

Module 1: Toward A Concentric Model of Global Multicultural Education

Introduction

This module is designed to invite professional educators to explore a concentric model of multicultural education that integrates global education and place-based education. In view of the far-reaching impact of globalization, there has been continuous advocacy for global education, which encompasses various socially responsive educational programs addressing the adjustment needs of living in an interdependent global village. At the same time, many concerned educators influenced by bioregionalism have made concerted efforts to incorporate “place-based knowledge” into the formal curriculum. Furthermore, it is noted that systematic efforts to “internationalize” or even “globalize” the formal P-16 education often lead to the devaluation of “domestic” diversity in modern democratic nation-states. As a result, many concerned educators are committed to reclaiming a place-based multicultural education.

In response to the complicated interplay of local and global educational concerns, this module will first explore how and why place-based education cannot cultivate a meaningful bioregional sensibility without addressing political and economic globalization. Next, this module will examine the conceptual connections between place-based education and critical global education. Finally, the module will facilitate a collaborative inquiry into a concentric model of multicultural education that integrates global education and place-based education.

Required Readings

Nussbaum, M. (1996). *For love of country: Debating the limits of patriotism*. Boston: Beacon.

Wilson, R. & Dissanayake, W. (Eds.) (1996). *Global/local*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Learning Objectives

By completing all tasks for this module, you will be to:

1. Recognize that “cultural unity“ and “cultural diversity“ are both always historicized.
2. Raise awareness of global interconnections and the confluence of global education and place-based education.
3. Develop a “global“ perspective that is sensitive to the interrelatedness of today's ecological problems and to the particular needs of local communities.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Knowledge:

- Understands his/her culture in global and comparative context (recognizes that his/her culture is one of many diverse cultures and that alternative perceptions and behaviors may be based in cultural differences)

Skill:

- Uses knowledge, diverse culture frames of reference, and alternative perspectives to think critically and solve problems

Suggested Activity: An Inquiry-based Seminar

Task # 1: Examining the Interplay between the Global and the Local

After completing the required reading assignment, learners will be engaged in an inquiry-based seminar to respond to the following key questions:

- Can global education aim at raising a global awareness without exploring diverse local cultures, especially the culture(s) of one's own community?
- Can place-based education exclusively focus on preserving one's local bioregion without addressing global environmental protection, world peace, and universal human rights?

More specifically, seminar participants will examine “the global” and “the local” as conceptual constructs. The guided inquiry is to lead to a recognition that “all that was local becomes increasingly globalized, all that is global becomes increasingly localized,” as noted by Edward W. Soja.

To analyze the dialectical interplay between the global and the local, the seminar facilitator will engage seminar participants to examine varied definitions, theories, and practices of “global education.” Notably, international organizations (such as the World Bank or the IMF) and national, state, or local governments are inclined to promote curricular reform that emphasizes providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in the global market and reap the benefits of economic globalization. On the other hand, there are concerned educators who advocate for global educational programs that embrace multiculturalism, social justice, world peace, and the establishment of ecologically sustainable global communities. This seminar's critical approach to global education and place-based multicultural education is founded upon the pedagogical aim of raising participants' awareness that “being-in-the-place” is coextensive with “being-in-the-world.”

Task # 2: Developing a Concentric Model of Global Multicultural Education

Seminar participants will examine the ideal of cosmopolitanism delineated by Martha Nussbaum (1996). To Nussbaum, one must recognize that one is always surrounded by “a series of concentric circles,” namely the self, the immediate family, the extended family, the local community, the nation, and the world. Place-based education deliberately attempts to cultivate “a sense of place(s)” that can, in turn, connect one’s immediate self-identity with the personal, social, spatial, and temporal dimensions of citizen identity. This seminar will provide participants with a better understanding of Nussbaum’s “series of concentric circles“ and the multidimensional nature of global citizenship.

Reference

- Nussbaum, M. (1996). *For love of country: Debating the limits of patriotism*. Boston: Beacon.
- Soja, E. W. (1989). *Postmodern geographies: The reassertion of space in critical social theory*. London: Verso.