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Kompetenzen und Globales Lernen

Aus dem Inhalt:

- Kompetenzen, Standards und Qualität im Globalen Lernen
- Modelle und Messungen von Kompetenz Globalen Lernens
- Kompetenzen in der Politischen Bildung
- Globales Lernen mit Neuen Medien

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Alun Morgan

The Global Dimension
Contexts within Contexts[1]

Zusammenfassung: Der Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit Herausforderungen schulischen Lernens angesichts von Weltkomplexität. Aus der Perspektive eines bejahenden, rekonstruktiven Postmodernismus wird für multiperspektivische und nicht-reduktionistische Lernangebote der Global Citzenship Education und der Education for Sustainable Development plädiert; angeboten von Lehrkräften als ‚gatekeeper' bzw. ‚facilitator' innerhalb dreier, Lebenschancen offereirender Kontexte – Raum, Meinung & Gefühl, Politik und Ökonomie.

Abstract: The article focuses the challenges for school-learning because of world-complexity. It's a plead for multi-perspective and non-reductionist learning arrangements of Global Cititenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development, arguing from a perspective of an affirmative and reconstructive postmodernism; offered by teachers as gate-keepers or facilitators within three contexts, presenting life-chances – scale, meaning and feeling, politics and economy.

New Worldviews for Old

Many academic disciplines have undergone (or are rather undergoing) something of a radical reformulation in recent years in response to the 'postmodernism' and the science of complexity, both of which are products of the increasingly Globalised World. The former has largely emerged from philosophical considerations of epistemology (how humans come to understand the World, and how reliable is this knowledge) and has had significant impact on the fields of sociology and cultural studies; the latter has emerged more from the natural sciences especially physics and ecology. Despite their different starting points, there are a great many convergences in terms of the conclusions reached. Put briefly, they both stress the importance of context and interconnection for arriving at an understanding of virtually anything (be it the behaviour of people or the weather). Furthermore, these relatively recent revelations have great affinity with the insights from non-Western philosophical traditions perhaps inviting the realisation of a truly Global Worldview where East meets West (and North meets South).

Implications for Education

These debates are only just now starting to filter into the theory and practice of Education largely due to the lag that often exists between developments in academic thinking and school practice. But it is also necessary to acknowledge that these insights challenge our existing way of thinking about the world and therefore require some courage to take on board. The good news is that there is much more scope now than ever before for exploring this more complex but much more meaningful and rewarding understanding of the World in our schools thanks to the much greater flexibility of the National Curriculum and examination syllabi. Rather, the significant barrier is the general lack of familiarity and confidence in terms of these themes on the part of the teaching profession. This is a problem since it could be argued that it is incumbent on educators to engage with these debates otherwise the profession will continue to teach in an increasingly outmoded and largely irrelevant way that is unpopular with our students. Equally, it could be argued that *all* students have an entitlement to engage with these issues if they are to be adequately prepared for their life in an increasingly complex Globalised World. This article is intended to support educators who wish to explore some of this new thinking about issues condensing around the global dimension, and to start the thinking about how to translate these concepts into meaningful teaching and learning activities.

Postmodernism

Much of the negative press associated with the term ‚postmodernism' is really describing the more negative (nihilistic, relativistic and alienating) implications of extreme versions – so called ‚destructive' or ‚eliminative' postmodernism which reject any firm foundation for knowledge, deny any ultimate truth giving rise to an ‚anything goes' mentality. There is, however, an alternative take on this theme – a postmodernism of ‚reconstruction' or ‚revision' (Griffin cited in O'Sullivan 1999 which promotes the creation of an integrative vision or worldview that guards against the older tendency towards reductionism (explaining everything in terms of a limited number of essential qualities e.g. class, race, gender in the social sciences; atoms in the physical sciences) whilst emphasizing instead the importance and value of using multiple perspectives and ‚discourses' (narratives or stories used to describe, explain and ‚make sense of' the World). It also lays great emphasis on an examination of the contexts within which anything must be located or understood. It enhances rather than rejects insights from the more traditional objective and empirical traditions by highlighting the richness of lived experience at the personal (subjective) and sociocultural (intersubjective). It explores the ways in which we all (both individually and collectively) interpret reality through our own particular

,lenses' which gives rise to our own particular ,take' on reality – the ,World' we inhabit. It demonstrates that our interpretative ,lenses' have been ground into shape through our lived-experiences (our own historical or biographical context). However, it further demonstrates that the overall shape of the lens is constrained by the structures within which our experiences take place, chief amongst which is the society and culture we are apprenticed or ,socialised' within – our socio-cultural context (family, friends, national culture etc.) which subconsciously teaches us what to value or shapes our ,value matrix'. This in turn directs our attention to the things of value in our ,environment' i.e. things that are worth paying attention to and identifying with. These are consequently ,brought forth' into our attention and make up the principal or significant foreground features of our ,World'. Things not valued in this socio-cultural context are still there but lurking in the background and not really considered and therefore do not significantly feature in our Worldview and therefore tend to fall outside the ,scope of concern'. This is essentially the idea behind the concepts of the ,socially constructed nature of reality' and the idea of or our ,situatedness' – the context-dependent nature of our particular take on reality.

What has this got to do with the Global Dimension & citizenship?

The importance of ,where you are coming from' is significant in more than a metaphorical sense – it literally means we must consider the place as the context that has shaped your life-experiences and your mental outlook – your worldview. Two different people might have very different Worldviews because the contexts that have shaped them are different (this might even be the case if they have grown up in the same geographical place because they have moved in different socio-cultural ,circles'). Consequently they will bring to the foreground (and leave in the background) different dimensions of their environments respectively and so effectively occupy two different ,Worlds'.

For most of human history the socio-cultural context shaping someone's Worldview has been very local i.e. their home locality. More recently, this had to be seen to be set within the wider national context with the rise of the nation-state. Now, for the first time in history, we potentially have a Global socio-cultural context thanks to Global communications. Consequently, there are very many more features from many other places (other people and other living things) that are responsible for shaping one's Worldviews, and that can be included and/or excluded from one's scope of concern.

Complexity and Chaos

The Key idea from this field is the notion of reality being made up of not of discrete elements linked in a simple linear fashion but rather systems comprising ,nodes in networks' operating in a complex/non-linear way. Actually, this is just another way of talking about contexts – the network being the context for any particular node, which in turn, makes a partial contribution to the whole context for every other node

in the network. For example, a team player is a node in a team; the team is their context; each player contributes to the performance of the team and therefore contributes to providing the context for the rest of the players. A significant consequence of this is the unpredictable nature of ,nature' – a change in one part (node) of the system can have consequences across the whole system which cannot be predicted because of the complex ,web of relationships' existing across the system's structure (an injury to one player can affect the performance of the rest of the team in ways that might not be obvious). Furthermore, systems exist in a ,nested hierarchy' (like Russian Dolls or a nest of tables) – what is seen as a system at one level is actually a node within a wider system at the next level up in the hierarchy (i.e. a player is a node in a team, which is a node in a league, which is a node in an international competition). This can also be expressed as ,contexts within contexts'. This again raises to theme of ,positionality' or ,situatedness' which sees the significance of any node being as much to do with its relative position and role within the system than its individual attributes. Another key idea that follows from this is that with each step up the hierarchy new and more complex and sophisticated levels of organisation are created with new or ,emergent' properties not seen in the system at the lower levels – the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

What's all this got to do with the Global Dimension and Development?

If we substitute the terms place and/or region and/or space for node and/or context and/or system then we are a long way towards seeing the relevance. Place is the term for a particular context (or node) which is shaped by wider contexts namely within which it is (literally) placed.

- Spatial context (geographical scale) – i.e. where it is located in the World
- Historical context (temporal scale) – i.e. its historical trajectory
- subjective and intersubjective context (the meaning and representations associated with it)
- political and economic context – its position within global ,geometries of power'

And unless you try to establish the complex ways in which these four dimensions interact and constitute one another (i.e. each represent significant background forces operating on the place which is in the foreground) then you will provide only a partial and incomplete understanding if place.

Thus places are nodes within wider networks or contexts (e.g. the global system) and their positionality is often expressed in terms of core and periphery e.g. where a place or business or community lies in an economic or political network determines how central or marginal it is, how much power it has. This relates to the contemporary notion of ,geometries of power'. Geographical scale is concerned with the hierarchical arrangement of geographical contexts – from local through regional, national, continental up to the Global. However, it is difficult to separate geographical phenomena into one discrete scale level (just local or just regional or just global) as the hierarchy works as a web of relationships with local forces both shaping

and being shaped by Global forces (with all levels in between also being involved) in a complex and mutually dependent fashion. Thus places are seen to be nested within places within places (as contexts within contexts within contexts). This idea is expressed as the local-Global nexus.

People (including geographers, politicians and ,nationalists') define the ,place' under consideration i.e. artificially carve up the ,local-Global nexus' by identifying:

- borders or limits within which the place can be defined. However, these borders are really artificial or human constructs especially in the contemporary Globalised world since all borders are relatively permeable within the local-Global nexus (one place affects another place in myriad ways through their network connections);

- a particular scale to focus their investigations at (e.g. local or regional or Global). However, this has important implications for the forces that are seen to operate since different scales are characterized by different geographical emergent properties. So by studying something at one scale you might miss important forces operating at another scale. This point emphasizes the significance of the Global Dimension for all issues of concern, even the apparently most local.

Doreen Massey (Massey/Jess 1995) talks of trying to develop a ,Global Sense of Place' that seeks to overcome the shortcomings of selecting of an individual place and/or scale for study in isolation from the local-Global nexus.

Global Systems

John Urry (2003) talks about two types of largely human structures or systems that that operate at the Global scale. The first type – Globally Integrated Networks (GIN's) – are purposefully created to serve a particular function on the Global stage and have a fairly rigid and identifiable network structure with a small number of controlling nodes (possibly only one) which influence the rest. Good examples include transnational companies (e.g. McDonald's and Coca-Cola) and the United Nations. The second type – Global Fluids – are much more spontaneous, much less predictable, much less ,ordered', and ,messy' in that they do not operate within strict networks but rather ,overflow' boundaries. Good examples of this second type are population migrations, the internet, environmental problems, Global protest movements.

What are the implications for Education?

Having set the wider philosophical and academic scene we should now be in a position to explore the implications for a more sophisticated contextual and relational education. The teacher has a great responsibility as a ,gatekeeper' and facilitator in the development of each learners' Global Imagination – they could either constrain or liberate how pupils define, represent and come to understand the World and their place in it . What we need to consider is do we wish to promote a narrow, parochial and xenophobic Geography/identity of exclusion or a cosmopolitan and inclusive Geography/identity of inclusion (Massey/Jess 1995). What this might look like remains to be seen but it is likely that it will need to address the following place and/or ,life-chances'-shaping contexts:

Scale (local, regional, national, continental, global): Attention to the scale of enquiry is fundamental because the scale at which you focus your attention will determine what processes are observable. A teaching device that might help learners to understand this issue is to get them to imagine they have a zoom-macro lens or zoom-in/zoom-out button facility built into their imagination

Meaning & feeling: This context is the repository of feelings, experience, sense of place, identities and representation (how people and places are presented to others). It can be considered at either the personal (or subjective) level or the social and cultural (,sociocultural' or intersubjective) level. However, the latter represents the context for the former – hence situatedness. This means that we need to engage with learners' feelings and representations about places, their own and other places.

Political and Economic Context – ,geometries of power': Learners need to explore the how Global structures – both Globally Integrated Networks (GIN's) and Global Fluids – operate, what function they perform (or whose interests do they serve) and how power and control are distributed within them. This will allow students to get a better understanding of issues such as territoriality, conflict and justice (both social and environmental) at all scales from the local to the Global; and what action they might take to transform unjust and harmful structures.

Helping pupils to develop an integrative, contextual and relational Global Imagination

The best means to avoid extremist, xenophobic and parochial Worlviews is to recognise the partial value associated with different perspectives and trying to integrate them in a balanced way. This demands a maturing process that involves learning from others through dialogue, empathetic understanding and negotiation. In this way we create a richer and more complete ,foregrounded' World with less and less dispensible background i.e. values diversity. This is the goal of Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development which are significant features of the contemporary Education landscape.

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Alun Morgan, born 1965; secondary school teacher in Geography in England and Wales; subsequently Education Director of the Cardiff Environmental Education Centre; Advisory Teacher post of Education for Sustainable Development Officer for Worcestershire County Council; Masters in Environmental and Development Education; currently undertaking PhD research; currently Lecturer and tutor at the Institute of Education, University of London.