

Learning and Development in the Global Context

Darrel Davis
Miami University

Overview

This module will introduce students to issues, perceptions, and practices of human learning and development via a global lens. There are significant cultural differences in how humans experience learning and development. Theoretical models seek to describe the human experiences, but much of what we know about learning and development is affected by the cultural lens through which the knowledge is viewed. It is important that students understand and engage different and more global perspectives if they are to fully appreciate their own realities.

This module is targeted at introductory-level educational psychology courses, although it may be used in courses dealing with human learning and development. The module is designed to be implemented in a low-enrollment course, but it could be revised for implementation in a large-enrollment environment that utilizes student peer groups as a part of the pedagogy.

Structure

One key feature of this module is its scalability and sustainability. The components can be completed by groups or individuals, making the module applicable to both large and small classes. In terms of sustainability, the module is recursive in nature where the products from one semester are used in subsequent semesters. Finally, the module can be implemented as a single project covering a few weeks, or it can be a semester-long project focusing on more expansive research, deeper analysis, and more involved and higher quality artifacts.

Global 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 alternate perceptions and behaviors may be based in cultural differences)
 - Demonstrates knowledge of other cultures (beliefs, values, perspectives, practices, and products)
- Skills
 - Interprets issues and situations from more than one cultural perspective
- Attitudes
 - Demonstrates resistance to cultural stereotyping

Task Outline

1. Choose a content area of interest that we have covered in class.
2. Choose a location-specific or a general cultural/global issue.
3. Request approval for your chosen content area and location.
4. Select a scholarly article that either focuses on or relates to your content area and location.

5. Create a quiz based on the scholarly article.
6. Select a contemporary exemplar that showcases the content area and the location.
7. Write a reflection paper focusing on the article and the contemporary exemplar.

Task Specifics

1. Choose Content Area

Choose a content area that you find particularly interesting. By doing this, you will find more value in differences and similarities across cultures. You may choose major content areas (e.g. Piaget and cognitive development), or smaller content areas (e.g. moral development or parenting styles). My recommendation is to choose a small and focused area that you find interesting.

Concrete Example: Early childhood learning and development

2. Choose an Issue

If you are interested in a specific country (not the United States) or a geographic region, then you may choose to focus on an issue relevant to that location. If you are interested in a more general issue that affects multiple locations or cultures, then you may explore that issue.

Concrete Examples:

- (1) Encouraging risk in early education
- (2) The role of the community in shaping early education experiences

3. Request Approval

You may send me your ideas via email, or you may discuss them with me outside class times.

4. Select Scholarly Article

Find a scholarly article that directly or indirectly focuses on your content area and location; I prefer a direct connection. Scholarly articles are usually found, but not exclusively, in academic journals. Select an article that is more recent in terms of publication date, but note that some older articles are seminal works that are important in the field. If you are able to identify a seminal article, you should consider using it.

Concrete Examples:

- (1) Tobin, J. (2005). Quality in early childhood education: An anthropologist's perspective. *Early Education and Development, 16*(4), 421–434.
- (2) New, R. S., Mardell, B., & Robinson, D. (2005). Early childhood education as risky business: Going beyond what's "safe" to discovering what's possible. *Early Childhood Research and Practice, 7*(2), 1–18.

5. Create Quiz

Create a four-item multiple-choice quiz based on the scholarly article. Each item must have four distracters. If you are interested, you may review the tips for creating multiple-choice items that are posted online.

6. Select Contemporary Exemplar

The contemporary exemplar showcases the connection between your chosen content area and location outside the academic setting. You may choose a movie (part or whole), a substantial newspaper article, a book, or any popular media product.

Concrete Example:

- (1) Babies The Movie

7. Write a Reflection Paper

The reflection paper will synthesize your selected content area, your issue, and the

artifacts you assembled. The paper should be structured as follows:

Introduction

- Identify the content area and the issue, and explain your interest. Make reference to specific content from our course.

Body

- Explain why you chose the article and the contemporary exemplar.
- Explore your issue, making reference to your selected article and contemporary exemplar. Identify the cultural artifacts (eg. beliefs) that are presented in the article and contemporary exemplar.
- Demonstrate how the contemporary exemplar adds value to the issue.
- Present your perspectives with support from our course content, the article, and the contemporary exemplar.
- Compare your personal experiences to those outlined in the article and the contemporary exemplar. Interpret the similarities and differences by exploring underlying reasons.

Conclusion

- Summarize the issue, your perspectives, and your interpretations.
- Describe at least one thing that you have learned during this process and state how you plan to use this new knowledge.

Additional Resources

Additional articles that may be used in addition to or in lieu of the provided articles:

Gaskins, S., & Miller, P. J. (2009). The cultural roles of emotions in pretend play. In C. D. Clark (Ed.), *Play & culture studies*, volume 9: Transactions at play (pp. 5-21). University Press of America.

Nwokah, E. E., & Ikekeonwu, C. (1998). A sociocultural comparison of Nigerian and American children's games. In M. C. Duncan, G. Chick, & A. Aycock (Eds.), *Play & culture studies*, volume 1: Diversions and divergences in fields of play (Vol. 1, pp. 59-76). Greenwich, Ct: Ablex.

Assessment

Quiz items

The multiple-choice items will be graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory scale. Students will redo unsatisfactory items.

Reflection Paper Rubric

The reflection paper will be graded using the WSU Critical Thinking Rubric

1. Identifies the Issues					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Does not attempt to or fails to identify and summarize		Summarizes issue, though some aspects are incorrect or confused.		Clearly identifies the challenge and subsidiary, embedded, or	

accurately.	Nuances and key details are missing or glossed over.	implicit aspects of the issue. Identifies integral relationships essential to analyzing the issue.
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2. Identifies and considers the influence of culture					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Approach to the issue is in egocentric or socio-centric terms. Does not relate issue to other contexts (cultural, political, historical, etc.).		Presents and explores relevant contexts and assumptions regarding the issue, although in a limited way.		Analyzes the issue with a clear sense of scope and context, including an assessment of audience. Considers other integral contexts.	

3. Develops, presents, and communicates own perspective					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Addresses a single source or view of the argument, failing to clarify the established position relative to one's own.		Presents own position or hypothesis, though inconsistently.		Appropriately identifies own position on the issue, drawing support from experience, and information not available from assigned sources.	

4. Presents, assesses, and analyzes appropriate supporting evidence.					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Does not distinguish among fact, opinion, and value judgments.		Discerns fact from opinion and may recognize bias in evidence, although attribution is inappropriate.		Demonstrates understanding of how facts shape but may not confirm opinion. Recognizes bias, including selection bias.	

5. Integrates issue using other perspectives and positions.					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Adopts a single idea or limited ideas with little question. If more than one idea is presented, alternatives are not integrated.		Rough integration of multiple viewpoints and comparison of ideas or perspectives. Ideas are investigated and integrated, but in a limited way.		Fully integrated perspectives from variety of sources; any analogies are used effectively.	

6. Identifies and assesses conclusions, implications, and consequences.					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Conclusions presented as absolute, and may attribute conclusion to external authority.		Presents conclusions as relative and only loosely related to consequences. Implications may		Conclusions are qualified as the best available evidence within the context. Consequences are	

	include vague reference to conclusions.	considered and integrated. Implications are clearly developed, and consider ambiguities.
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7. Communicates effectively.					
1	2	3	4	5	6
In many places, language obscures meaning.		In general, language does not interfere with communication.		Language clearly and effectively communicates ideas. May at times be nuanced and eloquent.	

General Module Notes

Consider the following:

1. Students can be given a list of articles and instructed to select one or more as the basis for their paper. This would increase the focus of the module but reduce students' option to explore topics of interest.
2. Students can be assigned to read one or more articles and complete the quiz items from peers. Peer evaluation of quiz items can be a valuable experience for students.
3. Stating a maximum word count or number of pages could make the papers more focused but it may be a disincentive for those who prefer deeper exploration and/or analysis.
4. In this format, the instructor will need to read each research article and attend to each contemporary piece. This may be problematic because it does not scale to large classes. The benefit, however, is that students have the flexibility to explore diverse topics.

Log of Early Reflection on the Module

1. I had a few questions on what exactly constitutes a "contemporary piece." I took a moment in class to talk about how/why we should locate course content in authentic contexts. Then I gave some examples.
2. The approval process appears to be critical. I have spent a lot of time talking with individual students and helping each refine her/his ideas.
3. Students are selecting topics they seem genuinely interested in exploring.
4. Students are selecting interesting but less complicated articles. They seem to avoid articles with complex statistical analyses.
5. Based on the quiz items I have seen thus far, I would say that this aspect of the module is not functioning as intended. I answered most questions thus far without having read the articles.
 - o One student asked if the quiz would be completed by other students. An interesting possibility.
6. Based on the drafts I have read, students are doing a good job of connecting their artifacts to course content, and also presenting/supporting their perspectives and opinions.
7. I'm not sure that it was a good idea to offer to read drafts.
8. I have had to warn a couple students about sounding overly judgmental in the narrative.