

Module 3

Globalization within Curriculum Studies

Introduction

Globalizing Discourse: Curriculum, Language, and Culture

When the notions of the global and the local are both problematized and become fluid, the relationship between the global and the local is no longer perceived as a connection between two static entities, but becomes an intertwined multilayered, and moving relationship to form a network of complex links.

(Wang, 2006, np)

Interestingly and ironically, what unites the environmental community arguing for regional ecology and the mining community for economic development is the word ‘sustainability’.

(Jickling and Wals, 2008, p. 14)

The term “globalization” and its respective material reality can be taken up as either a productive or destructive force. In Canada, the current exploitation of the [Alberta Tar Sands](#) as a beautiful destruction comes to mind here. For this module of study I put forth readings in order to complicate our historical and present understandings of the term "globalization" within the international field of curriculum studies. In response, Vanessa and Catherine both articulated the possibilities and limitations of curriculum movements in the name of “globalization.” Moreover they drew upon the readings to infer and provide analyses of the potential implications globalization as a (social, political, economic, environmental, curricular, etc.) movement has for curriculum development and implementation here in Canada or abroad.

Jickling and Wals (2008) challenge us to consider the various ways the concept of “sustainable development” has been taken up historically and presently by different organizations (multinational corporations, NGOs, international agencies, schools, etc.). “The emergence of socially responsible corporations,” Jickling and Wals tell us, “is fuelled by a demand for kinder and gentler companies that are in tune with people, planet, and profit (the so-called “Triple-P” bottom line)” (p. 2). Here, the marketing [sustainability campaign](#) of BP after the Gulf Spill comes to mind. For another interpretation of their campaign see following YouTube clip titled [Bringing People Together](#). Catherine, also troubles the various ways in which the concept of “sustainable development” is taken up through her engagement with Dr. Seuss’s famous book [The Lorax](#).

She tells us,

Years following the release of *The Lorax*, it was met with resistance and controversy in several logging communities of the United States. These communities felt that the story did not shed positive light on their industry. Instead this story was, according to these communities, sending a strong “anti-forestry” message to children. Consequently, these logging communities attempted to have this book banned from local school libraries and reading lists. But, this proved to be a more difficult task. Nonetheless, several members of the logging community also created a follow-up story called *The Truax*. In its plot a logging representative outlines the positive efforts

within the logging industry to re-plant and increase their efficiency while arguing against an environmentalist like *The Lorax* (Fenkl, 2001). The controversy over the message portrayed in *The Lorax* highlights the curricular tensions surrounding what children should be learning in schools about the environment.

Here Catherine demonstrates the discursive wars around the concept of “sustainable development.” Consequently the way in which this concept is situated within a curriculum policy document, as one example, can shape the way both teachers and students in turn take it up in relation to their understandings of how humans impact the environment. How might we take up our responsibilities for such impacts that go beyond say for example British Petroleum’s interpretations of “sustainable development”? Catherine highlights, the power multinational corporations have in terms of shaping narratives (a curriculum) of “truth” as a narrative of “Truax.” Whereas Dr. Seuss’s narrative is relegated to one of “folk/lore” put forth by a “Lor/ax.” Therefore the ways in which we each take up the concept of “sustainable development” depends in turn on how each of us situate our interpretations of other concepts like “curriculum,” “language,” and “culture.” Our pedagogical translations of such “curricular taking up” rely in turn on “whose,” and “what knowledges,” we deem “of most worth.”

Regardless of our epistemological positioning (the way each of us think we know the world) on concepts like globalization, sustainable development, and curriculum, our study of an internationalization of curriculum, as Catherine suggests, “should not be about homogenizing curriculum but rather about incorporating different (and alternative) views on” such curricular issues. Moreover, how might we begin to challenge the regimes of curricular discourse that work to transmit knowledge rather than invite teachers and students to actively transform it in participatory, creative, and productive ways.

Here Vanessa takes up the texture tensions of such local and global transformations within the contexts of internationalizing curriculum studies. “Personally,” she stresses,

...I feel like I am already years behind my younger sister’s comprehension of technology and social networking on the Internet (such as Facebook and Twitter). In order for curriculum studies to adapt to all of these changes, Wagner (2004) explains that globalization is a condition of our time that urgently needs to be addressed by acknowledging and understanding the diverse forces at play, including the economic forces (market), the cultural forces (community), and the political forces (hierarchy) (as quoted by Wang, 2006, p. 2). More importantly, we, as individuals, need to participate in these global processes rather than step back from them. Of course, the critique of globalization in order to understand it and implement change is necessary, but as Carson (2009) states, “critique will not provide the way forward” (p. 157).

Vanessa stresses the implication globalization has on our “personal” lives and the lives of the students we teach. Moreover, how might we take up the impacts of global forces on our professional lives as administrators, teachers, and students that does not create and/or reinforce false dichotomies among “the personal,” “professional,” and “political.” “Globalization, market, technology, and neo-liberalism,” Vanessa continues, “are all important constructs that influence the internationalization of curriculum studies, as well as our own individual and personal lives within these systems.” Wang asks us to consider the concept of “indigenization” in relation to such constructs.

Here, “indigenization does not mean a simple return to one’s own tradition,” Wang (2006)

stresses, but rather “the transformation of traditions as a result of self-critique and conversing with other traditions” (n.p.). Wang’s article asks us to draw upon the creative processes of curriculum theorizing in order to situate a self-critique if you will, whether it is personal or professional, of our lived experiences with the external and internal forces of globalization. Following up on Wang’s questions then: What does indigenization mean for Canadian curriculum studies? Where are the locations for potentiality, alterity, and new possibilities? Vanessa discusses these questions in part, by taking up the concepts of “digital immigrants” and “digital natives.” With access to the Internet, students can now participate in a globalized social network through sites like Facebook, Ning.com, My Space, etc. “Online courses and the use of technology as a learning tool in the classroom,” Vanessa reminds us, “are examples of how curriculum studies are shifting to accommodate an increasingly globalized world.” Moreover Vanessa’s personal reality provides an example of such globalized digital social networking. She continues to correspond with us from the Netherlands.

And yet this digital space, at least for me, is not freed from conflicts but remains filled ambiguity, paradoxes, and complexity (Wang, 2006). I continue to try and negotiate the impacts of globalization on my curricular designs for this course as well as the ways in which we can negotiate our online pedagogical encounters with in creative and productive ways that can perhaps “sustain” and complicate our online conversations. Moreover, I wonder how we might conceptualize this online course as a “third space?” How might reconceptualizing and/or conceptualizing this online course as “third space” help us to rethink concepts like globalization, curriculum-as-planned, -implemented, and -lived when taking up our conversation in modules 4 and 5? I look forward to reading your negotiated responses in relation to internal and external globalized forces within the contexts of an internationalization of curriculum studies and its respective discursive regimes.

Objectives

By the end of this module students will be able to:

- Complicate historical and present understandings of the term "Globalization" within the international field of Curriculum Studies;
- Articulate the possibilities and limitations of curriculum movements in the name of "globalization";
- Begin to illustrate an understanding of the curriculum theories that inform the authors analysis of the concept; and
- Infer from the readings the potential implications globalization as a (social, political, economic, environmental, curricular, etc.) movement has for teachers here in Canada or abroad.

Activities



1) Read

Read the two required readings. If you have time, read the optional reading.

Required Readings:

Jickling, B. & Wals, A. (2008). [Globalization and Environmental Education: Looking Beyond Sustainable Development](#). *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 40 (1), pp. 1-21.

LaSpina, A. (2003). [Designing Diversity: Globalization, textbooks, and the stories of nations](#). *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 35 (6), pp. 667-696.

Optional Readings:

Wang, H. (2006, Feb). [Globalization and Curriculum Studies: Tensions, Challenges, and Possibilities](#). *Journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies*, 2.

2) Watch one of the following videos:

[Naomi Klein: Addicted to risk](#)

[Charles Leadbeater: Education innovation in the slums](#)

3) Discussion

Be prepared to draw on the readings to discuss your interpretations of the authors' main arguments in relation to your peers' reader responses. If you have time view the films *Refuge of the Deep* *Blue Planets* (if you can get a copy); or share a film that takes up the topic with us. A nice strategy would be to do the readings, and then utilize them to analyze the themes (curriculum) put forth in the film. Also think about films that you might use to teach in a classroom, at the institution you work at if you are not in education, at a community function, or that you might recommend to us for future use.