

Chapter 9

Glocalism: Situating Global Civic Engagement in the Local Community

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ABSTRACT

The interconnectedness of nations and peoples worldwide is changing the face of art education. While some scholars aspire to global education that will encourage students to become engaged in creating a more just and peaceful world, others warn that global education is tied to a neoliberal ideology and must be approached with caution. This chapter will provide a discussion of the promises and challenges of infusing global civic learning into a public school art education environment and address how global civic learning might be situated in a local context in order to avoid some of the possible pitfalls. Then, through a review art education literature, the chapter will make suggestions for the types of curricular endeavors (service learning, ethnography, ecology, and public art) that have successfully been able to situate global civic learning in local environments.

INTRODUCTION

The interconnectedness of nations and peoples worldwide is considered by many to be an inevitable, driving force in the modern world (Brooks & Noremore, 2010; Menon, 2007, Peters, 2009). Students today have greater access to technology and information than ever before and with it has come the realization that students and teachers must embrace their role as citizens of the world (Peters, 2009).

While some scholars (Delacruz, 2005; Peters, 2009) aspire to global education that will encourage students to see the interconnectedness of peoples and become engaged in creating a more just and peaceful world, others (Apple, 2004; Compton & Weiner, 2008; Giroux, 2013; Hill, 2010; Menon, 2007) warn that global education is tied to a neoliberal ideology responsible for devaluing the teacher, standardizing education and curriculum, and eradicating local culture from school. Additionally, some believe that, in its current manifestation, global education can lead to cultural misunderstandings and the othering of groups of people (Inokuchi & Nozaki, 2010). With these concerns in mind, we cannot fully address

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questions about infusing global civic learning and engagement into art classrooms, museums, and other educational settings without simultaneously asking what must be included in a global art education curriculum in order to prevent some possible pitfalls.

Scholars such as Brooks and Noremore (2010), Fassenfest (2010), Gruenewald and Smith (2008), and Zhao (2012) have suggested that merging the local and the global offers access to the promises of a global education while avoiding some major perils. Brooks and Noremore (2010) argue for increased understanding of the intersection of the economic and social issues of globalization within local communities, by demanding “a consideration of glocalization”, which they define as “a meaningful integration of local and global dynamics” (p. 53). Perhaps then, a “glocal” curriculum, one that situates the goals of global learning within a local context, is a practical and effective way for art educators in a variety of environments to begin teaching for both global and local civic engagement.

This chapter will begin by discussing the challenges of infusing global civic learning into a public school art education environment and address how that learning might be situated in a local context. Then, by reviewing art education literature, will make suggestions for the types of curricular endeavors (service learning, ethnography, ecology, and public art) that have successfully situated global civic learning in local environments.

BACKGROUND: PERILS OF NEOLIBERALISM AND GLOBALIZATION FOR EDUCATION

Typically, dialogue surrounding politics in the United States tends to categorize issues according to *liberal* or *conservative* platforms, and often neoliberalism and its principles are omitted from popular discourse (Weiner, 2011). While neoliberalism is related to the platforms of contemporary *conservative* and *liberal* political parties, it encompasses a unique ideology which currently crosses party lines (Apple, 2004; Giroux, 2013; Weiner, 2011). Although the term neoliberalism is rarely used in the media or by political parties, Hursh (2008) explains that “neoliberal theory and practices have become so embedded within our economic and political decision making that neoliberalism is rarely explicitly evoked as a rationale” (p.35). Consequently, it is important to understand the ideologies of neoliberalism to see their impact on education.

According to Bockman (2013), neoliberalism is both an approach to government and a political movement grounded in the belief that governments cannot ensure economic growth or social welfare and that instead, private companies, private individuals, and unrestricted markets are required for economic and social stability. As a term, neoliberalism originated in the 1930s after the Great Depression. During this time there was a common belief that the “old” form of liberalism, emphasizing laissez-faire economics, was responsible for the ongoing economic difficulties. Neoliberalism was then a “new” liberalism which responded to these concerns, with the primary principle being that a strong state, through legislation, could support the economic stability of its free markets (Bockman, 2013).

In the 1970s, capitalism was being undermined internationally with the rise of socialism and the increasing oil, budget, and fiscal crises. Neoliberalism became the capitalist response as politicians and capitalists worked together, privatizing formerly publicly owned and operated entities, and consequently creating the first neoliberal states. According to Foucault (1979/2010), a state becomes truly neoliberal when the market is used to govern. This happens when social services are distributed according to market standards like efficiency, competitiveness, and profitability (Foucault 1979/2010; Bockman, 2013).

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