



GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AND LEADERSHIP IN CHANGED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

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The Impact of globalization on work and learning

One of the key characteristics of the global economy is the increasing fragmentation of production into different activities and tasks along global supply chains. This has profound socio-economic impacts (ILO, 2015). The rise in global supply chains has been facilitated by a significant reduction in trade and transport costs and by advances in information and communication technology (ICT). Together, these forces have transformed the world into an interconnected and multipolar production and trading arena. This makes obsolete traditional national boundaries and limits. Physical distance is no longer such an obstacle to the movement of goods, services and information. Consequently, the way in which the world economy is structured has dramatically shifted. This brings new types of benefits and risks - with differing implications for firms, workers and learners in both advanced and emerging economies. With an ever-greater number of direct and indirect supply relationships between firms, global supply chains have become increasingly complex (Meixell & Gargeya, 2005).

There are two immediate impacts. One is that all labour market activities now must be viewed in contexts of internationalization. Second is that jobs themselves have been transformed from the defined certainties they once were. Patterns of employment have changed. Even if an individual remains with the same employer over an extended period of time, that person's job requirements will transition many times over the course of time in that position. It is almost certain that the company itself will transition to different owners, that supervisory or production models will evolve and that shifts in the employers' desired outcomes shall be assured. The traditional demarcations within jobs and between sectors have blurred significantly. The capacities and skills required have altered. New forms of work and work organization have produced radically new forms of work production, behaviour, methods, and settings. The evidence is that this pattern is accelerating.

The overall gains from this process should outweigh adjustment costs and any income losses, thereby entailing net economic benefits. The *distribution* of these net benefits, however, depends heavily on policies, legal frameworks and institutions. While globalization can create and destroy jobs when parts of the production are shifted across countries, it can also affect different aspects of job quality (wages, working conditions, specifications, contracts). In other words, economic benefits do not automatically translate into beneficial improvements for

employees at all times. But the jobs people now do assume an innovative character unrelated to traditional models.

Globalized engagement can affect highly skilled and low-skilled workers differently. Apart from many other things, this can have an effect in shaping income distribution. Globalization often breaks up the production process so that more knowledge-intensive tasks remain concentrated in the lead firm, while less knowledge-intensive tasks are outsourced to suppliers in other countries. Globalization thus changes the demand for skills in both lead and supplier firms. These changes in demand then have an impact on the wages of high- and low-skilled workers (as well as the ratio between the two). In this respect, globalization affects workers differently based on their skill endowment (Feenstra & Hanson, 1995).

This has huge implications for the provision of relevant education and vocational training programs. The impact of ICT supported delivery systems has only made more intense the need to match changing needs to relevant, timely and sustainable educational models that interact positively with this changing world. Upgrading towards technologically and skill-intensive jobs may be the preferred option in the long run to address skills gaps and the impact of vocational change and transformation. But whether or not this is feasible will depend on the productive capacity of an economy. In this respect, policies to enhance technological capabilities, technology transfer and the development of skills, including on-the-job training, are essential (ILO, 2015). This in itself challenges traditional models of learning and educational provision.

Educational responses to an altered world

This has immediate and profound implications for those working in educational provision, both locally and globally. Traditional jobs have been re-designed into areas of work performance, which are variable, multidimensional and mutating. Flexibility and adaptability are now more important than specified functional capacities. In addition, the nature and structure of work organization has altered significantly. Concepts like a *job for life*, security, role demarcations, unionization, social security, or tenure have been discarded. They have been replaced by new environments where change, flexibility (in how, when, and where work is done), interaction with co-workers, re-location, disruptive innovation, pervasive technologies and insecurity are now the new norms. As if this were not enough, companies that operate globally shift locations and production lines across continents with staggering rapidity and operate in an environment where job autonomy no longer has any meaning.

For learners (and especially those at risk of social marginalization), and those professionals who work with them, there is now an urgent need to re-conceptualize the environments in which individuals work and learn. This means not only a profound re-examination of the nature and scale of employment and work in the globalized 21st century, but also an ability to understand the dynamics of globalization – and the competence to advise, assess and undertake learning in a deeply transformed environment.

The impact on education and learning of the globalization process is equally contradictory. On the one hand, learning resources (such as course materials, accepted terminology, subject range and internet-based learning) have been criticized for being overwhelmingly centred on US or European models and norms – and, in particular, by being dominated by exclusively English language orientations. On the other, globalization opens up real possibilities for transformative learning, where knowledge exponentially grows without constraints of national curricula or vested self-interest. New models of learning, as well as recognition if not transformation of educational platforms and certification, beckon as industry and education develop more globally meaningful collaborations.

The role of advanced technological tools and e-learning has also become a key focus in the literature and research undertaken internationally. The use of advanced technologies powerfully reinforces learning for adults and provides a rich resource in terms of techniques and methodologies for teaching staff and facilitators. Among the new professions that have emerged are digital content designers, digital writers, graphic artists, rich media experts and project managers for digital content. Parallel to this macro-economic context is the growing impact of the emerging digital world and the contours of employment it is shaping. This new, emerging digital world has created a range of new professions and skill-sets, which are literally and figuratively unprecedented. In other words, these new professions cannot be studied in advance. But they represent a range of professional skills, behaviours and attitudes that professionals are obliged to learn in a hands on manner, in dynamic and evolving job configurations.

Whatever the concerns, it is clear that globalized processes are now a permanent part of the fabric of twenty-first century life. This poses a lot of questions for the principles and practices that underlie the science and practice of learning.

Inclusive global citizenship

It has been found that though the new policy contexts of various European countries support a shift to inclusion (inspired by the policy framework objectives of the European Union), education professionals need more support to develop their practice. It is also possible to conclude that there are some signs of hope and that inclusion can be fostered in settings that have flexible curriculums, programs for staff exchange/training, spaces for dialogue, addressing issues of human rights and fostering processes of labour market participation and practices of peer/mentoring support for stakeholders and professionals. The profound transformation in the global labour market offers both challenges and opportunities.

As work environments change and recognition grows that transition to global existence started long ago, there are exciting challenges to expand our understanding of the world, of the closeness of people and places we have hitherto regarded as totally disconnected from our realities. As the world becomes flatter, both opportunities and risks emerge. On the one hand, the scale of economic disruption is reflected in wars, genocide, ethnic cleansing, health issues and above all the extraordinary movements of people either as economic migrants or refugees

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– now a permanent and accelerating dimension of globalized life. On the other, the explosion of instantaneous communications, accessible education, networked collaborative social media and increasing awareness of how (and why) others live as they do is producing a renaissance in learning and expression.

Cohen and Kennedy (2000) cite six issues around globalization that impact directly on education and learning:

- Changing concepts of space and time;
- An increasing number of cultural interactions;
- Common problems facing the world's inhabitants;
- Growing interconnections and interdependence;
- Networks of increasingly powerful transnational actors and organization;
- Synchronization of all dimensions involved in globalization.

The removal of barriers to participation and the enhancement of embedded equality approaches will, at the end of the day, be about asserting strategic policy as well as the techniques necessary to embed best practice. A sense of vision about what society means, and about what it is for, can inform the creative process of learning and skill development interventions. It can give a sense of value and direction to the design and development of employment structures. A lack of informed understanding about the meaning of work in contemporary society means that we could be forever condemned to repeat past mistakes.

The notion of *global citizenship* has recently gained prominence in international development discourse with the recently-adopted United Nations Secretary-General's *Global Education First Initiative* (2012). Among the three priority areas outlined in this global initiative, the third aims to 'foster global citizenship'.

“Education must fully assume its central role in helping people to forge more just, peaceful, tolerant and inclusive societies. It must give people the understanding, skills and values they need to cooperate in resolving the interconnected challenges of the 21st century.”

The notion of *global citizenship*, however, remains very broad, if not contested, and consequently difficult to operationalize in education. There are two possible reasons for this. Firstly, it is unclear whether the very notion of global citizenship is a metaphor, a contradiction in terms or an oxymoron (Davies, 2006). What does global citizenship possibly imply both from a legal perspective, as well as from that of collective identity, sense of belonging and civic engagement? Secondly, when applied to education the notion of global citizenship implies a certain degree of confusion. Is *global citizenship education* (or *education for global citizenship*) a wishful expression or is it a fundamental purpose of education systems in transformed learning environments?

Citizenship itself can now be reformulated in terms of rights and obligations as well as potentially new forms of post-national citizenship. Educational institutions are the key to this

complex process. They translate an explicit public policy at the heart of the reproduction of all societies. Indeed, beyond socio-economic development rationales, national education systems have fundamental social, civic and political functions related to the formation of citizenship, and to the strengthening of national cohesion. This poses a contradiction if national education systems are charged with developing conceptual frameworks and policy for global citizenship.

If citizenship education remains the preserve of sovereign states, it can be said that many *global trends* present a set of common challenges for all societies and countries around the world. The intensification of globalization is leading to greater collective acknowledgement that individuals and local communities are affected by global processes, and, in turn, that they may also affect them.

The study by Kerr (1999) indicated a shared concern with a perception of unprecedented global change across many countries and a resulting common set of challenges:

- Rapid movement of people within and across national boundaries;
- Growing recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities;
- Collapse of political structures and the birth of new ones;
- The changing role of women in society;
- Impact of the global economy and changing patterns of work;
- The effect of a revolution in information and communications technologies;
- Increasing global population;
- The creation of new forms of community.

In a compelling analysis, Tawil (2013) summarizes the main issues for learning and global citizenship:

“In more ‘critical’ approaches, the ethical starting point is the concept of social justice as framed by the international normative instruments of human rights. A median position is perhaps that of what Johnson refers to as ‘environmental global citizenship’ based on the central notion of sustainable development. All three posit, albeit in different ways, the interconnectedness of local, national and global realities, as well as individual responsibility at these various levels. They all arguably imply a sense of local and global solidarity and a commitment to action.” (Tawil, 2013; p.6)

Educational leadership

Not only do these trends remain valid in the current context, but many of them have also intensified and become more complex. This is particularly true of the new emerging spaces and forms of socialization, learning, and civic and political mobilization in today’s digital world. A global economy would on the surface seem to suggest the need of some kind of global citizenship. The values of public education, critical reflection, access to valued learning outcomes and quality in education all rest upon a direct connection to the policy and principles embedded in the right to learning. There is an essential need for this discourse to

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move from the conjectural into practical ways and means to extend an operational vision of global education and citizenship as integrally linked aspects of the same phenomenon.

The changes produced in both the human and technical aspects of the globalization process shape how global education may now include various learning communities previously excluded by reason of prejudice, discrimination or remoteness. Contemporary education needs to support learners across the globe to transcend barriers and address conflict and persistent discrimination by means of skilful application of potent technological tools in the metamorphosis of traditional educational systems to meet unprecedented levels of socio-economic transformation. This also speaks of the critical importance of innovation and vision in addressing the key priorities for developing learning and transnationality to combat socio-economic marginalization. It is of interest that marginalized groups themselves can often be critically important springboards for new innovative learning methodologies.

The globalization process is at the core of labour market change in all countries. This has specific implications for learning designers and educators in terms of professional training, best practice and standards in approaching the diversity emerging within many communities. The pervasive globalizing process means no discussion on intercultural learning strategy can be undertaken without parallel international understanding and analysis of how new forms of cultural diversity impact on the learning needs of populations subjected to unprecedented levels of change.

Throughout all Member States of the European Union – and indeed in countries all around the world – there is growing concern about the capacity of traditional schools and education systems to change, adapt and provide an appropriate foundation for lifelong learning. It has become urgent for governments to review the ways in which schools are organized, the content of curricula, modes of delivery, design and location of places of learning and the integration of advanced information technologies into the overall educational structure. In such an environment it is important to evaluate and re-assess the role and function of schools in our society and the relationship between education and families, employment, business, enterprise, culture and community.

The OECD thinking on lifelong learning has produced a wide-ranging debate on the type of society we are presently constructing and wish to leave after us. Education and training are not just some abstract themes to be tacked on to the real business of making money. They are at the heart of what it means to grow and develop – both as individuals and as communities. That sense of community which is most threatened by the growth of social dysfunction, racism, violence and despair is best preserved in a context where people are allowed to learn and develop at their own pace with the satisfaction of knowing that their development feeds into processes of creativity and innovation for all.

Much of this is echoed and cogently summarized in the International Implementation Scheme for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development which interweaves the four strands of human rights, social and economic justice, environmental issues, and

cultural diversity. The multiple processes of globalization (in its various manifestations: economic, technological, social environmental, or political) are steadily transforming traditional conceptions and practices of citizenship. The consolidation of the international human rights regime, the greater interconnectedness and interdependence of individuals and groups across the world, and the emergence of new forms of transnational and indeed post-national civic engagement are all expressions of this transformation. Global citizenship as concept and method offers a viable way to liberate education and its associated technologies to serve truly human learning needs in ever more creative and innovative ways.

This also speaks of the critical importance of innovation and vision in addressing the key priorities for developing learning and internationalization to combat the effects of fragmented responses and the impact of socio-economic marginalization. It is of interest that marginalized groups can often be the springboards for new innovative learning methodologies. Developing new innovative and creative learning and application paradigms is critical (for a number of reasons) for both excluded citizens and the educators who engage with them in meeting the challenges of a globalized world and economy.

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