

Editors' Report: Connecting to 'Others' through Social Studies

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When reading through the varied contributions to the journal from all parts of the world and by authors with such varied experiences I was inspired to read Said's *Orientalism* in more depth, to clarify some of the arguments he provided for how a whole raft of peoples could be categorised as overwhelmingly similar and overwhelmingly subservient. Said's methodological underpinnings included examining what he called pure and political knowledge, acknowledging that much of our literature, our academic papers, our ways of thinking are influenced by political factors including where we live or have our cultural roots. He also pointed out that he was influenced in his choice of texts to read by the historical vagaries of what texts were available to him, what translations had been made, the need to clarify the origins of the representations made of the orient, and the importance of reading 'scholarly works, political tracts, journalist texts, travel books, religious and philosophical studies' (p. 23). Thirdly he acknowledged his personal stories as a key influencing factor in his observations. As an "Oriental' growing up in Palestine and Egypt and America and educated in a Western manner his personal life influenced the book's writing and argued that this must be accounted for in its findings. This acknowledgement of the importance of the influences around us on how we think and behave is crucial when considering our importance as social educators. The example of the notion of 'Orientalism' is an important one:

Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, The West, 'us') and the strange (the Orient, the East, 'them'). This vision in a sense created and then served the two worlds thus conceived [it] express[es] the strength of the West and the Orient's weakness-as seen by the West (Said, pp.43-45).

Thus its discourse is a:

discourse of power originating in an era of colonialism.... [and many] see similar knowledges constructed for Native American and Africans a chronic tendency to deny, suppress, or distort the cultural context of such systems of thought in order to maintain the fiction of its scholarly disinterest (Said, p.345).

Orientalism is a text well worth another read if only to clarify some of the difficulties of having a clear and 'simple' methodology for your research.

This edition of the journal is very much focused on change in curriculum and the changes focused upon are associated with improved ways to connect with others. We have research articles that tackle big issues of learning to live with others in a globalised world; learning about others and also clarifying underlying preconceptions which may make such linkages and awareness difficult. A focus of these articles is the methodologies used. All authors were careful to critically scrutinise the way they provided evidence for their conclusions and to signpost the way for future researchers to follow their trail. The issues addressed are crucial for social education and the link between us as social educators and social studies educators and the wider education community. These ideas are continued in our wonderful set of perspective articles on human rights education in the Social Justice section; articles about how 'Others' do things that can provide direction for our own work in our International Perspectives section; and points of view that can inspire us under the Media section.

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Articles

Kristy Brugar, *Experiencing the Local to Become Global: A Portrait of Teaching and Learning Abroad*, follows some teachers with regular interviews over a 12 month period as they begin their teaching career in Haiti at an American school. This contribution to looking at things from the 'Other' point of view allows us to clarify if things change as the teachers become more familiar with the new context and it provides a social studies focused methodological lens (linking history and pedagogy of place to students' lived experiences). I was struck by the fact that such key fundamental aspects of what we do in social studies education are crucial for global learning and global understanding. Historically she points out that students bring their histories to class and so to teach in a context different to the one you are familiar with requires knowledge of their histories. This can be part of the students' sense of place, an aspect of how they perceive their place. As Kristy explains it,

pedagogy of place or place-based education (PBE). PBE is grounded in curriculum and instruction of local contexts (Woodhouse, 2001) with an emphasis on authentic learning experiences.

Several guiding principles associated with place guided her study including the idea that (1) content is specific to place; (2) experiences are experiential/participatory; (3) place is multidisciplinary; (4) connection of individual to place; and (5) reflection of a more broad educational philosophy emerges through place study. She argues for the need to provide such global perspectives in all teachers' professional development. How better to understand the 'other' than to clarify their personal sense of their place.

Dr Dafney Dabach, *"You Can't Vote, Right?": When Language Proficiency is a Proxy for Citizenship in a Civics Classroom*, highlights the long identified dilemma that emerges in many educational contexts when teachers form different expectations for different students, and as a result behave differently toward students (Brophy & Good, 1974). In this instance Dabach argues that language competence, in immigrant-origin English learners (ELs), appears to influence civics teachers to judge how themes of citizenship education should be taught. Dabach claims that in her case study observation 'EL students were positioned as non-citizen outsiders, rather than as "citizens in the making"'.

In view of the fact that:

Not all ELs are immigrants, and not all immigrants are undocumented. In fact, most EL students (over 74%) are US-born with citizenship status (Whatley & Batalova, 2014),

this is problematic for educating future citizens. Wider perceptions of citizenship rights and responsibilities that include social participation and transnational citizenship in the curriculum may be more appropriate and more inclusive than citizenship interpreted as learning to vote as a U.S. citizen. Dabach points out that:

The issue at hand is not merely whether or not students were correctly identified as citizens. The contentiousness of the politics of immigration underscores the need for educational theorists, teachers, and others to stake out an inclusive and progressive pedagogy in citizenship education. The episodes reveal a genuine need to address gaps that are not merely cultural and linguistic, as substantive as those are, but which also bar access to

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participation in the very practices that are imagined as important in civics education (e.g., voting).

Including the 'Other' that reside among us can be difficult if the educators do not recognise that they are excluding groups of people and do not address the curriculum to make it more inclusive of diversity even in citizenship education which appears to be inclusive.

Rodeheaver, Gradwell and Dahlgren, in their article, "*We are Dumbledore's Army: Forging the Foundation for Future Upstanders*" pursue their interest in examining how activists, who advocate for human rights, learn to do so. The idea of "Dumbledore's Army" evolves from the Harry Potter series of books as a group of people who will stand up and fight for practical ideas. The authors call these activists "upstanders".

While the origins of the term are attributed to several individuals and organizations, the researchers chose the term as it was defined by Power (2002). The term encompasses individuals who take large risks on a global level as well as individuals who take a stand on a more personal level, such as those who prevent bullying.

The need for participation in support of those who cannot pursue their rights, or do not understand their rights, is a fundamental belief of a democratic system, and yet so many of us abrogate that right and duty. It is important to clarify how to help people to learn and how and when to do this. By examining a summer program to encourage young human rights advocates the authors identified some key features of what seemed a successful program (albeit a program difficult to assess in terms of actual outcomes). The key features they identified included women's rights themes, attending field trips to sites useful for learning about human rights, participating in service learning, observing and working with role models of "upstanders", and working in a community atmosphere.

Bates, Lucey, Inose, Yamane and Green pose interesting questions about how 'Other' cultural groups perceive financial morality. In their paper, 'College Students' Interpretations of Financial Morality: An International Comparison' they ask students in the U.S., Canada and Japan how they perceive financial morality. The literature review in this article is quite insightful for social studies teachers because it links research from disciplinary and cross disciplinary areas such as economics, psychology, philosophy, ethical studies, citizenship studies, multicultural studies and education. In the school curriculum the world, over the disjunction between social studies teaching and some key ethical debates that affect subject areas such as maths teaching and business studies are overlooked and not engaged with. Some fundamental precepts of modern economics are open to debate particularly that of why the economy runs as it does – is it about individual choice and decision-making or community choice and decision-making or is there no choices when it comes to sustaining a global community? They argue that the value of their research lies within the importance of being cognizant of cross-cultural differences about perspectives of financial ideas in global communications and in educational processes.

International Perspectives

Dr Rapaport as editor of our international perspective section of the journal points out the importance of international education and global education in developing new ways for us to interact within our nations but also with other nations. He has long been an advocate for travel abroad programs for teachers because they influence the teacher to reflect on what they had previously seen as 'common and normal' and to consider other ways of doing things. Dr Rapaport's selection of Dr Mark Percy's, contribution to this section is a very important one. Mark travelled to

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Germany for only two weeks and yet came back with some very important insights into key differences in ways of organising community between the USA and Germany that he will consider with students in his classes. He argues that it has increased his open-mindedness with the German concept of 'Sozialstate', where the individual owes a responsibility to the community, a theme that should be explored in Social Studies classrooms in the USA. Additionally we have the work of Dr Vlaardingerbroek and his two co authors Louie Traikovski and Irshad Hussain who have developed a comparative approach to law education in schools internationally using a case study of Pakistan and a state of Australia (Victoria). They argue for further professional development of teachers of law and law related subjects in the school curriculum because different forms of law appear to be taught well but others are ignored in school education. This is of much interest when considering international perspectives on citizenship, as the legal underpinnings of our society are not necessarily clearly apparent to its citizenry. In particular it seems international laws are not often applied. Some fundamental rights and privileges can be neglected through lack of use, and lack of understanding.

Social Justice

Dr Gloria Alter, always an advocate for social justice and human rights, introduces us to two inspiring advocates for curriculum change in the area of Human Rights Education (HRE). Dr Felisa Tibbitts and Rosemary Ann Blanchard. All three scholars were at the recent NCSS conference in Boston so I hope many of you heard them and learned with them. Felisa points out in her piece that:

HRE remains unique in that it is focused not only on values related to justice but the empowerment of learners to know and claim their rights. This is quite specific to HRE and goes beyond the "participation" goal that we find in citizenship education.

She is arguing for a stronger direction for citizenship education and curriculum change in citizenship education. HRE has been developed by an international organisation (the United Nations) and requires educators and policy makers in various separate nations to use the ideas and ideals developed and make them applicable to their own national state. Human Rights covenants require discussion and collaboration and contextual understandings, all skills which an active citizen needs. Social Studies is the place for such strong active teaching. Rosemary Ann Blanchard demonstrates such strong advocacy skills and uses them in her work with community based indigenous groups, policymakers associated with Human Rights education and with curriculum groups lobbying for a place in crucial curriculum documents. Learning from an international forum such as the United Nations, and leading curriculum change towards a more equitable future world would seem to be something that social studies teachers can easily identify with. These are people from whom we can learn.

Media Review

Associate Professor Toni Fuss Kirkwood-Tucker and Professor Alejandro José Gallard-Martinez, *Violations of the Educational Rights of Disadvantaged Youth in the Global Age*, have joined forces to discuss a particular important human rights issue, the lack of access to education by disadvantaged youth. Examining this difficult issues under a HR lens, allows us, as educators, to point out that blaming the victim is not acceptable.

...globalization has generated enormous detrimental consequences such as continued illiteracy, gender inequity, economic exploitation, racism, classism, and environmental damage (Benería, 2003).

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We in the Western world must accept some responsibility for students in many corners of the world not being given basic human rights. Clarifying for international citizens of the world that lack of achievement in school is influenced by a myriad number of cultural, economic, and political factors which subvert basic human rights is a goal for social studies. Then application of poor curriculum and pedagogical approaches that disadvantage some groups above others is unfair and counters global and international values of social justice.

Additionally, as a way forward in a divided world Oluwaseun Bamidele provides an overview of key issues in peace education and ways in which we can work actively towards building a culture of peace in the world. This is a very useful referencing of key ideas in peace education dialogue and a reminder that we have not given up on peace even though we seem to try to resolve our differences with conflict and force.

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