

E-1 Issues in Teaching International Studies II

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Economic Globalization Significantly Changes the Focus of International Studies

Abstract:

We live in an extraordinarily fluid time when the choices made today will have massive consequences for tomorrow. The institutional framework as it exists today for dealing with the resulting global challenges brought about by rapid technological change does not match the scope, scale and nature of the challenges. Constructively moving forward requires a clear understanding of today's power centers as well as the strengths, weaknesses and relationships of each to the others. The major issues of war and peace, poverty alleviation and environmental degradation can not be understood by focusing solely on the interaction of sovereign governments and international institutions. Attempting to address international issues through the prism of intergovernmental debate misses the point and leads to misguided solutions because the analysis ignores the major power players in a globalized society, Transnational Corporations (TNC's) and International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO's). The focus of this discussion is the examination of the power relationships of the major global actors to evaluate present international management systems in the light of the challenges to these systems being brought about by the Transnationalization of production and the Globalization of our economic and cultural structures. Major TNC's and global financial institutions operate outside the effective control of even the most powerful nation-states and in fact may establish much of the political agenda of these legitimate governing bodies. Of the largest economies in the world today, over 50 are TNC's. The actions of major financial institutions have brought down governments and dictated decisions regarding expenditures for internal social programs. In contrast, cooperative ventures involving TNC's, INGO's and civil society organizations have effectively provided needed services to society where governments in developing nations have proved incapable. Debate is needed to begin to evaluate the proper future roles of existing and new international organizations in managing and coordinating the productive and hostile forces that Transnationalization/Globalization has created. The "End of History" hasn't arrived as claimed by Fukuyama. Instead, we are once again at an exciting beginning where important impacts can be made concerning how the 21st century will unfold. Enlightened decisions can be made through an unemotional understanding of the relationships and powers of today's major global participants.

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Higher Education without High Learning: The Virtual Classroom

Abstract:

Universities across the country are adapting to teaching and learning in an online environment. In fact, some schools offer entire online degree programs. This project discusses the problems and prospects of virtual learning environments. It addresses the university incentives to offer online only courses and the problems this presents for pedagogy. The project includes an online survey instrument that was administered to both students and faculty to assess their experiences with online Political Science courses compared to face-to-face courses.

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Creativity and Culture in Discourses of Education: Making the Global Local (and vice versa)

Abstract:

Creativity has been the subject of academic studies since the mid-twentieth century in the U.S. and in other English-speaking countries. It has become a key word in educational policy, self-help literature and commercial training. The use of the term has been popularized worldwide as part of the discourse of modernization (notably in education) and used as a benchmark for gauging the potential success of competitors in the global economy. This paper examines creativity as a socially constructed concept within different cultural contexts, presenting the special case of Hong Kong as a creative environment at the turn

of this century, drawing its vitality from cultural and linguistic blending in response to international pressures and rapid political change. The various discourses of creativity in the education reform documents, and among creative writers, teachers and students in Hong Kong illustrate the dissonances – and possibilities for constructive action – that arise when an imported global notion is realized within a local context. It is argued that different approaches to creativity can best be perceived from an anthropological perspective: in Edwin Ardener’s terms, “from the experience of trying on a multiplicity of cultural spectacles”. Attempting to compare the relative creativity of different cultures can thus be viewed as a blind alley. Instead, international dialogue between scholars, educationists and policymakers is advocated, to help identify and promote contexts within which creativity (however defined) can flourish to the benefit of all.

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