

Chapter 11

Education as the Practice of Freedom: Writing Truth Into the Curriculum Across the Globe

Marva S. McClean

City of Pembroke Pines Charter Schools, USA

Marcus Woolombi Waters

Griffith University, Australia

ABSTRACT

As a result of the complex, multilayered, and problematic environment in which they work, two scholars collaborating between the continents of Australia and North America complicate the data from standardized testing in their communities to argue for the implementation of indigenous knowledge epistemology as a strategy to achieve social justice and equity in global classrooms. The chapter explores the residual effects of imperialism on the formerly colonized and investigates postcolonial themes such as the indigenous self, gender constructs, cultural and communal identity. The study reveals just how critical it is to global research to have the benefit of scholars collaborating across borders. The study provides findings and offers recommendations in direct response to the question: How can educators engage students as collaborators within a third space that elevates their voices as successful students?

INTRODUCTION

Seeking Social Justice Within the Neo-Colonial Landscape

Bell hooks (1994) asserts that to educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching so that anyone can learn. Peter McLaren declares, “we desperately need cadres of teachers to speak out and to create spaces where their students can assume roles as razor-tongued public instigators for social good” (McLaren, 2015, p.4). We contend that the Western educational system must take into account these words in examining the wounds caused over time by colonization from which have spawned oppression, racism and alienation resulting in the achievement gap between White children, descendants of the settler class and children of color (including Black, Aboriginal, and other ethnically diverse children), descendants of the enslaved people. Globally, colonization has created and facilitated the elements that led to educational disparity as is evident in the fact that within the West there is not one country born from colonization where the Indigenous or people of color share in any way the quality of life of the descendants of this settler class (Dorling, 2015). Even with pressing reforms, the past century of education has failed to close this gap because the focus on equality instead of equity has continued to feed this problem in a society that prioritizes efficiency in resource management over social justice in education (Espinoza, 2007).

This study interrogates how historically, the destruction of culture erodes cultural heritage and, with it, social mobility. This negates human rights and dignity leading to the perpetuation of the so-called failure of ethnically diverse children in school. Because of the complex, multilayered and problematic environment in which they work, two scholars collaborating between the continents of Australia and North America, complicate the data from standardized testing in their communities to “argue for the implementation of critical literacy as a step towards achieving social justice and equity in classrooms across the United States and indeed the world” (McClellan, 2014, p. 487). They push for innovative, nontraditional and experimental methods of teaching that focus on the oral tradition of people of color including rites of passage, storytelling and performance (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). To attain equity within school systems across the globe, deliberate action must be taken to bring the dignity of all children into the curriculum and include the history and culture of formerly colonized people resting on the foundation of the funds of knowledge that children of color bring to the classroom with them (Bhabha, 1994; Gonzalez & Amanti, 2005). In pushing for an interrogation of the colonial origins of their background, the African Diaspora, and the Aboriginals of Australia, both scholars argue for an engagement with the past and an understanding of how the historical continuities of racial intolerance maintain a system of educational injustice in 21st century classrooms (Solorzano & Yasso, 2001).

BACKGROUND

Investigating the Historical Continuity of Inequity

The chapter explores the residual effects of Imperialism on the formerly colonized and investigates post-colonial themes such as the Indigenous self, gender constructs, cultural and communal identity, problems of location and (dis) location, and the interplay between history and memory. Scrutiny is directed at the

20 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/chapter/education-as-the-practice-of-freedom/201419

Related Content

Teaching and Learning in Turbulent Times: International College Students in the U.S.

Tony Lee and Ruby Cheng (2022). *Handbook of Research on Learner-Centered Approaches to Teaching in an Age of Transformational Change* (pp. 270-286).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/teaching-and-learning-in-turbulent-times/304707

A Bibliometric Analysis of Students' Collaborative Learning and Online Social Presence via Tencent Meeting and WeChat

Ruobing Qin and Zhonggen Yu (2022). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design* (pp. 1-21).

www.irma-international.org/article/a-bibliometric-analysis-of-students-collaborative-learning-and-online-social-presence-via-tencent-meeting-and-wechat/311438

Promoting Diversity and Inclusivity Through Service Learning in Higher Education

Surjit Singha (2024). *Applications of Service Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 20-34).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/promoting-diversity-and-inclusivity-through-service-learning-in-higher-education/342771

A Pathway Towards Implementation of Blended Learning in a Medium Sized Canadian University

Maurice Taylor, Shehzad Ghani, Sait Atas and Michael Fairbrother (2018). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design* (pp. 60-76).

www.irma-international.org/article/a-pathway-towards-implementation-of-blended-learning-in-a-medium-sized-canadian-university/190846

Evaluating the Use of an Online Video Training Program to Supplement a Graduate Course in Applied Behavior Analysis

Gabrielle T. Lee and Tzu-Fen Chang (2019). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design* (pp. 21-32).

www.irma-international.org/article/evaluating-the-use-of-an-online-video-training-program-to-supplement-a-graduate-course-in-applied-behavior-analysis/223899