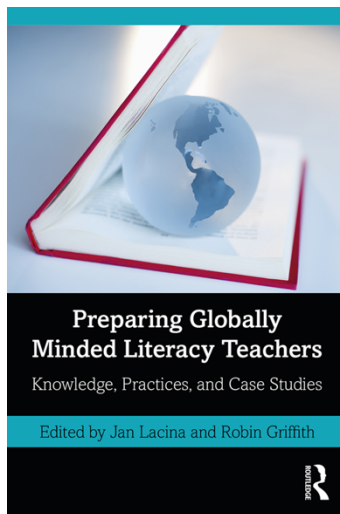


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**Review of *Preparing globally minded literacy teachers:  
Knowledge, practices, and case studies*  
Edited by Lacina, J. and Griffith, R.**

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Literacy instruction, heavily dependent on the social, cultural, and historical context in which it is situated, is not a one-size-fits-all phenomenon. Around the globe, teachers are tasked with challenging the traditional conceptions of literacy in order to serve the needs of their diverse student populations. The principle of global mindedness in education thereby becomes a lens for teachers to examine other perspectives with an aim to gain insight into their own classrooms and contexts.

*Preparing Globally Minded Literacy Teachers: Knowledge, Practices, and Case Studies* provides a discussion of global contexts in literacy and actionable strategies that teachers can apply in practice. As noted by the editors, Lacina and Griffith of the College of Education at Texas Christian University (USA), the approach to this collection is based on critical sociocultural theory and the constructs of identity, agency, and power in literacy learning (Lewis et al., 2007). From this perspective, learning is dependent on acceptance and recognition of identity and opportunities to exercise agency in the creation and renegotiation of identity through participation in discourse communities (Moje & Lewis, 2007). The chapters in this volume address ways in which these conditions may be met and challenge power constructs in learning spaces.

Designed as a textbook with teacher preparation in mind, this book offers ways that teachers can approach literacy with a global mindset. The chapter authors, representing varied global contexts, describe ways of reimagining literacy instruction and policies through this critical lens. Especially apparent throughout the book is the promotion of child agency, or “the strategic making and remaking of selves, identities, activities, relationships, cultural tools and resources, and histories, as embedded within relations of power” (Moje & Lewis, 2007, p. 18). This attention to the identities of children in literacy learning promotes culturally responsive pedagogy that respects students’ cultures, not only

in connections to content but also in instructional strategies (Gay, 2002).

This review first summarizes the organization and content of the book, focusing on three themes which recur across multiple chapters: resources for literacy instruction, digital literacies, and literacy instruction in languages other than English. Following this content overview, the main strength of the book, which is its focus on practice and application, and a critical discussion of both the book’s representation of teaching contexts and presentation are provided.

### Discussion of Contents

The book is divided into three main sections: Early Literacy, Intermediate to Adolescent Literacy, and Case Studies. Each contains five chapters that address viewpoints from varied global settings or literacy instruction perspectives. Each chapter in the first two sections includes the same eight subsections: a summary of the chapter, a short vignette offering a literacy practice in action, the historical and cultural context of the country and culture of the author(s), the theory and research base related to the practices discussed in the chapter, a discussion of implications for future research, recommendations for globally minded literacy teachers, discussion questions and applications, and a list of references. The final five chapters (in the Case Studies section) follow a slightly different format, first providing a description of a teacher’s classroom response to an identified problem followed by discussion questions and applications to facilitate critical evaluation on the part of the reader.

Some of the book chapters highlight specific resources that teachers can use in their classrooms or literacy programs. Chapter 2 describes the early literacy intervention Reading Recovery (founded by Marie M. Clay), which, despite having been first

implemented over 35 years ago, has stood the test of time and space as it has been applied in multiple contexts, including Europe, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. Chapter 7 discusses the application of a critical literacy lens for teaching materials and supporting students' critical literacy in South Africa, featuring specific critical literacy texts and teaching materials that address the intricacies of apartheid discourses in authentic texts that teachers in South Africa can use in their teaching to model and encourage learners' critical literacy skills. Additionally, Chapter 10 showcases how the Visible Learning Database, which uses meta-analyses of varied approaches and their influences on student literacy learning to demonstrate what matters most in learning, has been applied in the USA to identify effective literacy approaches for adolescents. The implication of this chapter is for teachers to "know your impact" (p. 174) and adjust teaching strategies toward greater influence on student achievement. Although these chapters attempt to generalize the implications of these resources beyond the described contexts and provide food for thought that literacy teachers, program administrators, and education policymakers can consider for their own contexts, readers should note that the practices and results within these chapters are likely not directly transferrable to other contexts, which have their own unique histories, policies, and practices that must also be taken into consideration in implementing new educational interventions.

Several chapters focus on digital literacy instruction in global contexts. In Chapter 3, the authors focus on using digital and multimodal texts to support early literacy in Australia, providing examples of using tools such as Seesaw (<https://web.seesaw.me/>) and multimodal project design to support students' development. Chapter 5 highlights digital curation as a new literacy practice that responds to current literacy development needs in the UK, drawing on the idea of "New Literacies" from John Paul Gee

(2015) in which literacy is understood as situated, ideological, and dependent on context (as cited on p. 63). The authors describe their use of an iPad app called Our Story as a tangible application of a digital curation project in which learners are provided with the agency to engage in the collection, organization, and presentation of materials to share their learning and identities with others using digital tools and resources. Additionally, Chapter 11 addresses digital literacy instruction and curriculum in Canada, calling for standards to be updated to include digital literacies in teacher preparation. They argue that digital technologies are contexts of meaning-making and thus should be addressed in literacy educational practices. Because all three of these chapters on digital literacies address educational contexts in English-dominant, 'first world' countries, there appears to be a gap in representations of digital literacy instruction and tools in global contexts with less access to resources. Broadening the representation of contexts in digital literacy instruction would provide a more well-rounded view of digital literacy from a global mindset.

A few chapters feature literacy instruction in languages other than English. Chapter 6 describes mother tongue policies as situated historically in Kenya, noting the complexity and challenges of implementing such a policy in a linguistically diverse community. Chapter 8 discusses literacy instruction of Chinese in Taiwan, noting that the majority of time spent in class by teachers in this context is on character and word instruction, with minimal time spent on comprehension. This chapter outlines some reforms in Taiwanese teacher development in which reading comprehension strategies have been implemented for literacy instruction and the impacts of these changes. Notably, this chapter calls attention to the need for addressing strategies for literacy that consider the nature of the language in contrast to a universal view of literacy. In Chapter 14, the authors describe

how teachers in a multicultural bilingual school in Oaxaca, Mexico incorporate instruction of literacy in Zapotec despite local ideologies that prioritize instruction in Spanish. They describe the project called *mensajes de los abuelitos* (messages from grandparents) in which students collaborated with family members to document a skill or a lesson in Zapotec and its contribution to supporting the community's recognition of the value of Zapotec in school. Though they faced a challenging endeavor to represent a fully inclusive global perspective in one volume, the editors attempt to represent varied world regions and countries. Unfortunately, the majority of these contexts are English-dominated, even those that take place in non-English-dominant countries. This indicates a need for more attention to literacy practices in a variety of languages and underrepresented regions as well as the active recruitment of literacy researchers across varied world contexts.

### **A Focus on Practice and Application**

A valuable feature of the book is the subsection in each chapter dedicated to discussion questions and applications. For example, Chapter 9, focusing on writing instruction research in New Zealand, provides some powerful questions for practicing or preservice teachers to think about their approach to teaching, for instance, "Do I know my students well, both as culturally centered individuals and as developing writers? Do I use what information I hold meaningfully for teaching and learning purposes? Do I need to collect and record more information?" (p. 159). These questions provide opportunities for discussion of readers' current teaching practices and imagined classrooms. Additionally, several chapter authors further elaborate their discussion points with clearly actionable applications for classrooms and literacy instruction. For example, Chapter 4 authors, applying Freire's (1970/2000) critical lens of reading

the word and the world to global children's literature (as cited on p. 47), offer ways that teachers can incorporate global children's literature into their practice, such as modeling thoughtful responses to global literature during read alouds or using literature circles to engage students in authentic conversations about global literature. This subsection in many of the book chapters effectively connects the theoretical bases of each chapter to classroom practice.

The final section of the book, Case Studies, highlights the practices of teachers reimagining literacy instruction in different contexts, connecting theory to classroom practices. Chapter 12 explores the attempt at applying an annotation technique that a high school English teacher in Korea makes in order to address her students' need for deeper engagement with English texts in a predominantly "teach-to-the-test" environment that prioritizes memorization and test-taking strategies over comprehension. Chapter 13 describes how one teacher in a bilingual school in Mexico City capitalizes on students' linguistic repertoires and translanguaging (Garcia, 2009) toward literacy development, demonstrating what these practices can look like in the classroom. Chapter 15 highlights the general principles and practices of a teacher in a UAE international private school. The final case study (Chapter 16) is about the classroom action research of a teacher in Spain comparing contextualized second language vocabulary learning (using picture books) and decontextualized vocabulary learning (e.g. flashcards, games). These case studies demonstrate how literacy instruction can be approached in different global contexts with a focus on students' diverse backgrounds and individual needs. This focus on practice and application throughout the book aligns with the editors' intended audience: teachers and preservice teachers preparing for literacy instruction. Making connections between practice and the concept of a

global mindset in literacy instruction would be best explored in a facilitated discussion, such as in a teacher preparation course.

### **Critical Discussion**

One area that appears unaddressed in the chapters relates to contextual factors such as socioeconomic status and access to educational resources for both students and teachers. The editors note, “Literacy practices are further influenced by the economic, social, cultural, and historical contexts in which children live,” citing Singh, Han, and Woodrow (2012, as cited on p. 4). However, attention to economic issues and disparities are not discussed. In Chapter 4, the authors provide resources inclusive of varied languages, cultures, and literature that may be applicable across contexts, such as wordless texts; however, the global accessibility of these texts is not addressed. They discuss the complicated definition of “global literature”, noting that it is often defined “by the lens through which one is viewing it” (p. 45), reminding us to challenge the lens through which we view global children’s literature and not see it as simply a contrast to the literature of dominant groups. While this book provides many insights into different contexts and ways of doing in classrooms that allow for a widening perspective, many of the classroom descriptions in the book are unbalanced toward a more idealized classroom environment than the work-in-progress in which many teachers find themselves addressing challenges day-by-day. Teachers need to see themselves and their teaching contexts represented. Explicitly addressing issues within educational institutions or environments related to such areas as diversity in socioeconomic status and access to resources may provide a deeper connection to the issues of power present in literacy instruction and further align with the book’s basis in critical sociocultural theory.

While reading the paperback edition of this book, I came across many grammatical and stylistic errors. While most of these errors were minor and did not affect comprehension of the book’s content, there were instances of incomplete sentences that could affect the reader’s ability to understand the full intended expression. While grammatical differences in expressions of English should be encouraged, especially in a book about global mindedness and literacy, attention should also be paid to the completeness of ideas to ensure that sentences express the fully intended message. I would suggest that the editors and publishers work together to ensure consistency in the expression of these valuable ideas.

### **Conclusions**

The editors expressed that preparing globally minded teachers requires “a better understanding of others across the globe and how we can learn from each other” (p. 1). The contributions from the chapter authors provide insight into a variety of literacy instruction contexts and how they are historically and culturally situated, allowing readers to evaluate them and glean applications for their own contexts, expanding the ways preservice teachers can visualize their approach to literacy to teach from a globally minded and culturally responsive perspective. The attention to the practices of real teachers that this book provides is a valuable tool with which the upcoming generation of literacy instructors can critically engage in order to enter their classrooms with a global perspective of literacy that sees beyond the narrowed lens of one’s own background.

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