IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON EDUCATION

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Abstract

A massive spread of education and that of western-oriented norms of learning at all levels in the twentieth century and the consequences of widely available schooling are part of globalization process. With regard to the role of schools, globalization has become a major topic of study, especially in the field of comparative education. The paper addresses the impact of globalization on education and the possible roles to harness the gains of globalization and education.

Given the increasing economic globalization and restructuring in the world political and economic systems, and the requirements for knowledge and information within that system, educational needs (in terms of structure, function, curriculum and approach) at all levels, especially at the tertiary level, have changed. These educational requirements for the workforce of the future are extremely important. However, the systems developed for informal learning, specifically for adult learners to engage in life-long learning, are important as well.

There are significant contrasts between knowledge, education and learning. "Education is generally seen as a formal process of instruction, based on a theory of teaching, to impart formal knowledge (to one or more students)." However, the process of learning can occur, with or without formal institutional education. "Knowledge accumulation and the accumulation of skills for using ICTs will occur increasingly outside the traditional institutions of formal education. Learning in the workplace, and through collaborations that sometimes span the global and at other times involve tightly not local communities with similar interest, will become more commonplace.

However, knowledge should not be limited to a selected few. As the store of knowledge expands throughout the world, all of the world's people should have as much access to it as possible. However, the "formal institutions of education that exist today, and even many of these in the planning stages in developing countries, are becoming less relevant to the requirements of emergent 'knowledge societies*." Clayton (1998) argued that these countries must actively reshape their educational systems in ways that are consistent with their national priorities. However, these national priorities must now take into consideration the fundamental changes occurring in the underlying structures of the global economy and new strategies for achieving competitive national advantage.

Globalization and Role of Education

Globalization is often synonymous with internationalization, referring to the growing interconnectedness and interdependence of people and institutions throughout the world. Although these terms have elements in common, they have taken on technical meanings that distinguish them from each other and from common usage. Internationalization is the less theorized term. Globalization, by contrast has come to denote the

complexities of interconnectedness, and scholars have produced a large body of literature to explain what appear to be ineluctable worldwide influences on local settings and responses to those influences.

A massive spread of education and of western oriented norms of learning at all levels in the twentieth century and the consequences of widely available schooling are a large part of the globalization process. With respect to the role of schools, globalization has become a major topic of study, especially in the field of comparative education, which applies historigraphic and social scientific theories and methods to international issues of education. At this juncture, it is imperative to discuss globalization theory and role of education separately.

Globalization is both a process and a theory. To Robertson (1987) views globalization as an accelerated compression of the contemporary world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a singular entity. Compression makes the world a single place by virtue of the power of a set of globally diffused ideas that render the uniqueness of societal and ethnic identities and traditions irrelevant except within local contexts and in scholarly discourse.

The notion of the world community being transformed into a global village was introduced by (Marshall 1960). Despite its entry into the common lexicon in 1960's, globalization was not recognized as a significant concept until the 1980's when the complexity and multidimensionality of the process began to be examined.

Prior to the 1980's, accounts of globalization focused on a professed tendency of societies to converge in becoming modern. It is a fact that theory of globalization is relatively new, but the process is not. However, it has been observed that what makes globalization unique in contemporary life is the broad reach and multidimensionality of interdependence, reflected initially in the monitored set of relations among nation - states that arose in the wake of World War I. it is a process that before the 1980 was akin to modernization, until modernization as a concept of linear progression from traditional to modernization theory.

The main difficulty with modernization theory was it focuses on changes within societies or nation and comparisons between them with western societies as their main reference points to the neglect of the interconnectedness among them, and indeed, their interdependence and the role played by non western countries in the development of the West.

On the other hand, the school is the major formal agency for conveying knowledge and it features prominently in the process and theory of globalization. Early examples of educational globalization include the spread of global religious especially Islam and Christianity and colonialism which often disrupted and displaced indigenous forms of schooling throughout much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Postcolonial globalizing influences of education have taken on more subtle shapes. In contributing his quota, Jarvis (2000) opined that in globalization, it is not simply the ties of economic exchange and political agreement that bind nations and societies, but also the shared consciousness of being part of a global system. That consciousness is conveyed through ever larger transnational movements of people and an array of different media, but most systematically through formal education. The inexorable transformation of consciousness

brought on by globalization alters the content and contours of education, as schools take on an increasingly important role in the process. The role of education was affected as a result of structural adjustment policies. With respect to education, structural adjustment policies ostensibly reduce public bureaucracies that impede the delivery of more and better education. By reducing wasteful expenditures and increasing responsiveness to demand these policies promote schooling more efficiently (Samoff 1994).

A policy of using schools as part of the democratization process often accompanies structural adjustment measures. Expansion of school civics programme, could for example, draw energy and resources away from active engagement in political affairs by youths whether within or outside of schools. Increased privatization of education in the name of capitalist democratization could invite greater participation of corporate entities, with the prospect of commercializing schools and reducing their service of public interest.

It was noticed by (Woodhouse 1987) that by mid-twentieth century, missionaries and colonialism had brought core western ideas and practices to many parts of the world. With contemporary globalization, penetration of the world periphery by measures of education had been accomplished mainly in other ways, especially as contingent on structural adjustment and democratization projects.

From the above analysis, it can be inferred that schools perform as a filter to sanitize reality, but their effectiveness is differential, their capacity to filter is larger, the farther they move out into they periphery.

Globalization, Education and Learning

The role of knowledge within the economy is leading to a whole range of new industries and new developments in biotechnology, new^ materials science, informatics, computer science, etc. Within this new framework for knowledge, education and learning, there are at least ten components that should be included and/or enhanced. Each of these components is explained below (Williams 2001);

A Focus on Abstract Concepts

Some of the challenges for knowledge, education and learning in this period will be ability for today's learners to be more familiar and comfortable with abstract concepts and uncertain situations. Much of the academic environment today, presents students with ready-made problems and then asks them to solve them. The reality of the rapid-fire global economy, based on information and knowledge is that problems are rarely that clearly defined. It requires those seeking valuable employment to seek out problems, gather the necessary information, and make decisions and choices based on complex uncertain realities.

Uses a Holistic, as Opposed to Discrete Approach

Much of the education and learning environment today is divided into very rigid academic disciplines, focused in discrete units of research. However, the emerging Information Society and global economy requires a holistic understanding of systems thinking, including the world system and business eco-systems. Thus inter-disciplinary research approaches are seen as critical to achieving a more comprehensive understanding of the complex reality currently facing the world system.

Enhances the Student's Ability to Manipulate Symbols

Symbols are highly abstracted manifestations of some concrete form of reality. Highly productive employment in today's economy will require the learner to constantly manipulate symbols, such as political, legal and business terms and concepts (such as intellectual property rights), and digital money (in financial systems and

accounting concepts). These "symbolic analysts", as Robert Reich calls them, are in high demand.

Enhances the Student's Ability to Acquire and Utilize Knowledge

In the past, academic practitioners often saw themselves as wise "sages on the stage" delivery data, information, knowledge and wisdom to the eagerly awaiting students, whose minds were empty vessels waiting to be filled. However, if that reality were ever true, the world's store of knowledge is increasing at such a monumental rate, that no single person can hope to adequately convey as comprehensive an understanding of a subject as is possible, or as could be absorbed by most students. The Global Information Infrastructure Commission (GIIC), an international, independent nongovernmental private sector organization argues that:

The globalization of the economy and its concomitant demands on the workforce requires a different education that enhances the ability of learners to access, assess, adopt, and apply knowledge, to think independently to exercise appropriate judgment and to collaborate with others to make sense of new situations. The objective of education is no longer simply to convey a body of knowledge, but to teach how to learn, solve problem and synthesize the old with the new.

There are a range of new technologies and new techniques engendered by the Information Revolution that allow for the production of new knowledge and the dissemination of data, information and knowledge. Some of these technologies include the Internet, World Wide Web, CD-ROM, printed matters, audio, video and other electronic media forms. These new technologies allow for academic practitioners to move from being "sages on the stage" into the role of the "guide on the side" and assist students in gaining the skills and abilities required to acquire and utilize knowledge contained in various forms around the world.

Produces an Increased Quantity of Scientifically and Technically Trained Person

The emerging economy is based on knowledge as a key factor of production, perhaps a factor more important than any other traditional factors of production. The kinds of industries emerging in the age of globalization -such as biotechnology, new materials science, human genetics, advanced computing, artificial intelligence and human/computer interfaces - demand that employees remain highly trained in science and technology. Research and development is a critical component, and many countries are trying to develop National Systems of Innovation (NSIs) that attempt to harness the combined resources of its academic institutions with the research enterprises within the public and private sectors. In these countries, universities will have to quickly adapt to the needs and provide a key component of such national systems.

Blurs the Distinction Between Mental and Physical Labour

The Fordist-Taylorist development model made strict separations between mental and physical labour. However, the new innovation-mediated paradigm requires a much more holistic approach to the business enterprises and valorizes the intellectual; contributions of all employees. In fact, most observers would find it very difficult to make concrete distinctions between many Information Age-oriented manufacturing facilities and computer laboratories.

Encourages Students to Work in Teams

Closely related to the last point, is the need for employees in globalized enterprises to be able to work closely in teams. Working in teams requires students to develop skills in group dynamics, compromise, debate, persuasion, organization, leadership and management skills. Most academic institutions and programmes are set up to do the opposite, to force students to think only of themselves and their own personal

development, perhaps with some very limited group work.

Uses Virtual Teams Around the World

Again, closely related to the last point, is the need for enhanced virtual and networked activity. Not only should students learn to work in teams; but also they should learn to work in global networked teams. These global virtual teams are being used increasingly in industry and international organizations for R&D activities. Chris Dede argues that "Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) enhances team performance through tools for communicating each person's ideas, structuring group dialogue and decision making, recording the rationales for choices, and facilitating collective activities".

Is an Agile and Flexible System

As command and control systems disintegrate around the world, academic institutions must become less rigid and more flexible in their attempt to meet the varied needs of learners and the global economy. This includes variety in time, place, approach and curriculum offerings. As new issues and industries emerge within the global economy, academic course offerings should be adapted to reflect these new knowledge, education and learning requirements.

Break the Boundaries of Space and Time

Using advanced information and communications technologies, a new system of knowledge, education and learning should apply wide range of synchronous and asynchronous activities that aid the professor and student in breaking the boundaries of space and time. Synchronous activities can include real-time lectures (featuring audio, presentations, web sites, and even video), quizzes and group discussions; all of which can occur with the instructor being at the same location or even a different locations from the learner. Asynchronous activities can include lectures (in audio and video) and other archived course material that can be accessed at nearly anytime, anyplace.

Conclusion

Globalization is a favourite catch-phrase of journalists and politicians. It has also become a key idea for business theory and practice, entered academic debates and become a focus for discussion in education. But what people mean by globalization is often confused. This paper therefore tries to examine some key themes in the theory and experience of globalization as a background to exploring the impact on education.

Recommendations

Based on the discussion on globalization and education, it is pertinent to recommend the following:

The schools worldwide should help students to manipulate symbols. Globally, financial systems and accounting concepts make use of symbols and are of high demand. Secondly, students should be helped to acquire and utilize knowledge. This is because globalization of the economy and its concomitant demands on the workforce requires a different education that enhances the ability of learners to access, assess, adopt and apply knowledge to think independently to exercise appropriate judgment and to collaborate with others to make sense of new situations.

The new technologies such as the internet, World Wide Web, CD-ROM, and printed matters, audio, video and other electronic media assist students in gaining the skills and abilities required to acquire and utilize knowledge contained in various form around the world.

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