
Recenziji · Reviews

Gillett-Swan, Jenna, Coppock, Vicki (ed.). *Children's Rights, Educational Research and the UNCRC: Past, Present and Future*. United Kingdom: Symposium Books Ltd, 2016.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is among the most ratified human rights treaties in human history. As one of the critical initiatives in the field of children's rights, the CRC provides a legal framework that wishes to uphold the protection and further development of children's rights internationally. Seeing that children spend most of their formative years in education, it is crucial to ensure that the educational practices in use are consistently in line with the CRC and its guidelines. Following ratification of the CRC, the work continues throughout various organisations such as the 2014 European Conference on Education Research, which give rise to further debates within the academic forum.

A round-table discussion inspired by the 2014 European Conference on Education Research saw the publication of "*Children's Rights, Education and the UNCRC past, present and future*", which critically analyses contemporary issues surrounding the CRC and children's rights. In its seven chapters, the authors explore multiple themes of the CRC and engage in critical discussions over the implementation of several of its aspects. By providing diverse contexts and case studies from scholars in Australia, Finland, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom, the text may be seen as a valuable introductory collection of scientific papers for education research in the CRC context.

In the first chapter, John I'Anson presents readers with a comprehensive historical analysis of children's rights and educational research within

the CRC framework. The chapter is divided into four subparts that address various key themes concentrated around educational research in the area of children's rights.

By highlighting the importance of the 'voice' and 'participation' phenomena in contemporary research on children's rights, the author acknowledges that the *notion* of 'voice' is problematic since it itself derives largely from '*Western individualism*', showing that it is essential to pay attention to the complexity of children's geographies in which children's right to participation is upheld.

By understanding that the legal entity of the framework comes with obligations, I'Anson presents a series of arguments in which he acknowledges important tensions in research practice. The argument is directly linked to children's rights and cultural contexts in which research is conducted, thereby suggesting an argument for research to be characterised by the interpretation of children's rights and the sociology of childhood as a universal category with its own ethical issues and challenges.

Written by Louise Gwenneth Phillips, the second chapter starts with an outline of Article 42. The author emphasises the deficient implementation of the "human right" to education in children's lives by presenting a historical narrative in which the lack of children to possess any "status" derives from the notion in which children are seen as "property of parents or guardians" given the philosophical context in which children's rights have been perceived sociologically.

Noting the development in which we see the CRC as an internationally recognised legislative framework, Phillips states that the CRC still largely remains "unknown to adults and children" although positive actions in the form of international programmes and national initiatives have emerged as part of the CRC, like the UNICEF Child Friendly Schools programme and the National Curricula and Policy for Children and Young People.

The third chapter is written by Nina Thelander and somewhat continues on from Phillips' idea of international initiatives leading to positive outcomes through her analysis of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (HRE) as an introduction to her study of HRE in Swedish primary schools. The chapter provides a practical examination of the dual implications of children's rights to education; first, education *as* a human right and, second, education *for* human rights.

The concept of HRE is explored by Thelander in great detail, ranging from how the right itself is conceptualised in society to how the right is executed and delivered by international organisations like the UN. Implementation of the CRC, Thelander argues, led to a shift in how we

think about childhood and children's rights during a period in which sociology and children's rights became a topic of research.

Moving the focus over to the development of international and local policies regarding HRE, the text examines the experiences of two Swedish teachers. The decentralisation of the school system in Sweden arguably allowed for the development of a school curriculum which provides an insight into the obstacles faced by educators with respect to educational implementation of the CRC.

Written by Reetta Niemi, Kristiina Kumpulainen and Lasse Lipponen, Chapter four gives an excellent example of the long-standing tradition of recognising children's rights to agency and votes in Finland. Empirical data presented in the chapter were gathered in a primary classroom community with children aged 7 to 13. The authors collocated their analysis to three models of participation, followed by the introduction to the Finnish National Core Curriculum and their understanding of the concept of participation.

The study has incorporated various theoretical models to further reflect on the varying results of measuring participation. The developed methodology showcases how certain legislative aspects of the CRC can be implemented in classroom-based practices.

The article also emphasises other relevant ethical considerations such as standards of responsibility, transparency methods and inability of anonymity. Yet, the research *consistently* shows that important factors are involved when talking and examining participation since participation in school is never free from standardised curricula or official laws and acts.

The fifth chapter presents a practical examination of how socioeconomic status and precariousness can deprive a child of the right to citizenship. Authors Joana Lúcio and Fernando Ilídio Ferreira explore this theme by considering the implications of the 2008 economic recession in Portugal. In their analysis, the authors examine the subject matter extensively via the lens of the welfare state mechanism in terms of continuing the implementation of children's rights.

It is revealed throughout the study that austerity led to a reduction in state-provided economic support for families, which directly impacted family well-being. This in turn created hardships which actively put children at-risk-of-poverty and social exclusion, while directly affecting access to and measures of provision, protection and participation.

The study gives a clear example of how important it is for educators to prepare for "teaching" children's rights in line with participation and citizenship. The data gathered in the context of a research project investigating components of the curriculum of the Institute of Technical

Education revealed that the knowledge possessed by educators is largely 'theoretical', leaving educators incapable of explicitly identifying instances where the CRC is respected and enforced. As such, the results show the extent in which educators are unprepared to implement the CRC and the need to reinforce the social and cultural dimension of ITE (Initial teacher education) which potentially, if combined together, can act as a protective mechanism against the vulnerabilities children face.

In the sixth chapter, Gordon Tait and Mallihai Tambyah present analysis of an Australian case study which showed that, despite the CRC being one of the most ratified conventions in the world, it faces many challenges in being implemented in national frameworks, stating three main reasons for that; governmental, legal and definitional.

Taking the concept of privacy into consideration, the authors critically assess and question Rengel's (2013) restatement of the foundational through an essential understanding of privacy with a cultural and historical connection. The authors dig deeper into the subject matter by discussing introduction to childhood as one of the most regulated spaces and reflecting on its tension in triangulation within children and the concept of privacy at home and at school.

Tait and Tambyah offer insights into the surveillance and privacy of the student population, with important considerations concerning personal surveillance and big data in the era of increased tech globalisation. Their study examines aspects of moral panic over the concept of sexuality and public liability in the educational sphere as regards privacy. It reflects on how educational facilities are exposed to civil actions in cases of negligence and personal injury, thus reflecting on the zones of pupil privacy equating directly with zones of economic and personal risk.

The authors provide readers with an in-depth discussion of the lack of legal implementation of the CRC through the example of the UNCRC having no legal repercussions if it is not upheld – thereby reflecting on the limited scope of the implementation of international legal frameworks. The case study in which Australian law in this regard is examined reflects the above-mentioned.

In the final chapter, Jenna Gillett-Swan and Vicki Coppock examine how the UNCRC can act as a tool for shaping further research and methodologies in the development of policies for children's rights. They recognise new-age digitalisation as a tool which can pose both challenges and opportunities while also discussing the complexity of participation and access as key to furthering the development of children's rights. Crucially, this emphasis on how increased digitalisation has changed the

space in which children learn and develop is presented as the main focus of the study, with each author discussing issues like privacy and safety.

The study also highlights how the UNCRC acts as a framework for contextualising children's rights, reflecting on how the UNCRC can be used for the purposes of continued upskilling educators in the discussion on children's rights, ethics and online safety with further implementation of Articles 13 and 17 of the CRC.

The volume as a whole provides readers with insightful themes and discussions on issues surrounding children's rights and the UNCRC as a policy. The book acts as an introductory guide for policymakers in the field of education and sociology. The concept of childhood is introduced and presented in a sensible and cohesive manner.

The chapters all present diverse articles on numerous topics that introduce the reader to historical, thematic and contextual discussions concerning the CRC and its implications. Despite limited case studies which focus on selected countries, the book recognises the importance of educators, classroom environments and guardians in the sphere of the CRC and can act as a starting point for further research on children's rights within interdisciplinary approaches and methods.

The book allows the reader to see the concept of children's rights as an idea that stretches beyond the classroom and is influenced and affected by culture and economics. The conclusion brings together the resonating aspects of each chapter, before introducing an epilogue which draws out some of the key findings of educational research concerning children's rights.

If one is to consider Nietzsche, as quoted by l'Anson in the first chapter, "...counter to our time and thereby action on our time and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come" resonates deeply with the scope of action in which the book can act as a stepping stone.

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Hyslop-Margison, Emery J., Thayer, James, *Teaching Democracy: Citizenship Education as Critical Pedagogy*. Rotterdam, Boston and Taipei: Sense Publishers, 2009.

"There is no escaping the world we now live in" is a statement that is true when participatory democratic decision-making is removed from the realm of public policy formation (Hyslop-Margison and Thayer, 2009, p.