

Chapter 17

Postcolonial and post-critical 'global citizenship education'

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The relatively recent rise in the popularity of global citizenship education can be interpreted as a response to a major social crisis and the perceived failures of education to address the complexities of globalization, and to fulfil the project of human rights, freedom, democracy and global justice that could be a response to the crisis itself (Todd, 2009). On the other hand, if global citizenship education is shaped by the forces and ways of thinking that have framed traditional accounts of education in the first place, we are bound to have more of the same kind of failures. Therefore, in this chapter I argue that, in order to move beyond our current limitations and to fully engage with the complexities, diversities, uncertainties and inequalities of globalization, educators need other lenses and other ways of knowing, being and relating available to them.

Hence, this chapter offers a conceptual framework for thinking about pedagogy that is grounded on what has been called the 'discursive turn' in the social sciences, which gives rise to the traditions of the 'post-', namely postmodernism, postcolonialism and poststructuralism. I do not propose that educators should *adopt* any of these lenses. What I do propose is that we raise our professional game: that we lift the profile of education by increasing the levels of intellectual engagement and autonomy in the profession. My argument is that, if we are serious about engaging with globalization or the social crisis we are embedded in, we need more lenses available to make better-informed choices of what to do in the complex and diverse settings in which we work.

In the introduction of this chapter, I provide my working definitions of concepts that are central to this text. I also situate my interpretations of these terms in relation to my own background. I then present a very brief account of the 'discursive turn' in the social sciences and the 'post-' traditions. It is important to highlight the fact that this brief account is written for a pedagogical purpose and to inspire educators to engage in this debate. In this sense, it will grossly oversimplify a complex discussion that has been happening for over forty years, and this requires a commitment from the readers to take that into account. Next, I offer a brief analysis of recent literature related to

education in the 'twenty-first century' and the implications of two different interpretations of 'post-' (i.e. as 'after', or as 'questioning'). In the last part of this chapter, I analyse the implications of these discussions in my current thinking and practices in education. I offer a glimpse of what a postcolonial and post-critical global citizenship education could look like.

Introduction

My definition of 'global citizenship' is one that privileges 'reciprocal and transformative encounters with strangers' (Anderson, 1998, p. 269) beyond geographical, ideological, linguistic, or other representational boundaries. These encounters are framed around radical appeals to openness, to difference and to the negotiation of meaning, rather than around normative appeals to notions of impartial reasoning or ideas of democracy, freedom, rights and justice that are presented as universal (Todd, 2009). This kind of 'critical' global citizenship is highly sceptical of normative projects grounded on views of progress, humanity or knowledge that conveniently 'forget' that other people may have very different and perfectly logical interpretations of these concepts. My working understanding of global citizenship *education* is that it should equip people to live together in collaborative, but un-coercive ways, in contemporary societies. This requires an acknowledgement that contemporary societies are complex, diverse, changing, uncertain and deeply unequal. I believe the role of global citizenship education is one of decolonization: to provide analyses of how these inequalities came to exist, and tools to negotiate a future that could be 'otherwise'. Rather than providing a normative and universal vision for a more just world, I see my role as an educator as one that enables the emergence of ethical, responsible and responsive ways of seeing, knowing and relating to others 'in context', as an ongoing project of agonistic co-authorship and co-ownership.

These definitions are grounded in a discursive orientation that is directly related to my background and cultural positioning. This positioning is shaped by a number of factors related to my history and learning journey. Important factors in this history or journey include: my upbringing in the 1970s and 1980s in a mixed-heritage family of indigenous ancestry in a transition period from dictatorship to representational democracy in Brazil; my work as a teacher in schools in Brazil in the early 1990s; the challenges of North-South relations I faced when working for the British Council and the World Bank in the late 1990s; the search for my indigenous identity and work on social justice issues with the World Social Forum; my position as a non-white, female academic from the 'Third World' working in the 'First'; and, as well, my experience as a migrant and as a mother of migrant children in England and in New Zealand.

My teaching ethic in global education is profoundly committed to addressing North–South inequalities in terms of power relations and the distribution of wealth and labour in the global context. Given my background and the challenges I face every day in relation to how I am positioned, I am particularly interested in the impact of cultural beliefs in the worth attributed to social groups and individuals and in the role of colonialism in constructing assumptions of ‘Western’ cultural supremacy. In this sense, I have engaged with the literature around critical pedagogy, and Marxist and feminist theories. Such theories have been extremely useful in providing valuable tools of analysis that helped me understand some of the historical aspects that have shaped current inequalities. However, they have also failed to address some of the issues I face in my professional and personal experiences today. The attention to complexity, critique and emerging forms of identity construction and relationality in the traditions of the ‘post-’ have provided a very useful focus that has had a substantial impact in my thinking for the past ten years. This focus is explored in more detail in the next section of this chapter.

The discursive turn and the ‘post-’ traditions

The ‘discursive turn’ in philosophy and social sciences is characterized by an emphasis on the ideological nature of language and its role in social praxis, including the social–historical construction of social realities and identities. This focus on the creation of meaning highlights that ‘the relationships between words and the world are not neutral, but deeply ideological’ (Weatherall, 2002, p. 147). In other words, the discursive turn proposes that the correlation between language and reality is not one where language ‘describes’ reality, but one where languages construct (different) realities. The implication is that ‘society is, or should be, constituted by a plurality of discourses, none of which can claim overriding legitimacy in the manner that the “grand narratives” of progress and emancipation did for modernity’ (Angus, 1998, para. 4).

In order to illustrate this point, I will use an example from education. Consider the definition of the role of education that I presented in my introduction: ‘education should equip learners to participate together in a globalized world’. Each word in this phrase can be interpreted differently in different contexts. These interpretations will depend on shared cultural assumptions of what counts as real or ideal and what counts as knowledge. As an illustration, I will provide a double interpretation of the words: ‘globalized world’, ‘participate’ and ‘equip’.

From a perspective grounded in a universalist representation of modernism, the interpretation of the phrase ‘globalized world’ could be based on a metaphor of an engineered machine. This would evoke ideas of order,

control, stability, and predictability, based on an understanding of progress associated with consensus around a universal ideal for a harmonious future. The word 'participate' could be based on a metaphor of compliance with this definition of order and progress associated with the reproduction of received knowledge and the acceptance of existing structures and 'normal' ways of being, knowing and seeing. Following this logic, 'equipping learners' could mean inculcating values, and transmitting content and skills that would enable learners to conform to the predetermined idea of society described above.

From a different logic that could be framed as postmodern, the phrase 'globalized world' could evoke the metaphor of an organic system or of a network where the world is complex and always changing with interdependent but also autonomous parts that negotiate interchanges. This system or network cannot be engineered or controlled in its totality as it 'learns as it goes' with its multiple meanings, interpretation and interchanges 'in context'. The word 'participate' could then be related to the idea of being able to perform in such system or network: to negotiate meaning or carry out interchanges within and between different parts or communities, to generate new knowledge, to 'learn as you go along', in context. The word 'equip' could be related to creating spaces to enable learners to become competent in engaging with the complexity, uncertainty and diversity of the system.

The discursive turn in the social sciences is not necessarily represented in the second perspective, but in the ability to trace different interpretations of words to socially and historically constructed and culturally located 'meta-narratives', or stories that offer grand explanations of history or knowledge. These meta-narratives serve as the basis for how we construct meaning and how we justify our actions. Therefore, my illustration of the different meanings of the words 'globalized world', 'participate' and 'equip' perform the understanding of language that characterizes the discursive turn: language as unstable, contingent, dynamic and socially negotiated. From this perspective, language does not describe reality, as is commonly thought; it creates or constructs reality.

The implication is that when we name something we are choosing one possible story rather than a 'universal truth'. This does not mean that reality does not exist, but that our experiences of it will always be mediated by language and that language is always unstable – it cannot be pinned down – as meaning is always attributed in context, depending on other meanings that have been attributed before. Therefore, our stories of reality, our knowledges, are always situated (they are culturally bound), partial (what one sees may not be what another sees), contingent (context-dependent) and provisional (they change).

This linguistic – or discursive – insight can be framed as a response to and coming from within the modern/Enlightenment meta-narrative itself.

However, it can also be traced to many of the cultures that have been deemed inferior in the (neo)colonial order, especially oral and monist traditions. In academia, the discursive turn has given rise to many interesting discussions and new academic traditions known as the 'post-' traditions.

The 'post-' traditions

The 'post-' traditions are orientations that emerge in the application of the insights of the discursive turn in different contexts. There are numerous 'post-' orientations (e.g. post-positivism, postnativism, postfeminism, posthumanism, and so on), but in this chapter I will focus on the key traditions of postmodernism, postcolonialism and poststructuralism. The 'post-' in these conceptualizations is usually defined in terms of 'interrogations' of taken-for-granted assumptions in the areas they are applied; however, some people interpret the 'post-' as 'after'. I will return to this crucial difference of interpretation in the next section.

Different authors represent postmodernism, poststructuralism and postcolonialism differently. Prasad (2005) maps the origins and influences of these three orientations in terms of four broader traditions of critique that are located within the modernity/Enlightenment meta-narrative itself: artistic and literary modernism; anti-Enlightenment discourses; critiques of colonialism; semiotics and structuralism; and Marxism and critical theories (see Figure 17.1).

Prasad's map may help us to put the orientations in context and to identify

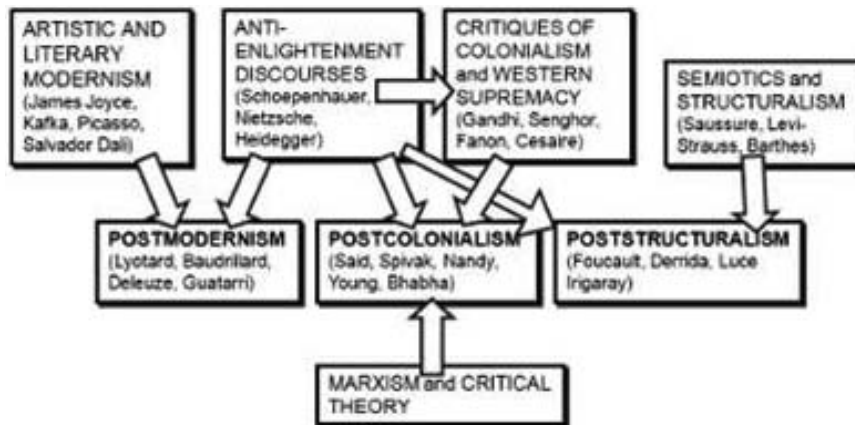


Figure 17.1 Prasad's (2005, p. 214) mapping of key elements of the 'post-' traditions

the influences they share in common (i.e. anti-Enlightenment discourses), their specific influences, and their specific practical focus. Postmodernism, for example, is defined by Prasad as an orientation that emerges in the area of art, literature and architecture. Therefore, its main preoccupation can be represented in the interrogation of the artistic, aesthetic or literary canon. It proposes the use of collage, appropriation and *bricolage*, among other strategies, to subvert the universalizing tendencies of the modernity/Enlightenment meta-narrative, especially concepts related to artistic genius.

Poststructuralism emerges in the field of linguistics and focuses on interrogating the role of language, especially the relationship between 'signifiers' and 'the signified', and the power/knowledge connection in the construction of subjectivities/identities that are disciplined into a 'norm' that privileges one side of a binary at the expense of another. It proposes 'deconstruction' as a strategy of resistance to destabilize these normative hierarchies, such as: heteronormativity (the idea that man/woman relationships are the norm and that same-sex relationships are abnormal), ableism (the idea that able bodies are 'normal' and other bodies are 'abnormal') or anthropocentrism (the idea that humans should be considered the centre of reality at the expense of other forms of life).

Postcolonialism emerges in the field of anti-colonial struggles and literatures. Its main preoccupation is the epistemic violence of colonialism and the interrogation of European cultural supremacy in the subjugation of different peoples and knowledges in colonial and neocolonial contexts. It borrows the poststructuralist tool of deconstruction to destabilize Western/European/White supremacy and it appropriates tools from Marxism and critical theory to make explicit the connection between assumptions of cultural supremacy and the unequal distribution of wealth and labour in the world. It highlights the flow of capital and resources from the 'Third' to the 'First' worlds, while the flow of expert knowledge, interventions packages and rights-dispensing initiatives (based on the interests of the donor countries) take the opposite direction. One strand of postcolonial theory proposes hyper-self-reflexivity as a strategy that acknowledges everyone's complicities and investments in coercive and repressive belief systems. It does so in order to imagine a way of relating to each other that can be 'otherwise'. Other strands focus on reviving and protecting voices that have historically been subjugated by colonial violence.

In the next section of this chapter, I will explore why the traditions of the 'post-' may offer renewed lenses and analytical tools for educators to engage with critically and negotiate reforms that call for more relevance and accountability in 'twenty-first century' educational contexts.

Why is this important for education right now?

The new thinking that has emerged in recent educational literature related to 'education in the twenty-first century' emphasizes that globalization and information technology have had a profound impact on the way knowledge, learning and identities are conceptualized in recent times (see for example, Richard and Usher, 1994; Cope and Kalantzis, 2000; OECD, 2000; Gee, 2003; Hargreaves, 2003; Lankshear and Knobel, 2003; UNESCO, 2005; Gilbert, 2005; Claxton, 2008; Andreotti and de Souza, 2008a). Three arguments are central to this literature. First, that the profile of learners has changed and that teaching twenty-first century students requires practitioners to perceive knowledge, learning and education in ways that are different from the ways knowledge, learning and education were perceived in the twentieth century, when most current practitioners were brought up and trained. Second, that for this change of perception of knowledge, learning and education to happen it will not be enough for practitioners to shift the ways they behave or do things, or even the ways they think – they will need to shift the ways they 'know' (i.e. an 'epistemological shift') and the ways they 'see' (i.e. an 'ontological shift'). These will also prompt a shift of perceptions and relationships that has an impact on all other areas, including the ways practitioners perceive their disciplines, themselves and their students (Gilbert, 2005; Gee, 2003; Richard and Usher, 1994; Cope and Kalantzis, 2000). Third, that these epistemological and ontological shifts involve knowledge about knowledge construction itself and the conceptual or theoretical underpinnings of current knowledge and future possibilities. (Trilling and Hood, 2001; Gilbert, 2005; Andreotti and Souza, 2008a). In summary, these arguments present a conceptualization of knowledge, learning, reality and identities as socially constructed, fluid, open to negotiation and always provisional. This epistemological shift is often conceptualized in terms of a shift from 'twentieth' to 'twenty-first century' ways of seeing knowledge, learning and identities.

However, these conceptualizations and changes that apparently borrow from the traditions presented in the last section, if driven by an economic (neoliberal) argument present a very different picture from what is proposed in section two. The neoliberal argument is still based on a teleological and seamless understanding of progress that conceptualizes the twentieth century as modernity and the twenty-first century as postmodernity. However, the prefix 'post-' in this argument is conceptualized as 'after' rather than 'interrogation', as per the orientations in the last section. This understanding of postmodernity claims that education should change to produce the right subjectivities for a new universal economic order. In other words education, which is understood solely as subordinate to the economy, should change to adapt to a new economic order. Educators are called to leave their 'twentieth-century' way of being (subjectivity), knowing (epistemology) and teaching

(pedagogy) behind, as these ways are based on the needs of industrial economies that operate through a logic of production and scale that is no longer relevant in post-industrialized nations. In order to contribute to the maintenance or improvement of their country's economic advantage, educators are called to adopt 'twenty-first century' subjectivities, pedagogies and epistemologies that are more malleable in the constant shifts and uncertainty of economies of service and scope, where the focus is on the production of new products, new markets, new identities and new patterns of consumption. The new 'global world order' central to this new meta-narrative is one where 'world class excellence' in education is about the production of cosmopolitan subjects that will respond to the authority of the global market (Soudien, 2009).

The 'post-' orientations described in section two, different from the neoliberal orientation that dominates the literature, emphasize the need and provide the conceptual tools for a reconceptualization of knowledge, learning, progress and identities away from traditional universalist ideas that tend to read difference as deficit. They have the potential to help educators pluralize epistemologies and possibilities for thinking and practice and to renegotiate power relations on non-coercive grounds. In this sense, it offers educators the opportunity to shape change rather than adapt to it. From this perspective, a transformative, rather than a reformative, agenda of teacher education is required. This agenda should be grounded on a profile of educators who are critical and independent thinkers, who have a high degree of professional autonomy and who are intellectually confident about engaging with complexity, uncertainty and multiple theoretical approaches. The rationale for this professional profile is that, in educating diverse learners in contemporary societies, practitioners need to be equipped to make informed choices, negotiate with others and justify their decisions in complex educational environments where a number of different variables and perspectives need to be considered.

What does this look like 'in practice' in terms of education?

In this last section I will present examples of the implications of a postcolonial orientation to education and specifically to global citizenship education that relates to the profile of autonomous and intellectually equipped educators described in section three. This orientation would place an understanding of globalization, its effects and how to negotiate them, at the centre of the curriculum for teacher education. This orientation is based on the argument that, without a deep understanding of the complexity, interdependence and inequalities in local or global processes and contexts today, educators in all areas are poorly equipped to design and implement educational interventions

that will be relevant for contemporary societies and meaningful for their learners. On the other hand, this statement also underscores the fact that, for education to be effective in contemporary educational contexts, it also needs to take account of the shifts in the profile of learners and the understanding of knowledge, learning, culture and identity happening as a result of globalization. This means that, in terms of meeting the needs of 'twenty-first learners', education needs to be designed in ways that acknowledges complexity, contingency (context-dependency), multiple and partial perspectives and unequal power relations. One way of addressing this demand is through the incorporation of critical literacy within a discursive orientation in professional education for a 'postcolonial/post-critical global citizenship education'.

From this perspective, a postcolonial or post-critical global citizenship education would equip learners to engage in dialogue, to see difference as a source of learning and not as a threat and to engage critically with local or global issues. This implies a move away from education that promotes the message 'think as I do and do as I say, there is only one right answer that can be used in all contexts', towards the message 'answers are context dependent: you will need to decide for yourself in ethical and accountable ways and take responsibility for the effects of your actions'.

This postcolonial or post-critical global citizenship education should equip learners:

- to engage with complex local or global processes and diverse perspectives: to face humanity (warts and all) and not feel overwhelmed;
- to examine the origins and implications of their own and other people's assumptions;
- to negotiate change, to transform relationships, to dream different dreams, to confront fears and to make ethical choices about their own lives and how they affect the lives of others by analysing and using power and privilege in ethical and accountable ways;
- to live with and learn from difference and conflict and to know how to prevent conflict from escalating into aggression and violence;
- to cherish life's unsolved questions and to sit comfortably in the discomfort and uncertainty that it creates;
- to establish ethical relationships across linguistic, regional, ideological and representational boundaries (i.e. to be open to the Other) and to negotiate principles and values 'in context'; and
- to enjoy their open and uncertain individual and collective learning journeys.

If teachers and students who are engaging in this kind of global citizenship education have been cognitively shaped by Enlightenment ideals and have an emotional investment in universalism (i.e. the projection of their ideas as what everyone else should believe), stability (i.e. avoidance of conflict and

complexity), consensus (i.e. the elimination of difference) and fixed identities organized in hierarchical ways (e.g. us, who know, versus 'them' who don't know), then a postcolonial orientation would also suggest four types of learning. These are: learning to unlearn, learning to listen, learning to learn and learning to reach out. The definition of each type of learning is reproduced below from the project 'Through Other Eyes' (2008).

Learning to unlearn is defined as learning to perceive that what we consider 'good and ideal' is only one perspective and this perspective is related to where we come from socially, historically and culturally. It also involves perceiving that we carry a 'cultural baggage' filled with ideas and concepts produced in our contexts and that this affects who we are and what we see and that although we are different from others in our own contexts, we share much in common with them. Thus, learning to unlearn is about making the connections between social-historical processes and encounters that have shaped our contexts and cultures and the construction of our knowledges and identities. It is also about becoming aware that all social groups contain internal differences and conflicts and that culture is a dynamic and conflictual production of meaning in a specific context.

Learning to listen is defined as learning to recognize the effects and limits of our perspective, and to be receptive to new understandings of the world. It involves learning to perceive how our ability to engage with and relate to difference is affected by our cultural 'baggage' – the ideas we learn from our social groups. Hence, learning to listen is about learning to keep our perceptions constantly under scrutiny, tracing the origins and implications of our assumptions, in order to open up to different possibilities of understanding and becoming aware that our interpretations of what we hear, or see, say more about ourselves than about what is actually being said or shown. This process also involves understanding how identities are constructed in the process of interaction between self and other. This interaction between self and other occurs not only in the communities in which we belong, but also between these communities and others.

Learning to learn is defined as learning to receive new perspectives, to rearrange and expand our own and to deepen our understanding – going into the uncomfortable space of 'what we do not know we do not know'. It involves creating different possibilities of reasoning, engaging with different 'logics', trying to see through other eyes by transforming our own eyes and avoiding the tendency to want to turn the other into the self or the self into the other. Therefore, learning to learn is about learning to feel comfortable about crossing the boundaries of the comfort zone within ourselves and engaging with new concepts to rearrange our 'cultural baggage', our

understandings, relationships and desires in dialogue with 'others'. This process requires the understanding that conflict is a productive component of learning and that difference is what makes dialogue and learning relevant and necessary.

Learning to reach out is defined as learning to apply this learning to our own contexts and in our relationships with others continuing to reflect and explore new ways of being, thinking, doing, knowing and relating. It involves understanding that one needs to be open to the unpredictable outcomes of mutual uncoercive learning and perceiving that in making contact with others, one exposes oneself and exposes others to difference and newness, and this often results in mutual teaching and learning (although this learning may be different for each party involved). Learning to reach out is about learning to engage, to learn and to teach with respect and accountability in the complex and uncomfortable intercultural space where identities, power and ideas are negotiated, and that the process itself is cyclical: once one has learned to reach out in one context, one is ready to start a new cycle of unlearning, listening, learning and reaching out again at another level.

(Andreotti and Souza, 2008b)

However, these kinds of learning or the principles for postcolonial/post-critical global citizenship education described above cannot be transmitted as 'values'. They can only become possible in the repertoire of educators once they are experienced as lived and living theories – lived in the sense of embodied experience and living in its provisional and contested nature. Therefore, there is a need for teacher education to enable spaces for teachers and student teachers to *experience* and to *theorize* these possibilities, rather than teach them as given and static 'content'. If we conceptualize morality as universalizable principles of normative behaviour and ethics as an ideal of relationship, a way of defining ourselves in relation to others (Andreotti and Dowling, 2004), then a postcolonial/post-critical global citizenship education needs to focus on ongoing processes. It cannot seek to produce a universal outcome based on moral grounds (i.e. normative behaviours). Its goal can be framed as the negotiation of an 'uncoercive rearrangement of desires' (Spivak, 1994) towards an ethic that cannot be considered in isolation from knowledge and power and that relates directly to the broader conditions within which human life is situated (Sedgwick, 2001).

In conclusion I have argued that, if societies have indeed been affected by globalization and technology and if many young people, especially those considered 'at risk', are choosing to disengage from schooling and from life, it is our ethical responsibility as educators to do our homework, to consider our options and to do what we can to make education more relevant for the

learners and communities we work with. We cannot continue to use only the old tools (languages or concepts) that have been helpful (or unhelpful) so far. We cannot throw them away either. We need to acquire more tools and more lenses to engage with the complexity of the problem and to try out different solutions – and hence make *different* mistakes. The idea is not to find the ‘right’ lens or tool, but the appropriate lens or tool for specific contexts. As educators, this means we need to ‘raise our game’ and, instead of talking about best practices or normative projects, we need to focus on engaging with the complexity of context, on applying multiple lenses and choosing a tool or *lens in response* to a context, rather than *a priori*. Our analyses of power relations and commitment to difference, to interrogating dominant assumptions and to non-coercive education will denote whether or not we will be working from within a modernist, neo-liberal or ‘discursive’ orientation.

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