Glocal Challenges to Teacher Education and a Glocally Sustaining Pedagogical Framework

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Abstract

This article explores some of the challenges facing teacher education and how glocality as a concept can be used toward a Glocally sustaining pedagogical framework for teacher education. Higher education has long espoused particular commitments to the preparation of educations that appear, to us, to fall short in their ability to be followed. The areas of disconnect are amplified by snowballing tensions within higher education settings, a range of hyperbolic political discourses, and a resistance both in society generally and higher education to engaging difference in meaningful and authentic ways. A framework of Glocally sustaining pedagogy (GSP) takes as its skin a realist approach that sees no greater value to perspectives and contexts that are global over those that are local, recognizing that every local is connected in a global network of connectivity. In this piece we aim to outline the challenges, using culturally relevant pedagogy, as an example. We then provide an understanding of the meaning of glocality that will serve to pose a five-question frame that we might understand as a GSP.

Keywords

Teacher education, glocality, educational reform, teacher preparation, higher education

Introduction

We wanted to use the opportunity of this special issue to comment, more in article form, on some of the challenges facing teacher education and how glocality as a concept can be used toward a Glocally sustaining pedagogical framework for teacher education beyond some of our work as editors. Higher education has long espoused particular commitments to the preparation of educations that appear, to us, to fall short in their ability to be followed. The areas of disconnect are amplified by snowballing tensions within higher education settings, a range of hyperbolic political discourses, and a resistance both in society generally and higher education to engaging difference in meaningful and authentic ways. A framework of Glocally sustaining pedagogy (GSP) takes as its skin a realist approach that sees no greater value to perspectives and contexts that are global over those that are local, recognizing that every local is connected in a global network of connectivity. We see GSP as a mechanism to ask bigger, bolder, and broader questions about the landscape and practices which characterize the preparation of educators worldwide. We acknowledge, at the outset, the limits, overused educational tropes such as culturally relevant pedagogy, response to intervention, mitigating learning loss, etc. which have each in their own way failed to provide any ongoing change in the practices and engagements of educators. In this piece we first aim to outline the challenges, using culturally relevant pedagogy, as an example. We then provide an understanding of the meaning of glocality that will serve to pose a five-question frame that we might understand as a GSP.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Its Challenges

Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995, 2008) introduced Culturally Relevant Pedagogy as a mechanism to promote that positive engagement likely results from a) significant expectations for academic achievement, b) cultural competence of the teachers own self as well as her/his students, as well as c) socio-political commitment. CRP (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995, 2009) has a fundamental recognition that when students and teachers are not well-connected owing to difference the outcomes can be dire for students.

Since the middle of the 1990s significant attention has been placed on using the phrase culturally relevant to describe any range of educational practice (Mellom, Straubhaar, Balderas, Ariail, & Portes, 2018; Zygmunt et al., 2018; Walter, 2017; Jensen, Whiting, & Chapman, 2016; Thomas & Warren, 2013) though there appears to be very little in terms of actual positive change in outcomes for student traced to CRP. As of August 2021, Ladson-Billings' *Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy* (1995) has been cited over 8,700 times and her book *The Dreamkeepers* (1994) has been cited over 12,200 times. Considering the widespread citational use of this work, and the constant static articulations of the CRP discourse by educators with little change in outcomes, we should force ourselves to ponder how something so pervasive in the repertoire of educational research has shown little actual impact on achievement.

Challenges to Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

To understand the disconnect between a commitment to articulating the ideology of CRP with the actual practices we turn to the free-market economy that purposefully and necessarily selects and sorts (Bonoli, 2010; Terranova, 2000). Sorting individuals through selection in the market is a vicious but necessary function in any service-driven economy requiring the cheapest labor force possible to provide balance between supply/demand and profit. So, now, a few specific challenges.

The first challenge is the overwhelming nature of stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson,

1995; Young, 2007; Ford, 2010; Ford & Harris, 2000; Davis, Aronson, Salinas, 2006; Reed, 1988). Stereotypes about groups serve to isolate children from feeling connected and included and widen the perceptive gulf between educators and their students. These stereotypes, however, do much more damage in that they prevent educators from leaning into other cultural contexts to explore situational answers to common challenges. Because stereotype is so pervasive lines of communication with others across a multitude of global contexts to understand one's localized challenges remains elusive. Secondly, we see increasing hostility toward difference exacerbated through the 2016-2020 Trump-era. In the wake of this hostility there is a heightened level of confusion and anger surrounding the consequences of accountability – accountability designed ostensibly to help reduce gaps and divides in achievement. Third, as educators internalize their own discomfort, they often find sustaining their work to be challenging if not impossible. Fourth, even well-meaning educators simply lack the preparation and authentic experiences needed to connect across difference locally and globally. Teacher preparation programs, for example, appear to seldom promote or facilitate study abroad or otherwise structured experiences that help their candidates engage in necessary counter experiences – but the teacher preparation faculty themselves have also not often had sufficient experiences in more globalized landscapes, save vacations, that would help facilitate their encouragement of engaging difference.

In the end, the CRP as a discourse is frequently articulated by educators in labeling their practice, even though the acts of engagement themselves seem more disconnected from the abstract and liberal ideals of CRP. In other works lacking actions or engaging actions disconnected from a larger vision of what CRP could do, locally and globally to disrupt static achievement for students (Dixson & Fasching-Varner, 2008; Hayes & Juarez, 2012; Fasching-Varner & Dodo-Seriki, 2012; Fasching-Varner, 2006).

Global Challenges to Teacher Education

There exist at least two global challenges to teacher education and preparation, that appear commonplace indifferent to one's location, which intensify the challenge of working toward engaging the ideals of CRP. First there are a number of resistances and fighting over money, prestige, and responsibilities which exist internal to universities and second an over-engagement with market-economies that depend on cheap labor fueled by nationalism, neoliberalism, and xenophobia.

Internal challenges facing universities and university teacher-based preparation programs face could be identified by the acronym A(&)RE: Accreditation & Reduction/Enrollments. Universities worldwide face increasing demands placed from **accreditation** processes. Accreditation, whether internal (university-based), national, or global, often ask teacher preparation units to provide significant amounts of documentation and evidence from all those involved in teacher preparation including the overburdened community partners. During accreditation visits, programs are also asked to arrange and prepare interviews, visits, and documentation catalogues for reviewers. These accreditations are both financially outrageous and intensively time consuming. Accreditation, and the never-ending cycle of preparing for accreditation visits sees escalating professional time away teaching and scholarship and toward an investment in addressing, responding to, and engaging with accreditation processes themselves. The financial investment includes fees to the accrediting body, expenses related to the reviewers themselves including their travel, as well as internal expenses on personnel, document preparation, and other considerations. All told accreditation globally is a multi-billion-dollar enterprise. And while accreditation as a concept, including its requisite intended accountability, is not inherently problematic on its face value, it does require a burden of time, resource, and engagement that detract from the principle enterprise of educating pre-service teachers themselves.

Despite decades of accreditation for teacher preparation, the so-called achievement gap continues to persist in the performance of school aged children, and consequently there are global concerns about the value-added benefit of accreditation.

Reduction of teaching as a profession, and the societal minimization of teachers contributed to challenges in enrollment. Universities face declining enrollments, particularly for students pursuing teaching degrees. University students desiring to pursue teaching are surrounded by discourses that position teaching as a lesser profession and they are pressured to pursue other disciplinary areas for their studies. From the inception of formal schooling and early teacher education programs, the teaching profession has been dogged by its standing as women's work (Grumet, 1981, 1988). The male-engendered historical, political, and economic construct of a deficit model of students and teachers pervades societal perspectives on education (see Grumet, 2010). Using the measuring stick of performance standards, teachers are failing society in their role. Educators need to be "fixed"—deskilled and reskilled (Apple, 1986/2013)—under the supervision of the ruling governments. Students need to be "saved" from the shortcomings of their maternalistic teachers. The sentimentalization of teaching has contributed to the impossible ideology of submissive salvation, while successfully rendering teachers (consequently and specifically women) inadequate for the job (Grumet, 1981). As Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot noted in the late 80s, there is significant pressure placed on female students—who make up a vast majority of students pursuing education—to pursue other professional interests (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1988). Thus, the lower enrollments are not a reflection of demand for teachers – there is in fact a high demand for teachers particularly where marginalized groups of K-12 students are taught. Those demands/needs have not been met by sufficient increases in salary and professional treatment to counterbalance the relatively low supply of teachers which exist. As

university aged students choose other careers to respond to family, peer, and teacher/school, and societal pressure placed on them, combined with a lack of market shift in salary and professionalization of teachers, enrollments in teacher education programs decline.

To address rising pressures from lowering teacher education **enrollment,** programs preparing teachers have become resistant to innovation and change. Where changes are occurring they are largely in modifying delivery approaches to combine populations of teacher candidates. That is while enrollments may be down, class sizes for educator preparation are stable and/or increasing owing to less offerings with combined groups of traditional undergraduate students with students on alternative routes to licensure (ARL) in larger class settings. ARL students come to the setting having had different undergraduate majors combined with both life and career experiences. ARL candidates seek programs with the least demand on their time (accelerated) at the lowest cost, combined with flexibility. These alternative programs are also offered outside of university settings, putting a greater financial strain on institutions of higher education who consequently see fewer new candidates pursuing teaching. This pressure forces unique learning arrangements that do not best tailor to the needs of inherently different pre-service teacher populations.

To save costs, universities across contexts rely on essentially the free, or quite poorly compensated labor of mentor teachers, signaling that the induction phase of a pre-service teacher is likely to be with a teacher for whom this extra responsibility is uncompensated and beyond their already taxing responsibilities to their students, especially in urban and rural settings where marginalized and historically underrepresented youth live.

The second major global challenge is that of neoliberalism which has impacted the global landscape significantly since the 1980s. Neoliberalism is popularly tied to Reagan and Thatcher-era economic models of increased

privatization and market-driven orientations. We see the public sector being sold to private sector for support, funding, and basic level existence. Governments, as the public entity, have expressed and demonstrated a proportionally less financial commitment to the enterprise of education than pre-1980s. Those engaged in the educational reform industrial complex have profited significantly. Private lobbies with powerful connections to governments from both sides of the political spectrum have yielded a significant influence on curricular, financial, and reform-oriented decisions making in public school. Through private financial investment in schools, choices of materials, learning environment access, and even as far as the preparation of teachers themselves have become market-driven through the non-public sector. This corporatization of teacher education within the neoliberal agenda promotes consumerism and capitalism, posing a direct threat to civic freedoms and democratic citizenship (Giroux, 2002). Be it charter-schools, increasing desire for vouchers, public-private partnerships, as well as the educational reform consultants, materials, and producers (like textbook companies) public funding interests for schooling are invested into private for-profit, models, just as they are with nearly every sector of public life. The public purse reduction combined with still significant government regulation on the educational sector itself yields influence over curriculum and testing requirements and establishes many unfunded mandates which solely benefit the private sector.

There should be a recognition, in free-market capitalism, that educational reform over the past 50 years is particularly dependent on mechanisms to sort individuals into determined class groups. The service-based economy relies on portions of society to remain locked out of many of the benefits of formal education. The free-market society depends on laborers and their resultant lack of educational attainment in bolstering the increasing gap between wealthy and poor. The process which sorts individuals has particularly placed marginalized individuals in the role of economic scapegoats, worldwide,

for market elites. And in the past 10 years particularly, political leaders have doused the landscape with a hate-filled fuel, centered on fear and loathing of whole groups of people.

Together intensifying neo-liberal economic policies coupled with the direct targeting of marginalized peoples suggests that as teachers enter the classroom, they not only need to negotiate their 'teacher' decision making, but must conduct that work in a larger social context which is 1) not well funded publicly though outsourced to the market 2) aimed at being unsuccessful to justify the need for the educational reform industrial complex, and 3) crafted in a way that further marginalizes already underrepresented groups. As teacher preparation has less time to prepare teachers, has growing demands on their capacity, and with a proliferation of privatized routes to the classroom, the challenges are insurmountable hurdles for teachers to engage any sound pedagogical approach, much less culturally relevant pedagogical approaches. Retention rates in the profession are historically low with a majority of new teachers unable to persist after five years.

Leaning into and Learning from the Local and Global Challenges

It is clear from the example of CRP that an educational approach can be admired and discussed globally with little or no impact in local contexts. The lack of take up in localized settings is both attributed to and compounded by the neoliberal stranglehold on education. This near death-grip has put teacher education programs in peril in the multitude of ways listed above. Commensurate with critical pedagogies that consider the power structures within education and encourage dialogue towards liberatory action (Freire, 1970/1993), Grumet and Stone (2000) urge that "Without a structure

that engages critique with agency, critique flourishes—without much effect" (p. 194). While combatting global issues at the local levels can feel "hopeless," educators might well reclaim agency by leaning into care, difference, and radical pedagogies of hope.

As Grumet (1981, 1988, 2010) has shown, teaching has been inherently gendered with nurturance being seen as a professional shortcoming. Carol Gilligan (2011) suggests that "An ethics of care is key to human survival and also to the realization of a global society" (Question 9, para. 2). Similarly, Nel Noddings (1984) proposes that care is central to the role of teaching. Employing an ethics of care locally contributes to societal wellbeing. Care is not a measurable outcome of teaching and does not service the neoliberal goals of consumerism within education. For this reason, care ethics and other holistic approaches hold potential to change the existing structures and practices for the overall health of the system. Noddings (2005) urges that:

> We will not find the solution to problems of violence, alienation, ignorance, and unhappiness in increasing our security apparatus, imposing more tests, punishing schools for their failure to produce 100 percent proficiency, or demanding that teachers be knowledgeable in "the subjects they teach." Instead, we must allow teachers and students to interact as whole persons, and we must develop policies that treat the school as a whole community. The future of both our children and our democracy depend on moving in this direction (p. 13)

Holism and holistic frameworks are central to many Indigenous epistemologies where the relational ontologies inform an inherent sense of connectedness within the world (Absolon, 2010, 2016; Archibald, 2008; Battiste, 2000; Bell, 2014; Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 1990; Cajete, 1994; Calliou, 1995; Carriere & Richardson, 2013; Graveline, 1998; Hart, 2002; Hill, 2014; Markides, 2020,

forthcoming; Wenger-Nabigon, 2010). Within these Indigenous frameworks, self is often at the center of concentric circles which expand out to include family, communities, society, and the Universe. As Willie Ermine explains, "In the viewing of the world objectively, Western science has habitually fragmented and measured the external space in an attempt to understand it in all its complexity" while "Aboriginal people found a wholeness that permeated inwardness and that also extended into the outer space. Their fundamental insight was that all existence was connected and that the whole enmeshed the being in its inclusiveness" (Ermine 1995, p. 103). In this way, Indigenous holistic frameworks encompass local and global orientations to life and living. The interconnectivity also implies a responsibility to all beings: human and more-than-human (Abram, 1996). Learning from different worldviews in this instance invites educators to contrast Western and Indigenous ideologies, embracing difference and recognizing challenges as being shared by and enmeshed with the individual and the collective.

In the face of the aforementioned bleak teaching context, circumstances, and challenges, hope can be a scarce commodity in the undervalued teaching profession. To face these challenges, teacher educators need to lead with what Jonathan Lear (2006) calls "radical hope" where courage is tempered by wisdom and hope. Both radical hope and radical pedagogies are needed to attract and keep teachers in the profession. Recognizing that schools are hegemonic institutions that reflects and perpetuates cultural and religious values, power structures, and societal norms, Peter McLaren (1999) asserts that knowledge of the ritualization of schooling, coupled with radical pedagogy, can support more emancipatory practices in schools. hooks (2003, 2010) has spent her career pushing back against the marginalizing and sorting tactics of education.

For educational approaches like CRP to have an impact locally, educators and education programs need to lean into care, difference, and radical hope/pedagogies to address the global crises in formal schooling. As hooks (2003) advocates:

> We need mass-based political movements calling citizens of this nation to uphold democracy and the rights of everyone to be educated, and to work on behalf of ending domination in all its forms—to work for justice, changing our educational system so that schooling is not the site where students are indoctrinated to support imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy or any ideology, but rather where they learn to open their minds, to engage, in rigorous study and to think critically. (p. xiii)

To actualize these much-needed movements on a local and global scale, a sustaining pedagogical framework is needed.

Glocally Sustaining Pedagogical Framework

While educators engage particular contexts that may appear to be highly localized, the larger landscape and system of engagement is one that is always already *glocal,* that is locally situated and globally facing, locally delivered and globally influenced. Glocality, a difrasismo, or blending of two concepts into one may be viewed as "…a dialectical space where new understandings might emerge through the integration of polarities" (Rendón, 2009, p. 68). Glocality as an act of engaging prompts us to not see our challenges or opportunities are particularly reflective of a narrow or isolated occurrence, but as existing in replicated and replicable ways across the globe where we can

be informed by a broader range of international contexts and ideas. With such an understanding we can free ourselves of the idea that answers can only emerge from the local space without deflecting to a sense that the issues are so globally large that they cannot be addressed locally (the it's too broken to fix approach). Glocality asks educators to consider how the global landscape might better inform the local application for practitioners of teacher education over driving decisions in increasingly particularized ways that consider narrow lanes of local necessity (Brodeur, 2004).

Glocality as an approach to connectivity among teacher educators suggests that what are perceived as hyper localized concerns are in fact contextually relevant localized concerns that exist across other localized concerns for global counterparts. In other words what one program feels it uniquely experiences are in fact replications of phenomena that are equally local to others but singularly global in their outcomes. Myerowitz (2005) acknowledges that "all experience is local…[and] the localness of experience is a constant" (p. 21). Glocality contextualizes that understanding with the idea that "...we now increasingly share information with and about people who live in local-ities different from our own [and] we more frequently intercept experiences and messages originally shaped for, and limited to, people in other places" (Meyrowitz, 2005, p. 23). As Barrett & Kurzman (2004) suggest, "the similarity of demands, coordination of mobilization, and clustering of policy outcomes across countries with varying political and cultural conditions" is both locally real and globally relevant (pp. 487–488). The notion of glocality then informing our work here, aligned with Erickson (2002), is that "global phenomena more often than not could be studied in their local expressions...that cultural globalisation was always tantamount to glocalisation…[as] creative fusions of [the] local

and non-local" (pp. 166–167). Resultantly the forces working against the preparation of teachers explored in this entry are multifaceted, locally significant, and globally consistent. A glocalized approach has the ability to better consider that these challenges we all face reflect a more systemic (and one might argue sinister) backdrop to the work we do.

How might teacher preparation use the concept of glocality to inform particular lessons about the interaction between experiences and practice where damaging internal and external forces can be resisted through networks of engagements? Glocality is far more than simply understanding someone else's experience but instead is the call to ask particular questions that force dialogue and engagement that is answered through neither purely global or particularly local lenses. Stepping out of our (dis)comfort zones and into the fully glocalized world has particularly significant implications that should help us understand that pressures created by neoliberalism and neonationalism are not acts of isolation that only one country or place experiences, but are intentionally part of the 'machine' that is the free-market and must be addressed in broader globally informed yet highly localized enactments.

Pre-service teachers, teacher educators, and administrators are encouraged to grapple with the complexity of the changing global educational landscape as a mechanism to apply any particularized pedagogy. Earlier in this entry we outlined challenges to culturally relevant pedagogy and would suggest that to engage in culturally relevant pedagogy you must apply a Glocally sustaining pedagogical framework to the work. In using this type of glocality educators are able to ask questions of themselves whose answers highlight the key roadblocks in engaging any pedagogical approach where there have been little long term outcome differences. GSP framework poses a

series of five guiding question frames (each frame having multiple interconnected reflective questions) which focus educators toward the current realities of teacher preparation to contemplate how they might direct their energies moving forward.

Question Frame 1 – How much teacher education in a variety of context promote such programs breaking away from workload and financial incumbrances related to accreditation which impede the work of preparing teachers? What are the differences between impact and intent of accreditation processes, especially where acts of accreditation appear more like surveillance than engagement relative to the reflective capacity accreditation could generate? What can we learn from resistances to accreditation? Have resistance efforts permeated any structures of teacher preparation: if so what can we learn, and if not why haven't such efforts been successful?

Question Frame 2 - What status and value exists relative to teaching as a profession? How do questions of status influence the human and fiscal resources, assigned to the development of culturally engaged, class conscientious, and pedagogically resilient educators at bot primary, secondary, and tertiary levels? What discourses of teaching and teachers in localized contexts exist? What are other local examples beyond one's individual sets of realities? What common patterns across contexts may exists, and how might those patterns help produce a shift relative to teacher preparation programs inducting teachers to better control teaching narrative/s?

Question Frame 3 - Can we understand the muddying of neoliberal and neo-nationalistic influences on teacher preparation, curricular and broader educational reform, and teachers' satisfaction with the profession? What balances between localized and more globally influenced ways that neonationalism and neoliberalism

impact the work done in teacher preparation exist?

Question Frame 4 - Can teacher preparation address, plan for, and respond to changing times considering implications of glocal trends and patterns? In what ways might teacher educators create engagements to develop lobal consciousness while challenging inherited dominant narratives? How might educators across contexts connect and make sense of the role of multiple contexts that characterize teacher preparation globally?

Question Frame 5 - Considering the complexities between multinational and multicultural forces that source the formation of a global understandings. Even more, how might practitioners prepare their own students to be glocaly engaged when often locally isolated? Particularly, how should practitioners shift from superficial understandings of the global community in their classroom toward the cultivation of meaningful connections across spatial and cultural barriers?

The engagement of these question frames, together, provide a Socratic framework toward glocally sustaining approaches to support any number of pedagogical approaches. Even culturally relevant pedagogy, which has failed to launch in terms of its impact on outcomes would benefit from the broader set of questions being asked here. The frames provided here have the capacity toward more nuanced and responsive practices for teacher educators and classroom teachers informed beyond their own current (limited) realities. Given the current challenges to both teacher preparation generally and toward the enactment of culturally relevant pedagogical approaches the urgency of the questions posed here should not be lost. The call to practice glocality requires nuanced, varied, and critical

reflexivity toward embracing care, difference, and radical hope through global and local lenses with the goal a pedagogy premised on dialogue and relationship building.

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