

Addressing Globalization and Art Education

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Abstract

This is a review of literature that discusses the studies and beliefs about globalization and its effects on cultures, art, and education. It includes the findings and opinions of authors, researchers, and professionals involved in the study of art, education and art education, visual culture, and globalization. Their findings and opinions may be beneficial for the art educator that is developing curriculum for the modern day art classroom.

This literature review focuses on three key concepts related to globalization and its effects. First, it will focus on how globalization is impacting people. Next, it will focus on how communities, cultures and contemporary artists are addressing globalization. Finally, it will focus on how globalization is being addressed in the modern day classroom.

Literature Review

Introduction

My husband grew up in a small town in Georgia where everyone knew everyone. The locals were born and raised there. Things have changed today because Durango Paper Mill, the main industry that supported the small town, closed because it could not produce paper as cheaply as foreign producers (Associated Press, 2002). Around the same time, Kings Bay Naval Base opened. Many of the locals moved away to find employment elsewhere and many young military families moved in. Walmart moved in and many of the small family owned businesses closed. The locals were faced with how to protect the culture and uniqueness of their small coastal town in the midst of change. Many communities today are looking at the same kind of situation due to the present impact of globalization.

Globalization is a complex topic and affects virtually everyone to some extent. According to Delacruz (2011), globalization, art, and education are “inextricably linked” (p. x). As an art educator it is important to examine globalization. It is necessary to know how cultures, communities, and contemporary artists are responding to it. It is essential to understand how curriculum within art education can address it.

This literature review will reflect upon Delacruz’s writings and authors such as Marshall and Chung. It will cover three areas of interest relating to globalization, art and art education. It will consider how the local (people within communities sharing an environment) and the global (people as they relate to the whole globe) are merging together to create hybridized identities within the world today. It will explore how the local and global are merging creatively to contribute to and impact the world through art.

Finally, it will investigate how art educators engage globalization as they shape their local practices.

The Merging of the Local and the Global

Globalization is shaping how race, ethnicity, and culture are woven together. It is believed that in the U.S. “soon no one ethnic or racial group will make up more than 50% of the population” (Delacruz, 2012, p. 234). As cultural practices and physical appearances are blending together, children are becoming more and more multilingual (Vigneron, 2009). Children also have more access than ever before to information, global media, and material culture with today’s technology. Millions of teenagers as well as adults are using social media and other forms of technology to stay connected to family and friends (Delacruz, 2009). In addition, it is not uncommon for individuals to simultaneously belong to the local and the global. While they may live in one geographic community they may be connected to another through a virtual world. Chung (2009) explains it like this, “Not only are technological innovations shaping a global cultural landscape but they are also driving globalization, playing a key role in transporting and transmitting commodities, services, and information among people in greatly varying geographical locations” (p. 186).

Although in many ways the local are merging into the global, people still want to acknowledge and understand their cultural backgrounds. Vigneron (2009) explains “in a world where exchanges of goods and ideas are increasingly frequent on an international level, people have become more aware of the unique characteristics of their local cultures” (p. 36). According to Chung (2009), “globalization disrupts our typical association of culture with location and affects how we identify ourselves” (p. 186).

People today are seeking to bridge “the past with the here and now” (Frosting, 2009, p. 65). They are looking for ways to connect with who they are, in the face of globalization.

The Creative Merging of the Local and the Global

Art is being viewed as a way to promote and encourage identity and cultural heritage in the midst of globalization. The picturebooks created by the Taiwanese “represent an example of how one country” embraced their identity in “response to globalization” (Kuo, 2009, p. 12). Wanting to observe and commemorate their traditions, the government joined forces with private industries to create a series of books to “strengthen Taiwanese national self-consciousness and to emphasize Taiwan’s independence” (Kuo, 2009, p. 12). Similarly, Bae (2009) explains how “Korean popular culture is producing a new construct of Korean ethnic femininity” in an effort to provide Korean girls with “a sense of cultural pride and power” (p. 179).

The International Weifang Kite Festival is another example of how art is being used to foster cultural heritage. According to Wang (2009), the festival “conveys multiple, local, and global facets of Chinese culture, tradition, and community through art” (p. 41). It encourages community-based art education, intercultural education, and attracts people of all ages. As a result, the integrity and honor of the family is strengthened and economic and cultural development is taking place in the community (Wang, 2009).

Contemporary artists such as Takashi Murakami and Jean-Ulrick Desert are addressing globalization through “visual images” that portray “reality or realities” (Marshall, 2009, p. 88). As Delacruz (2009b) explains, these “artists understand and engage forces of globalization...utilize the mechanisms of globalization...and their own

tactics...they reinterpret and reflect the icons and imagery of global visual culture” (p. 85). According to Marshall (2009), “These artists are respondents to and critics of culture but also creators of culture... Their transnational lives give them first hand experience of dislocation and change as well as unusual vantage points on culture and humanity” (p. 96).

The Merging of Art Education with Globalization

Marshall (2009) believes, “It is important that our students understand two things: globalization and art” (p. 95). For this to occur, “thoughtfully and compassionately developed assignments that acknowledge the varied family and cultural experiences of children” need to be presented (Delacruz, 2012, p. 236). Following this concept, Anderson (2009) feels that art “should address the personal and social lives of students. It should be about making and critically receiving art that says something of significance that contributes to the human story” (p. 236). He suggests using themes that encourages acceptance, respect, peace, and understanding.

Frostig (2009) recommends lessons that place “students’ ideas and questions at the center of learning” and address “complex systems of freedom, individualism, equity, and social responsibility” (p. 64). Knight (2009) adds to this by saying that lessons should “look at the roots and outcomes of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping, the dangers of indifference, and the importance of individual and civic engagement” (p. 74).

On the other hand, Chung (2009) thinks it is “essential for art education to employ critical pedagogy to engage students in resistance” (p. 191). They need to be able to process, evaluate, and critically assess the visual culture of today. Marshall (2009) believes that students need to “go beyond absorbing information to developing global

consciousness (p. 96). She feels art such as “collage, layering, combining or metaphor, generates new meanings by reframing or reinterpreting existing images” and “can help students understand how connective strategies trigger ideas and catalyze critical insights” (Marshall, 2009, p. 96). Garoian and Gaudelius (2009) agree that individual and collaborative collage projects can promote understanding in globalization and transnational literacy.

Delacruz (2012) suggests looking within the community for “parents, artists, scholars, cultural workers, and citizens of many diverse backgrounds” to support our efforts (p. 238). Wang believes that celebrating and valuing local art is important idea. She feels it “creates a space for individuals to both interpret and share their own culture” while also increasing and enriching “an awareness of both local and global citizenship” (Wang, 2009, p. 44).

Insights, Applications, and Reflection

Teaching art to a wide range of ages, as well as a diverse group of students, offers many opportunities to address globalization in the classroom. At the same time it presents an intimidating and overwhelming undertaking. The readings throughout this study have presented many ideas, suggestions, and recommendations that include ideas relating to identity, cultural heritage, and visual culture. While there are many suggestions I could insert into my curriculum I feel the key lies in examining how these ideas and recommendations can be adapted to address my specific group of students. This entails knowing my students, understanding their connections to globalization, and evaluating what will benefit them most.

I feel time spent looking at the dynamics of each class can provide insight and

direction as to what students need. This can begin with listening to students as they participate in art making activities and asking them questions. I can make notes of what their conversations are about, what television shows, videos, and movies they are watching, what games they are playing, and what musicians they like. Answers to these questions can then be evaluated and incorporated into lessons addressing the areas of concern as they relate to globalization. Lessons can include related artists of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Another area I plan to investigate involves following a suggestion made by Delacruz to look within our community for individuals of diverse backgrounds who are willing to support our art program. I feel this is an area that I have neglected in the past because I feel uncomfortable doing it. We are fortunate to have a strong and thriving art community and I need to take advantage of it. This can easily be done through connections I already have established on social media sites. Stepping out of my comfort zone and making these connections can benefit my students by providing them with a better understanding of our culture, traditions, and community. It also presents the potential for students to see first hand, how art can unite and build community.

While incorporating lessons into my curriculum that address globalization, I need to keep in mind that it takes time. Whereas I would like to immediately throw things together, I need to think through the process and make good decisions that will impact my students in the best way. It is also important to remember that our world is constantly in motion. While some lessons may be appropriate and beneficial today, they may not be next year or the year after that. Therefore it is imperative that I continue to be a learner as well as educator.

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