

Globalisation and reflexivity: challenges for research into quality education mediated by ICTs

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Overview

- Globalisation as a process of ‘intensified reflexivity’ that creates a ‘world of clever people’.
- ICTs and education as fundamental aspects of globalisation.
- Four issues posited for discussion in terms of quality distance education: the impact of ICTs on educational research; the challenge of globally inclusive curricula ; the matter of English as the global language; ICTs and the research centre.

Origins of this paper

- Reflections on the contexts of recent conferences in Brazil, Thailand and Australia.
- Reflection on the context of this conference: what are its ‘taken-for-grantededs’ in terms of language, culture and ICTs.
- Quality and quality education: not only extrinsically ‘fit for purpose’, but also intrinsically worthwhile, valuable and pleasurable.

Globalisation 1

- Globalisation is publicly represented in economic or financial terms as modern trans-national capitalism.
- It has long origins back to the earliest days of exploration, occupation, trade etc.
- Developments in transport and communications were pursued to ‘shrink the globe’.
- ICTs led to ‘time-space compression’ where time and place of sending or receiving messages are technically (but not socially or culturally) irrelevant. It is here that the term ‘globalisation’ was coined.

Globalisation 2

- Globalisation is a term to describe the process whereby social, cultural and economic life operates transcending national or local contexts
- Therefore, globalisation can be viewed as a social process: it is (re)formed by people's actions.
- Reflexivity is a crucial element of globalisation: there is a continuous process of action and interaction, often facilitated through ICTs.

ICTs, education and globalisation

- Increasingly, people understand themselves as needing to be global citizens, but this is additional to their local citizenship(s).
- However, becoming a global citizen is dependent on a sufficient level of ‘wealth’ and ‘cultural capital’.
- Ownership of, and access to, ICT infrastructure is by the already privileged.
- ‘Globalising’ educational institutions exhibit some of the pursuits of their capitalist cousins: invading foreign markets, maximising profits, exploitation of labour etc

Quality global education?

- Quality global education needs to have curricula and pedagogies that work globally and locally.
- For example, curricula built through transnational collaboration, that are explicitly general, non-locally specific, but require local insertions.
- Pedagogies that require people to learn beyond their local, but also to think and learn locally.
- How can ICTs be used to provide quality global education to ‘create a better world’?

Issue 1: the place of ICTs in research work

- In what ways have the ICTs changed the practices, nature and topics of (educational) research?
- What sorts of research might have been undertaken if the ICTs did not exist?
- What sorts of research would *not* have been undertaken if the ICTs did not exist?
- Distribution of resources to ICT-research, but from where?

Issue 2: Globally inclusive quality education

- Can a *quality* education be provided at a distance across national and cultural contexts? How do we know? What are the conditions etc?
- How do we balance access against invasion? How do we respect (unknown?) local contexts?
- What constitutes quality in cross-cultural contexts? Who decides and verifies such? If quality educational transactions occur across some nations/cultures, can these occur across others/all?

Issue 3: English and local languages

- If global education is mediated through English, how do people obtain sufficient capacities in English to have effective access?
- How can the ICTs help to teach English (maybe within/alongside another curriculum area)?
- Can ICTs provide sufficient ‘auto-translation’ to learn bi-lingually (English and the learner’s local language)?
- What would be the consequences if all the citizens of the world were competent in English?

Issue 4 ICTs decentring the research centre.

- Research policies favour (local) centres of strength in areas of (national) priority.
- ICTs enable networks rather than centres, global rather than local.
- What does this mean for (local) research agendas, priorities, budgets etc?
- What (local) absences and (global) possibilities are created by ICT-enabled research networks?

Finally

- Our seminar is a local event with ‘global’ participants.
- If we enjoy and value these meetings and conversations, what does it say about the limitations of ICTs?
- Thank you and keep talking!