

Educational Foundations and the Values of Global Pedagogy

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Abstract

Educational Foundations offers insight into the value societies hold for educating youth. Examining global perspectives concerning the societal desire for education using the phenomenological idea of the *Other* leads to understanding the educative experience as a normative feature of teaching and learning. By communicating this normative feature with the theoretical notion of the “Golden Circle,” educators develop a strong qualitative foundation for theorizing and interpreting results of quantitative educational research.

Keywords: normative, educative experience, the Other, Golden Circle

How is education perceived globally? How do ideas of education inform policy, and influence practice? What roles do multilateral and bilateral international organizations, national governments, universities or other teacher education institutions, teachers’ unions/associations, nongovernmental organizations, the private (for-profit) sector, play in defining education? Perhaps most importantly, what role do parents and caregivers have in defining education? By using analytic tools of educational philosophy to examine global perceptions of education, we can create a framework for discussing answers to questions posed.

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Classical historian and philosopher, Will Durant (1939), in a comprehensive review of history, gave clues early on as to the character of education. His work on ancient civilizations posited the idea that humans' desire to educate their young was to carry on those things that the society thought important. More important than the pragmatic idea of cultural continuity was the idea that the educated individual was superior in many ways than an undereducated peer.

An educational foundations analysis of this normative desire for educating may prove beneficial to the educational community and others for creating an epistemological framework for conducting research. An educational foundation's frame that increases our fundamental understanding of the discipline of education would benefit educational practioners as well as theoreticians. Improving a fundamental understanding of pedagogy provides normative clarity for the professional practice of pedagogy.

Education is power, (Freire, 1990). Education is democracy in practice. Examining educational values in the international arena is helpful in developing a conceptual lens of how education takes its exalted position as a champion of democracy and freedom.

International Education

Observations of global pedagogy provide insight into a society's desire to educate its youth. Peering in classrooms and that desire is witnessed. From the eager enthusiasm of school children to the elaborate curriculum schemes the desire to learn is clearly witnessed. Here I'm speaking of the abstract notion of education – education as a construct. Daily and globally, one will find students and teachers engaged in teaching and learning. I am suggesting here that this educative desire is evident in a macro not micro perception of education.

With a macro perspective we attempt to observe shared values reflected in the practice of education, held by individuals and societies. What are these values and how are they useful in furthering an understanding of the desire to educate?

Education holds the positive expectation of academic and social existential success. Teaching and learning may look different in one part of the world than another. Talk to individuals around the world and many will say that despite international differences in curriculum methods, differences of

curriculum delivery, differences in teacher training and differences in school administration they are all educating pupils. This desire to educate is an anodyne to people throughout the world. The analytical tool useful in framing the appearance of our norm—that homologous root of education—is philosophical analysis of the “*Other*.”

Observation of global pedagogical practices offers opportunities to clarify the value of education, by framing global pedagogy practice with the philosophical lens of the “*Other*”, like those of Martin Buber and Edmund Husserl (Theunissen, 1984). Analysis of the “*Other*,” in this case global pedagogy, provides an opportunity to assess the value of a normative understanding of pedagogy. This apparent innate, perhaps evolutionary, desire to educate members of society—our normative notion—is what can be called educative experience.

Understanding and using the educative experience is crucial to building an educational science or pedagogy, just as mathematics is an essential building block for physics. In building a systematic science of education, educators may find common foundational principles essential in developing a unified approach to understanding educative experience. Educative experience begins with parents, governments and others involved with transmitting the construct of education.

Many times multiple variables, e.g., student standardized test scores, graduation rates, and drop-out rates are quantified and thus thought to be the definition of education. What these quantifications do is empirically note outcomes of education, and not the qualitative values initiating educative experience. These and similar quantifiable measures of the educative process are merely facsimiles or signs of the educative experience—they are not evidence of the normative desire to educate.

Educative experience is the causal component of these quantifications. Educative experience is the foundation of pedagogy (Popper, 1966). Educative experiences lead to educational processes that can be quantified.

Educators should resist temptations to accept quantitative based definition and or descriptions of “educative acts” as definitions of education. It is the richness of human experience – the desire to educate - that forms a reasonable standard to conceptualize pedagogical research. Quantitative understanding of educative experience is useful. Quantitative understandings distract investigation of the normative desire to educate. Educative experience,

at the forefront of pedagogy, infiltrates school experiences with recognition of the normative value of individuals and societies to educate.

Research on students, classrooms, administrative acts, standardized test scores, and other components of school life, should be based on a basic understanding of pedagogy, or those insights stemming from an understanding of the educative experience of students and parents, guardians and others. Buber's and Husserl's conception of the *Other*, global pedagogy, sharpens our research focus on educative experience. With the assistance of the *Other* we can recognize the universal human need to educate. Analysis of the *Other* in global pedagogy supports educative practices informed by educative experience. Global citizens define the essence of educative experience by finding ways to fulfill their educational ambitions.

Let's ask why don't we educate our young? In pre-civil war United States, southern plantation owners and southern legislators went to extreme measures to ensure that enslaved and free Africans in the United States were not given the opportunity to be educated (Berlin, 2007a). Here education meant learning to read and to write. It was fine for the slave to learn a trade or other handiwork that the whites thought valuable. And even that right to learn something thought useful was circumscribed if the African learned the craft too well. The fact that Africans in the United States wanted to decide their educative experience was cause for many to experience the wrath of angry slave owners and racist politicians. Education was sought in order to provide Africans in the US their existential destiny. Despite the shackles of hostile whites, Africans in the antebellum south saw education as a means of establishing an *identity* as a free people (Berlin, 2007b). Despite death threats, angry protests, school ransacking and other attempts to thwart the establishment of education for Africans in the antebellum period parents and citizens, black and white, made valiant attempts to bring education to the youth.

Why did these champions of education persist in their quest to bring the educative experience to so many? Education appears to be our human homologous connective tissue. The underlying desire to educate has foundational roots in who we might be as humans. What is the profound nature of the discipline that reaches its tentacles into our collective hearts and minds and makes us yearn for it so very badly?

Measures of Global Educative Experience

What is this urge to educate? What is this human need, this drive, which propels humans to seek education? Why do we humans endure sacrifices to have it; yet cannot hold this “it” in our hands? It changes shape, it changes outcomes, it is a slippery fellow.

Global pedagogy witnessed through analysis of the Other showcases this human and normative desire. The players in international education are the same worldwide: parents, children, and policy makers. All claim a stake in shaping educative experience.

International measurements of student achievement such as the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) attempt to capture educative experience. TIMSS is the world’s largest assessment of international educational achievement, gathering the results of 425,000 students. TIMSS is a project of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), an international organization of national research institutions and governmental research agencies. IEA is headquartered in Amsterdam (NCES, 2008).

Every three years PISA, sponsored by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, surveys 15-year-olds in the principal industrialized countries. Every three years, it assesses how far students near the end of compulsory education have acquired some of the knowledge and skills essential for full participation in society (OECD Retrieved December 15, 2008). Let’s look at how these two very large global initiatives (approx 33% of all nations), with PISA in 65 countries and TIMSS in 68 countries, help to form a global perception of education.

PISA assessments address the domains of reading, mathematical and scientific literacy. They are covered not merely in terms of mastery of the school curriculum, but in terms of important knowledge and skills needed in adult life. TIMSS is a major source for internationally comparative information on the mathematics and science achievement of students in the fourth and eighth grades and on related contextual aspects such as mathematics and science curricula and classroom practices across countries. The TIMSS frameworks and specifications are developed in a collaborative process involving international mathematics and science experts, as well as the national research coordinators from each participating country, and thus reflect recent developments and consensus in the

international research community and the interests of a wide range of countries (NCES, 2008).

Long-term international studies on education such as TIMMS and PISA describe education through their reporting results of scores and sophisticated analysis of many educationally related variables. TIMMS and PISA researchers generate rankings depicting how well or how poorly one country does against others regarding their respective school systems. Results from TIMMS and PISA reported to policy makers, the media and others cause either alarm or elation.

These large-scale evaluations of education, PISA and TIMMS, use a variety of quantitative methodologies to address their respective goals. Their quantitative science orientation obscures our homologous root of education — desire. The seemingly comprehensive nature of PISA and TIMMS both using multiple indicators of student educational achievement, may be easily thought by many to identify variables necessary in defining pedagogy.

Both PISA and TIMSS are useful in delivering measurable outcomes of educational practice. Their published outcomes of student achievement are signs of the relative health of a particular country's academic achievement. PISA and TIMSS report data representing multiple variables thought to be useful in understanding student achievement; however, it is easy to suggest that these quantitative outcomes are the sine qua non of education. Nonetheless, PISA and TIMSS assessments do not address the qualitative normative component of education *desire*.

What would it be like for PISA and TIMSS researchers to visit a country and not get any data? In countries where there is no formal educational system (e.g. Myanmar and Sudan (north and south)), could TIMMS and PISA researchers collect useful data on education?

Current PISA and TIMMS data provide a perception of education in a particular region. The data from their enquiries shape perceptions of education. That perception is rosy for countries scoring in the higher levels of achievement. The perception of educational achievement is less than rosy for those countries below average on a variety of quantitative scales. Quantitative methodology is useful in managing and interpreting data. But understand that what we measure is what we pay attention to. TIMSS and PISA data focus on educative processes; these data are often times wrongly taken as the definitive starting point in describing educative experience.

The Global Educator

Witnessing the global experience of pedagogy can become force for understanding the normative desire of education being discussed. There is comfort in knowing that educative experience is seen in the global recognition of the desire of parents and others for educative experience.

Internationally, we observe in the motivations of parents for their children's existential, academic and social growth the desire to participate in a valued educative experience. In looking at international education through the lens of the *Other* we recognize the commonality of experiences desired by parents and persons whose responsibility it is to serve youth.

A visible manifestation of the desire for educative experience seen through a global lens is the number of independent international schools found throughout the world. Parents send their children to these relatively expensive schools to have their offspring develop an understanding of the world and their self identity through exposure to and learning of a language thought to be necessary for a level of societal survival. There are many of these bi-lingual English, Chinese, Spanish, French, and Japanese curriculum private and public schools found worldwide. Frequently, parents bivouac outside the school several days before the formal application date in order to secure their place in the queue that holds promise for their child's future. These parents understand that educative experience is an identity-changing phenomenon. This experience provides the stimulus to help the child develop adaptation skills to an ever-changing world. Parents sending their children to public schools in countries where the income gap between rich and poor is great ask that the schools enhance their future through educative experience. In these mostly overcrowded public schools we find very poor parents seeking to find a place for their children. We find these parents demanding from school officials the basic necessities of school life. We find these parents clamoring for a place at the educational table for their child: securing a place that will increase their chances of economic, social and existential survival.

Finding Educative Experience – The Golden Circle

Simon Sinek (2009) described successful communication patterns through the effective use of the Golden Circle for projecting one's ideas. This

Golden Circle Model (see figure 1) is beneficial in understanding the value of a philosophical analysis of education.

Sinek speaks about how all organizations and careers function on three levels: What you do, How you do it and Why you do it. The problem is, most don't even know that Why exists. And according to his research including some scientific and biological, he found around in 2006-2007, that "why" most important aspect to inspire anyone.

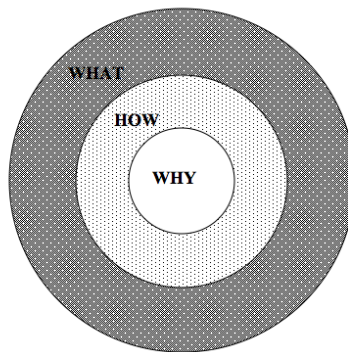


Figure 1. The Golden Circle (Sinek, 2009)

Sinek (2009) notes that communicating ideas can be done either through an outside-in process or an inside-out process. Thus, we can communicate ideas from a position that begins outside of the *Why* inner circle. When we communicate ideas from outside the inner circle inward the most important component of the message is distanced from fundamental desire.

The *What* of Education

The *What* of education is our curriculum. There are basic curricula, science curricula, arts curricula, anti-drug curricula, anti-gang curricula, standards-based curricula, remedial curricula, health curricula, vocational curricula, drop-out prevention curricula, unwed mothers curricula, IB curricula, and obesity curricula. Curricula are the *What* of our profession. Instructional curricula take many emphases. It is easy to see that the *What* of education, reduced to a curriculum emphasis cannot communicate our normative idea of education. Curricula are not sufficient representations of *Who* educators are. Curricula do not represent the normative existential desires of parents, guardians, and the state.

Curricula are necessary vehicles of teaching and learning. And when there are evaluations of PISA and TIMSS results, countries whose students perform inadequately ask for and even mimic curricula of more successful countries. Curriculum reforms maybe a necessary component of teaching and learning. However curriculum reform is not a sufficient vehicle to communicate the profound contribution of desire to enhancing educative experience.

Outside-in communication (see figure 2) is often unclear concerning goals, aims and beliefs. Using the outside-in communication approach of ideas and dreams results in a limited buy of the efficacy of curriculum reform by educational stakeholders. By communicating the *What* of teaching and learning—delivering our message from the outside in—our discussion on education begins on an unsteady foundation. Curricula transform according to any number of social and political priorities. However the *Why* we educate idea has been fundamentally unchanged throughout history and thus offers a more steady platform with which to begin educational inquiry.

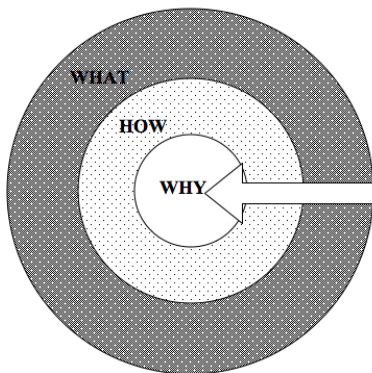


Figure 2. Communication from the outside in (Sinek, 2009)

This form of message communication travels from the What and How as reasons for our actions.

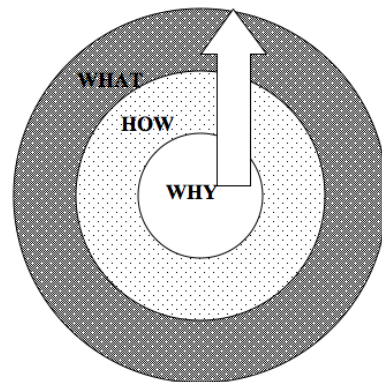


Figure 3. Communication from the Golden Circle out (Sinek, 2009)

This inside out communication creates significant buy-in to ideas, thoughts, and normative messages of education.

The *How* of Education

The *How* of education are instructional methods. These instructional methods are various teaching and learning strategies such as, constructivism, direct instruction, reflective practices, and phonics based practices. These instructional methods identify just a few ways in which the education message is delivered during teaching and learning.

Again if educators communicate reasons for teaching and learning from the *How* perspective the normative message is weakened. Clearly teaching and learning informed by instructional practices based on current research on educational psychology, brain research and in other fields is important in gaining understanding of how students learn. Perhaps one day one of these disciplines will tell us why they learn. Communicating the *How* of teaching and learning (see Figure 2) should not carry the message of *Why* we educate because this outside-in method is not fully informed by normative experience.

The *Why* of Education

If we frame our message from the inside-out perspective, moving from the *Why* golden circle, through the *How*, of teaching and learning and through the *What*, of teaching and learning we communicate educative experience more easily. An inside out communication process makes clear goals, aims, and beliefs. The Golden Circle of communication is the “Why.”

Durant (1939), by asking a value and qualitative based question, Why do we educate our young?, targets the golden circle of communication regarding human ideas. By answering the Why of what it is we do as educators we uncover the educative experience which is the desire to serve youth and benefit society. The Golden Circle informs what we communicate and how we communicate the normative idea of education.

By addressing the fundamental question of *Why* we educate we add clarity, direction, and promise for teaching and learning. By addressing this fundamental question of educative experience we buttress quantitative measures of pupil achievement with insights on the power and democratic nature of the education.

Conclusion

This paper described how the use of a philosophic concept, the *Other*, provides a holistic view of pedagogy not found in quantitative analyses. Pedagogical understanding exists beyond the useful but limiting scope of quantitative measures. Pedagogy is not static and in its motion there are a few constants. The most important constant or normative feature of education is the absolute thirst global citizens have for freedom and democratic thought and action.

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