

Context Matters: An exploration of its impact on education globally*

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Abstract

Many shortcomings of traditional education focus primarily on basic skills, highlighting the need for a more holistic approach to create successful global citizenship. It emphasizes the significance of fostering virtues like tolerance and dedication, as well as respecting cultural variety and heritage places. The changing educational landscape necessitates revolutionary adjustments, particularly in the context of English language education as a critical instrument for global communication. The convergence of several research initiatives highlights the critical importance of context in defining educational tactics and recognizes the necessity for specialized approaches in various geographical contexts. It emphasizes the importance of contextual factors in determining educational practices. Overall, the article covers the issues faced by the educational sector in different geographical backgrounds and varied applications of curriculum reforms and emphasizes the necessity of developing a holistic knowledge that incorporates cultural sensitivity, linguistic competency, and a dedication to universal principles in the goal of successful global citizenship education.

Keywords: *Context; curriculum change; educational change; educational reform; English as a Foreign Language (EFL).*

Introduction

In a worldwide and universal culture, producing individuals who can count, read, and write is insufficient (Garcia-Huidobro *et al.*, 2017). Effective global citizenship necessitates developing skills related to issues inherent in global socio-political and environmental problems, such as understanding and respecting universal values of tolerance, respectability, discipline, perseverance, and diligence, as well as respecting cultural institutions and World Heritage sites (Dias, 2022). The developing paradigms in teaching and learning highlight the requirement for change in the dynamic landscape of education (Grassick and Wedell, 2018). The importance of English language education as a catalyst for global communication amplifies the relevance of educational reform, necessitating an examination of its many facets (Mukherjee, 2018). This synthesis encompasses many research projects; each offering varied views on educational transformation in various circumstances (Zembylas, 2010).

There is a noticeable struggle for revolutionary changes in the dynamic educational landscape in response to shifting paradigms in teaching and learning (Datnow, 2002). It emphasizes the

importance of contextual factors in creating educational approaches, emphasizing that effective instructional tactics must be adjusted to the distinct socio-cultural and environmental circumstances of various locations (Wang and Coleman, 2009; Altheyab, 2023). The synthesis highlights the need for holistic knowledge that includes cultural sensitivity while negotiating the intricacies of global citizenship education (Hargreaves, 2005).

The complex journey of educators throughout curriculum revisions highlights the importance of comprehensive awareness of contextual aspects such as cultural effects, emotional issues, and external resources (Tan and Reyes, 2016). It highlights the dynamic interplay between internal and external variables, showing the critical role of context in the field of education, particularly in the context of curriculum reform and teacher identity formation (Mezirow, 1997).

The impact of English language education innovations on national curriculum changes highlighted the need for strategic planning that takes timeframes, resources, and professional support networks into account (Ong'ondo, 2018). The importance of context in educational transition emphasizes the necessity for stakeholders to understand many aspects of change and transformation (Alshumaimeri, 2022).

The overall theme that emerges as we travel through these various pieces of research is the critical relationship between context and educational attainment. The purpose of this essay is to present a complete overview of the complicated web of obstacles and possibilities posed by various settings in educational transitions, eventually adding to the continuing debate on effective global citizenship education.

Literature review

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has endorsed a regional integration framework aimed at facilitating the movement of commodities, services, capital, foreign investment, and labor (Chun *et al.*, 2016). This integration will increase the competitiveness of regional employment markets and promote education to generate competent graduates with 21st-century learning abilities (CENOZ and GORTER, 2011). English language training is being promoted in order to bridge development gaps (Hardman and A-Rahman, 2014).

Locally, it has been noticed that a 10-year basic education curriculum remains congested (Hyslop-Margison and Strobel, 2007), and that students who graduate from high school are unable to lawfully engage into contracts for work and business (Hornberger, 2009). The laggings in quality education called for the requirement of curriculum reforms to provide students with quality education and better communication skills (So and Kang, 2014).

Jiang and Zhang (2021) conducted research, guided by the Dynamic Systems Model of Role Identity, determined the transformational journey of EFL (English as a foreign language) instructors during curriculum change at a prominent institution in an unidentified nation. It outlines three prototypes of identity transition and examines two major examples. Notably, the study emphasizes the critical significance of contextual elements in affecting teacher learning and identity transformation, including cultural, emotional, and external resources such as institutional support. It underlines the relevance of taking into account the subtle interaction of

internal and external variables, confirming the greater significance of context in education, particularly in the changing era of curriculum reform and teacher identity development.

Chapman (2020) researched to collect data from semi-structured interviews with curriculum reform instructors that indicated positive responses and more autonomy. Staffing, access to professional learning, and learners' access to extracurricular learning were all difficulties. Despite these limitations, rural schools display a potential for independent action consistent with the ambitions of the new curriculum. The curriculum reform process in Wales provides a chance for schools to improve their methods, but rural schools encounter problems that the larger educational system is not aware of.

Graves (2021) used Johnson's specialist and coherent methods to investigate how instructors perceive, prepare for, and use the curriculum. As shown in the Greek reform, it emphasized the necessity of interdependence in decision-making. When policy changes have a direct influence on instructors, difficulties occur. To bridge policy and enactment gaps, Graves (2021) proposes a transformational strategy that prioritizes teacher engagement, training, experiential learning, and knowledge-sharing.

Wedell (2022) emphasized the continued influence of English language education innovations, particularly in the context of national curriculum modifications. It stresses the issues that educators confront across the world, as well as the need to have a thorough awareness of implementation settings. The report also emphasizes the significance of strategic planning that takes into account timelines, resources, and professional support systems. Secondary innovations are not sufficiently considered, which causes impediments to curriculum implementation at the system, institutional, and classroom levels. The study also emphasizes the emotional and relational components of educational transformation, as well as the necessity for context-specific adaptation of innovative concepts. The article highlights the importance of context in determining the success or failure of educational initiatives.

Hordern (2021) investigated recontextualization, a term in educational knowledge, and its use in teaching several courses. It contends that Bernstein's paradigm may be enhanced by embracing new research, rethinking disciplinarity, and doing historical studies. The importance of teachers in developing and implementing recontextualization ideas is emphasized in the study, as is the necessity to recognize their crucial role in curriculum creation. It contributes to the literature review by offering a comprehensive study of the features and consequences of recontextualization for educational understanding and curriculum creation.

Alshumaimeri (2022) reviewed the literature to study educational transformation, particularly in English language education, which is critical for enhancing teaching and learning results. As English fluency becomes more important, it is essential to approach English learning within the context of educational transformation. This entails assessing the importance of various components of change and developing linkages between them. Context is sometimes disregarded in educational transformation, but recognizing it may give a fresh perspective and enable successful goal-achieving tactics. Stakeholders must have a comprehensive knowledge of the change's many aspects and aims.

For optimal learning outcomes, contemporary pedagogical specialists highlight the relevance of context in education. However, because of its ambiguity, the context of learning is frequently disregarded. Culture, history, social circumstances, and national ethos are all elements in the educational environment. The link between context and educational results is still unknown, and ambitious educational changes must take the context of learning into account in order to be effective (Alshumaimeri, 2023).

The Indonesian centralized curriculum frequently excludes pupils from underprivileged backgrounds, generating difficulty in their intellectual, social, and physical integration. Reforming this restrictive curriculum is critical for developing an inclusive one that considers multiple historical views, creates cultural understanding, combats prejudice, and builds global consciousness (Mukminin *et al.*, 2019). The ASPIRE paradigm, which emphasizes assessment, synthesis, planning, implementation, review, and evaluation, is a viable way to guide this shift. It incorporates all stakeholders in the school and promotes academic and social success. This emphasizes the significance of context in education, particularly in Indonesia (Mukminin *et al.*, 2019).

Yan's (2012) study focuses on how English secondary teachers in China perceive and implement a new English curriculum reform. Despite their support for the curriculum's aims and pedagogies, there was a disconnect between the standards and teachers' classroom practices. Professional and psychological problems, student resistance, a lack of support from school leaders, and the backwash impact of the pervasive test culture all contributed to this divide. Addressing these issues is critical for the successful implementation of change.

The Philippine government is advocating for the implementation of a new basic education curriculum, including the Language Arts and Multiliteracies Curriculum (LAMC) (Barrot, 2019). This article looks at the K-12 English Curriculum from the perspective of 21st-century learning, concentrating on its distinctiveness, coherence, and conformity with 21st-century learning concepts. According to the findings, the existing curriculum has to be improved in terms of specificity, internal coherence, and integration of important concepts of 21st-century learning and language teaching and learning (Barrot, 2019).

Heng and Song (2020) investigated the difficulties encountered by 30 Singaporean teachers in implementing differentiated teaching, a concept taken from the United States, and emphasizes the importance of cross-national settings in educational transformation studies. It emphasizes the role of technical, societal, and political aspects in the acceptance and implementation of educational concepts in Singapore.

The research in England from 2015 to 2017, which received over 1100 answers, evaluates secondary school history teachers' readiness to engage in curricular improvements (Harris and Graham, 2019). The results suggest reluctance, with variations depending on the type of school. Teachers' desire is influenced by subject identification, but accountability measures strongly impact their decision-making, restricting their autonomy in developing the curriculum (Harris and Graham, 2019). The findings emphasize the importance of context in education, underlining the importance of considering nuanced aspects for effective curriculum change and recognizing the effects of larger policy frameworks on teacher involvement and autonomy.

Wedell and Alshumaimeri (2014) investigated the implementation of Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) programs in Saudi Arabia, demonstrating anomalies throughout the initial phase as well as limited efforts to fix concerns prior to the second phase. It implies that acknowledging and appreciating the experiences of implementers might improve the consistency of the second implementation phase in TEYL efforts. The research promotes policymakers' acquisition of sophisticated knowledge of multiple responsibilities and difficulties at various levels by raising awareness of the unique situations in which these changes occur. It also emphasizes the importance of context-specific planning to guarantee effective and long-term improvements in ELT practices. A lack of context understanding can stymie successful implementation and demotivate educators.

Dias (2022) argued that fundamental skills are insufficient and that an emphasis on global citizenship is necessary. It promotes respect, combats racism, and addresses socio-political and environmental issues. To promote global principles and respect for cultural institutions, the plan advocates including Global Citizenship Education within Brazil's National Curriculum Base. This strategy tries to make society more inclusive and culturally sensitive.

Conclusion

Finally, the many research findings explored in this essay highlight the critical relevance of context in educational transitions across varied geographical origins. The varied findings of research on EFL teachers' identity development, educational changes, and the ongoing effect of English language education innovations highlight the complexities of educational change. The findings emphasize that successful reform necessitates a context-specific strategy that takes into account cultural, emotional, and environmental elements, as well as the interaction of internal and external variables. Context is universally relevant in studies from Saudi Arabia to Singapore, Indonesia to China, demonstrating its crucial role in determining the success or failure of educational endeavors. The acknowledgement of recontextualization in teaching, the desire for inclusive curriculum revisions in Indonesia, and the identification of the relationship between context and educational outcomes all highlight the importance of context in determining effective education. As the article finishes, it underscores the continual problem of comprehending this connection and urges that the particular environment must influence any ambitious educational transformation to succeed fully. Finally, the article argues for a strategy that welcomes and exploits the various factors that shape the global educational scene in the pursuit of effective education.

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