
International Education: An Encyclopedia of Contemporary Issues and Systems. Ed. by Daniel Ness and Chia-Ling Lin. Armonk, NY: Sharpe, 2013. 2 vols. Acid free \$249 (ISBN: 978-0-7656-2049-1).

The subject of these two encyclopedia volumes is perhaps more relevant than ever in the past. We are constantly being bombarded by international news, most of which concerns our country in some manner. Parts of the world about which we seldom heard can now be critical to our well-being. Thus, in the past few years, learning about education in some of these countries can help explain why citizens and governments behave as they do. But not all events mean the same thing in different countries. We need to be able to evaluate each place on its own peculiar history, economy, and education. This encyclopedia is thus very timely, innovative in its arrangement, and fills a gap in comparative education.

This publication is arranged into two very distinct parts. The first part consists of extensive articles on eight issues and subjects that can affect social and political structures of education systems worldwide, such as gender, formal education, sociopolitical and cultural issues, and others. The second more extensive part deals with countries of the world, arranged by region. Within each region, such as South America, post-Soviet nations, and East Asia, the educational system of each country is detailed. Subjects and article length vary according to characteristics of the country, but each article begins with a useful short history and contains statistical tables and references for further reading.

Volume 1 begins with contents for the entire work, followed by a page that lists editors, board of directors, and contributors from around the world. Volume 2 contains contents for that volume alone as well as an extensive glossary and index. A helpful addition would have been short bios of the two editors, especially since their names appear at the end of a majority of the articles in the encyclopedia. I could find no other reference to them beyond their listing on the covers, title pages, and the editorial page. I did discover through Google that Daniel Ness is listed as a faculty member at Dowling College in New York with an extensive list of publications. I also found some information on Chia-Ling Lin and the honors she has received. The omission of such basic information which would add prestige to the publication is puzzling.

This encyclopedia will be unique now in the field of international education. The second edition of Rebecca Marlow-Ferguson's *World Education Encyclopedia: A Survey of Educational Systems Worldwide* (Gale, 2002) dealt with the same subject but is now much out of date. There exists a new online resource, Yvonne Hebert and Ali A. Abdi's *Critical perspectives on International Education* (Sense, 2013), but it deals with the subject in a very different manner.

A large audience, including students in high schools, colleges, and universities, will find the encyclopedia useful not only for international education but for other social sciences as well.

As a resource highlighting global changes, the volumes can also be of use to anyone interested in specific countries as well as a quick reference and valuable resource for libraries. Considering its uniqueness, it is highly recommended for academic, education, and large public libraries.—*Dr. Nancy F. Carter, Librarian Emeritus, University Libraries, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado*

The Iraq War Encyclopedia. Ed. by Thomas R. Mockaitis. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2013. 542 p. Acid free. \$100 (ISBN: 978-0-313-38062-4). E-book available (978-0-313-38063-1), call for pricing.

The Iraq War of 2003–11 may go down in history as one of the most unnecessary conflicts ever. Ostensibly invaded by the United States and her allies to rid this middle eastern nation of “weapons of mass destruction” (read: nuclear bombs), which were never found, the cover story then shifted to ridding Iraq of terrorists, whoever they were. An image ingrained in the mind of this reviewer is that of a contemporary political cartoon depicting President George W. Bush swatting a hornet's nest with a stick.

This one-volume reference work purports to shed light on the often murky goings-on that have transpired in a country far removed from our own. In the words of the preface, this volume seeks to provide “a comprehensive overview of the war, valuable to scholars but comprehensible to ordinary readers” (xiii). This worthy goal has only been partially met, as what we have here is a mixed bag. Of the 250 some alphabetically arranged and signed entries, the strongest are those giving a straightforward factual accounting of the topic at hand, for example, the article on the B-2 Spirit stealth bomber. Very solidly written, this entry details the aircraft's armaments, strengths and weaknesses, development history, and so on. Weakest writing occurs in articles that attempt to analyze or evaluate information. The piece on “Intelligence” (read: spying) presents the reader with some awkward and vague verbiage: “New intelligence communications architectures were built to pass critical intelligence more quickly from strategic to tactical levels and vice versa” (174–75). Other articles gloss over important facts. The contributor of the entry “Weapons of Mass Destruction” fails to admit that WMD was a no-show in Iraq, a major reason for going to war, and instead concentrates on a discussion of these chemical/biological/nuclear devices in other nations, at the same time employing evasive language, such as “Egypt, Syria, Algeria, and Iran are all believed to have significant stockpiles of biological and chemical weapons” (481). The author fails to relate as to how these beliefs came about; no evidence is cited to lend credence to the assertions made.

Editor Mockaitis holds master's and doctoral degrees in modern British and Irish History from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He is currently a professor of history at DePaul University, Chicago and is responsible for many books concerning recent mideastern conflicts. One suspects the weak link in the editorial chain is the so-called “independent

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scholar.” Several of them are listed on the contributors’ page. Who are these folks? What are their credentials? How were they selected to participate in this project? These questions must go unanswered, for there is no information given as to their background.

Considering the middling quality of this work and the fact that so many wars in the middle east/south-central Asia theater were interwoven and being fought concurrently, it is suggested that a better use of reference collection development dollars would be the acquisition of a competing title, namely, Spencer C. Tucker’s five-volume *The Encyclopedia of Middle East Wars* (ABC-Clio, 2010). While not quite as current, and necessarily more expensive, this set takes in the whole of the armed conflicts that have flared up in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Persian Gulf, and other hot spots in this region, fought over the course of the past thirty years. Tucker, of course, is a well-respected military historian who has written and edited a goodly number of award-winning reference sets. He’s at the top of his game here, as *The Encyclopedia of Middle East Wars* received a starred review in both *Booklist* and *Library Journal*, for instance. Need we say more?—*Michael F. Bemis, Independent Reference Book Reviewer*

Street Food around the World: An Encyclopedia of Food and Culture. Ed. By Bruce Kraig and Colleen Taylor. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2013. 504 p. Acid free \$100 (ISBN: 978-1-59884-954-7).

Street food has enjoyed a surge in popularity in recent years, gaining a great deal of television attention on cooking and travel channels. Its appeal is further evidenced by the proliferation of food truck festivals and its prominence at county fairs. The food is as big a draw as the rides, farm animals, games, and other attractions. Existing books on the topic tend to be cookbooks that are generally focused on a

particular region. The timing is perfect for a comprehensive book of international street foods.

The introduction provides an overview of street food that includes a definition, the basic types of street food, and common methods of preparation. Following the introduction, the encyclopedia includes seventy-six entries listed by country or region. Entries provide some background information about the country, its population and history and goes on to describe the country’s most popular street foods as well as how street food is perceived in the country. It further explains how the population tends to consume the food, whether it is on the go or enjoyed at tables, purchased from a peripatetic vendor or from a fixed food stand, etc.

The index includes occasional headings for cooking terms or broad food categories, such as dumplings, but is comprised primarily of the countries listed as entries in the encyclopedia and then subdivided by the foods described in those entries. This is helpful but its usefulness is limited for a reader wanting information about a street food but who is uncertain of the dish’s origin since the foods are listed under the country of origin.

The text is jargon-free, employing general, everyday language, making it highly accessible to the casual reader. The book would likely be of greatest interest to foodies or fans of cooking shows, though readers interested in travel might also enjoy learning about the foods and cultures covered in the encyclopedia. It would be best suited for public libraries, though it would also be a welcome addition in the libraries of culinary academies or colleges offering culinary programs. The book is an entertaining as well as informative read. As an added bonus, it includes over 100 recipes of dishes described in the book; as such, it would be equally appropriate in a library’s circulating collection as it would in the reference collection.—*Susan Trujillo, Reference Librarian, West Los Angeles College*