thus providing a major and original contribution to our knowledge of this crucial subject.

The publication, however, cannot pretend to cover all the dimensions of inclusive education, and the title itself is some form of confession to that limitation. Hence, anyone expecting an in-depth focus on the evolution of inclusive education as a human right in countries such as South Africa and the United States will be disappointed. Consequently, beyond a passing reference to a collaborative research project entitled *Developing Sustainable Inclusion Policy in Practice in India, South Africa, Brail and England*, there is no further discussion on the subject in South Africa, the home of apartheid and a country that has been trying to confront the issue of inclusive education. Furthermore, no consensus has so far been reached as to what constitutes inclusive education. It is perhaps because of this that UNESCO chose to focus on the subject at the 48th Session of the International Conference of Ministers of Education, convened under the auspices of the UNESCO International Bureau on Education in Geneva, Switzerland in November 2008.

A future edition should encourage a broader discussion and more contributions outside Europe, which currently provides around half of the total contributions to this work. It would be a wise investment in scholarship to pay attention to quality in areas where the issue of inclusive education is prominent but has not yet been studied or explored in depth by scholars. Perhaps the fact that the series might examine this shortfall in a future volume should give one some consolation and hope.

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SJUR BERGAN. 2007. *Qualifications – Introduction to a Concept*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing. 274 pp. ISBN 9-78927-161253.

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This book examines the notion of qualification and its applications in the global culture. The first thing that comes to my mind, when I read this book, is the link between qualification, employment and credentialism. Haynes (2006) in *Social and Cultural Foundations of American Education* asks why so many of us pursue educational credentials, concluding that the job market requires it of us, as “more and more jobs – not just high-tech jobs but also jobs that in the past have not required specific credentials – are only accessible to those who hold degrees”.

It was both Dore (1976) and Collins (1979) who laid the foundation for the current credentialist framework concerning qualification. In his book *Diploma Disease*, Dore examined the emergence of credentialism from the 1950s onwards, while Collins in his *The Credential Society*, offered his own sociological theory of credentialism. Collins argued that status-groups, concerned with social exclusion and the accumulation of cultural capital, dominate the politics of credentialism. Similarly, in *The Dirty Little Secret of Credential Inflation*, Collins suggests that the expansion of the educational system “palliates the problem of class conflict in the United States by holding out the prospect of upward mobility somewhere down the line, while making the connection remote enough to cover the system’s failure to deliver” (Collins, 2002: B20). Collins (1979) argues that due to the crisis of the credential market, where job skills are preferred to qualifications, new types of credentials had to be instituted in order to adapt to market forces and accept employers’ on-the-job training programmes.

Bergan’s book, divided into four parts, looks at the history of qualifications, national and overarching qualifications frameworks, and the nexus between education and qualifications. It provides numerous examples of the knowledge, skills and standards characteristic of higher education institutions (HEIs). A particularly interesting and current example focuses on recent education reforms and state education standards of the higher education sector in the Russian Federation (pp. 33–36). The Dublin Descriptors also offer a useful typology of educational standards. Bergan discusses issues such as competence and the components of qualifications. Of particular note are the sections focusing on the skills and competencies expected at different levels of qualifications, a new system of credits, the quest for quality (pp. 101–117), and learning outcomes, which the author argues should be the key indicator in assessing and evaluating qualifications (p. 128).

In Parts 3 and 4, Bergan provides a detailed examination of national qualifications frameworks and qualifications across different HEIs and nations. I particularly liked the sections detailing the two overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA),

encompassing some 45 countries, and the 2006 European Qualifications Framework, applicable to countries of the EU and the European Economic Area (pp. 160–173). The author's discussion of the relationship between national and international overarching frameworks is particularly useful for accreditation authorities and higher education policy analysts. Bergan discusses the assumption that qualifications belong to a particular education system. He provides examples for countries with more than one education system (e.g. the United Kingdom has two qualifications frameworks, one for Scotland and one for England, Northern Ireland and Wales). He discusses the concept of trans-national, cross-border or borderless education, and, more importantly he describes some of the legal issues relating to the recognition of qualifications. His suggestion that three different types of recognition be established, (academic, *de jure* professional and *de facto* professional), his discussion of transparency instruments that help to explain the contents of qualifications, and his suggestions for methods of measuring qualifications will be of particular use to accreditation authorities worldwide. Bergan offers a highly informative and well-researched overview of the issues and dilemmas surrounding qualifications and accreditation processes. However, such an invaluable manual on qualifications should include an index, as there are so many concepts, policies, and practices under discussion which need to be cross-referenced.

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ALEXANDRA DRAXLER. 2008. *New Partnerships for EFA: Building on Experience*. UNESCO-IIEP/World Economic Forum: Paris/Geneva. 110 pp. ISBN 978-92-803-1314-7.

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Private–public partnerships have become very prominent, so documents that provide a framework and outline salient issues are very useful. The book does a very good job of providing principles and organisational modes, particularly as pertinent to EFA.

The concepts related to multi-stakeholder partnerships tend to be vague, and it is sometimes unclear what the words actually depict in the real world. The narrative could have benefited from greater specificity. The author presents several examples in text boxes which are useful as illustrations, but are not sufficient to help the reader understand the breadth of potential partnerships.

A systematic survey with detailed data would help highlight experiences and outcomes of multi-stakeholder partnerships. Such evidence would have also allowed a more critical look at these partnerships than the book is able to give.

Over time, concerns have been raised in the donor community that private–public partnerships have not been sufficiently scrutinised. Potential issues with these partnerships could be dealt with in future studies. These include:

- *Conflicts of interest* The book discusses this topic rather briefly, but much more evidence and critical analysis are needed. There is much enthusiasm about private firms giving services to schools as charity, such as the e-curricula developed by Cisco for mathematics and used in the Guilford county public schools of the US. Further studies in this topic should offer more evidence on costs and benefits for businesses and students. The business benefits may range from innocuous tax reductions to getting contracts later or creating brand preferences (hardware, software, junk food, etc.). But when large firms flood the schools with their own software, are local brands edged out? Are some partnerships in fact reinforcing oligopolies? And how do services influence learning outcomes?
- *Complexity of multi-stakeholder partnerships* The book rightly points out that these partnerships can be complicated, and Part V is devoted to decision considerations and software. Complexity is such a serious matter that the donor community is only beginning to grapple with it. Multi-donor, sector-wide approaches (SWAs) in various sectors can become so time-consuming that they sap attention away from the substance. As a result, the substantive issues for which the partnerships were formed may be neglected. For example, some African countries have SWAs for EFA with 20+ partners involved. Donor meetings may concentrate on coordination issues, neglecting the sad fact that many students remain illiterate while financing baskets are sorted out.

- *Private provision of public education* This type of partnership includes vouchers and takeovers of public schools by private firms (a policy tried extensively in the US). This topic is particularly pertinent for EFA, since both of these approaches have been considered as a means to improve the learning outcomes of the poor. These partnerships have proved controversial. Despite strong ideological support, evidence has been ambivalent. There is much need to document the long-term outcomes of such partnerships.

This book represents only an initial effort to delve into this subject. It is hoped that more extensive research will follow. Additional work could explore the workings and effects of partnerships in actually improving learning outcomes for the poor. Governments and the donor community need clear advice on which partnership formulas to embrace and on which ones to avoid.

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COLIN BROCK, and LILA ZIA LEVERS (eds.). 2007. *Aspects of Education in the Middle East and North Africa*. Oxford: Symposium. 240 pp. ISBN 978-1-873927-21-2.

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Education policies and planning have long considered change in educational policies and reforms to be a function of techno-rational planning. However, literature in education planning and reform increasingly advocate for the importance of historical, political, social, and religious contexts in the process of reform in education. In some nations, religion may be the backbone of all aspects of life including education, while in others, religion remains an individual and family matter. In countries of the Islamic Middle East, it is particularly critical to acknowledge the increasing salience of religion and religious movements when investigating educational phenomena. This is what the book *Aspects of Education in the Middle East and North Africa* has done well.

The first five chapters cover education in Arab and Islamic nations with respect to religion, gender, empowerment, social transformation and bilingualism. For example, the first chapter on The Qur'an and women's education stands as a good example of the struggle to articulate a viable disunity of educational ideologies seen through the comparison of pre-modern Sunni interpretation of the Verse/Sura 4:34 with a Modernist view of the same Sura. The second chapter shows how tradition and religion have historically shaped what the role of the Arab and Muslim woman are as a wife and the challenges she may face as an educator. As the author of the chapter, Serra

Kirdar states that the quality of the educational system, the changing roles of women and the challenges they face have been numerous and difficult because of the ways in which their dual roles (traditional and modern) help or hinder them in becoming leaders in their professional carriers. The discussion of marginalisation and segregation at the gender level in Arab and Muslim countries is well informed and effectively argued in Findlow's article on Women, Higher Education and Social Transformation in the Arab Gulf. The article tackles issues of the barriers to achievement that are embodied in cultural expectations and other external factors which do not exclude religion in many ways.

The contribution of *Aspects of Education in the Middle East and North Africa* is very clear for the context of Arab and Muslim countries because it shifts discussion away from the Western world's emphasis on negative religious elements, such as the perceived oppression of women by men and the issue of head scarves, which has proven polemical both abroad (e.g. France) and within the Arab States. Instead, the focus is strongly on the fundamental issues of education in general, such as test scores, pass rates in science and mathematics, literacy, and so forth, hence bypassing the discussions that have divided scholars and educators into offence and defence groups and generating new and much-needed dialogue on vital issues. Quality-based and empirical discussions on religion and education are at the heart of the chapters on Arab and Muslim countries. For instance, Kirdar states that it is high time we erased the erroneous belief that the subjection of women in the Arab world is a result of Islam. This statement remains true only if we focus on educational data and analysis based on performance, not on belief.

The innovative perspectives from which religion and education are addressed in this book permeate the empirical research on which it is based. Diversity in Iran is another aspect of this discussion with which scholars still need to engage. Through content analysis of religious textbooks for school-children, the author finds homogeneity in religion to be a common denominator. The author presents evidence to call for an emphasis on similarities and a move to undermine differences in order to build an equal and just society.

From complex issues of religion and education in the Arab and Muslim world to political and nationalistic issues, the book carefully and successfully highlights controversial areas of the Israeli/Palestinian education system, analysing the complexities and controversies of educational issues and how these issues affect knowledge and identity in societies. I find Dahan and Yonah's analysis of the issue of educational reforms in Israel as a turning point in Israel's identity and country in the Middle East particularly striking. For example, the Integration reform did more segregation within integration by separating pupils from different ethnic groups into different classes within the same schools. Their discussion addresses the social justice factor that is needed to empower the discourse of scholars including educational researchers. Barakat examines Palestinian education and finds that it has shaped Palestinian minds politically, intellectually and culturally. Formal schooling

in Morocco, meanwhile, seems to be controversial in its own way. While the reform has emphasised the universalisation of education, illiteracy after six years of reform is still high; and, among other issues, while pluralism of languages of instruction are encouraged in public education, students' communication skills of students are down.

Another strong point of *Aspects of Education in the Middle East and North Africa* is its diversity of approaches to complex issues of identity, religion, education, citizenship and so on, including textbook analysis, policy analysis, secondary analysis of primary data, qualitative research, and quantitative research. This wealth of analysis increases the work's validity and reliability.

To sum up, *Aspects of Education in the Middle East and North Africa* is one of those few books which shift the focus of discourse to controversial issues by moving away from old-fashioned ideological approaches to analytical discourse which presents various points of view and discusses issues on the basis of concrete evidence. This shift has enabled important questions to be considered and discussed at length. All in all, the book is a very analytical and offers in-depth research. It communicates a great deal of knowledge about education and higher education in the Middle East and North Africa in a subtle and very systematic style.

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VINCENT GREANEY and THOMAS KELLAGHAN. 2008. *National Assessments of Educational Achievement. Volume 1. Assessing National Achievement Levels in Education*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank. 161 pp. ISBN 978-0-8213-7258-6.

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In recent years, the international community has attached importance not only to the quantitative development of education but also to qualitative aspects of education. In many countries, the focus of education development has shifted from "access" to "success", and from a concern with inputs to a concern with outcomes. Indeed, a large body of empirical evidence indicates that improved enrolment and completion rates are necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for economic growth. Instead, enhanced learning outcomes – in the form of increased student knowledge and cognitive skills – are key to improving economic competitiveness and social development.

The effective assessment of the performance of educational systems is a crucial component in developing policies that optimise the development of human capital around the world in general, and in developing countries in particular. Against this backdrop, the World Bank has recently published

five books in the National Assessments of Educational Achievement series, edited by Vincent Greaney and Thomas Kellaghan, which introduce key concepts in national assessments of student achievement levels, ranging from policy issues that must be addressed when designing and carrying out assessments to test development processes, sampling, data cleaning, statistics, report writing and the use of results to improve educational quality.

The book reviewed here, Volume 1: *Assessing National Achievement Levels in Education, in the series of National Assessment of Educational Achievement*, offers an overview of key national assessment concepts and procedures. It is intended primarily for educational policy- and decision-makers, while the rest of the series will target education assessment professionals and practitioners.

In Chapter 1, the authors provide a brief overview of this first volume and the rest of the series.

In Chapter 2, the authors define the purpose, and describe the main elements and salient features of national assessments. They focus in particular on the differences between national assessments and public examinations, pointing out that public examinations often “play a crucial role in many education systems”, but “cannot provide the kind of information that a national assessment seeks to provide.”

A variety of reasons for carrying out a national assessment is detailed in Chapter 3. One key objective of a national assessment is to provide information on the operation of the education system, which is a key prerequisite for sound policy-making. National assessments, when administered over a period of time, can be used to determine whether standards improve, deteriorate or remain static. An analysis of findings can lead to decisions affecting the provision of resources in the education system in general (for example, for the reform of curricula and textbooks or for teacher development). The results of a national assessment may also be used to change practice in the classroom.

Chapter 4, the essential part of this volume, has 12 sections, each of which covers a crucial decision that has to be made in the design and planning of a national assessment using a question-and-answer format. Questions raised range from “Who should carry out the national assessment?” and “What will be assessed?” to “How will achievement be assessed?” and “What are the cost components of a national assessment?” The answers are given in the form of general suggestions supported by examples of practice from a number of countries, and are summarised briefly at the end of each section.

Chapter 5 discusses the issues and common errors that apply to each of the five components of national assessment activities, i.e., the design, implementation, analysis, reporting and use of national assessments, so as to enhance the confidence that stakeholders can have in the results of the assessment. Following a short explanation of each activity, recommended activities and common errors are listed in a straightforward manner.

Considering the development of international assessment activities such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Chapter 6 outlines the main features of international assessments in terms of how they compare to national assessments. It is clearly stated that the strength of an international assessment is that it provides data from a number of countries, thereby allowing each country to weigh the results of its students against those achieved by students in other countries, while its weakness lies in the fact that all participating countries must accept the test instruments provided, which may not accurately reflect the full range of achievements of their students.

In the concluding chapter, the authors pay particular attention to the role of the policy-maker or manager in the development and institutionalisation of national assessment activities and the optimal use of assessment findings. The authors rightly point out that involving policy-makers in the initial assessment design process, and again when the assessment is complete to discuss the relevance of results can help ensure that they come to appreciate the value of a national assessment and come to regard it as a key policy-making instrument.

At the end of the book, the main features of national assessments in nine countries are described (Appendix A), followed by descriptions of three international studies (Appendix B) and three regional studies (Appendix C).

Subsequent books in this series will provide technical details of the elements that go into designing and implementing national assessments, such as techniques for developing appropriate tests and questionnaires, implementing national assessments, analysing resultant data, reporting and using assessment results effectively.

This book has made a good attempt to address the issues involved in making learning outcomes a more central part of the educational agenda in developing countries. It is helpful for countries to develop capacity by measuring national levels of student learning in more valid, sustainable and systematic ways. In addition, as a typical World Bank publication, this volume is user-friendly, the wording of the book is clear and straightforward, and the use of boxes, tables and graphics is equally helpful. In general, the book is eminently readable and can easily be translated into other languages.

However, there are caveats. First, and quite obviously, this book is merely the first in a series of five. If readers would like to benefit more and search for more instrumental and resourceful information or considerations, they will certainly need to read the rest of the series.

Second, the World Bank, as a think tank in human resources development and with a general assumption that “the quality of learning outcomes in developing countries is very poor”, tends to tout its ideas on educational development to developing countries while underestimating the real difficulties and challenges in putting these ideas into practice. Assessing the quality of learning outcomes is much more complicated than the book indicates, particularly in the case of national assessments. This series provides a framework of the tasks and approaches involved in national assessments, but a much more thorough approach is needed in practice. The devil is indeed in the details, particularly for national assessments of educational achievement.

Third, this book is a valuable work of reference, but it is not an instruction manual. Although students might rate assessments lower than major examinations, such assessments are high-stake exercises for an education system as a whole. If a country wishes to establish a national assessment system, practical and suitable solutions need to be sought both at the policy and the implementation levels. As the authors rightly point out in the preface, readers “should not regard the books as providing simple formulas or algorithms to be applied mechanically but should be prepared to exercise judgment at varying points in the national assessment”. The process of establishing a national assessment system must be a “learning by doing” process, and creative answers are needed to respond to the difficulties and challenges that will almost certainly be encountered along the way.

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KEMAL GÜRÜZ. 2008. *Higher Education and International Student Mobility in the Global Knowledge Economy*. New York: State University of New York. 335 pp. ISBN 978-0-7914-7413-6.

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Are you a university professor, administrator, board member or marketing strategist wanting to understand the general trends in, and issues surrounding, international student mobility? Are you a student interested in the key institutional players and options within the international, post-secondary education landscape? Are you perhaps a history enthusiast who enjoys reading about the development of international student/teacher mobility from the medieval to the post-modern era? Perhaps you are simply curious to know more about such peculiar things as the “brain gain, drain and exchange,” “The Bologna Declaration,” “brick and click universities,” and the “first wandering international scholar”? All of this and much more are to be found within the covers of Kemal Gürüz’s new book, *Higher Education and International Student Mobility in the Global Knowledge Economy*.

The book contains six chapters, seven appendices, and a thorough bibliography and index. In Chapter 1, Gürüz sets out to answer the question (p. 18), “Why has demand for some form of postsecondary education increased over time, but especially in the second half of the twentieth century?” Within this introductory chapter, he introduces the reader to many of the key concepts and issues that will be more fully developed later in the text such as: globalisation and the knowledge economy; the transformation from an industrial society to a knowledge society; the significance of “research

and development” (R & D) initiatives; the difference between “knowledge producers” (e.g., United States, United Kingdom), “knowledge users” (e.g., China, India), and “passive users/technologically-disconnected” countries.

In Chapter 2, the author deals with issues related to demand and supply. Gürüz notes that the explosive growth in student numbers worldwide occurred after World War II, and then provides a number of figures and graphs to elaborate on the national trends of student enrolment over the past half century. He contends that “the need for lifelong learning is ... expanding” and that this major change is “leading to a blurring between initial degrees and continuing education certificates and between institutions at the secondary and the tertiary levels” (p. 31). An aging demographic in developed countries is shown to presage an increase in immigration, and different types of national responses (i.e., open and more selective systems based on “skilled immigrant” filters) to this increase are highlighted. He further contends, “Most jobs in the global knowledge economy not only increasingly require an education at the tertiary level, but also continuous upgrading of skills and acquiring of new skills.”

Chapter 3 deals with questions related to finance, administration, governance and the emergence of national systems within an historical perspective. Beginning with the world’s first university in Bologna (1088), Gürüz traces how universities began as demand-driven institutions structured by market forces, eventually came under formal control of the state, and only in more recent times have experienced a return to a heightened sensitivity and critical responsiveness to changing market forces. The author discusses the significance of the United Kingdom’s Jarrat Report (1985) and the United States’ Bayh-Dole Act (1980) in encouraging the university-market connection, and in allowing universities to patent and commercialise the results of federally-funded university research, respectively. The remainder of the chapter deals with the growing number of private institutions, an historical sketch of the changing patterns in university governance (i.e., transformation from a regulatory to an evaluative state), and the effects of the rise of market forces on international student mobility.

In Chapter 4, Gürüz attempts to summarise the literature and information on technology-driven developments in higher education worldwide. This is no mean feat given the breadth of the topic and the fact that its related products and processes are in constant flux and reconfiguration. Gürüz here discusses international systems of distributed learning, first explaining how the “term *unbundling* of services refers to the separation of the teaching, research, and service functions of institutions of higher education” (p. 83). Many examples are compared from leading educational institutes that have launched out in different directions in terms of this technological voyage, and varying success rates are analysed. The reader is introduced to the ideas of consortia and networks, virtual universities, corporate universities, certificate programmes, academic brokers, and franchises/branch campuses – each with several key contemporary examples which the author has highlighted for sake of comparison.

As a new university professor, I found Chapter 5 most interesting. Here, Gürüz recounts a detailed history of university development, professorial roles and mobility, and the possible linkages between these historical “antecedents” and the present state of higher education. Gürüz argues that the Greek polymath Pythagoras can be considered the first example of the wandering international scholar (p. 117). The eras of ancient Greece, Rome, Arabia and medieval times are highlighted as part of the developmental stages of the modern university. The history and unusual structure of England’s Oxford and Cambridge universities are discussed, as is the significance of the Napoleonic University in France and the German Research University under Humboldt in Germany. Finally, the emergence of the modern American university that would set the international standard for the next nearly two centuries is described in detail. Drawing on the extensive work of Knight, Gürüz defines the key, interrelated terms of globalisation and internationalisation. He then takes the reader on a tour of several recent internationalisation efforts, such as the Bologna Process (standardisation of university degree frameworks), the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) negotiations (regulation of the commercial aspects of transnational education), and the Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE) body (voluntary global quality assurance process).

Chapter 6 is concerned with the major host countries for, and the countries of origin of, foreign students. Gürüz also examines the rationales for, and the drivers of, international student mobility that are specific to these host/origin countries. Equivalent to the pervasiveness and prominence of Latin in the ancient world, English is described as “the most widely studied language, the language of commerce and banking, the language at the pinnacle of scientific communications, and the language of [global] instruction” (p. 164). This fact is shown to figure heavily in the modern university’s population and programming considerations. The author provides many figures and charts in this final chapter to illustrate aspects of student mobility in terms of the host/origin countries, noting historical and recent developments. He carefully discusses 9/11 and the United State’s present and possible future responses to acts of terrorism in terms of immigration measures and their related effects on both international student enrolment and faculty recruitment and retention. The contrasting of brain “gain” (p. 187), “drain” (p. 232), and “exchange” (p. 234) is most interesting, as are his seven pages of concluding remarks in which he summarises the entire text.

My only criticisms of the book would be the placement of Chapter 5 (I personally think the historical sections might have been better placed at the book’s beginning, but this is preference only), and the arguable overabundance of figures and charts (50 and 4, respectively, to be precise) in the dense final chapter. The text is well-edited and virtually error-free, while the Appendices and Index are excellent additions.

Gürüz provides the reader with a timely and honest disclaimer: “Given the increasingly rapid pace of change and developments occurring in this area,

those remarks, and possibly some of the material presented in the previous chapters, may be irrelevant and obsolete by the time this book is published” (p. 19). Notwithstanding the real and rapid change to which he thereby refers, Gürüz’s book is a powerful and remarkably comprehensive work dealing with a wide array of interconnected topics and complex data relating to globalisation and international student mobility. It provides the reader with an informative, albeit brief, historical record of 2,500 years of higher education development, a snapshot of present practices and controversies, and a stimulating presentiment regarding possible future directions. Overall, *Higher Education and International Student Mobility in the Global Knowledge Economy* is a wonderful read on many levels and clearly represents decades of careful data analysis and synthesis. Gürüz has provided us with a quality text which is at once enjoyable for the layman and equally informative and challenging for the educational researcher or university administrator.

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YOLA JACOBSEN. 2007. *E-Guidelines 11. E-learning for Adults with Learning Difficulties*. Leicester: NIACE. 61 pp. ISBN 978-1-86201-319-3.

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In this collection of practical guidance on the teaching of information and communication technologies (ICTs), the author makes very good points that remind the reader that technology can benefit a wide range of learners including those with learning difficulties. To clarify issues, the term “learning difficulties” is synonymous with learning disabilities.

Learning settings discussed in this book include community colleges and even informally arranged classes at a local town hall. The author shares several excellent tips designed to help instructors unfamiliar with teaching adults with learning difficulties. Assuming there is adequate time to prepare and foreknowledge of the nature of the learners, these tips are very helpful. Recommendations such as making certain that learning material is age-appropriate and not aimed at children seems an obvious point, as do the admonitions not to underestimate the learner. One of the most important teaching tips shared in this book is that the instructor checks that the adult learner has understood the assignment. The author recommends getting the learners to repeat these in their own words if necessary.

Tools the author recommends for instructors range from oversized buttons to advocacy groups. Many times, ICT professionals may teach classes or explain computer functions to a group, but for those without training in educational techniques, this book contains very helpful advice. One example

is to remind ICT workers that working with computers can help adults with learning difficulties in decision-making processes and in learning how to communicate more effectively. These broader goals, once understood, can leave ICT instructors with a feeling of success beyond teaching the workings of computer applications.

Text, for many adult learners, can become a barrier to learning if not presented carefully. The author offers many suggestions on how to make text more accessible, such as increasing the font size, using shorter sentences that contain only one main point, and ensuring that the language is clear and easy to understand. Additionally, the use of editing software for images as well as audio can be used to great effect with adult learners. Another reminder to ICT instructors is to make use of the accessibility options available on much of their software, a set of tools often overlooked.

Even reminding the adult learner how to open and close programmes or to recognise certain well-known desktop icons can encourage success. Creating lessons that are person-centred and based on the learner's strengths and interests will create a successful experience for both the learner and the instructor. Furthermore, multimedia tools can be effective in sensory learning situations with learners who have profound or multiple learning difficulties.

Developing lessons suited for adult learners can pose a new challenge to ICT professionals that is well worth pursuing. Additional valuable reminders for ICT professionals can include teaching basic life skills, supporting travel skills, setting up situations in real-life contexts and respecting learner choice. As many educators have discovered over the years, a well-developed lesson with a clear understanding of learners' strengths and weaknesses can open up a new world to adults with learning difficulties and these learners can often surprise their instructors with their successes.

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DAVID JOHNSON (ed.). 2008. *The Changing Landscape of Education in Africa. Quality, Equality and Democracy*. Oxford: Symposium. 187 pp. ISBN 978-1-873927-11-3.

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The authors in this volume argue that quality, equity and democratic accountability are inseparable objectives in the quest to strengthen and improve educational systems in the developing world. The book opens with an introductory chapter by the editor and William Beinart, and continues with a chapter by Andriaan M. Verspoor on: The Challenge of Learning: Improving the Quality of Basic Education in Sub-Saharan Africa. Later follow chapters

dealing with research undertaken in various African countries. There is a chapter on improving the quality of education in Nigeria (David Johnson), one on education and democracy in the Gambia (Michele Schweisfurth), one on the primary school management project in Kenya (Michael Crossley), two on the Republic of South Africa (one by Elaine Unterhalter on changing masculinities in RSA and one by Anthony Lemon on redressing social inequalities in the Eastern Cape), one on the Khoisan healers of Namibia (Chris Low) and one on minority languages in the Cameroon (Barbara Trudell).

Most of the authors in this book are British and/or working at British universities. Much of the input into the various chapters has come from consultancies or research supported by DFID or the CfBT (Centre for British Teachers) Research and Development Fund.

In the very first lines of the introductory chapter of this book David Johnson and William Beinart write:

It is 40 years since Coombs (1967) first drew attention to the *World Education Crisis*, and specifically problems in the educational systems of countries in the developing world. Today, many of these problems remain, and are most visible in the educational systems of countries in sub-Saharan Africa. A large number of children remain out of school and for those who do enrol, less than half complete the primary education cycle. More worrying is the fact that those who do complete primary schooling leave with unacceptably low levels of knowledge and skills.

There is, unfortunately, little analysis in this book as to what may cause children to drop out of school. Chris Low mentions the alienating curriculum and Barbara Trudell the language issue for minorities in Africa. These are indeed important issues. However, it is not only the minority populations in Africa who are being alienated through the western schooling system and the foreign languages used as languages of instruction and effective barriers to learning of subject matter. Several authors mention the lack of resources, of textbooks and teaching material. Both Elaine Unterhalter and Anthony Lemon are concerned about existing inequalities in the educational system in South Africa. Not much redress has taken place. Although Lemon touches on the language issue and mentions that African children tend to isolate themselves in the playgrounds of integrated schools by speaking isiXhosa to each other, he does not go into any depth on this issue. He could have referred to research by Kathleen Heugh (1999) which shows that African children actually achieved better exam results in the apartheid era as they were able to use their mother tongue as the language of instruction for more years.

In his chapter on Nigeria, David Johnson mentions a survey of reading literacy conducted in 2007 which established that in a sample of 1,873 grade 4 children the mean number of words read accurately from a short simple story containing 89 words was 19.1. He does not mention in which language this survey of reading literacy was done. If it was done in English, a language children are not familiar with and do not hear outside of school, the result is not surprising. From Nigeria it would have been interesting to know why the

successful Yoruba experiments have not been brought to scale. Children being taught in Yoruba for an extended number of years did better in all subjects, including English than those who were taught in English (see Bamgbose, 2005).

It is difficult to see how one can discuss quality in education in Africa without discussing the fact that African children cannot understand what the teacher is saying (Brock-Utne, 2001, 2007; Dutcher, 2004; Mehrotra, 1998) Nadine Dutcher (2004: 8) holds:

It is shocking that the international dialogue on Education for All has not confronted the problems children face when they enter school not understanding the medium of instruction, when they are expected to **learn** a new language at the same time as they are learning **in** and **through** the new language.... However, instead of making changes that would lead to real advancement, the international community has simply repledged itself to the same goals, merely moving the target ahead from the year 2000 to 2015.

In an article on Education for All, Santosh Mehrotra (1998: 479) draws our attention to what he sees as the most important characteristic of those developing countries that really target the poor and have the highest percentage of the population with a completed basic education: “The experience of the high-achievers has been unequivocal: the mother tongue was used as the medium of instruction at the primary level in all cases”.

In her chapter on the Gambia, Michele Schweisfurth mentions the problem of corporal punishment in African schools. Our research found that Tanzanian secondary school teachers who use punishment when they teach in English do not do so when they teach the same subject in Kiswahili (Brock-Utne, 2007).

Since the introductory chapter starts by referring to Phillip Coombs and his reflection on the World Crisis in Education, it is tempting to quote him here:

The issue of what language or languages to adopt as the medium of instruction at successive levels of education in one of the most pedagogically difficult and potentially explosive political issues faced by schools in a great many countries...Paradoxically, however, the choice of language of instruction is also one of the least appreciated of all major educational problems that come before international forums. (Coombs, 1985: 256)

This is probably right, but one would hope that researchers who are so lucky as to be born with a world language would understand the educational problems of children who have to express themselves through this unfamiliar language to which they have little exposure. Michael Crossley in his chapter warns against the direct transfer of ideas, not only from the west to Africa, but also from one African country to another. This is an important warning also when it comes to the language of instruction issue. But all research we have on this issue shows that children learn better in a familiar language.

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RICHARD P. PHELPS. 2007. *Standardised Testing*. New York: Peter Lang. 156 pp. ISBN 978-0-8204-9741-9.

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*Standardised Testing* by Richard Phelps (2007) is a primer that aims to provide non-specialists in educational measurement and other educators with an overview of standardised testing with emphasis on discussing the controversies associated with this topic.

There are five chapters in the book. In Chapter 1, the author defines standardised testing, discusses its value and purpose, and provides data that suggest that standardised tests are useful and popular. In Chapter 2, the author differentiates between aptitude and achievement standardised tests, provides a historical overview of the development of such tests, and discusses the criticisms of early uses of aptitude testing in the USA, especially the ways in which intelligence tests were used in their development. Furthermore, the author discusses the use of aptitude tests in university admissions in the USA, the federal testing programmes in the USA, the use and criticism of high stakes and low stakes standardise tests, the use of aptitude tests in the USA

as compared to the use of achievement tests in Europe, the interplay between state and federal testing in the USA, and the nature of standardised testing in the USA and its relationship to its unique educational system. The author then moves to discuss the differences between testing practices in the USA and Europe regarding the difficulty and frequency of testing at the pre-college level and the different types of testing used in the USA and Europe for university admission. This is followed by a detailed discussion of the North-American (mainly US) commercial testing industry and a description, analysis, and overview of the implications of the USA's participation in international comparisons such as the 2003 Trends in International Math and Science Study (TIMSS).

In Chapter 3, entitled *Effects of Testing*, the author discusses the myriad ways in which school administrators manipulate the administration of standardised tests, abuse test results, and manage to neutralise the effective use of standardised tests in decisions regarding individual students and policy decisions. One of the identifying characteristics of this chapter is the detailed discussion of a study conducted by John Jacob Cannell which revealed the variety of ways in which school administrators abused test results, leading to what Cannell called the "Lake Wobegon Effect", a situation in which all students in all states were above the national average. Then, the author discusses the legislative, judicial, and professional responses to Cannell's study which led to the development of the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing by major professional associations such as the American Psychological Association (APA), American Educational Research association (AERA) and the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME). In addition, the author discusses the ways in which educators opposed to testing explained the results of Cannell's study in such a way as to neglect what the author calls "educator's dishonesty and lax test security".

Finally, the author dedicates the rest of Chapter 3 to argue against a number of popular misconceptions about standardised testing such as "high stakes cause test-score inflation", test coaching and preparation for tests cause test score inflation, and high stakes tests help to narrow the scope of the curriculum. Furthermore, the author looks at the advantages of standardised testing (e.g. their ability to predict student results and encourage students to take tests seriously); conditions that result in higher achievement.

Chapter 4 focuses on theoretical and practical matters regarding test development and quality assurance. The author discusses validity in all its forms (content, curricular, criterion, concurrent and construct), followed by a presentation on the test development process, test administration and scoring, and a very short (and inadequate) discussion of the differences between classical test theory and item response theory. In the concluding chapter (Chapter 5), the author argues that while there are problems with standardised testing, it is still useful because the alternatives pose more serious problems.

The book has a number of useful features: the inclusion of a glossary of terms in every chapter and definitions of terms in margins. In addition, it presents important resources such as testing standards and guidelines, reference books, and non-print resources and journals.

*Standardised Testing* by Richard Phelps provides valuable information on the controversies regarding testing and generally succeeds in presenting strong arguments in favour of standardised testing. At times, however, it seems like he is defending standardised testing on ideological rather than empirical grounds, drawing on the same approaches used by opponents of testing. In addition, his focus on examples that come mainly from the USA make the book hard to follow by readers who do not have the knowledge or experience with the US educational system. Even the comparisons with other countries, mainly European, are geared toward helping readers from the USA understand mainly American issues and problems.

The book sheds light on many controversies associated with standardised testing. In this respect, readers might benefit from understanding the controversies and the arguments for and against this type of testing. However, including the word “Primer” on the cover of the book suggests that the book would help practitioners understand the mechanics of test development and administration, topics that were, in my opinion, inadequately addressed in Chapter 4. I am convinced that a reader from outside the USA, and one who does not have some understanding of testing prior to reading this work, will not benefit much from reading it. The book might be useful to readers from the USA who are interested in understanding arguments for and against standardised testing in their attempts to take a position regarding this type of testing.

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RONALD SULTANA. 2008. *The Girl's Education Initiative in Egypt*. UNICEF. 119 pp. No ISBN.

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Girls' education has long been considered a cornerstone of national development, and, in best case scenarios, a component in broader processes geared towards democratisation, the eradication of poverty and female empowerment. It was in this spirit that the United Nations schools spearheaded the Girls' Education Initiative (GEI) in Egypt, which supports the spread of girl-friendly, active learning schools in remote rural areas. This thoroughly researched and lucidly written UNICEF book by Ronald Sultana provides a greater insight into GEI schools, which were a mere six years old at the time

of the book's publication. They are described as "a new generational of schools for a new generation of women – women who are educated, empowered, and eager to take their rightful place in society, as equal partners in its development[...]" (p. 13). Whether sufficient and convincing evidence is provided to support such exalted claims remains an open question, but that this book offers a meticulously detailed testament of an important educational experiment in contemporary Egypt cannot be disputed.

The author positions himself as an enthusiastic advocate of Egypt's GEI rather than an impartial observer, and sets himself the valuable, though difficult, task of explaining "how educational change takes place" (p. 32). He maintains that the book is intended to document rather than evaluate this "outstanding and inspirational educational initiative" (p. 12) in the hope that it will "inspire others to walk the same road" (p. 13). In actuality, the text is part documentation, part evaluation, with the author appraising the Initiative in the highest terms.

The overriding objective of the GEI, in keeping with the Millennium Development Goals and other international charters and frameworks on children and education, is to achieve universal enrolment, gender parity and the spread of democratic principles and practices, especially for the hardest-to-reach girls who have historically been excluded from mass schooling. Sultana methodically chronicles multiple aspects of the Initiative by examining the complex processes involved in multi-sector and multi-lateral coordination; he reviews issues of finance, governance, school building, leadership, staffing, training and evaluation. These sections offer invaluable insights into the way in which education projects get off the ground and are sustained in the national context of Egypt.

The reported success of the schools, as measured in both quantitative (schools and enrolments are expanding at a rapid pace) and qualitative (schools are operating according to a more democratic model than mainstream schools) terms, are explained as the result of policies. These include carrying out needs assessment through laborious door-to-door communication and surveys in remote areas, building schools in close proximity to girls' homes, the utilisation of flexible schedules that correspond to the "rhythms of the community" (p. 61), the provision of dry meals to girls and food rations for their families, and the practice of staffing schools with young, energetic female facilitators, some of whom are graduates from UNICEF-spearheaded Community Schools which run on a similar model (dating back to 1992). Success is also attributed to the less tangible but indispensable elements of enthusiasm, dedication and "sense of mission" which seem to infuse many involved in the Initiative (p. 101).

Even though Sultana makes a concerted effort to balance his analysis by highlighting some of the Initiative's weak points and challenges (including problems of scaling up, resource gaps and burdens of decentralisation), this effusive rendering of GEI schools sometimes verges on possibly misplaced adulation. Certain methodological constraints, oversights and a predisposition

towards positive analysis leave unexamined or under-examined some pressing and ongoing questions about education, social justice, gender equity and democracy in Egypt and the region.

On the issues of democratisation and critical pedagogy, for instance, the author affirms that in GEI classrooms, “seeds of democracy are being sown” and “critical and creative thinking are taken to be the norm” (p. 84). While such an assessment may be accurate, the democratising and transformative affects of GEI classrooms cannot realistically be surmised based on half-hour, pre-announced and mediated classroom visits where translation is needed (the author also carried out interviews). To be able to make a firm claim that these schools are forging a new kind of democratic personality imbued with critical and creative capacities requires independent, long-term and sustained research, something that is in dire shortage in Egypt and the region as a whole. The dearth of such research hampers the potential for a truly informed, reflexive and critical understanding of education and democracy in the ostensibly non-democratic context of Egypt; such understanding is crucial for those working towards lasting and meaningful change.

With regard to the teaching profession, this analysis overlooks the deteriorating labour conditions that have been the cause of great distress and consternation among Egyptian educators in recent years. The teachers, or “facilitators” as they are labelled in keeping with the participatory language of the project, receive the same low wages as teachers in mainstream schools: \$17.20 per month if they hold an intermediate degree (the norm in GEI schools) and \$22.60 per month with a university degree (a sum confoundingly referred to as a “decent salary”). But unlike school teachers, GEI facilitators receive no job security (they are employed on six month renewable contracts) and enjoy neither health insurance nor paid holidays, crucial facts that are relegated to a footnote (a reminder that the devil is in the detail). In addition to already poor labour conditions, some facilitators are also expected to volunteer for time-consuming committees and task forces. On a related note, GEI maintains a policy to exclusively employ women between 18 and 35 years old as facilitators, field supervisors and technical supervisors. Youthful novices, it is argued, are “more likely to be flexible – and hence more trainable” (p. 89), or, as noted by a trainer, “less mutilated by their culture, and easier to work with” (p. 90). While this may be the case, and clearly there are strong arguments in support of using female teachers for girl-friendly classrooms, one must also consider that young, rural female employees might be considered less likely to agitate for better benefits and conditions and be viewed as more compliant to authority. It remains unclear what becomes of these young women after the age of 35, though this is an important question.

An alternative interpretation of GEI schools, then, might be that while they have surely been successful in the daunting task of getting hard-to-reach girls into schools, further research is needed to chart out and better understand their democratising practices and potentials, especially as plans are underway for national scaling up. Questions must also be raised about

whether these schools, which depend on the dedicated labour of young rural women, could be reinforcing gendered inequality through inequitable labour policies that are inimical to the decidedly admirable GEI goals of female empowerment, poverty eradication and democratisation. If young women are indeed being educated to “take their rightful place in society, as equal partners in its development”, then they should have opportunities to join a workforce that is equitable and just.

Despite inevitable oversights, this book is infused with enthusiasm for the prospect of educational and social transformation. It provides the basis for ongoing conversations about ways to – or not to as the case may be – achieve quality and universal education both in Egypt and worldwide, grounded in principles of inclusion, gender equity and democratic change.

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ALAN TUCKETT (ed.). 2007. *Participation and the Pursuit of Equality. Essays in Adult Learning, Widening Participation and Achievement*. Leicester: NIACE. 184 pp. ISBN 978-1-86201-256-1.

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Sometimes we can observe societal shifts in attitude through the works of a single individual who has played a pivotal role in that very change. When the formidable barriers of practicality, finance and attitude blocked the way of underrepresented groups in the system, Veronica McGivney was at the forefront of the development and the dissemination of social research. Her efforts made a convincing case for educators to begin opening the doors wherever possible to the underrepresented. This collection of essays is a Festschrift for Veronica McGivney, the Principal Research Officer at the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), written by twelve scholars reflecting upon her work in adult education centres throughout Britain.

Decades of studies designed to make education a more positive experience for those coming to it late in life reached a broad audience and these works helped change the public's attitude. These studies and reflections on subjects ranging from feminist education strategies to the use of preschools as a stepping-stone to further education helped inform a broader social transformation.

Through this collection of essays, colleagues consider her work and its effect on attitudes toward education. As one example, the benefits of access to education have resulted in reduced child mortality rates and lower levels of HIV infection. One might also argue, if one were to read these essays in their whole, that during this period social class became less important to education

in industrial nations. These two examples of societal shift by themselves are reason enough to read these essays.

Social movements have an energy all their own, and through reflections on the work of individuals such as McGivney, the varied facets of societal shift are documented. It is the unrelenting energy, enthusiasm, and scholarship of such individuals that captures the sense of a social transition.

An examination of these essays, written by the community of scholars with whom she works, makes it clear that the abundant praise of the career of Veronica McGivney, evidenced in this Festschrift, is justified.

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GERALDINE VAN BUEREN. 2007. *Child Rights in Europe*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing. 200 pp. ISBN 978-92-871-6269-4.

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The recent focus of the Council of Europe on promoting and preserving children's rights globally is presented by Geraldine van Bueren in her book *Child Rights in Europe*. Van Bueren, a Professor of International Human Rights Law, Queen Mary, University of London, has provided an informative, analytical and comparative analysis of the rights of children in the light of the jurisprudence of the European Constitutional Courts and the European Court of Human Rights.

Chapter 1 covers fundamental legal principles of interpretation, extending to the four major Council of Europe treaties dealing with the protection of children's human rights. It explains the principle of the best interest of the child, its symbiotic relationship with the evolving capacities of the child, and its applications and limitations. Chapters 2 to 6 deals with definitions of childhood in Europe, participation and autonomy, child protection, prevention rights and children, child provision rights and an overview of the issues covered.

Although Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as "every human being below the age of 18 years" (p. 52), the European Court of Human Rights has yet to determine the minimum ages of protection within childhood, and the concept of "childhood" remains an artificial construct. More importantly, the right to respect for private life is rarely considered from the child's perspective. The author also discusses such issues as the right of children to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and the rights of freedom of expression. Chapter 4, which deals with child protection and legal rights, is invaluable. It examines issues such as the rights to liberty and security, the right to a fair trial, the minimum age of criminal responsibility (which is 10 in the UK), the right to respect for family life,

immigration, refugee status and a child's family life, adoption and fostering, as well as obligations concerning access and custody.

The book offers an informative and valuable insight into children's rights globally, especially the right to an effective remedy and the right to education. It also examines judicial physical punishment and children with reference to Article 3 (No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment), especially corporal punishment inflicted on children in some schools. In her concluding comments, Geraldine van Bueren argues that while the Council of Europe "lacks a general child rights oriented treaty" (p. 200), much progress has been made in examining the legal basis of the rights of children in the light of the jurisprudence of the European Constitutional Courts. The author, by examining numerous court cases, has discovered numerous omissions in the judicial safety net governing the protection of children.

While the author offers a compelling examination of various cases and court rulings, there is a need to expand the final section, which deals with international obligations affecting legal concepts and acts surrounding children's rights. For such an important book on children's rights, there also needs to be a subject index. However, the book is timely, well-structured, well-argued, and should be read by all who work with children and who are active researchers and practitioners of children's rights.

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