Chapter 64

Critical Instruction, Student Achievement, and the Nurturing of Global Citizens:
Global and Comparative Education in Context

Howard Menand
University of North Carolina – Charlotte, USA

ABSTRACT

The chapter applies critical theory to analyze the impact of globalization on education at the classroom level. Based on the hypothesis that education policy decisions made at the global level result in outcomes at the classroom level, it is clear globalization directly impacts students in the classroom. Therefore, within the context of curriculum and instruction, this chapter critically explores 21st century instructional practices as a response to the following research question: What are effective methods for engaging all learners in today's classrooms? The chapter incorporates qualitative research results and historical background about globalization, which thus situates current 21st century instructional practices within a framework for critical deconstruction. Finally, the qualitative research utilized in this chapter stems from classroom observations of teachers delivering 21st century instruction, and this research serves the purpose of clearly illustrating the characteristics of 21st century instruction in the classroom.

INTRODUCTION

Researchers who approach education as a contested practice assert that the definition of knowledge and the hierarchical ranking of cultural values that manifest within schools and classrooms emerge out of an arduous process of negotiation, and this process of negotiation produces a contentious curriculum fraught with misaligned perspective. The dispute over education practice exists because defined knowledge within the curriculum is instilled with cultural signifiers that either perpetuate the status quo or challenge the dominant culture narrative. The struggle to define knowledge within schools is not simply a dichotomous conflict; it involves multiple factions sometimes competing

asynchronously. After all, educators confront challenges with the canon—the representative sanctioned literary collection—to incorporate material of ethnic, racial, gender, and cultural backgrounds not represented within the dominant perspective. Without a continued challenge to the assertion of dominant values, a perpetuation or social reproduction occurs. As Giroux explains,

Reproduction refers here to texts [language and communication patterns] and social practices whose messages, inscribed within specific historical settings and social contexts, function primarily to legitimate the interests of the dominant social order. I want to argue that these can be characterized as texts, as social practices about pedagogy, and refer primarily to categories of meaning constructed so as to legitimize and reproduce interests expressed in dominant ideologies. (1983, p. 157)

An understanding of this point—that education serves multiple purposes and varied agendas—underscores the importance of knowing education as a contested realm. Within this construct, the curriculum is a pathway to engaged instruction and to successful academic outcomes that can disrupt the status quo.

In our current, globalized world, education serves as the focal point for social conflict—schools cannot escape the pressures of their environment. The structural circumstances apparent in contemporary society, such as pervasive poverty and stratified employment opportunities, place demand on schools to deliver opportunity to all students. In this context, schools, through global pressure, now emphasize 21st century instructional skills as a driving force to promote student success. It is this point specifically that unfolds throughout this chapter and serves as the focus of critical analysis. The chapter comprises three key subsections, which in total delineate globalization's impact on education at the classroom level. The first chapter subsection is titled "Globalization and the Knowledge Economy." In this section, the connection between globalization, the knowledge economy, and the evolution of 21st century instruction is established. The next subsection of the chapter, "Critical Instruction," utilizes a critical pedagogy framework to deconstruct the role of 21st century instructional practices as a method of instruction for all learners. Finally, the last section of the chapter, "21st Century Instruction and Global Citizens," examines whether or not the current trend of 21st century instruction perpetuates dominant cultural values at the expense of nondominant cultural values.

BACKGROUND

To begin, an analysis of academic indicators—both international and national—shows that multiple levels of student underperformance exist. Academic underperformance is a problem steeped in intricate complexities that lacks simple explanations; this problem demonstrates a need for an aligned curriculum designed to reach all student populations. Consider international data in which American public school students do not experience a commensurate level of academic success as compared to their global counterparts. For example, data from the Program for International Assessment (PISA), which measures reading literacy, mathematics literacy, and science literacy for 15 year olds every three years, illustrates that American students when compared to their Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) equivalents on the 2009 PISA results rank 8th in reading, 21st in math, and 13th in science (Fleischman, Hopstock, Pelczar, & Shelley, 2010). Additionally, data from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) indicate that while the scale score for American students of 540 is significantly above the PIRLS

21 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/critical-instruction-student-achievement-and-the-nurturing-of-global-citizens/125789

Related Content

Corporate Social Responsibility Practices in Multinationals and Large Enterprises in Pakistan: Assessing Commitment to the United Nations Global Compact
Zahid Ali Memon, Javaid Ali Dars, Wahid Bux Mangrio, Arabella Bhuttoand Mark Gregory Robson (2016). *International Journal of Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Corporate Social Responsibility (pp. 1-16).*
www.irma-international.org/article/corporate-social-responsibility-practices-in-multinationals-and-large-enterprises-in-pakistan/172164

Boko Haram Insurgency in Cameroon: Role of Mass Media in Conflict Management
Afu Isaiah Kunock (2017). *Media Law, Ethics, and Policy in the Digital Age (pp. 226-244).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/boko-haram-insurgency-in-cameroon/175449

SMoBAICS: The Smart Modular Biosignal Acquisition and Identification System for Prosthesis Control and Rehabilitation Monitoring
Volkhard Klinger (2021). *Research Anthology on Emerging Technologies and Ethical Implications in Human Enhancement (pp. 313-338).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/smobaics/273082

The Impact of CSR on Consumer Responses in the Hospitality Industry: CSR and Consumer Responses
Mobin Fatma (2016). *Corporate Social Responsibility in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry (pp. 46-62).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-impact-of-csr-on-consumer-responses-in-the-hospitality-industry/147188

Making a Case for Information Integrity in Healthcare
Reema Khuranaand Vijay V. Mandke (2013). *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Business Convergence, Computing, and Legality (pp. 144-151).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/making-case-information-integrity-healthcare/78199