

Multidisciplinary Humane Perspectives on Education

Multidisciplinary Humane Perspectives on Education:

Educating All for All

Edited by

Lawrence Ogbo Ugwuanyi

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To the memory of my friend, the late Professor Isaac Ovaborhene Idamoyibo, whom I first met at the World Education Fellowship (WEF) conference at Sun City, South Africa in 2001, who remained a very good friend until his passing in April 2022; and to all those who have genuinely served humanity through their work with non-governmental organisations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	ix
Notes on Contributors.....	xi
Introduction	1
Lawrence Ogbo Ugwuanyi	
Chapter One.....	5
Repercussions for the Development of the Individual through Teacher Training in Environments where there are Universal Processes of Development Mediated by Virtual Interactions: Towards an Integrative Humanist Philosophy of Education Claudio-Rafael Vasquez-Martinez	
Chapter Two	13
Applying the Principle of Equality to Interrogate and Advance Teaching and Learning in a Developing Educational Context Lawrence Ogbo Ugwuanyi	
Chapter Three	27
Education Inclusiveness among Children with Learning Disabilities in Nigeria: Implications for Counselling Psychology Muraina Kamilu Olanrewaju	
Chapter Four.....	43
Neither Parochial nor Cosmopolitan: Cultural Instruction in the Light of an African Communal Ethic Thad Metz	
Chapter Five	63
Ubuntu Education: Reforming Human Values among Youths in Institutes of Higher Education: A Case Study of Colleges in Masvingo Province Gladies Nhamburo	

Chapter Six.....	89
Instituting a Culture of Transcendence in Contemporary Global Education: Issues, Values and Challenges Okorie Onwuchekwa	
Chapter Seven.....	108
Locating, Outlining and Assessing the Role of Conflicting Pressures in Higher Institution through a Psycho-Philosophical Analysis Muraina Kamilu Olanrewaju & Lawrence Ogbo Ugwuanyi	
Chapter Eight.....	126
Promoting Human Values by Abstracting the Educational Gains in the Book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes Nesta Andy-Philips	
Chapter Nine.....	146
Imagining a Dialogue between Indigenous and Non-indigenous Knowledge Paradigms in Zimbabwe Dennis Masaka	
Chapter Ten.....	168
Assessment of Teachers' Level of Acquisition of Non-Cognitive Evaluative Skills among Primary School Teachers Iwuagwu Godson Chinedum, Iwuagwu Felicitas Onyemazuwa and Akuta Felicia Onyekpauwanaka	
Bibliography.....	180

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Founded in 1921, the WEF is voluntary and non-partisan, and enjoys the status of a UNESCO non-governmental organisation. The Nigerian section of the WEF began in 2010. In line with the overall vision and mission of the WEF, the book has engaged with theoretical and practical means and methods of educational delivery that will lead to a humane world, with a focus on the developing context of modern educational delivery which influences the activities of the WEF in Nigeria.

In the course of advancing the cause of the WEF in Nigeria (which led to this noble project), I have enjoyed some favours from a number of people who deserve to be mentioned. I appreciate the efforts of the staff of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) Abuja, in particular the efforts of Mallam Isa Yapai to assist in introducing the WEF to the Nigerian community during various activities/interviews at FRCN. I also appreciate the efforts of Dr Henry Ukavwe who showed some devotion and interest when the WEF took off in this country. Others whose interest and devotion have promoted the efforts to sustain and advance the cause of the WEF in Nigeria are its members, some of whom contributed chapters to this book.

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for humanity that deserves the interest of all educated members of the human community.

Lawrence Ogbo Ugwuanyi
Editor

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Claudio-Rafael Vasquez-Martínez, PhD, is an educator, with skills in administration, writing, and painting. He is a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Guadalajara and served as Dean of the Cread Pascual Bravo Technology Institute, Rio Negro, from 1985–86. He has taught the following courses (among others) at the University of Guadalajara: Electromagnetism Theory, 2001–18; Calculus 2001–17, and Numerical Analysis 2003–16.

Lawrence Ogbo Ugwuanyi, PhD, is a Professor of African Philosophy and Thought. He is the Director of the Centre for the Mobilization of Stakeholders at the University of Abuja; the President of World Education Fellowship (WEF) Nigeria and a member of the International Guiding Committee on the WEF. He is the Founder of the *Centre for Critical Thinking and Resourceful Research in Africa* (www.cectraafrica.org). He is well published with over 54 articles in journals such as *West African Review*, *South African Journal of Philosophy*, *Religions*, *Theoria*, *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, *African and Asian Studies*, and *Revista de Estudios Africanos*. His published monographs – *Success in Life* (1989), *Peace of Mind* (1991), *Life is a Treasure* (1996), *Qualitative University Education* (1998), and *The Poverty of Jealousy* (2011), as well as a poetry collection, *Let Them Not Run* (2011) – have been well received within Nigeria.

Thaddeus Metz, PhD, is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pretoria. He is known for drawing on the African philosophical tradition analytically to address a variety of contemporary moral/political controversies. Metz has 300 publications which include books, chapters, and articles, the most recent of which are: ‘Recent Work in African Philosophy’, *Mind* (2021); ‘Traditional African Religion as a Neglected Form of Monotheism’, *The Monist* (2021); and *A Relational Moral Theory: African Ethics in and Beyond the Continent* (Oxford University Press 2022). Metz was once

designated one of ‘The World’s Top 50 Thinkers’ by *Prospect Magazine* for having helped bring African philosophical ideas to global audiences.

Muraina Kamilu Olanrewaju holds a PhD in Counselling/Educational Evaluation from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He is a Lecturer in the Department of Educational Management and Counselling, Faculty of Education, and the Director of the Centre for Research, Industrial Linkage and International Cooperation at Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria. He is a member of many professional associations, including the Educational Research Association of Turkey (2018). He has served as Visiting Associate/Adjunct Professor to Department of Psychology, University of the Gambia and Unicaf University, Cyprus. He was awarded a research grant in 2017 by Nigeria’s TETFUND Institution Based Research.

Onwuchekwa Okorie, PhD, is a lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Abuja, Nigeria. His research interest hinges on existential phenomenology and ontology (metaphysics), the history of philosophy, the philosophy of education, and environmental philosophy. Apart from his many research papers in both national and international philosophical journals, he also co-authored the book *The Fundamentals of Philosophy and Logic for all Disciplines*. His most recent publication is “The Place of Aristotle’s Theory of Moderate Realism in Brand Equity and Management”, published in *Academia Letters*.

Dennis Masaka holds a PhD in Philosophy from the University of South Africa and teaches philosophy at Great Zimbabwe University, Zimbabwe. He is a Research Fellow in the Department of Philosophy at the University of the Free State. He has published in journals such as *South African Journal of Philosophy*, *Philosophical Papers*, *African Identities*, *Journal of Black Studies*, *Education as Change*, *African Study Monographs*, *Journal of Negro Education*, *Theoria*, *Alternation*, *Journal on African Philosophy*, *Social Epistemology*, *CODESRIA Bulletin* and *Filosofia Theoretica*. He has contributed a number of book chapters to edited collections. His areas of interest include the philosophy of liberation and epistemic (in)justice.

Nesta Andy-Philip holds a PhD in Biblical Studies, specialising in the Old Testament. He is a Bible translator and teacher. He teaches New Testament

Greek, classical Hebrew and theology in the Department of Christian Studies and Religious Communication at the University of Abuja. He has numerous scholarly publications to his credit which include books and articles in both national and international journals. He is a member of the following professional Associations: Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS); Nigerian Association for Christian Studies (NACS); the Society for Research and Academic Excellence (SRAE); and the Society for Biblical Literature (SBL).

Gladies Nhamburo holds a Master's degree in Educational Foundations and Philosophy. She is currently pursuing a PhD at Women's University in Africa and teaches philosophy at Masvingo Teachers College, Zimbabwe. Her research interests include quality education and educational policies. She has presented conference papers on mentoring, inclusive teacher education, ECD provision and perceptions on reviewed curricula.

Akuta Felicia, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Abuja. She attended Community Secondary School Emekuku, Owerri between 1987–93. She obtained a Nigerian Certificate in Education (Early Childhood/ Primary Education/ Home Economics) from Alvan Ikoku College of Education Owerri in 1998, a B.EdB.Ed. (Guidance and Counselling) from University of Nigeria Nsukka in 2000, an M.Ed. (Early Childhood Education) from University of Ibadan in 2008, and a PhD (Childhood Education) from the University of Nigeria Nsukka in 2018. She has written and co-authored several scholarly articles on childhood education published in academic journals.

Iwuagwu Felicitas Onyemazuwa, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, at the University of Abuja. She obtained an NCE (Early Childhood/ Primary Education/Home Economics) from Alvan Ikoku College of Education Owerri, a B.Ed. (Guidance and Counselling) from University of Nigeria Nsukka, an M.Ed. (Early Childhood Education) from University of Ibadan, and a PhD (Childhood Education) from University of Nigeria Nsukka. She has written and co-authored several scholarly articles on childhood education published in academic journals.

Iwuagwu Godson Chinedum holds a PhD in Educational Research, Measurement and Evaluation (RME). He is a Lecturer at the Institute of Education, University of Abuja, Nigeria. He has numerous publications in the area of his research interests and has co-authored scholarly articles in both national and international journals. Among his publications are “Assessment of Teachers’ Level of Acquisition of Non-cognitive Evaluative Skills among Primary School Teachers”, “Readability Index of Secondary School Economics”, and “Development and Validation of Teachers’ Job Satisfaction and Motivation Scale Manual (TJSMS)”.

INTRODUCTION

LAWRENCE OGBO UGWUANYI

Given the complexities, diversities and challenges of human nature and our environment this book was conceived to articulate and illustrate the various ways and forms that education can reach as many people as possible. The aim of the book project is to publish a book that attempts to articulate how best education can promote the emergence of a multi-cultural, multi-religious and or secular, tolerant, international human community where the values of peace, humaneness and tolerance constitute core human values and are cherished by all. In so doing, education can serve as a viable tool that could lead to a global human culture where each component of humanity could be seen to belong and to have the opportunity to contribute to a better human order

The book addresses a number of issues such as how to achieve an integrative humanist philosophy of education, and how to provide the form of education that could be relevant for global humanity and reconnect mankind with shared goals and ideals. This state of affairs can be achieved by cultivating human nature through education. Thus the educational needs of all children, youths and adults are captured in part or in whole by these chapters, which aim to articulate how all educated citizens of mankind can be useful to all others. Its contributors – drawn from Mexico, South Africa, Nigeria and Zimbabwe – are all united on the need for education to serve some definite goals that can make every member of the human community accountable to the other and enable the knowledge achieved through the educational process to serve the desired goal of discovering and being useful to one another.

The book contains ten chapters in all, with various topics that rally round the overall vision behind the project. In Chapter One, entitled “Repercussions for the Development of the Individual through Teacher Training in Environments Where There Are Universal Processes of

Development Mediated by Virtual Interactions: Towards an Integrative Humanist Philosophy of Education”, Professor Claudio Rafael Vasquez-Martinez (who made his contribution from Mexico) articulates the ways in which we can modernize teaching patterns. The author suggests that teachers should not see the school in isolation or in the traditional mode but in a way that engages modernity through legitimized means of information and communication technologies.

Chapter Two, “Applying the Principle of Equality to Interrogate and Advance Teaching and Learning in a Developing Educational Context”, explores how education can promote the principle of equality. Here the author, Professor Lawrence Ogbo Ugwuanyi argues that education in itself should reflect the principle of equality by ensuring that students and learners learn in environments that are designed to reflect the ethics of equality. In the spirit of the World Education Fellowship, the NGO through which the book was conceived, this chapter attempts to locate and address the challenge of inequality in educational pursuits and delivery.

In Chapter Three Dr Muraina Kamilu Olanrewaju stresses the need for inclusiveness with regard to the educational needs of people with disabilities. He recommends that counselling psychologists should be involved to create an attitude that favours people with disabilities in educational service delivery.

In Chapter Four Professor Thad Metz, who sent his contribution from South Africa, suggests how education can serve the role of cultural education without creating a culture of alienation among students. He suggests that educators should “give some priority to understanding and enriching local culture, while being open to and not remaining ignorant of other cultures”. In this way education can create the opportunity for larger gains for mankind through a cosmopolitan worldview.

Chapter Five, titled “Ubuntu Education: Reforming Human Values Among Youths in Institutes of Higher Education: A Case Study of Colleges in Masvingo Province” is a contribution by Gladies Nhamburo from Zimbabwe. Here, the author discusses how education can serve the role of infusing moral values in the minds of recipients. She applies the instance of

a study conducted on youths in the Masvingo Province of Zimbabwe to argue that education should help in “strengthening the affective domain in our curriculum” to achieve a morally sound society.

Chapter Six is a philosophical exploration of how education can lead to a transcendental vision of humanity. Titled “Instituting a Culture of Transcendence in Contemporary Global Education: Issues, Values and Challenges”, the author Dr. Okorie Onwuchekwa theorises the need to transcend limits in educational service delivery. He suggests that the mind should insist that only the best is good enough and seeks for what can adequately transform the self. By searching for this higher limit of things there can be a higher gain for educational values.

Chapter Seven is a joint paper by Dr Muraina Kamilu Olanrewaju and Professor Lawrence Ogbo Ugwuanyi. The two authors capture the challenges arising from conflicting pressures among educators and why this should be seen as an important issue that has to be addressed for quality educational delivery. Applying some views drawn from psychology and philosophy, the work locates conflicting pressures as an issue that can lead to conflicting outcomes.

Chapter Eight is an attempt to locate values and principles that engender humanitarianism through the knowledge that comes from religion. Titled “Promoting Human Values by Abstracting the Educational Gains in the Book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes”, the author Dr. Nesta Andy-Philips draws from the Christian Bible to provide positions that re-centre learning at the heart of humanitarian culture. Through inductive study, the chapter attempts to abstract human values from the books of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs and applies them for the betterment of society.

Chapter Nine, titled “Imagining a Dialogue Between Indigenous and Non-indigenous Knowledge Paradigms in Zimbabwe” is a contribution by Dr Dennis Masaka. In the chapter the author attempts to respond to this need. The study looks at the items for education and provides views that illustrate the need to minimise the imperial quality of the current knowledge process. Drawing from the instance of Zimbabwe, the chapter “imagines the possibility of a dialogue of epistemologies that would lead to educational

curricula that also includes the knowledge paradigm of the indigenous people” of the country.

Chapter Ten addresses the need for primary teachers to be sensitive to the humanitarian demands of their work. Authored by three scholars with specialities in primary education – Iwuagwu Godson Chinedum, Iwuagwu Felicitas Onyemazuwa and Akuta Felicia Onyekpauwanaka – “Assessment of Level of Acquisition of Non-Cognitive Evaluative Skills Among Primary School Teachers” looks at the state of non-cognitive skills among primary school teachers in selected secondary schools in Abuja, Nigeria. By “ascertaining the level to which primary school teachers possesses non-cognitive evaluative skills”, the work provides views that make education more gainful so as to serve worthier humanitarian gain.

In all, these scholars give us a number of narratives and scholarly interventions that enable readers to see the need to engender humanitarian values through education. There is no doubt that if these significant values find a space in educational delivery, the world will be far better for it. Education, in the end, must serve to advance and promote human values.

CHAPTER ONE

REPERCUSSIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL THROUGH TEACHER TRAINING IN ENVIRONMENTS WHERE THERE ARE UNIVERSAL PROCESSES OF DEVELOPMENT MEDIATED BY VIRTUAL INTERACTIONS: TOWARDS AN INTEGRATIVE HUMANIST PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

CLAUDIO-RAFAEL VASQUEZ-MARTINEZ

Abstract

The training of teachers in the development of educational competencies is the central issue of this study. The process for training of teacher is described. Training of teacher in the development of educational competences is advocated and a profile of teacher skills developed. Training of teacher is different from training for a profession of training of teacher. The substantive question is how to develop teachers, and for what, without falling into informational bulimia, where knowledge is regurgitated undigested. Teachers need diverse skills, and must be able to understand and tackle problems, as well as assimilating and generating new knowledge. Teachers must have skills that are logically linked. This integration of skills is made possible by a focus on competences, which can be thought of as a step forward in the development of the teacher, and as one of the best means that society has of preparing the teachers that are needed in the present day. The transmission of information confronts current training processes with the challenge of building signs and symbols when signals are no longer

controlled by traditional pedagogic devices – such as using the blackboard, the classroom and the teacher’s body – but by information technology and communication, including screens, smart phones, audio devices and electromagnetic waves. The engagement with elements outside the school, whether poverty, technology, a combination of both, or other factors, requires that the school no longer look inwards and consider itself in isolation, creating the production of subjectivities by discipline and controlling classes. It must use legitimate means of information and communication technologies towards fostering an integrative humanist philosophy of education.

Introduction

The higher education system in Mexico, is currently undergoing a problematic transformation so palpable that a dispute has arisen over the boundaries of higher education as a social institution. On the one hand are those who argue that it is an institution that seeks knowledge and the education of citizens, while on the other there are those who see it as a resource and a means of negotiation and interaction, which is presented as a factory of public skills, legitimized by private interests through technological and managerial processes, effectively driven by the demands of the market and profit, providing a consumerist education which engages with the global context.

The aims of the present paper are to describe, analyse and demonstrate the links of the current elements in the higher education system of Mexico with the information society, and to suggest ways of moving forward. At the same time, the chapter seeks to highlight the social, subjective and technological levels which are taken into account in creating educational opportunities, both in the public and in the private sectors of higher education, by adopting distance education models. Distance education is enhanced by global dynamics that anticipate future scenarios of educational development, creating media, and incorporating elements of transnational educational.

Today higher education institutions adopt a blended approach, which is to say they adopt mediated subjectivities and action at a distance, using

technologies in the global market for higher education in Mexico as a means of legitimizing citizen training. This has become training for students immersed in the culture of virtual reality, where roles are continually redefined and invented, and there is some blurring between identities.

The Market for Higher Education

It is possible to speak of an educational purpose, which means that university reform can be framed as a rational and bureaucratic emergence of specialized work. Such reform originated in the nineteenth century, where the educational system was closely related to the needs of industry, labour and daily activity; it represents a certain pragmatism that seeks to relate the educational services provided by the universities with the more specific needs of the economy and society, taking advantage of the practical nature of individuals. This structure helped them to solve the problems of business and industry through means such as isomorphism, which legitimizes patronage relationships between students and educational institutions.

According to Reading (1996) it is necessary to rearrange educational institutions, as the implementation of a mediated subjectivity makes them lose their essence as producers, protectors and universal agents in forming individuals and corporations on a bureaucratic model, stressing panoptic control.

Given this, there is no doubt that the school, as part of the system, cannot remain unaffected. It is necessary to rework the curriculum by introducing new virtual content which is supported to complement educational processes, as Perez (1998) has observed:

... The role of the school is to help citizens become more educated, responsible and critical, now that knowledge (in this case about the potential and the mechanisms of seduction and awareness of the mass media and new communication technologies) is a necessary condition for the conscious exercise of individual freedom and for the full development of democracy.

Approximating a mediated subjectivity

Devices that create subjectivity

The transmission of information confronts current training processes with the challenge of building signs and symbols when signals are no longer controlled by the traditional pedagogical devices – the blackboard, the classroom teacher, the body – but by the array of mediating technologies, including screens, smart phones, audio devices and electromagnetic waves. The engagement with elements outside the school, whether poverty, technology, or a combination of both, or other factors, requires that the school no longer look inwards and consider itself in isolation.

However, these developments require the creation of a virtual reality, created by the manipulation of electronics, computing and cybernetics as a control mechanism from inside and from outside educational institutions. A mediated figure does not entail media communication, but a set of technologies, or “action at a distance”, as claimed by Tarde (2004). Old technologies (the mass media) coexist with the new (information) technology. From this point of view, “mediated” does not mean only that it comes from the media, but that it develops through a process of mediation, referred to by Rodriguez (2009), and the trend is for integration into a globalizing world, subject to the demands of the state and the market.

Subjectivity is defined as a way of life that is culturally and socially constructed; it is produced by material practices that give life to these modes of life, bringing subjectivity-producing devices into existence as certain structuring practices that have an impact on a way of living.

One device of control and power that is prominent in educational provision is the media, as well as information and communication technologies, which as Duschatzky (2004) has argued do not exert their power over the subject who was previously assembled, but over the subject that they create. Hence the influence of mass media and ICT in creating subjectivity (based on a constructivist epistemology of language and hegemony of support-screens) and organizing a complex spatio-temporal and perceptual-cognitive condition of life.

Therefore, “The dominant subjectivity is not institutional but mass mediated” (Lewkowicz, 2004). Speaking at a global level, we understand that the rules are not merely normative and knowledge-based, but arise in subjectivation through the rules of image and opinion, which make it possible to talk of a society of spectacle – an impersonal education – in which semiotics is domesticated by the reading of images, rather than the reading of letters. We experience the media by means of information and communication technologies, on which our educational system is currently based, especially when higher education is managed by two consortia of communication in our country.

Castells (2006), in *The Network Society*, aims to cross over the divide between noun and adjective, and suggests that, rather than virtual reality, we should speak of real virtuality. This expression is intended to highlight the contrast between a reality “lived”, not shown, and one that would become the reality of representation itself.

For this, you need to be able to differentiate between what composes and symbolizes the mediated world and what does not. In a mediated world, what happens at any time and in any space is lived. In the mediated world experience is not required, and not even presence is necessary. The radio, as a media tool, relates what is happening to millions of people, even if they are not paying attention. Television, like radio and film, is recordable and reproduces records in a way that is traditional for the media. Turning to the present situation, digital media attach and create materials and information (virtual platforms) to be studied by a whole population, and students are globalized and depersonalized in terms of distance education and training processes.

Components of the mediated subjectivity

In this sense, the media world, real virtuality or the show, are all names of a compression of space and time (timeless time and the space of flows) in which the subjects and students no longer move. It is almost an inner journey, without movement, to the substance of the representation. Hence we are justified in talking about virtual universities, distance learning classes, executive bachelor degrees, processes and procedures that make it

possible to digitize and globalize a commodity exchange of educational services, through remote monitoring (de-territorialization) by governments, permitting them an alleged autonomy as institutions of higher education.

It is, therefore, important to summarize the components of subjectivity in relation to media in higher education. Education is confinement, discipline and surveillance, controlling societies, shaping development, training and information, space, time and body, in the control of societies and mediated subjectivity. This bringing down to earth is intended to demonstrate how social change, the product of globalizing phenomena – among which is the “education crisis” that is currently seeking to trans-nationalize education by means of new social dynamics, technology flows and their subjective effects – makes it possible to answer the question: How should we evaluate the power of higher education in the information age?

Today the demand is not only for education, but for trained personnel, which requires making changes to courses, changes to problems and skills, and to talk about the information age, noting that digital technologies effectively play the role of surveillance and panoptic mechanisms, in the control of a company, only cheaper and more remote. New and future professionals are supported in a learning process based on “competence” and “virtual artifacts”, looking not so much at historical development, but at a permanent, global ordering of information and communications that empowers the trans-nationalization of higher education, spreading homogenous schemes, which are distorted by a local or national community, to make way for a busy multiculturalism, supported by social relations and subjective media.

Therefore, the technologies can enhance trends, transforming them into something equal to or different from that imagined at the time of its creation, through social use. It is not enough to refer to this use to bypass concerns. The crisis in the concept of training, teaching and learning in modern times correlates to the emergence of the information technology revolution. In turn, this revolution intensifies the scope of the show, because it leads to the possibility of infinite representation (synthesis of images and sounds, convergence of new and old). And in doing this, the crisis reaffirms the concentration on training.

From this point of view, the information is the name of a process of transformation (of Western societies into capitalism itself). Technologies are both an expression and empowerment, pivoting between the control of societies, general appearance and mediated subjectivities. As noted by Berardi (2006), communication technologies have changed the context of human critical thinking in which we find paradigms of modern humanism.

Conclusion

Therefore, one can locate subjectivities in the culture of schools, including through their practices, knowledge and representations, produced and reproduced as part of the everyday life of the institution. The new subjectivities are based on media in education, following from the modelling of the set of practices, knowledge, and social representations that operate through the mass media and the new (and not so new) communication technologies.

It is increasingly clear that we need to understand the diversity and plurality as well as the singularity in the different areas of endeavour in education, understanding that we are sheltered by an information age that connects to a modern higher education system depending on state requirements and on the market. These latter forces respond to globalizing processes based on relations of power and domination that are hidden behind the legitimating argument that relations within institutions are the result of targeting criteria of efficiency directed to groups in society that want to bring about economic modernization.

So, to fall into subjective practices in education implies practices that are not regulated or controlled, much less certified by internal or external agencies of school culture. The client-learner does not stop being a figure-medium, individualized and standardized by the technology of the solidarity of mediation.

Previously, educational subjectivities ended with the moulding, the search for knowledge through science, with memory and knowledge. Today media subjectivity replaces those traditional elements like the blackboard in a classroom, to inventory information through the image and perception,

highlighting the following question: How do we link the established and learned teacher with the student-user who is globally mediated? And, therefore, who teaches whom?

The proposal emerges in search for a social balance that allows further preservation of the traditional educational scheme, supported by information and communication technologies, which are used, not merely for administrative, commercial and transnational purposes, but as a means to allow training to continue, consolidating universal individuals through scientific knowledge.

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CHAPTER TWO

APPLYING THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY TO INTERROGATE AND ADVANCE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A DEVELOPING EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

LAWRENCE OGBO UGWUANYI

Abstract

A prominent aspect of modern life in Africa is inequality: that is how it can be said that the community upholds and defends the ethics of equality in social and political lives of the people. Although this problem is considerably global, some societies have recognized this more than others. This is arguably contrary to the African traditional communal ethics that promoted the ethics of sharing and brotherhood, which at last in principle minimized inequality. This chapter locates the challenge of inequality in the social life of people and suggests how the ethics and principle of equality can be advanced through education and educational delivery. It suggests that making equality a core principle in education could lead to rewarding outcomes for the education. To do this it discusses (i) the idea of equality and its gains and promises; (ii) locates the problem with educational delivery in the developing African context through inequality. It then explains how (iii) equality is a missing variable in educational values of modern Africa and suggests (iv) how equality can be applied to promote teaching and learning. The method applied is textual reviews and critical evaluation of extant claims on equality and education. This chapter sets out to highlight the need to promote the quality of educational delivery in a developing context. Educational delivery broadly refers to capturing the process of providing education and the desired outcome of education. The work applies equality as a desirable value that can lead to this process and attempts to discuss how teaching and learning can promote or reflect the virtue of equality. The work illustrates how the absence or lack of equality in African social life has affected the desirable gains of education negatively

and how this can be held to emanate from the educational process. It then proceeds to illustrate how the virtue of equality can be applied in teaching and learning.

I. The Idea of Equality and Its Gains and Promises

Equality can be defined as that virtue in terms of which items are held to have the capacity and potential to influence each other and to expect a balanced outcome from each other proportionately in interacting with each other. It is a state in which a person, institution or organ does not suffer any deprivation and deficiency either in its nature or potential and has the capacity to engage others of the same rank with the same capacity and resources. Equality amounts to a measured or desired proportionality in worth, significance, value and meaning.

At least four values can be itemised as gains that derive from the principle of equality. The first is that equality leads to and promotes a conception of the virtue of justice. The second is that equality promotes the virtue of egalitarianism. The third is that equality accepts and enhances the idea of dignity among the human community and the fourth is that equality generates respect among human beings.

To begin with, equality promotes a conception of justice. The concept holds that justice means treating equals equally and unequals unequally. This idea of justice interprets it as giving each person his or her due in the right means, guaranteeing the availability of the same to others. This theory of justice which owes its origin to one of Plato's dialogues implies that justice amounts to meeting a desirable dividend based on allocating rights and responsibilities based on the principle of equality. The implication of this is that justice can only be obtained – especially in the socio-political demands of the term – among a group of people when there is an identifiable measure of balance in the resources that are allocated. Through this “fixed or measured sameness” within a given group, a living entity can identify with another on the grounds of justice. The implication of this is that a basic assumption of justice can only be assigned to an organism if it is held to be the same rank as other organisms of the same order. Equality in this regard demands a basic sameness or background. For instance all human beings

are held to be equal or implied to be equal on the ground that they have forty six chromosomes each of which has the basic potential for actuation. Similarly, all human beings have the same natural inheritance and occupy the same natural space. This order confers the same terrestrial status on human beings and demands that everything should be constituted to respond to the demand of this sameness. For instance, while justice demands that human beings should feed to live, another aspect of justice also means that human beings should feed according to the measure of their need for food such that those who need more tons of food to feed should be given more at the cost of others' feeding. Here, what is at work is what can be called the equality of human nature and the meaning attached to it, which should drive the basis for justice.

The second value that can be derived from equality is egalitarianism. This value demands that we apply a basic disposition that demonstrates the acceptance of the uniformity or sameness of the human desire to share the gains and pains of social belonging. An egalitarian social ethic is one which accepts a measured sameness, valued oneness and a communitarian ethics as principles of social relations; one that practices an ethics of inclusiveness and admits members on the principle of sameness and oneness. An egalitarian society would for instance promote a worldview which encourages the ethics of participation and discourages the principle of alienation and estrangement.

The third value that can be derived from the principle of equality is dignity. By dignity I mean a measure of meaning that places high regard or status on a person or agent. Dignity implies or demands the ascription of the virtue of nobility to an item whereby the item is allowed to exist or operate to its own end and in such a manner that its distinction is upheld and recognised. Dignity is often defined by the level of autonomy and regard that is applied to an item. To be dignified is to stand out with a high mark of regard and value. When an item is held to be dignified its status is believed to be sacrosanct as to disallow any alteration. It is seen to be noble and to deserve care and protection which makes it imperative not to harm the item or to interfere with its worth, value and status. For instance, when bio-ethicists talk of the dignity of human life the view implied is that just by being a life belonging to human that life has inherent dignity. This view de-emphasizes

(or at least does not principally emphasize) such demands as the quality of life, the potential of the life, and the needs of the life as defining constituents on which the idea of dignity should be upheld.

The fourth value that arises from equality is the virtue of respect. When a person is held to be equal with others there is little chance that the person will be held in contempt or disregard. Respect is a principle that demands a disposition to permit the other to be as different and unique as is desirable to the agent. It is a disposition to a desired difference and the ability to resist the temptation to hold the other in disregard. Respect preserves or permits the being of the other corporately and totally without affecting the items that influence the component of the item. In relation to the individual it demands allowing the faculties and principles of man – the will, reason, body and spirit – to function in the way that preserves and defends the being of the other. Respect demands the need to honour an individual by ascribing a measure of value or worth to the individual. The virtue of respect demands that we approach the other with regard – the kind that pre-disposes us to subordinate (or coordinate) our worth to the worth of the other person or at least permit the other to function in a manner that defends the demands of his or her status.

After the attempt to explain the meaning of equality the question that borders us in relation to this work is how do we articulate the role equality should play in educational delivery? And how can it be discerned that such a role is desirable? To address these matters it is urgent to note that education shapes both society as a whole and the outlook of individuals; to the extent that this is the case, a core human value such as equality should attract concern as to the kind of relationship it is supposed to have in relation to the educational process. Thus, if education has as much power and influence as to shape the individual and society significantly, it is important to consider the kind of relationship it could have with such a cardinal human value as equality, given the outstanding significant virtues it confers on us as people. Can education which promotes inequality shape society positively? What would happen if (or what does happen when) educational delivery ignores equality as a significant social variable that should define and shape the human society? And if equality is held to be a desirable value in the educational process, in what significant way should this be understood