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Abstracts

Gender Differences of Adolescent and Pubescent Students in Retention of Science Topics

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It has been documented that very few women choose to study STEM careers; there are many studies trying to know the causes of that. Here, we try to figure out how boys going through puberty retain science concepts compared to adolescent girls of the same age. The instruction consisted of a 30-minutes video titled “Continental Drift,” which explains how continents move. The evaluation instrument was a multiple-choice questionnaire with 22 items directly related with the video. The movement of continents is explained using the concepts of mass, weight, density, viscosity, buoyancy, heat transfer, among other concepts. The video was projected in classes of 7th to 9th graders. The short-term retention was calculated with the answers of the students just after seeing the video, and the medium retention with the answers from two to four weeks after seeing the video. The sample consisted of 685 girls and 647 boys from public schools of México. From these students, 407 of 7th graders answered the same questionnaire between 2 to 4 weeks later. The analysis was done using a binary logistic regression. The responses of 7th grade students showed that girls overcame boys, but in 8th and 9th grade, boys overcame girls, even though the odds ratios are not significant. The odds ratio related to humour were significant only in 7th grade in favor of girls. Also, we calculated the gain “g,” comparing the total score before and after seeing the video. For 7th grade students, in the short retention test, $\text{Exp}(B)=0.646$, $p=0.01$, in favor of girls, while medium retention is in favor of boys with $\text{Exp}(B)=1.215$, $p=.361$. We conclude that there is not a gender effect on their interest in retaining science concepts. The humour still works for adolescent girls, and the retention increased with time in the case of boys.

The Use of Portfolio in the Field of School-based Professional Experience

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A portfolio and its recent application e-portfolio is an authentic tool to improve pre-service teachers’ classroom performance during their school-based professional experience. A plethora of research has emphasized the use of the portfolio as a developmental and formative (authentic) assessment tool, with the aim of enhancing reflective skills of pre-service teachers in the field of school-based professional experience (e.g. Eames, 2006; Kim and Yazdian, 2014 & Shulman and Wilson, 2004). This study focuses

on the understanding of the portfolio's use from stakeholders, namely university supervisors, cooperating teachers, and pre-service English teachers. Those stakeholders are from three higher education institutions, namely Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), Rustaq College of Applied Sciences (CAS), and Nizwa University in Oman. To this end, the study implements hermeneutic phenomenology because it allows the study to understand how human experience is constructed discursively. In other words, the language people choose to describe their experience of any phenomenon has to be the focus of hermeneutic phenomenological research. The core of phenomenology focuses on questions of the meaning of experience (Cohen, Kahn & Steeves, 2000; Langdrige, 2007). Creswell (2012) emphasizes that phenomenological researcher "tends to rely upon the participants' views of the situation being studied" (p.8). Thus, through conducting interviews with stakeholders, this study has shown that SQU and Rustaq-CAS are implementing the portfolio as part of the learning process. The stakeholders including pre-service teachers are fully aware of their role in the portfolio which has enabled them to become reflective practitioners. However, Nizwa University does not seem to integrate the portfolio in the learning process. Thus, its stakeholders do not value the portfolio. For them, it is a compilation of artifacts that should be compiled at the end of the school-based professional experience. Therefore, it is suggested that Nizwa stakeholders are clearly aware of their role when performing the portfolio and make the role of the portfolio more explicit in terms of monitoring and enhancing pre-service teacher development and learning.

The Anxiety Factors in the Saudi EFL Learners: A Study from English Language Teachers' Perspective

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The purpose of the study is to explore the factors that cause language anxiety in the Saudi EFL learners while learning speaking skills, and the influence it casts on communication in the target language, as observed and perceived by EFL teachers. The investigation of the anxiety-producing factors that arise while learning to communicate in the target language will hopefully broaden the insight into the issue of language anxiety and will help language teachers in making the classroom environment less stressful. The study seeks to answer questions such as what are the psycholinguistic and socio-cultural factors, as per teachers' perspective that cause language anxiety among ESL/EFL learners in learning and speaking English Language, especially in the context of the Saudi students. How is anxiety manifested in the language learning of the Saudi EFL learners as observed and perceived by the English teachers? And which strategies can be used to successfully cope with language anxiety? The scope of the study is limited to the college and university English Teachers and subject specialists in public sectors colleges and universities in Saudi Arabia. Some of the key findings of the study are: Anxiety plays an important role in English as foreign language learning for the Saudi EFL learners as reported by English teachers. Some teachers believe that anxiety bears negatives effects for the learners, while some others think that anxiety serves a positive outcome for the learners by giving them an extra bit of motivation to do their best in English language learning.

Misreading Lord of the Flies: Interpretive Problems as Pedagogy

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Throughout a unit on William Golding's novel *Lord of the Flies* in my seventh-grade English classes at the Ethical Culture Fieldston School, I have noticed instances of what literary critic Barbara Schneider calls "narcissistic reading," or the tendency toward projecting onto the text one's own preoccupations. Instead of dismissing out of hand such responses to the text as misreading or making meaning that cannot be substantiated by the text itself, I explore in this paper whether and how interpretive problems like narcissistic reading can be valuable pedagogically. That is, any and all responses in an English class constitute an ongoing discourse that might be "read" by teachers and students alike, as part of a truly reflexive practice of teaching and learning literature. To investigate this possibility, I facilitated a structured speaking and listening activity, known as a "fishbowl" discussion, in each of my four sections of English 7, as well as a writing assignment by each student--specifically, an interior monologue narrating a particular moment in the novel from the first-person point of view of a character of their choice. In so doing, I have explored some modes and consequences of narcissistic reading. When a particular reader identifies with a character in a novel, for example, this act of recognition can deepen and/or distract from their interpretation, depending on the extent to which their identification elucidates and/or obscures historical and material differences between that particular reader and that particular fictional character. This finding, which I discuss at length in my paper, arguably suggests the limits of empathy as an ethic in the teaching and learning of literature.

Access to Education and Development of Marginalized Students: A Bottom Line Approach

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Background: Education is the most potent tool on which we would be successful to build an equitable and just society with the feature of dynamic social-economic mobility as education provides skill and competencies for economic well-being for whole society and so for the whole nation too. Education acts as an integrative force in society, imparting values that foster social cohesion and national identity. Moreover, Education plays a positive and interventionist role in correcting social and regional imbalances, empowering women and in securing rightful place for the marginalized community. **Objectives:** To focus the importance of education in creation of awareness among the marginalized students. To assess the qualitative change in the literacy level and to examine accessibility of universal education and development of marginalized section of the students in India. **Study Design:** The study is adopted multi-stage sampling method and bottom line approach, total 300 samples have been interviewed for the study. **Hypotheses:** Accessibility of universal education make the improvement in quality of life, the education is a weapon to break the vicious cycle of poverty, the education plays a positive and meaningful role to build a peaceful society. **Results:** The super structure of human civilization is built on

the foundation of literacy. The impact of literacy on socioeconomic development is positive and can be easily determined by comparing the standard of living, per capita income, Gross Domestic Product, industrialization and development of infrastructure within a country. Literacy enhances the working capabilities of people by providing them with skill development. Literacy and socio-economic development have endless companionship. An illiterate person has hundred enemies such as epidemics, hunger, disorder, humiliation and many others. Thus, illiteracy is a curse to humanity and socioeconomic development, Lal (2015). 95% students have learning capabilities with bottom line approach, More than 65% students are dropout. 89% students have fear of English subject. 96% sample respondents reveal that learning in mother tongue is easy for them. As a result the enrollment ratio will be increased at a faster rate. Keywords: Universal education, Bottom line approach, Qualitative change and development

An Uncertain Moment: What Is Education Worth in a Cosmopolitan World?

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Kazuo Ishiguro the 2017 recipient of the Nobel prize for literature recently stated how we live in an uncertain moment. The geo-political world clearly illustrates this in matters such as artificial intelligences, bio-medical advances ,automation, population displacement, the intangible economy, racism, religious fundamentalism and climate change for example.

Combined with a political climate of apathy, anger, neo-liberal and egalitarian agendas, the world is unpredictable. With advancements in technology, we live in a more intensive, and global view of different cultures and viewpoints. It is a world that young people will enter necessitating learning experiences exploring this world they will live and act in.

How do we enact an education to aid young people in this quest? It should enable them to gain an informed and secure identity; a sense of belonging as citizens and the gaining of understanding which form and foster their capabilities.

Research has pointed out the inequities and injustices which are systemic in societies and the need to interrogate and rectify these issues. Theoretical perspectives of a social contractarian and of a social choice nature are explored and the areas of discourse needed to ensure an informed and more socially just society.

Recent research of a more empirical nature has described current educational practices that reflect a narrowness of learning experiences reinforcing the lack of any vision of the education of the whole person. The background to these findings is elaborated in terms of, high-stakes testing, league table accountability, and privatisation. These are complimented by studies of the internal workings of schools, their learning and organisation .

It has been suggested that there is little evidence of a more progressive, cosmopolitan view of education. Case studies and historical analysis are used to illuminate learning experiences and schools which reflect the above, examples are used from India, US and UK. The influence of a Deweyan philosophy can be seen in the schools. An ecological framework is proposed using practical, pragmatic approaches to develop:

A policy framework at local and national level

The interactions at classroom and institutional level
The positing of a curriculum entailing inter-cultural understandings

Music Education and Politics

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The Czech Republic has experienced a rich history of singing over many centuries that helped to promote a spirit of national and ethnic identity, culture, and pride. Singing has long been valued because it helped bond people together during difficult times, including during the years of communism. In this paper, I provide a brief historical overview of music education in the Czech Lands (now Czech Republic) to show how choral music education, as a central part of the curriculum for centuries in this territory, influenced the development of Czech nationalism. The main focus is on choral music education practices and perceptions during the dramatic political changes that occurred during and after communist domination in the latter half of the twentieth century. The study draws heavily on the personal testimonies of four prominent Czech choral music educators who lived and worked during the communist regime, and through the transition to democracy and now during the capitalist economic system. These individuals were interviewed for their personal and professional knowledge of, and insights into, social, political, or economic factors that influenced choral music education in the Czech Lands. The conclusion of this study is not that communism or democracy is necessarily better for Czech choral music education. With the onset of democracy, globalization, technological advances, and goals of individualism and capitalism, people have access to other, far more powerful and far-reaching means to communicate—not just locally, but globally. Singing no longer holds a pivotal & central place, and radical changes in structures are necessary if the choral art is to regain its former prominence. Attention to teacher education practices, and innovative pedagogies & repertoire that educate singing teachers to empower their students will be required to ensure there is quality choral music education in generations to come.

The Work of Aesthetics in Modern Life

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As Arjun Appadurai usefully points out in *Modernity at Large* and *History as Cultural Fact* aesthetics are no longer to be simply understood as the practices of the artist, a maverick citizen creating self-referential images about the past, present and the future of human existence. But aesthetics are linked to the work of imagination of ordinary people and connected even more earnestly to the work of capitalism and its reorganization on a global scale. Contrary to the neoMarxist tradition, aesthetic practices are at the epicenter of lived experience and the institutional practices of modern societies. These practices, as CLR James alerted us to in *American Civilization*, constitute a great window on contemporary life revealing central contradictions, tensions and discontinuities. In this presentation, I will call attention to the

following. First, I explore the aesthetic dimensions of the diffusion of modernization theory to developing societies. Second, I point to the deepening role of aesthetics in the organization of capitalism in late modern life. Third, I will discuss briefly the crisis of language that the aestheticization of everyday life has precipitated in neoMarxist efforts to grasp the central dynamics of contemporary society. The latter has led to a depreciation of the value and insightfulness of neoMarxist analysis in our time—old metaphors associated with class, economy, state (“production,” “reproduction,” “resistance,” “the labor/capital” contradiction) are all worn down by the transformations of the past decades in which the saturation of economic and political practices in aesthetic mediations has proceeded full scale.

The State of USA School Finance Texts: A 50-state Resource Initiative

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In 2014, the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) began publishing a series of state-by-state eBooks to prepare and inform leaders through a lens into the foundation of school finance concepts and practices, which can vary in as many ways as there are states across America. The related laws and policies can also change during subsequent legislative sessions, so there is a need to be able to edit and "republish" on demand for accurate information to policy makers that is relevant for practitioners in schools and students in classrooms. The professional organization's rebranding as the International Council of Professors of Educational Leadership (ICPEL) in 2017 reflects changes in education leader preparation, especially the critical importance of linking leadership performance to student achievement. Fiscal challenges are not confined to political boundaries, so alignment to the Flagstaff Seminar's Educational Leaders Without Borders underscores the importance of international efforts to improve how schools are funded -- key strategies for leaders' wise use resources are increasingly critical and global. The initial book, *Taking the Mystery Out of Illinois School Finance*, 9th edition has served as a template for six books in this series. Its author, Dr. Thomas Kersten, gave permission to use his model. Eleven professor-authors' collaborated in Florida, Michigan, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia, along with Victoria, Australia, to publish versions of their school finance books with ICPEL Press, with an Arizona draft in process. The goal is to publish three or four school finance books annually in the next ten years. There is a companion text, *Arizona School Law Review* that was developed by Dr. Gary Emanuel for the Creative Commons through Rice University's Connexions. These could serve as models for professors teaching school law and policy courses, in addition to creating and implementing instructional budgets.

The Bearing that the South African Mathematics Curriculum Design has on Underachievement

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The objective of this paper is to investigate the perceptions of the teachers and subject advisors on the bearing that the South African Mathematics school curriculum design has on enhancing or inhibiting achievement in Mathematics at the Grade 12 level. Data was obtained from the interviews which were conducted with the Mathematics educators of the selected schools, and the Mathematics subject advisor of the district to find out about their perceptions with regard to the impact of Mathematics curriculum design on students' underachievement in Grade 12. In addition, the contents of the National Curriculum Statement for Mathematics documents were analysed.

The findings revealed that the scope (contents coverage) is too wide, and that the skills which are supposed to be developed in learners per term are not fully developed. Time allocation is unreasonably limited, and as a result, learners are unable to cover the scope for the term. Revisiting of topics done every year in a spiral fashion is good but the balance between superficiality and depth is not achieved, and that it is done without checking and understanding learners' previous knowledge on the topic. The sequencing of certain topics has to be looked into and revised. The study also revealed that Mathematics curriculum design, link and progression from primary to high school is good but not all details are covered, which leave students with content gaps that impede the learning of certain topics.

Woman as Social Edupreneur: Opportunities, Challenges

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In a developing country like India, social entrepreneurship of women holds tremendous promise for economic growth and prosperity. In the hands of women, businesses develop into extended social service, with focus on women empowerment, education, and the needs of children, the disabled and the needy. I have been an edupreneur for twenty years, teaching English Language and Literature to adults, mostly women, from across India, and pioneering educational and entrepreneurial innovations. While running a finishing school for university students, I have merged my teaching with associated business ventures such as a literature merchandise shop, a book publishing company, a gaming club, and a travel company, through which my students have found exposure, training, and employment. My belief in the study of literature as a comprehensive life activity prompted me to launch Q-Shop, an online shop for literary merchandise. The publishing company Bodhi Tree Books explores the possibilities of web-based innovation in print media through collective writing and research-oriented hyper-linking of information. To equip my students in a variety of careers and enhance their employability, I have started the English Literature Professionals Forum. The E-ProF Team, where my students are trainees, has organized numerous programs in editing, writing, teacher training, and resource development. Ace of Clubs is our literature gaming club that conducts literature-based Game Fests. Our tour company Literary Trails organizes literary tours to different parts of the globe to give the participants cultural exposure as well as training in professions related to media, publishing, tourism and business. Through my edu-preneurial ventures, I have thus developed my own model of social entrepreneurship through which my female students get life counseling, employment training and empowerment. My paper examines the opportunities and challenges of women social entrepreneurs in India, based on a review of my own career.

Time-Series Visualization of the Collaborative and Metacognitive Processes of English Writing at University: Based on the Use of Multilevel Digital Portfolios

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The main purpose of the study is to examine the effect of multilevel digital portfolios in terms of the time-series visualization of changes in metacognitive awareness in the domain of writing. Multilevel digital portfolios, based on the results of the online evaluation of university students' L2 (English) writing, were recorded on a newly constructed WebDAV system. The system could visualize time-series metacognitive processes in the multilevel portfolios, which include drafts and evaluative descriptions, online to the students so that they could develop metacognitive awareness collaboratively. In the descriptions of the multilevel portfolios, based on the self-evaluation and peer-evaluation of the 1st draft, and the final self-evaluation of the revised draft, time-series changes in collaborative metacognition were analyzed by employing text mining using KH Coder (software for computer-assisted qualitative data analysis) as well as a case study. Text mining analyses, including Co-Occurrence Network, SOM (Self-Organizing Map), and others were conducted. The descriptions were analyzed in the case study in light of metacognitive components, such as knowledge (declarative knowledge about persons, tasks, strategies, and goals), experiences (affective characters, including feelings of difficulty and confidence, monitoring of a task-specific knowledge), and skills (procedural knowledge relating to action control and strategy use) (Efklides, 2009).

It was found that the students' peer-evaluation could help develop their own awareness of these components of collaborative metacognition because in the peer-evaluation, each student evaluated the peer's draft by looking at metacognitive descriptions in the peer's self-evaluation portfolio recorded on the system. The students could also reflect on their own metacognitive changes by finally reviewing all of their own multiple portfolios. Consequently, the study could elucidate that the multiple portfolios contributed to the development of the students' collaborative awareness of the components of metacognitive knowledge, experiences, and skills, which influenced each other, by visualizing the consciousness of the students.