

## Introduction

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### Glocal Education in Practice: Teaching, Researching, and Citizenship

#### Abstract

Internationally, there is a growing body of work on globalization and glocalization driven by a rapidly changing world and associated global and local issues. Although both notions, globalization and glocalization, have developed as a response to the increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, global education has gained stronger scholarly attention than glocal education. This paper provides a platform to put together the two notions in conversation with each other in order to uncover the meaning of glocal education in practice in connection to teaching, researching, and citizenship.

Keywords: glocal education, glocal citizenship, global education, glocalization, globalization, internationalization

#### Introduction: Nexus between notions

In our highly interconnected and interdependent world, people are on the move, products and services are offered internationally, and advanced technologies create changes in society as well as in scholarly fields. According to Williams and Graham (2014, p. 1), “contemporary movements and border crossings in society and academia need to be considered or linked with reshaping the way we teach glocal students and educate glocal citizens”. Mannion (2015, p. 29) suggests that education for glocal citizenship and glocally oriented pedagogies offer more comprehensive educational opportunities than education for global citizenship: “Glocal pedagogies respond to contemporary ecological and social issues in ways that take account of the integrated nature of local and global processes.” This paper supports the abovementioned scholarly assertions, bringing forward the notions of globalization, glocalization, and internationalization with a link to glocal and global education. Glocal education is then explored in connection to teaching, researching, and citizenship.

The term *globalization* is fairly new (1980s) in scholarly research and educational discourse (Jackson, 2016). There is no universally accepted definition for the term *globalization*, which is complex and contested. In general, the term describes the spread of technology, trade, and democracy across the globe (Conroy, 2017). This, in turn, breaks down boundaries and barriers that have an impact on economic development, workforce mobility, and the circulation of knowledge and ideas (Conroy, 2017; Zhao, 2007). In education, technological advancements have

significantly influenced new ways of teaching, learning, and researching across the world. Scholars, however, warn that schools are instruments of globalization, with the agenda to promote a dominant ideology. Robertson (2012) informs that relying solely on the notion of globalization is limiting, since it neglects the complex interconnection between the global and the local as well as existing power dynamics between the two notions. The word *global* can be associated with standardization, while *local* calls for the realization that there are differences between contexts that need to be considered and respected (e.g. culture, environment, and legal requirements). Mannion (2015, p. 20) explains that “the term ‘glocal’ is a useful idea because it provides an inbuilt critique of some contemporary notions of globalization that lurk behind many so-called global curriculum initiatives”.

Another relevant term that needs to be addressed is *glocalization*, which originated in Japanese business practices, meaning global localization. Until now, the term has often been used in reference to globally distributed products or services that are tailored to accommodate the users or consumers in local markets. Converting this process from economic to social and educational systems shows that glocalization is not about universalization. It simply means that global developments in a specific area mix with local culture to produce the desired outcome. As Mannion (2015, p. 21) indicates, “[g]lobalization as a term helps us capture the idea that the local is always with, through, and in the global. Put another way, the global always has a local context for its operationalization”. In terms of social diversity, glocalization attempts to connect universal and local values, placing them in a familiar context (Tagüeña, 2008). Patel and Lynch (2013, p. 223) state that “*glocalized* learning and teaching refers to the curricular consideration and pedagogical framing of local and global community connectedness in relation to social responsibility, justice and sustainability”. Harris and De Bruin (2018) explain that glocalization considers the complexity of globalization, problematizing a compressed worldview that comes with it.

Scholarly literature also brings attention to *glocal awareness* in connection to an *internationalization* agenda. It goes without saying that internationalization, which is sought after by most educational institutions, affects aspects of teaching and research. Patel (2017) argues that the internationalization paradigm is based exclusively on Western knowledge, which undervalues and takes away legitimacy from other forms of knowledge. According to Patel (2017), higher education internationalization is a skillfully engineered apparatus designed to generate lavish revenue with a limited focus on the context-based solutions or sustainable social change benefiting local communities. He calls for a redesign of internationalization and a shift towards the glocalization of learning, which promotes the legitimacy of different forms of knowledge, respects diverse cultural traditions, and embraces equity and inclusivity.

The term *glocal* originally was coined by sociologist Roland Robertson in the 1980s, portraying a blend of *local* and *global*. In alignment with this, Longman’s Dictionary (2018) explains that the word *glocal* relates to the connections and relationships between global and local elements, social aspects, and associated issues. Tagüeña (2008), viewing the notion from a social justice perspective, states that the glocal approach integrates the global and the local, presenting global knowledge in connection to the local context, respecting human rights. She also

talks about the glocal science advocacy strategy, where global issues are discussed in classrooms, making them meaningful to local society. Currently, there are no universal standards for glocal education; however, some scholars, institutions, and organizations have developed a variety of approaches and frameworks for glocal education. In general, the glocal approach to education can be understood in terms of (a) how educational institutions manage to transfer an understanding of global realities, opportunities, and challenges with connection to the local context, and (b) how the educational institutions are meeting the mission of addressing local needs while addressing global realities and performing at a level of global aspirations. At the heart of glocal education is the exploration of local and global connections to maximize glocal consciousness. The concept can be understood in terms of a form of dual citizenship that comes with privileges and responsibilities. We are all citizens of a specific nation, as well as citizens of the world, sharing the same goal to understand and sustain the world in which we live. Glocal education is meant to provide the capacity to recognize oneself in the narrative of the interconnected world as well as local realities.

## Teaching

*Teach the world as well as teach the word.*  
Freire, 1970

Without any doubt, a curriculum can be defined as the core of any learning institution, which means that schools and universities cannot exist without a curriculum. We can also state, without any doubt, that the curriculum in formal education has increasingly become a dynamic process driven by the changes of the globalized world (Alvior, 2014). We live in times of global developments, the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution era, where things are constantly shifting and evolving, and it is our responsibility as educators, and often decision makers, to keep ourselves up-to-date. Thinking about curriculum design and implementation requires carefully thinking about what the currently expected outcomes of a given curriculum (and education at large) are. We need to have a comprehensive awareness of what kind of teachers, researchers, and ultimately citizens we are seeking to prepare, and not how many learners need to graduate to satisfy school rankings or the international competitive educational system.

The literature informs us that the main purpose of curriculum development is to ensure that learners receive cohesive (*interconnected*) and coherent (*clear*) learning experiences that contribute to their personal and professional development. Therefore the curriculum needs to consider learners' different backgrounds, abilities, motivations, experiences, and learning styles, to mention only a few variables. Meanwhile, the content being taught needs to be systematically updated and made relevant at the global and the local level. The American Association for Colleges and Universities (2015), for instance, recommends that schools' learning objectives (or outcomes of a specific program) include civic knowledge and engagement (local and global), as well as intercultural knowledge.

It is also essential to notice that the mere exchange and acquisition of information are not education. William Pinar (2004), an American curriculum theorist, argues that being informed is not equivalent to being educated. Information

must be tempered with intellectual judgment, critical thinking, ethics, and self-awareness. In this case, self-awareness, as one's positioning within a global society and local realities, is of the essence as it accounts for glocal awareness. Choudaha (2012) uses the term *glocals*, referring to a new sector of students as "people who have global aspirations, but need to stay local". Such students have aspirations to become globally competent but, for various reasons (financial constraints, insufficient academic merit, or family obligations), are unable to experience overseas education. In short, glocal students are looking for quality global education, leading to a good career or career advancement without moving far from home.

As explained by Caniglia, Bellina, Lang, and Laubichler (2017), merging global and local means bringing together local learning, engagement, and impact with global communication, collaboration, and knowledge production. This process takes place across social, cultural, and geographical boundaries and involves the way students learn about the world and how to act responsibly in it. The current era calls for a fluid rather than a fragmented understanding of society and social issues. It is all about interconnectivity among places, experiences, realities, and subjects. For instance, Finnish education is introducing teaching by phenomenon in basic education, with the intention to have the new system in place across the whole country by 2020. Chibber (2015) in Quartz, a news publication, states that Finnish schools are already teaching by phenomenon rather than by subject, which means that learners study broader topics, such as the European Union, with a multi-dimensional and multi-discipline approach. Supporters of this program feel that teaching in the old-fashioned way worked in the early 1900s; however, the new concept is more suited for the 21<sup>st</sup> century because it is rooted in real-world experiences reflecting the interconnectivity of subjects and contexts.

## Researching

*Comparative Education does not contend with studying one education system in its societal context in isolation. Various education systems, shaped by their societal contexts, are compared and hence the comparative perspective.*

Charl Wolhuter, 2018

Comparative education has a supportive and informative role for the entire educational studies as a discipline. Comparative education, investigating aspects of educational systems, always takes into consideration the respective social contexts (locality) by which these educational systems were shaped and are influenced. Therefore the element of localization is inseparable from the perspective of comparative education and the comparative research method. As stated accurately by Wolhuter (2018, p. 33), the "focus of Comparative Education is broader than just the education system *per se*. The education system is studied within its societal context and is regarded as being shaped by, or as being the outcome of societal forces (geographic, demographic, social, economic, cultural, political and religious)". A multitude of social and environmental variables need to be taken into consideration before identifying and implementing a good practice from one context to another. As Sir Michael Ernest Sadler (quoted in Hayhoe & Mundy, 2008, p. 4) indicated over a century ago:

*[i]n studying foreign systems of education, we should not forget that the things outside the schools matter even more than the things inside the schools, and govern*

*and interpret the things inside. We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden, and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant. A national system of education is a living thing.*

In the globalized 21<sup>st</sup> century, we cannot ignore global influences; however, neither can localization or positioning be ignored. As pointed out by Hayhoe and Mundy (2008, p. 17), “conceptually, globalization challenges comparative education’s traditional focus on national systems of education. It also creates opportunities for understanding those aspects of the educational enterprise that transcend national borders”. In fact, both notions, globalization and glocalization, are equally important and lessons can be learned from the nexus of the global and the local. The following on-the-ground example, borrowed from Tagüenia (2008, para 9), clearly illustrates the glocal approach to a research project:

*A glocal approach would take the global system of health and vaccines to isolated ethnic groups, together with anthropologists and science communicators who understand the local way of life. These communicators would work with locals (preferably in their original languages) to explore why they can trust medicine and how some simple changes in their domestic routines might improve their health. In the process, we may learn of traditional methods that are useful to our modern society.*

This brings attention to glocal awareness in preparation of future researchers. The ever-changing research environment calls for competent researchers who are able to contribute to the knowledge-based economy and serve as agents of change, locally and globally. The cross-national initiatives to expand doctoral programs need to be followed by investments in quality doctoral programs and glocal research training. Niemczyk (2018) explains that researchers are expected to become knowledge producers, innovators, leaders, and contributors to prosperity and sustainable development. Therefore, in order to meet these expectations, quality research training needs to become a priority, as opposed to the number of degrees desired.

## Citizenship

*Young people growing up in the new century are inheriting a “glocal” world (in which the local is in the global and the global is in the local).*

David Bohm, 1983

Without any doubt, with globalization, the concept of citizenship has become more complex. Mannion, Biesta, Priestley, and Ross (2011) explain that education for global citizenship developed and gained popularity as the result of the pressure to make a living in a globalized world. Jorgenson and Shultz (2012) show that on the surface, global citizenship education may appear to be focused on social justice and inclusion; however, its primary goal can be, in some cases, the advancement of internationalization and marketization. According to Tichnor-Wagner (2017, p. 71), it is essential that teachers demonstrate to students that global citizenship and national citizenship are not mutually exclusive. In fact, global citizenship education cannot ignore the relevance of the local. Mannion (2015, p. 24) argues that “especially in policies of education for global citizenship, we risk overemphasizing the global at the expense of the local, which is clearly a necessary ingredient”.

Glocal education requires schools to create a culture that encourages students to explore and comprehend current social realities and issues. Educators, in their role as facilitators, are in the position to introduce students to global and local realities along with the relative interconnections. Students should not only be offered knowledge but also be empowered to see themselves as glocal citizens who are able to make a difference in the local and global community and thus contribute to a peaceful and sustainable future.

As described by Oomen (2015), there are many reasons for recognizing the value of glocal citizenship. According to the author, glocal citizenship focuses on action as much as on knowledge and beliefs. For instance, confronting global challenges requires local action, which is usually more realistic to undertake:

*...recycling your waste water is easier than directly addressing desertification in the Sahara; helping refugees feel at home in your city is more doable than stopping boats from sinking in the Mediterranean; working for the local foodbank is easier to achieve than combating famine in Africa. (Oomen, 2015, p. 13)*

Sklad, Friedman, Park and Oomen (2016) also echo the need to focus on action next to learning. The authors claim that in order to provide students with a transforming teaching experience while discussing global challenges, education for global citizenship needs to be education for glocal citizenship:

*Such action has to be cognizant of the degree to which the local is constitutive of the global (and vice versa), and the ways in which engagement at home can be as important as engagement in faraway places. (Sklad et al., 2016, p. 336)*

It is essential to recognize that since we are glocal citizens, we are not educating individuals only to become glocal citizens. Instead, we are educating them to gain awareness of their dual citizenship that goes along with privileges and responsibilities. Glocal education has the potential to instill in students complex self-conception and opportunities for active engagement. Not everyone should become an active agent for change, but everyone should be well informed, which promotes decision making in general. Teaching students at all levels of education to recognize their multilayered status within the world gives them a more accurate perception of themselves as citizens of a nation and citizens of the world. This, in turn, connects to the aspect of glocal education that rejects “knowledge parochialism”, the idea that one’s own knowledge system is superior and thus sufficient for complex living (Fataar, 2017). Educational institutions (schools and universities) devoted to glocal citizenship education nurture in students respect for people, diverse cultural knowledge systems, and the environment.

## **Conclusion: Going glocal**

Considering that we live in a glocal interconnectedness, whether teaching or researching, we have the responsibility to recognize ourselves within the local and global society. We cannot afford to escape critical reflection and engagement in dialogue about complex social issues that are intertwined between the local and the global. As demonstrated in the paper, the local is always part of the global.

Striving to educate teachers, researchers, and ultimately citizens as critical readers of the world, we need to devote more attention to glocal education and thus glocal awareness. As mentioned earlier, the word *global* implies some sort of

standardization and *global education* may promote dominant ways of knowing. Meanwhile, no knowledge system is superior over another and omnisufficient for current social complexities. In the complex world where people occupy the status of national and global citizens, *glocal education* offers a more comprehensive outlook on the integrated nature of the local and the global. What needs to be avoided is viewing global citizenship and national citizenship as mutually exclusive notions. In fact, global citizenship education cannot ignore the relevance of the local citizenship.

The comparative research method has the potential to provide further understanding of the value of glocal education, exploring opportunities, challenges, and best practices that different contexts can learn from one another in terms of transformative learning and researching.

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