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What Is Really New in the “New” Urban Environment?¹

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Abstract

Established in 2009, The *Jean Augustine Chair in Education in the New Urban Environment* presented the learning community opportunity to define new urbanism through debates, conversations and other learning encounters. As the inaugural chair, Dlamini began conversations with faculty, students and community in order to unpack the meaning of the new urban environment and its associated characteristics and encounters. This article follows ongoing conversations between, Dlamini and three graduate students from her urban education class, which tackled these and many other questions throughout the course. Following the seminar, we find ourselves continually questioning what is meant by new and if this term is only foregrounded by the understanding of what is old? This article takes these questions of newness to Education. Throughout the paper, we consider the new ways of understanding pedagogy in urban environments; meanings found in geographical spaces; the understanding of Shakespeare coupled with the newness of Hip Hop; and finally, questions of local and community based pedagogy.

Résumé

Fondé en 2009, la *Jean Augustine Chaire d'Éducation dans le nouvel environnement urbain* a présenté à la communauté éducative, l'opportunité de définir le nouvel urbanisme, à travers des débats, des conversations et d'autres formes de rencontres éducatives. En tant que première présidente, Dlamini a entamé des discussions avec des professeurs, des étudiants et la communauté afin d'étendre la signification de ce nouvel environnement urbain, des caractéristiques et rencontres qui y sont associés. Cet article suit les récentes conversations entre Dlamini et trois étudiants diplômés de sa classe d'éducation en urbanisme, qui a abordé ces questions et bien d'autres encore tout au long du cours. Suite au séminaire, nous nous interrogeons continuellement sur ce qu'on entend par nouveau et si ce terme est seulement placé au premier plan par notre compréhension de ce qui est ancien? Cet article s'attaque donc à ces questions de nouveauté en Éducation. À travers ce document, nous considérons les nouvelles manières de appréhender la pédagogie en milieux urbains; les significations trouvées dans les espaces géographiques; le sens de Shakespeare lié à la nouveauté du Hip Hop; et finalement, les questions de pédagogie basée sur la localité et la communauté.

Any claim to newness, any proposal that we are at the turning point in history, urbanity, or ecology, is at once a historical commitment and a tendentious and transitional proposition (Homi Bhabha, 2010, p. 2).

INTRODUCTION

New ways of understanding urban environments and the lives within have consumed the fields of urban planning, human geography, and urban education, just to name a few. What the urban setting looks like as a physical space and

¹ A version of this paper was first presented at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education, Fredericton, New Brunswick, June 2, 2011. All students in the Faculty of Education, York University, the student presenters were part of the CIESC presidential keynote. The author names are presented alphabetically; all writers contributed equally to the production of this paper.

how individuals and groups engage in that space have changed significantly over the past century. Elder (1995) defines new urban environments as characterized by changes in landscape, internal and international migration, and rapid social change generating problems of human dislocation and deprivation, as well as new opportunities. Changes in landscape include, among others, a change in street design, which has ushered in the idea of “inclusive streets” – streets that embrace pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit as well as automobiles, a street design that has emerged out of a ‘new’ emphasis on the importance of public health, environment, and sustainability. These, and other such changes in landscape, are about creating livable and sustainable urban communities.

With regard to population trends, studies in human geography and urban education inform of increased international migration from, for instance, resource-scarce and/or war-torn countries to resource-rich and politically stable countries. These studies also inform of internal migration (migration of people from inner cities to suburban areas and vice versa) and regional migration (migration of people from rural to urban sectors). Regional migration has been viewed as a partial consequence both of narratives that associate the urban with modernity and progress (Corbett, 2009) and of the age-old presentation of cities as having streets paved in gold, i.e., an imagined enhanced economy and thus the good life. Such an imagined idealized economy of the urban setting has resulted in the depopulation and decline of rural areas, draining rural sectors not just economically but emotionally. This drain has led educators to document and analyze how rural teaching and learning is sometimes about (possibly unconscious) lessons of how to leave (i.e., physically leaving the space) as well as lessons of learning ways to live with the emotional loss felt by those who are left behind for those who have gone (Corbett, 2009).

In addition, within the urban environment are networks of communication (e.g., high-speed Internet access, comprehensive cell phone service, major newspapers), transportation (e.g., mass transit, network of roads), and the rest of the underlying infrastructure that enable the city and its people to function. The urban environment is as spatial as it is social, but the spatiality and social constructions of the urban setting are complex and need unpacking to understand the everyday encounters of the subjects within it. Amin (2007) urges a framework that looks at the changes and interconnections within urban settings, starting with the ‘incomplete’ city as a symbol of urbanism. He states:

What remains of cities as territorial entities is no longer self-evident.... [T]he everyday urban has become part of a world space of many geographies of varying spatial reach and composition linked to the rise of transnational flows of ideas, information, knowledge, money and people;

... linked to trans-local networks of organization and influence; ... and linked to technologies ensuring rapid transmission of distant developments such as monetary swings, environmental disaster, and the actions of the powerful. (p. 104)

Written with the city of Toronto as its central focus, this paper presents examples of the spatial and social complexities encountered by subjects in an urban environment. We offer examples of changes in the urban environment, as described in studies in human geography (see, for example, Amin, 2007), which emphasize the interconnection between urban spatiality and social experiences. In addition, these examples are presented in ways that complement while simultaneously challenging notions of how ‘newness’ is understood in the urban setting. Often, condo skyscrapers that are constructed to accommodate the increasing population are seen as the most important representation of the new urbanism. And in the Greater Toronto Area, for example, in addition to the new suburban areas and beyond where uninhabited bush land is being bulldozed to create new cities, ‘old’ Toronto neighbourhoods are also undergoing restoration for the purpose of developing a “world-class city”. Some scholars have argued that such urban refurbishing and urban gentrification projects, rather than ensuing in social livelihood, often result in further marginalization of the most vulnerable sectors of the population (Amin, 2007; Corbett, 2009).

Examples of urban newness that we present in this paper build on the contention by Bhabha (2010) in the quotation that begins this paper. That is, we see newness as connected to the old in provocative and temporary ways. Urban subjects make meaning of their present experiences by merging them with their old (experienced) knowledge and its complexities. The spatiality of the encounter creates a temporary association with events long past while simultaneously engendering new experiences. This is the transitional newness described by Natalie Davey in her journey as a teacher from her old and much loved school to a new and unfamiliar school community. Davey crosses spatial boundaries to a new space, yet memories of earlier (i.e., old) encounters continue to shape and become part of her new urban social experience. Indeed, her new urban school encounters are a testimony to the fluidity of “newness” because how she remembers the past is instructional to how she forms/interprets/lives the present (Dlamini, 2006) amid her memories that are intertwined with the lives of her urban students. In learning to become a ‘new’ subject in her new space, she asks questions about identity formation and negotiation – and how the past meets the new in the positions she formulates as she learns to live in the present shaped within a very influential and fluid past.

A claim to newness comes with a commitment to the past, and this is evident in Audrey Hudson's narration of how hip-hop (the archetypal new urban music) encounters and builds anew on Shakespeare (that is, the past). As a fixed and central part of the Western literary canon, Shakespeare continues to haunt what goes on in places of learning – but rarely has he been considered part of the 'new' in urban learning. Hudson illustrates how hip-hop, through its poetic attributes and creative expression, can aid Shakespeare to become new for her students. By putting hip-hop alongside Shakespeare to foster an understanding of urban life, we are already committing to a history – the 'aging' of hip-hop. That is, we are automatically committing to engaging in new constructions of music that combine the new and the old, demonstrating the complexity of interpersonal encounters in an urban setting.

Finally, this paper discusses some of the problems in understanding 'newness' in relation to community and the so-called global village. Sam Teclé illustrates that in our efforts to study global connections arising from, for example, new technologies, we have lost sight of local communities that are sites of possibilities – challenges worth celebrating and addressing respectfully. This is the 'new' challenge of the urban setting that needs to be examined using complex framing of what globalization means and what its impact is on local status quo and change. This paper illustrates how spaces – cities, regions – are sites of intersection between old and new experiences and inheritances that mark and mediate what goes on in protected heritages.

NEW SPACES, OLD MEMORIES, AND FINDING HOME ANEW: Natalie Davey

Packing boxes for a move, be it to a new home or a new job, means filling them with memories and deciding what to leave behind or throw away. Being in the midst of moving homes and teaching jobs all in one fell swoop has made me keenly aware of the relationship between space and memory. Memory is situated in experience, and yet the spaces in which we remember are often not the spaces where the experience occurred. On my desk I have pictures of students whose names I have forgotten and replaced with new names and fresh faces of young people eager to push beyond the safe boundaries high school walls provide and out into the 'real world.' As I pack my bags and boxes, preparing to venture beyond these same safe walls, memories decelerate this process, creating space for a few considerations:

A move requires the shifting of external space – and, of equal importance, the inevitable shift of the mover's internal "space" – therefore, it follows that memories associated with these spaces change simply because we

do. Though the old school in which I taught for six years is only a few streets south of the new school I am moving to, I am changed internally as I make the shift from one space to the next. The geographical or “urban” understanding of each building (and its associated neighbourhood) is shaped by what I bring to them in the form of my memories and experience. Nothing is fixed in the urban environment, for the fluidity of experience with old and new students, colleagues, and even the physical classrooms themselves define the spaces we occupy. A constant reframing of memory is necessary, due both to the effect that these spaces have on us and equally to how we in turn affect the spaces that shape our ever-shifting urban landscape.

In “*Inkumbulo* As Remembering, Communing, and Praxis: Retelling the Stories of Transformation and Learning,” Dlamini (2006 refers to the theoretical assertion that “effects of memory are not only individual but communal” and that “memory cannot be singularly owned if it is to serve its educative goal” (Dlamini, 2006, pp. 38 & 41). Both statements focus on the packing process, both figuratively and metaphorically, although perhaps what has evolved is more of an unpacking of events of the past as they come to bear on the present. As I move to this new school I am not the same teacher who started at the old one some six years ago. The building and the people, students and staff, parents and community members, have shaped and been shaped by me. This unpacking or new awareness, which Dlamini terms ‘remembrance,’ has been both a difficult return and a critical learning experience for me that I must observe as I move on to the new space.

In our moves between old and new spaces, we hold both insider and outsider status, forever crossing borders that we never conceptualized as existing in the first place. Indeed, these borders are only visible when we move away from the homes and communities we previously belonged to with their unbounded possibilities. Yet in our closer examination of our insider/outsider status, we come to understand that all geographical spaces, no matter how intimately we come to experience and understand them, are always fraught with both nostalgic ambiguity for the old space we once called home and apprehensive excitement as we move forward and away into a new community. We grapple with feelings for this old community that may never have been ours – feelings tied to fear and yet mixed with hope for what is to come, and the possibilities and potential for new experiences that inherently come with new environments and spaces. Though the different spaces – old and new – will never converge, conceptually or figuratively, we come to hope that we have learned the limits and contours embedded in the process of remembering. The boundaries have shifted,

necessitating change in our ways of seeing; and moreover, the boundaries have impacted and informed how and what we remember.

ENCOUNTERING SHAKESPEARE ANEW: Audrey Hudson

Shifting boundaries impact teachers and, perhaps all the more, students who sit at the crossroads between childhood and adult life, struggling to create space for their growing bodies, minds and voices – to fit. Self-expression for youth in the urban environment demands the cultivation of a space for their voices to be heard to legitimize their cultural experience. Schools are spaces where this legitimizing should be made apparent through the conscious pedagogical decisions of teachers as they shape a curriculum where students can see themselves in the classroom, specifically in literature and curricular texts.

How can we as educators take advantage of hip-hop's potential for initiating a discussion on the relevance of the language of black communities to the canon of Western literature? How can hip-hop be utilized as a creative outlet to legitimize the experience of youth in the new urban environment? In examining the pedagogical potential of hip-hop through its poetic attributes and creative expression, let us consider how female rapper Nicki Minaj constructs her identity through the African American literary tradition of 'signifyin(g)' (usually spelled without the 'g'), at the same time examining Shakespeare's portrait of Lady Macbeth to compare the characteristics of the two women. This case study allows for consideration of a pedagogical discourse for literature that exposes students to the literary tradition of 'signifyin', by illustrating and comparing the women of hip-hop to the women of Shakespeare, thus giving Lady Macbeth an aura of newness.

The discourse of hip hop based education (HHBE) offers a contemporary approach to pedagogy with a promise of far-reaching prospects. Hip-hop was born on the streets of New York City in the early 1970s. More recently, scholars have engaged with hip-hop to create a curriculum that speaks to and reflects the lived experiences of youth in the urban environment. Scholars such as Asante Jr. (2008), Dimitriadis (2009), Hill (2009), Rose (1994), and Wetmore Jr., (2006) theorize this work to address student needs for self affirmation in the classroom. Universities have also embraced HHBE scholarship: Morgan State (Baltimore, MD), Brown University (Providence, RI), and, closer to home, York University (Toronto, ON) all offer courses on hip-hop, and in June 2010, NYU's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development established a Hip-Hop Education Center.

Discussing language and cultural representation, Stuart Hall (1997) states that we use a number of tools – signs and symbols within language, sounds,

written words, musical notes, and objects – to represent and convey our concepts, ideas, and feelings to other people. Indeed, “language is one of the ‘media’ through which thoughts, ideas, and feelings are represented in a culture” (Hall, 1997, p. 1). Applying Hall’s notion of representation to the use of hip-hop as a means of expression for youth in the urban environment is to cultivate a space for their voices to be heard, thus legitimizing their cultural experience. HHBE, then, is both an outlet for youth to see themselves represented and a platform for associating their lived experience with literature.

Henry Louis Gates Jr. makes the following claim: “The black term of signifying has its associated concept of all of the rhetorical figures subsumed in the term Signify. To signify, in other words, is to engage in certain rhetorical games...” (1989, p. 48). To comprehend what someone is signifying, one must understand what is being signified, what Sassure calls ‘associative relations’ (as cited in Gates, 1989 p. 49). These associative relations depend on each other: The signified and the signifying often converge but also run parallel to each other at times.

We see signifying in the rhetoric of speech, where a playful pun on words becomes an effective tool to make a persuasive argument, and this is where I see rap as a modern conduit for this literary tradition. To signify, then, is to say something in well-crafted verse, but to imply something else. It is the use of a ‘double-voiced word,’ where, as Bakhtin states, “by inserting a new semantic orientation into a word which already has – and retains – its own orientation” (as cited in Gates, 1989, p. 50). In essence, the double-voiced word takes a word with an existing meaning and changes it, thus making its relevance and usage new. We see this application in rap lyrics, where MCs take a word and re-work its original meaning to make the word their own, to claim ownership of the word; the word eventually enters the vernacular, at least within the hip-hop culture.

We see these aspects of signifying in Nicki Minaj’s boastful delivery of lyrics from the song “Monster” (Kanye West ft. Nicki Minaj, Jay-Z, Rick Ross, & Bon Iver):

Let me get this straight wait I’m the rookie
but my features and my shows ten times your pay?
50k for a verse, no album out?
yeah my money’s so tall that my barbie’s gotta climb it
hotter than a middle eastern climate
find it Tony Matterhorn dutty wine it
(Minaj, 2010)

She says one thing to signify her meaning of something else. Minaj alludes to her self-imposed Barbie persona and boasts of her riches, beauty, and sexuality.

The result is a ferocious delivery of her argument, and the ingenious energy she exudes is electric. Within seconds, she wreaks havoc on her opponents with poetic daggers, thus illustrating the rhetorical play that Gates and Abrahams (1989) discuss.

The question becomes: How can we provoke thought about identity constructs through the concept of signifyin', using the creative word play of rap in conjunction with Shakespeare's dialogue to encourage students to speak about themselves creatively? Here we turn to Lady Macbeth's character to consider how her language illustrates the rhetoric of double-voiced word. What if learners were instructed to craft a rap speech based on Lady Macbeth's dialogue to shed light on the rhetorical games that Gates (1989) names as part of signifyin'? What if we used Shakespeare's portrayal of Lady Macbeth as a scheming, determined, unsympathetic female to initiate a conversation between Shakespeare and the African American literary world of rap lyrics to welcome Shakespeare into the new urban environment? Lady Macbeth is sly and headstrong in her quest to redeem her family's name. We see these characteristics illustrated in her speech to Macbeth after Duncan's murder, where she is presented as a wife who shows no remorse or compassion for her husband's distress (Act III, Scene 4). She is a woman whose sole goal is to rehabilitate and amend the family arms, and she will commit murderous acts to seek retribution. Shakespearean scholar William Hazlitt makes the following statement about the character of Lady Macbeth:

She is a great, bad woman whom we hate, but whom we fear more than we hate. Her fault seems to have been an excess of that strong principle of self-interest and family aggrandizement not amenable to the common feelings of compassion, failure, and justice.... (Hazlitt, as cited in Cook, 1980, p. 122).

Indeed, Hazlitt (as cited in Cook, 1980) paints Lady Macbeth not only as a woman who concerns herself with vengeance but also as a less-than-kindhearted fiend whose sole purpose is to settle a score.

It can be argued that Lady Macbeth's mastery of scheming has a similarity to Nicki Minaj's conspiracy to massacre other rappers with her new monetary success. Minaj uses the associative relations that Sausure (as cited in Gates, 1998) speaks of, as evidenced by the following lyrics: "She's on a diet but my pockets eating cheese cake/and I'll say bride of Chucky is Child's play/just killed another career it's a mild day" (Minaj, "Monster"). Lady Macbeth and Nicki Minaj take on personas that exude animalistic intentions of murder, be it physical or verbal. Lady Macbeth's murderous intent stems from the honour of her family, while Minaj's murderous intent is for personal gain as she forges a space for herself as a female in the competitive male-dominated rhetorical game

of hip-hop. As Hazlitt (as cited in Cook, 1980) claims, Lady Macbeth epitomizes the Shakespearean woman whom we fear while having great respect for her magnitude, and here we see Nicki Minaj as a rapper with the same characteristics.

What if we introduce signifiyin', as Gates discusses, as a mediator between Shakespeare and hip-hop? What could such a conversation sound like? Envision a cipher, an aspect of hip-hop where everyone crowds around in a circle, and MCs/rappers compete in a verbal fight, a battle of quick-witted, impromptu speeches and verbal jabs. Spectators react by making noise in appreciation and admiration for the two engaged in this battle of wits. Educators could facilitate learning by engaging students in crafting rhetorical strategies based on elements from hip-hop and Shakespeare. A cipher could be orchestrated between Nicki Minaj and Lady Macbeth and this method would offer the potential for learners to engage with the concept of signifiyin', as Gates discusses, including re-writing Lady Macbeth's speech to take ownership of the new product (p. 62). Students could re-write other characters, too, to investigate rhetoric, rhyming, sentence structure, and cadence to create new dialogues, and, as Hall suggests, to make new meanings through (possibly old) representations (1997, p. 1). Speeches could be presented in a classroom competition to determine whose oral prowess persuades the most listeners.

To introduce Shakespeare to the boastful rapping of hip-hop is to attempt to address the lived experiences of students in the new urban environment. Students can work with portraits of identity in Shakespeare and hip-hop to discuss gender so as to create intelligent females as role models. To further the study and perhaps to discuss the implications of relationships, one could look towards hip-hop diva Lauryn Hill as an analogue of Othello's lover, Desdemona; or perhaps the challenge of sexual independence could be illustrated by comparing Viola from *Twelfth Night* with 1980s rap group Salt 'N Pepa.

To work within both the Shakespearean canon and hip-hop is to open new dimensions of learner engagement by honouring the poet/rapper. It is critical for researchers concerned with education to investigate methods for accessing the creative language of hip-hop and thus to provide a space for their students to negotiate their identity as Canadian youth, whose self-identity is now largely drawn from American influences. With respect to students' knowledge about the canon of hip-hop culture, the potential exists to make Shakespeare accessible, while at the same time cultivating space for students to articulate their own complex narratives in the new urban environment.

ENCOUNTERING THE NEW IN THE EVERYDAY: Sam Teale

In attempts to keep pedagogy relevant, current, and responsive to the needs of the new global community, educators have begun to explore educating for 'global perspectives.' These explorations are a response to the real need to prepare students to be competitive and active in a global knowledge-based economy. This way of thinking, however, has resulted in a move away from a local community-referenced pedagogy, which is now considered inadequate for students to remain competitive in a postindustrial, increasingly globalized knowledge-based and -brokered economy, especially as situated within an urban setting. While this shift towards a global education is well intentioned, it is not void of hidden and subtle statements that undermine the importance of local knowledge and economies.

Kawagley & Barnhardt (1998) write: "Whatever piece of the curriculum you are responsible for, embed it first in the world with which the students are familiar and work outward from there. Adapt the content to the local scene and then help the students connect it to the region, the nation, and the world" (p. 5). Further, Gruenewald (2003) has argued for a "critical pedagogy of place" as an important framework in which place-based education meets critical pedagogy. He argues that this pedagogy is necessary to "[c]hallenge the assumptions, practices, and outcomes taken for granted in dominant culture and in conventional education"(p. 3). Therefore, this section of our paper explores the question of whether the global starts with a deeper understanding of the local, asking if it is necessary for students and teachers to experience a community connection and to consequently feel a sense of belonging and ownership to the formation and maintaining of a local school-community. I posit the necessity of these local connections for any global education to exist and be relevant.

The Concept of a Community Place

To achieve a more complete understanding of how students' identities are constructed and affected by individuals in and of the communities the students inhabit, a thorough analysis of community and place is crucial, as are simultaneously the schooling experiences that are informed by it. This section will be working with the definition that "a place, in the full conceptual sense, is a discrete geographic location, has a physical form (buildings, topography, etc.), and is invested with meanings and values" (Gieryn, 2000, p. 469).

Although we run a risk here in using the terms 'community' and 'place' interchangeably, community and place need to be seen as more than just simply a background or passive setting for social processes; As Davey suggested at the start of this paper they should also be viewed as a mediator and partial

component of these processes. When one considers the active role that community plays in identity formation and schooling experiences it becomes evident that an active examination of people's everyday experiences with the places within the urban landscape that they frequent is necessary.

Place mediates many components of identity, one of which is race. Frankenberg (1993) writes about a "social geography of race" to explore how place is divided and racially identified. She describes place as the "physical landscape – the home, the street, the neighbourhood, the school, parts of town visited or driven through rarely or regularly, places visited on vacation" (p. 43). Here, place is seen as an active setting or background upon which racial meanings are mapped in individuals' minds. In her study, she treats place as a force in the construction of racial and ethnic meanings, rather than simply as a landscape that maps. In so doing, she attempts to understand the local community processes by which race, and thereby, racial inequalities are constructed.

To further define our terms of reference in urban formations, let us look at a definition of culture. Nieto (1999) defines culture as:

... the ever-changing values, traditions, social and political relationships, and world view created, shared, and transformed by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors that can include a common history, geographic location, language, social class, and religion ... (p. 150).

Nieto describes culture simultaneously as it defines community. Difficulties arise when efforts are made to define community and culture as mutually exclusive entities; they are mutually the product and process of each other. Culturally appropriate and place-based practices require that teachers not only be aware of students' cultures, as defined above, but also place students' cultures at the centre of the curriculum, both in terms of content and process (Tiedt, 1999). Understanding how communities, and inside them the ensuing school communities, make meaning for individuals and groups helps us to understand how these places may affect the construction of self and identity for students. To establish an orientation towards a global education one must look at location or space within which the communities and schools exist. In the new urban environment, these spaces contain collective and active histories, legacies, and memories that structure and inform numerous hidden agendas: of the school, of teacher perceptions and attitudes, of policies and practices, and ultimately of the very community that these multiple dynamics simultaneously construct. McInerney, *et al.* write:

It may seem something of a paradox that in a globalized age where notions of interdependence, interconnectedness, and common destinies abound, the 'local,' with its diversity of cultures, languages, histories, and geographies, continues to exercise a powerful grip on the human imagination. The ties that bind us have global connections but are anchored in a strong sense of locality (2011, p. 16).

Students' (and to an extent, teachers') experiences, particularly in the new urban schooling environment, are primarily rooted in the communities that these students inhabit. In her writing, bell hooks (1994) uses the term "the authority of experience" and states that the "authority of [community] experience" gives particular value to the community that students inhabit and that they invariably bring to the classroom; highlighting and making these community experiences central creates a critical pathway into the multiple and complex ways of knowing that are rooted in experience. There is a particular disconnect that teachers experience when practicing in particularly stigmatized communities that are not their own, which speaks to the necessity of a form of pedagogy that bridges the domains of community and classroom. What is needed here is a need for a critical reading and placing of the physical, social, and cultural qualities of these places, as well as an examination of the very active roles they play shaping students' identities.

In terms of a broader social structural cultural analysis, elements such as, social justice methodology, inclination towards civic engagement, and a citizenship lens are all necessary components of a critically informed pedagogy. Teachers must deal with the communities they work in with a particular openness. In fostering what Schecter and Alvarez write of in *Learning, Teaching, and Community* (2005), "authentic linkages" between local urban environments and schools inform the global context in light of the burgeoning interest in the global perspectives as well as the re-renewed focus on social justice, equity pedagogy, and civic engagement. Such linkages can be observed in a relatively new policy of the Ontario Secondary School Curriculum that makes 40 hours of community service a precondition for receiving a high school diploma. This policy is an attempt at engaging the broader community as "a curriculum resource" (Schecter, Solomon, & Kittmer, 2003). In the United States, numerous case studies have documented how community-based or place-based education (PBE) can promote civic engagement while ensuring an intellectually challenging education that meets national standards (Gibbs & Howley, 2000; Smith, 2002; Sobel, 2005; Wood, 1992).

Recent trends in research and the literature have focused on fostering a global education. What is lacking, however, is the equivalent, if not more substantive, call for a community-referenced pedagogy. In the discourse on culturally relevant pedagogy, the definition of ‘culturally relevant’ needs to be widened to encompass the local community as an integral component of any culturally relevant pedagogy in an attempt both to foster transformative and collaborative linkages and to develop an authentic sense of belonging and ownership not only within the confines of the school but with the community that encompasses both local neighbourhoods and the larger city. Local situatedness can alter perceptions and foster pathways to a deep and authentic understanding that global citizenship must begin with an equal effort on the part of all stakeholders in the educational project to take into account the critical role of local citizenship.

To maximize community-referenced pedagogy, students must be given ample opportunity to first negotiate their neighbourhood life and identity. Community must penetrate the walls of the classroom and curriculum while moving towards a global context in education. It can be deceptively alluring to conceptually leap to a pedagogy that contextualizes students globally first and foremost, while denying or simply glossing over the complexity of the local community and neighbourhood and the multiple ways they inform school life. Through a genuine interest in the neighbourhood and community life of their students, teachers are able to constantly and critically examine themselves, their role, and their positions as active players within the community. Assigning validity and authority to students’ everyday lives allows students to simultaneously inform their teachers’ perceptions of them as young adults and improve upon both parties’ understandings of their mutual community and classroom spaces.

Pedagogy that is devoid of context – of sense of place – does not work well in fostering student–teacher relationships; this kind of teaching is more clinical than caring. Referencing and validating the community and neighbourhood life that students invariably bring into the classroom moves the teacher–student relationship towards a caring orientation. Pedagogically, this relationship is as empowering as it is bi-directional, and the teaching of critical skills will work towards an examination of the social placing of students and schooling structures while moving towards real ways of being for our students in these new urban environments. These approaches provide, at the very least, a grounding, for both students and teachers, by which to contextualize and articulate the contours of a shrinking world in the ever-widening reality and necessity that is globalism.

Curriculum, as experienced by many of our urban students, is divorced from the current realities of the impact that living in a specific neighbourhood has on the formation of self, on the multiple hybrid ties of identity, on their worldview, on school experiences and on their attitudes and school outcomes. Possibilities abound when pedagogy is conceptualized from the situatedness that place and community can offer. The result is teaching that is far from a cold, calculated, clinical exercise and is instead rooted in genuine openness, collaboration and care. Through this type of pedagogy, students experience curriculum and skills through the primary lens of their own community cultures. Student-centered and community-centered pedagogy is inherently inclusive. Through what the literature terms the ‘constructivist approach,’ the learner constructs knowledge, resulting in learning as a personal interpretation of experience; learning as active, collaborative, and situated in a real-world context; and assessment of learning integrated within the learning context itself (Marlowe and Page, 1998). What context can be more available and effective than the community?

If curriculum is conceptualized as content, and pedagogy as methodology, community and place can be proffered as the conduit for mediating and negotiating between the two elements, while at the same time meaningfully linking teachers and students, school and communities, locally and ultimately even globally.

CONCLUSION

Davey’s reflections on a teacher’s role as the insider/outsider, and the nature of space, memory and boundary shifting, connects with Hudson’s specificity in modifying space and place in school curriculum. By using hiphop pedagogy to alter the at times fixed space of the classroom to engage the traditional instruction of Shakespeare, Hudson links to Teclé’s larger vision of the community and what he sees as its necessary place in the ongoing work of global education. With these varied and yet connected perspectives, this paper illustrated how spaces – cities, regions – are sites of intersection between old and new experiences and inheritances that mark and mediate what goes on in protected heritages.

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