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Hyper-curriculum: Transcending borders of standardization in the cosmopolitan classroom

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Abstract

The world is not just connected; it is hyper-connected. The global flow of ideas, technology, and people are at unmatched levels in history. More classrooms are becoming cosmopolitan centers composed of students with multicultural backgrounds. However, United States public education in this hyper-connected world puts emphasis on standardization and accountability. By doing so, schools driven by federal initiatives fail in helping students to become worldly citizens. Students and teachers are deprived of room for creativity or new multicultural possibilities. Hence, this paper intends to develop a theoretical framework for curriculum in the hyper-connected world, aptly named “hyper-curriculum.”

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1. Introduction: Globalization and hyper-connection

Thousands of years ago human beings discovered the power of making and using tools for survival. This evolutionary landmark was caused by the development of the human brain’s cerebral cortices. Only then did man realize that survival did not rest on physical strength, but innovation, adaptation and transformation. From this point, as Bronowski (1973) stated, “That series of inventions, by which man from age to age has remade his environment, is a different kind of evolution – not biological, but cultural evolution. I called that brilliant sequence of cultural peaks *The Ascent of Man*” (pp. 19-20). The cultural evolution of man brought scientific, industrial, and cultural phenomena into being on a scale grander than generations past. In the 20th century, the ascent of man entered a new phase with the creation of digital tools: globalization.

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The phenomenon of globalization began roughly 30 years ago and designates a process in which people, cultures, technology, economies, sciences, politics, government, etc. around the world interconnect (Boudreaux, 2008). One might say globalization *flattened* the world, removing the challenges of geographical distance (Friedman & Mandelbaum, 2011). In this flat or globalizing world, small regions and non-state actors make advances in technology, make international impacts on economies, and even influence human migration (Bezdecny, 2015). Globalization has empowered citizen to connect directly with others, regardless of geography in matters of social networking, commerce, political, and science (Bethlehem, 2014). This is a world where individuals are the mediators of change and can act beyond traditional ways of state intermediation (Apple, Kenway, & Singh, 2005).

The phenomenon of globalization was inaugurated by the efforts of scientists, politicians, economists, cultural workers, etc., that have done more than serve solely neoliberal interests (Bezdecny, 2015). The years of intellectual and scientific rigor have allowed human progress to develop momentum in our ascent. This has affected global economic patterns, job creation/destruction, volunteer and creative efforts, and trade (UNDP, 2015). These patterns have also accelerated the technological revolution—inspiring new types of revolutions at the same time. As a result of this 30-year development, the 21st century globalized world has ushered in a new phenomena: *hyper-connection*. This refers to the accelerated pace of globalization in regards to human progress and development.

Within a hyper-connected world the phenomena of culture, technology, international politics, science, etc. are interconnected and develop at accelerated rates (Friedman & Mandelbaum, 2011; Hilbert & Lopez, 2011). For example, “the current pace of technological advance is unprecedented in history and shows no signs of stabilizing as other historical technological innovations, such as electricity, eventually did” (Hagel, Seely Brown, Samoylova, & Lui, 2013, p. 2). The acceleration of the hyper-connected world can be understood by the United Nations Development Programme’s (2015) *Human Development Report 2015*, which reported that the world’s progress is the result of roughly 1 billion workers in agriculture, 80 million in education and health services, and the creative contributions of 450 million entrepreneurs and 53 million domestic workers.

How pervasive is this human progress and development? The UNDP (2015) reported that between 1990 and 2014, 98% of the world’s population was classified as high human development (a indicator rank increase from 12 to 46). The population in these countries also climbed from .05 to 1.2 billion people. With over 1 billion people contributing to hyper-connection, such as the health and education sector, human capabilities have been enriched and progressed. For example, with the advent of clean energy and

environmental sustainability, 23 million jobs were created in both India and China (UNDP, 2015).

Furthermore, hyper-connected global communities now exist where people transmigrate at staggering numbers; most appear to be moving because of natural or man-made disasters/tragedies, or financial opportunities (Hassan et al., 2015; Kazanjian, 2013b; Marchi, 2010). The number of international migrants increased from 92 to 247 million between the years of 1990 to 2013—where the largest growth happened between 2000 and 2010 (UNDP, 2015). Forecasting reports project that the number of international migrants will exceed 250 million people by 2016. Many of these migrants travel to urban centers in developed countries. The UNDP (2015) reported that the largest took place in China, where 275 million people migrant workers from rural to urban areas.

Other sources of human movement are caused by human rights violations and violence (Doocy, Lyles, Robertson, Akhu-Zaheya, Oweis, & Burnham, 2015). By the end of 2014, the world experienced the largest number of people forcibly displaced—roughly 60 million people—a number that surpasses the displacement during World War II (UNDP, 2015; UNHCR, 2014). Since October 2015 the United Nations High Commission for Refugees engaged over 4 million Syrian refugees (Hassan et al., 2015). The 2011 civil war violence in Syria has caused a mass exodus of people, many of which entered European countries (UNDP, 2015; Yazgan, Eroglu Utku, & Sirkeci, 2015). The violence has killed over 200,000 and injured over 800,000 Syrians. The majority of refugees, roughly 51%, are under 18 years of age. They have been victims of war crimes against humanity, sexual violence, massacres, execution, hostage situations, etc. Victims also suffer psychological effects such as anxiety, despair, depression, and hopelessness (Hassan et al., 2015).

As a result of the displacement of Syrians, many areas of the world have reached out to help, whether it be an online donation, traveling overseas to volunteer in a refugee camp, or opening their homes to the children (Barhoum, Tobias, Elron, Sharon, Heija, & Soustiel, 2015; Lough, 2015). Through globalization and now hyper-connection, global agencies have the power to connect people and resources, while exposing issues of social justice and making outreach efforts. These organizations include the World Health Organization (WHO), World Trade Organization (WTO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) (Bethlehem, 2014; UNHCR, 2014). Hyper-connection in this realm is about cooperation and collaboration for outreach and justice.

2. Hyper-connected theory

Through globalization, an accelerated process began of interconnecting networks of people, culture, ideas, and practices (Friedman & Mandelbaum, 2011; Smith, 2013). For 2016, the network interconnection developed at astounding rates to create an interdependent-interconnected world (Hilbert & Lopez, 2011). Within these interactions and exchanges, hyper-connection resulted. Just what does *hyper* imply for globalization and in terms of curriculum theory?

In terms of network connections, *hyper* refers to an extraordinarily rapid pace where diverse elements (within culture, science, etc.) interact. These components interact in such a way to open undiscovered pathways for new networks to form—thus, connections gain momentum in building upon themselves, accelerating the pace of interaction and discovery. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) had a similar understanding in their concept of the *mechanosphere*, where “Every abstract machine is linked to other abstract machines, not only because they are inseparably political, economic, scientific, artistic, ecological, cosmic—but because their various types are as intertwined as their operations are convergent” (p. 514). One might say that hyper-connection in this sense is a scaffolding or learning framework. An example of these ideas of interconnection as well as a product of the hyper-connection is ANNABELL—a computer program that simulates human cognition by chat room-like interaction (Golosio, Cangelosi, Gamotina, & Masala, 2015).

The ANNABELL program was a breakthrough for cognitive neural models of language in that the simulated mind would not be solely programmed with responses. ANNABELL was programed to start *tabula rasa* and learn (or scaffold) how to build/use vocabulary, make decisions based on reward mechanisms, and to interact with different people. Researchers Golosio, Cangelosi, Gamotina, and Masala (2015) designed this computer model to mirror the neural architecture of a developing and functioning human being. Our brains are not constructed with pre-coded rules for thought or interaction. There needs to be learning to successfully operate in social interactions. Much like the rapid neural development of a human child, ANNABELL learns by exploring and making decisions—rewards and failures, constructing the scaffold. The connections build at an accelerating pace as new information is gathered—ANNABELL’s network for procedural and declarative knowledge becomes hyper-connected (Golosio, Cangelosi, Gamotina, & Masala, 2015).

Scientific developments like ANNABELL as well as other breakthroughs in technology have altered our relationship with computers, cultures, time, and distance (Fahey & Kenway, 2010). Technology has not only come to mediate our physical and material world, but also created virtual spaces for social interaction, creation, and expression (Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014; Oiarzabal & Reips, 2012). According to the UNDP (2015), analysts project that in 2016 there will be 7.1 billion mobile subscriptions and over 3 billion people using the Internet worldwide. Hyper-connection is most prevalent in developed countries where human progress can be seen in the remarkable speed of

technological advancements. The UNDP (2015) predict that the pace of acceleration in advancement will not cease or slow—ultimately making complexity and uncertainty integral to the hyper-connected world.

The products of this acceleration have taken form as revolutionary advancements in health and medicine, such as immunotherapy or growing replacement organs with stem cells (Kaur, 2013). The word *revolution* may sound hyperbole in regards to hyper-connection, but it is a revolution in every sense. As the UNDP (2015) described of global revolutions, “The first was driven by steam, the second by electricity. The third revolution is unfolding now—driven by computers and networks” (p. 80).

The way in which developed countries work has also been revolutionized—offering opportunities to sustain or improve life (UNDP, 2015). For example, the invention of the 3D printer has the potential of affecting about 12 percent of the workforce worldwide—many disabled people have benefitted in the printing of prosthetic limbs. The robotics industry has grown 170 percent from 2009 to 2011—where by the end of 2015 there will be 1.5 million robots in the workplace. Furthermore, Hyper-connection has initiated a digital revolution with high-tech industries changing the way people work agricultural or social network. This is true for farmers in Saudi Arabia that have begun using wireless technology to distribute what little water they have for cultivating wheat (UNDP, 2015).

Hyper-connection created a shared international space where there is rapid movement of people, interconnected global economy, and social integration (Bethlehem, 2014). A global symbiosis has left our globe both vulnerable yet profitable. For example, the disparity between the rich and the poor is expanding due to the ease of international trade (Wahlstrom, 2014). People and environments around the world are potential sources of exploit to global corporations (Giroux, 2014).

There are over 75% of people living in developed countries experiencing unequal income distribution (UNDP, 2015). The household income inequality rate has risen 9 percent for very developed countries. Furthermore, there are “significant human potential remains unused, misused and abused. More than 200 million people with 74 million young people are out of work, more than 800 million working poor people are living on less than \$2 a day” (UNDP, 2015, p. 80). The risks of hyper-connection have allowed more regulation and opportunities for protection for threats that include cyber security, economic, environment, human trafficking, child prostitution, etc. (Bethlehem, 2014). However, the reality is that non-state actors may operate beyond borders and state control. For many people, the excess of possibilities in modern society can lead to anxiety, loneliness, pressure to achieve, depression, and fatigue (Han, 2012; Kazanjian & Choi, 2014).

Through cultural and social practice, hyper-connection gains momentum. As Bethlehem (2014) argued, the faster we travel, the more blurred is our vision of the landscape. Ultimately we become forced to utilize the images of the past for referents,

instead of planning a future based on current atmospheric conditions. Watts (1979) wondered if our high standard of living in the United States is a “dope” that offers “a violent and complex stimulation of senses, which makes them progressively less sensitive and thus in need of yet more violent stimulation” (p. 21). The hyper-connected world accustoms many, especially youth, to “crave distraction—a panorama of sights, sounds, thrills, and titillations into which as much as possible must be crowded in the shortest possible time” (Watts, 1979, p. 21). These negative elements have entered the classrooms of developed nations and educators are challenged with negotiating hyper-connected tools that can build but also destroy.

In spite of the potential dangers, hyper-connection must be utilized as a educational opportunity to expand perspectives and open possibilities. Standardized curriculum does more harm by limiting the public education system and preventing teachers from opening democratic spaces to negotiate global challenges (Rubin & Kazanjian, 2011). The pressure to enforce standardized curriculum restrains students and teachers’ creative abilities for engaging in the scientific discovery and cultural developments that is essential for hyper-connection (White, Mistry, Chow, 2013). As Friedman and Mandelbaum (2011) described that “*Maintaining the American dream will require learning, working, producing, relearning, and innovating twice as hard, twice as fast, twice as often, and twice as much*” (p. 102, italics in original text). Hence, this paper discusses a theoretical framework of curriculum, called *hyper-curriculum*, as a way to utilize the conditions of our hyper-connected world in a constructive way.

3. Globalization and education in the U.S.

Scholars of education have called out for inclusive curricular strategies that accommodate the needs of the hyper-connected world (Hughes, Lourea-Waddell, & Kendall, 2008). According to Wahlstrom (2014), innovative curricular strategies take second place to neoliberal strategies. Market-driven values are strongly embedded in standardized educational policies. One may conclude that standardized education has become a tool solely to train youth as workers and consumers (Giroux, 2008; 2009a; 2009b). The excessive emphasis on standardization and accountability, at the exclusion of creativity and autonomy, is getting stronger (Giroux, 2014).

For instance, the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) held elementary and secondary schools accountable for improving the academic performance of all students. If adequate yearly progress were not made, the school would be subject to review, loss of accreditation, principal reassignment, or loss of federal/state funding (Giroux 2008). As a result, curriculum is narrowed so that classrooms lessons would serve to solely improve standardized test scores/performance (Rubin & Kazanjian, 2011; Sleeter & Stillman, 2009; Wraga, 1999). Academic performance and development is then equated by test performance benchmarks (Berrett, 2013; Emanuel, 2013).

Although the Obama administration has continued No Child Left Behind (2001) with Race to the Top (RTTT), the curriculum continues to narrow. The Obama Administration's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 invested in RTTT to reform the entire education system (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). This new take on standardization set international benchmarks, raised teacher and school accountability, and gave hundreds of millions of dollars to schools if they *win* the race (Johnson & Stephens, 2012). President Obama enlisted the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State Schools to govern the initiative for developing consistent, standardized educational assessment. Forty-five states have implemented the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as part of the race to ensure that students are being given a rigorous education and achieve academic progress (Bayliss, 2014; Gewertz, 2013; Hess, & McShane, 2013). The CCSS are aimed to standardize the nation in English/Language Arts and Mathematics.

The CCSS materials and curriculum test students on critical thinking as well as the application of formula and scientific models. In recent years, teachers have been inundated with CCSS geared materials and strategies. Teachers are then required to adapt their teaching styles to meet the needs of the CCSS. However, there is a learning curve for teachers to understand the CCSS and modify their pedagogy to help students meet these requirements (Bayliss, 2014). Both students and teachers are together in a learning process—how to teach to the CCSS fast and effectively and how to learn and perform on the tests. With all the CCSS books and guides offered to teachers, it appears that teachers are seeking help, just as the students are, in an academic world of competition, standardization, quantification, and narrow curriculum (Hess, & McShane, 2013). Additionally, Gawlik (2012) found that “aggressive accountability system seeks to remedy the ills of schools by implementing a policy of sanctions and rewards that cripple teacher autonomy” (p. 217). Similarly, as shown through a national survey of U.S. school districts, nearly 70 percent eliminated one subject from the curriculum to concentrate on math and reaching to meet the AYP of NCLB (Au, 2011). As a result, Au (2009) stated, “Not only do teachers lose control of curricular decisions, but any power the students might have had as contributors to their own educational process is also taken away” (p. 69).

Even at the university level, professors are battling increased observation and assessment in fear of losing accreditation. Many states, such as South Carolina and Pennsylvania have already implemented protocols for assessing college student performance (Berrett, 2013). It appears that public universities will be next for standardized tests and narrow curriculum to ensure that rigorous standards are met in order for funding to be awarded. For states governments to give money, colleges and universities need to produce data. Curriculum that is prescribed at the national level is typically adopted by state institutions/government to direct the learning and

development of students in the classroom (Wahlström, 2014). That is, colleges and universities are becoming more structured like primary and secondary schools.

High stakes testing feeds accountability by removing power and possibility from the classroom and placing it in educational agencies or bureaucrats (Au, 2011). Accountability has become an ominous presence in schools, which has narrowed the scope of domestic and global realities (Gawlik, 2012; Hawkins, 2014). The emphasis on accountability and standardization is not a sufficient model of educational curriculum in helping students to meet the needs of a hyper-connected world. A quality education is not achieved by the attempt to make more competitive workers for an international job market or higher test scores for math, English, or science (Giroux, 2009a). Rather, it is “to teach and inspire all Americans to start something new, to add something extra, or to adapt something old in whatever job they are doing” (Friedman & Mandelbaum, 2011, p. 102). RTTT will ultimately fail students if its focus is set on tests scores. It will not achieve the high quality standards of students and teachers who challenge narrow curriculum and seek to work in creative possibilities.

Studies have shown that high-stakes standardized exams are detrimental for both student and teacher. According to Amrein and Berliner (2003), the usage of standardized high school graduation exams actually decreases academic achievement (Amrein & Berliner, 2003). Graham (2013) found that standardized tests might perpetuate social stereotypes if they are used to classify students by intelligence or skill set rather than instruments to improve learning. Furthermore, the high incidence rate of teacher attrition may be driven by the overwhelming anxiety to perform and loss of professional autonomy (Day, 2002; Hill, 2005; Scherff & Hahs-Vaughn, 2008).

Furthermore, standardized tests have detrimental effects for English Language Learners (ELLs), as their English language proficiency may not be as developed as their peers (Pascopella, 2007). This causes an unnecessary amount of stress on both the student and the family. Negative labels are assigned to students that have low-test scores and ultimately develop a social stigma of underachievers or failures; especially if the student is a person of color (Graham, 2013; Lugg, 2007; Yatvin, 2008). The racial aspects of high-stakes testing reveal a test that is not neutral, but clearly bias in the realm of race, economic status, cultural, and belief (Au, 2009; Hill, 2002).

The narrowing of standardized curriculum disregards multicultural and anti-racist pedagogy (Giroux, 2014; 2008). According to Au (2009), roughly 25-30% of public schools in the nation have reduced the time given for arts, foreign languages, social studies—the percentage is higher if the school has a large population of minority students. The school districts that have higher populations of lower-income and non-white students are under greater pressure to achieve numbers. As a result curriculum narrows (Rubin & Kazanjian, 2011). NCLB is supposed to enrich educational environments for all students, but research has proven just the opposite (Au, 2009).

Standardized curriculum and high-stakes tests have also caused a deep seeded sense of anxiety in the classroom for teacher and student. The anxiety stems from the threats and penalizations that the tests carry if the teacher/students fail to achieve adequate scores (Kazanjian & Choi, 2014). For example, Segool, Carlson, Goforth, von der Embse, and Barterian (2013) surveyed the test anxiety of 335 students in grades three to five in a Midwestern school district. Anxiety levels were measured from both NCLB's standardized tests and regular classroom exams. The researchers found statistical significance in the increase of overall anxiety (both physiological and cognitive symptoms) in correlation to NCLB high-stakes testing. This was revealed by the correlation coefficient for the NCLB testing ($r = -.21$) being stronger than the regular classroom exams ($r = -.10$).

Anxiety for the child can manifest in many ways, such as stomachaches (irritable bowel syndrome), tension, sweating, increased heart rate, etc. (Kazanjian & Choi, 2014). Researchers have also found that youth between the ages of 15 and 24 will experience a major anxiety episode that may last into later years (Hodgson, Shelton, van den Bree, & Los, 2012; Sancakoğlu & Sayar, 2012). The stressors of childhood (identity formation, social situations, etc.) can cause this anxiety, and need not be exacerbated by standardized tests.

Furthermore, the negative somatic effects caused by standardized tests may extend beyond physical symptoms into impairing cognition. This is a result of the disruption of the White Brain Matter (WBM)—the association fibers in the brain that provide networks of neurons associated with cognition, motivation, and emotion (Villareal et al., 2013). To further explicate, Jung, Grazioplene, Caprihan, Chavez, and Haier (2010) studied the creative capacities of 72 healthy young adults from 18-29 years of age. With Diffusion Tensor Imaging scans, the researchers found that the architecture of the WBM is essential for divergent thinking and creativity. The WBM is also linked to emotional centers of the brain, such as the amygdala—this links the emotional responses of anxiety with cognition. Furthermore Fink et al. (2014) found that if individuals with anxiety also have disrupted WBM, they tend to have inhibited cognitive abilities to constructively cope with anxiety. Research on WBM's relation to anxiety is still in nascent stages, and needs further study in connection to standardized tests and classroom anxiety. However, one may infer that the anxiety generated by high-stakes exams inhibits the children's and teacher's creative abilities.

4. Hyper-connected world and hyper-curriculum

According to the United Nations Development Programme (2015), the past 30 years of human progress have ushered in a transformative set of digital networks that are changing the global patterns of culture, business, technology, etc. These networks were created from the force known as globalization, but now work at an accelerated pace to

making revolutionary changes—this is the hyper-connected world. The hyper-connected world designates a place where the elements of globalization (i.e., interconnected cultures, economies, technology, etc.) are rapidly developing and opening new networks for these elements to discover global possibilities (Friedman & Mandelbaum, 2011).

For public schools in the United States, the 30 years of progress have made homogeneous classrooms scarce. The manifestation of diversity is not confined to the realms of race, ethnicity, cultural practices, or language (Hanson, 2014). Rather, diversity extends to personal value systems, religions, experiences, cultures, sexual orientation, trans-nationalities, and personal histories (Castro, Field, Bauml, & Morowski, 2012). Curricular and pedagogical practices can, and should, allow this diversity to be revealed *to and from* students as a means to beget worldly citizens or cosmopolitans.

In other words, we need a *hyper-curriculum* for a hyper-connected world. A hyper-curriculum designates curricular imaginations that utilize the conditions of the hyper-connected world (e.g., technology, culture, economic, etc.). As *hyper* signifies the increased speed at which global networks are forming, curriculum should serve in the same manner. This paper understands curriculum as stated by Au (2012) “*Curriculum can be conceived of as the tool that structures the accessibility of knowledge in environmental form, where framing and classification, respectively, communicate the accessibility and structure of knowledge*” (p. 49, italics in original text). Therefore, hyper-curriculum is about opening educational spaces and opportunities for new and innovative networks to form. This curriculum means providing necessary training for teachers and students to be competent worldly citizens that can understand and contribute to the interconnecting of cultures, ideas, and sciences (Kazanjian, 2012). Hyper-curricular tools can be website building programs, avant-garde music (i.e., similar to global hip-hop movements), cell phone apps, digital movies, art, and intercultural group activities (Kaya, 2002).

Training youth as better test takers can hardly meet the complex needs of the present (Giroux, 2014). Rather, educating the whole person to realize the interconnectedness of the student’s life/actions will help develop a worldly paradigm (Moustakas & Perry, 1973; Rogers, 1969). The effect will be that the students begin learning to respect people with different cultural backgrounds, different worldviews, environment, etc. (Friedman & Mandelbaum, 2011; Kazanjian, 2013b). The following sections discuss the three tenets of hyper-curriculum which are integral to the foundation of this curricular theory: (1) Developing a Cosmopolitan consciousness, (2) Opening spaces and training abilities for critical communication, and (3) Opening and engaging spaces where new networks may form.

5. Tenet I: Developing a cosmopolitan consciousness

Around the fourth century, the Cynics developed the theory of cosmopolitanism by means of a “moral obligation as allegiance to humanity itself, a meaningful portion of which they knew given the polyglot cultural ethos of the Mediterranean world at the time” (Hansen, 2008, p. 291). In Classical Greece, Diogenes proclaimed that he was a *kosmopolite*—a citizen (polite) of many worlds (cosmos) (Appiah, 2006; Hansen, Burdick-Shepherd, Cammarano, & Obelleiro, 2009; Toulmin, 1990).

How the cosmopolitan philosophy was to be lived out was elaborated by Greek philosopher Epicurus around 300 B.C. and those thereafter known as the Epicureans. Another group known as the humanists uncovered and studied the texts of the Epicureans years later. The humanists proffered a cosmopolitanism, in which a person could, “to live an ethical life without reference to postmortem rewards and punishments; to contemplate without trebling the death of the soul” (Greenblatt, 2011, pp. 10-11). The cosmopolitan could explore possibilities of life and sought to cure ignorance with education, reason, and scientific inquiry (Lucretius, 2007).

In the 18th century, the Enlightenment reawakened cosmopolitan ideology (Hansen, 2008). The Enlightenment challenged dogma and absolutism that kept cosmopolitan and humanist ideas subjugated. Scholars like Kant (1996) argued for a human right, in which “This right, since it has to do with the possible union of all nations with a view to certain universal laws for their possible commerce can be called cosmopolitan right (*ius cosmopoliticum*)” (p. 121). Since the Enlightenment, human rights and cosmopolitan ideals gained stronger momentum.

The cosmopolitan is a worldly individual that appreciates the dynamics of the internal (self) and external cosmos (Nixon, 2008; Wahlström, 2014). With a worldly perception, the person begins to act as a global citizen (Rizvi & Lingard, 2006; Said, 2001; 2004). The worldliness of a cosmopolitan is generated by skepticism of social customs, historical traditions, and has a “moral obligation as allegiance to humanity itself, a meaningful portion of which they knew given the polyglot cultural ethos of the Mediterranean world at the time” (Hansen, 2008, p. 291). Thus, the cosmopolitan is a person who seeks to find harmony and possibility amongst the many worlds in the community (Kazanjian, 2012; Toulmin, 1990). Cosmopolitans place value on relationships and engaging worlds in a critical, yet compassionate manner (Appiah, 2006). They work to transcend a national outlook by understanding the interdependence, risks, and benefits of hyper-connecting these worlds (Wahlström, 2014). Cosmopolitanism is not a theory, but a way of life (Hansen, 2008)—just as “history is not events, but people” (Bronowski, 1973, p. 438).

Contrarily, cosmopolitanism has been criticized for being elitist, or designed for the privileged few able to travel the world sampling each culture, moving out of free will to seek professional, personal, or academic opportunities (Hawkins, 2014). Others also believe that a formal cosmopolitan curriculum and pedagogy is futile because of the

endless complexity of local practices, beliefs, values, meanings, and communications. However, even with the limitations, cosmopolitanism may become a way of understanding the elements of global life and phenomena (Hansen, Burdick-Shepherd, Commarano, & Obelleiro, 2009). As a vantage point, cosmopolitanism can offer one a space for conceptualizing and engaging the complexities and possibilities of a hyper-connected world (Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014; Wisler, 2009).

The first tenet of hyper-curriculum is to facilitate the development of a cosmopolitan consciousness in the classroom. Hyper-curriculum opens cosmopolitan spaces where teachers and students periodically engage the “unsettling connection with the dynamic spaces between the local and the universal” (Hansen, 2008, p. 296). These cosmopolitan spaces “are both comforting and unsettling, spaces that both disturb and enlighten, spaces in which students can experience one another and connect with the otherness of others” (Engelbrecht, Mafumo, & Waghid, 2009, p. 223). Engaging the discomfiting issues of the world opens opportunities for the students to develop skills, competence, and knowledge by engaging people and ideas from around the world (Hawkins, 2014; Liu & Dall’Alba, 2012). Hyper-curriculum depends upon Kant’s (1795) cosmopolitan right by learning to act humanely and develop meaningful relationships. By developing relationships and engaging in the world with openness and compassion, students and teachers discover more of their inner potentials (Hansen 2008; Kazanjian, 2013a; Moustakas & Perry, 1973; Nhat Hanh, 2007; Rogers, 1969).

In hyper-curricular terms, cosmopolitanism serves to provide the tools and philosophical structure in which students can access, engage, and critically analyze the curricular environment that generates classification, structure, and accessibility (Au, 2012). Moreover, cosmopolitanism can work, “For an expansion of creativity, imaginings, openness, and affiliations...with a moral and ethical imperative to engage in and sustain equitable and just relations (Hawkins, 2014, p. 97). This curriculum offers students “opportunities to experience local and broader traditions educationally rather than solely from the point of view of socialization” (Hansen, 2008, p. 300). Developing a sense of commonality instead of locality, students begin to incorporate the disqualified, subjugated, or disregarded experiences of people, to better understand the human condition (Said, 2001).

Furthermore, as a curricular tool, Engelbrecht, Mafumo, and Waghid (2009) stated that cosmopolitanism, “Creates opportunities for its students to take responsibility for their own ideas, take intellectual risks...learn how to think and engage critically in a democratic society, and learn how to bring justice to the world. (p. 223). In this model the classroom curriculum becomes interdisciplinary. For example, a social studies unit incorporates the rest of the social sciences, as it delves into anthropological and psychological evidence, theory, and research. This exhibits the transition from locality to commonality—as most everyone has a type of culture.

A cosmopolitan consciousness will reveal a worldly anthropological study in which culture emerges as a type of solution for existential dilemmas. As Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski (2004) stated “With the realization of their mortality by the creation of uniquely human cultural affections, including art, language, religion, agriculture, and economics...exposition of how the awareness of mortality directly influenced the evolution of culture” (p. 19). Insecurity and morality awareness may generate an anxiety for the person, in which culture alleviates the anxiety by promoting self-esteem, develop values, attaining social roles, and entertaining other cultural worldviews. Students ultimately begin to understand that “human-nature relations thus provide a window on how people cope with matters of life and death” (Koole & Van Den Berg, 2004, p. 87). For the social studies classroom, students are engaged in a conversation on cultural views by means of existential questions.

To appreciate diversity while engaging differences in a cosmopolitan consciousness, students recognize diversity as the distinct contents and customs of a historical pre-culture—these elements are bound to a time-circumstantial frame in which multicultural ideals, systems, and signs exhibit as a humanity (Bhabha, 1994). On the other hand, a cosmopolitan consciousness emphasizes the cultural difference as an existential avenue. In this paradigm, “culture only emerges as a problem, or a problematic, at the point at which there is a loss of meaning in the contestation and articulation of everyday life, between classes, genders, races, nations” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 34). This type of engagement allows the students to question the structure rather than the effects of the problems that culture seems to alleviate.

The cosmopolitan consciousness engages cultural difference as a means to help an individual engage the notion of self and a sense of identity within existential dilemmas (i.e., how a person copes with death, meaninglessness, freedom, and isolation) (Moustakas, 1966; Yalom, 1980). Thus, a cosmopolitan consciousness generated by the hyper-curriculum allows the student not to develop rigid networks of cultural context/referents, but rather open up to be bicultural—redefining and blending cultural definitions (Salzman & Halloran, 2004).

The cultural and personal identity is not lost in a cosmopolitan consciousness, but expanded and contested in critical and constructive ways. There is no doubt that social groups are beneficial to “provide individuals with a *social identity* that allows for an extension of the self in space and time; it is abstract, intangible, and therefore everlasting. Social identity, we argue, is human beings’ vehicle for transcendence” (Castano, Yzerbyt, & Paladino, 2004, p. 314). The social identity is no longer about conforming, but acting in a world in which they can find more of themselves and transcend structures of knowing the world, self, and others. Beginning to make life choices not on the basis of shared static or historical cultural values, but inner values.

These inner values feel true to the student and allows him/her to become an autonomous individual while relating to others (Martin, Campbell, & Henry, 2004).

6. Tenet II: Opening spaces and training abilities for critical communication

Developing a cosmopolitan social identity helps a student extend the self through expression (Castano, Yzerbyt, & Paladino, 2004). Hyper-curriculum appreciates that in the contemporary world, social identity is also globalized. Thus, the second tenet of the hyper-curriculum is for educators to open spaces and to training students' abilities for critical communication. This transdisciplinary approach engages a critical view of curriculum to dismantle traditional or compartmentalized approaches to education (Smith, 2013). Tenet II emphasizes the connection among global subjects to understand cultural difference as an art of living existential questions (Bhabha, 1994; Wahlström, 2014; Yalom, 1980).

As Giroux (2008) argued, "Culture plays a central role in producing narratives, metaphors, images, and desiring maps that exercise a powerful pedagogical force over how people think about themselves and their relationship to others" (p.118). Students become empowered with cultural competence skills when interacting with different cultures (Fanghanel & Cousin, 2012; Shim, 2011). Competence skills can be introduced in a number of ways—from guest speakers to prosocial community projects. In the diverse classroom, students may work collaboratively with students of different cultures to develop a deeper sense of empathy (Rogers, 1969). Developing diverse relationships by means of empathy deepens the level of communication (Moustakas & Perry, 1973).

The success and depth of learning from diverse relations depends upon empathy. Empathy is an authentic caring and inquiry into the emotional state or experience of another (Adler, 1965; Rogers, 1969, 1977; Suhd, 1995). Developing empathy allows the student to feel *as if* another person's experiences/emotions were his/her own (Rogers, 1980). Facilitating students to be empathetic can be an exercise in the deepest realm of human experience and imaginative capacity—how might *that* feel? This is especially important when students have intense or disturbing experiences (such as displacement) and other students are struggling to imagine how that may feel (Fanghanel & Cousin, 2012). Although empathic classroom encounters with intense personal experiences may be unsettling, they are meaningful to the student's education. Empathy can only be enacted for this critical communication if educators cultivate a safe classroom environment based in respect or unconditional positive regard (Kazanjian & Choi, 2014; Rogers, 1977; 1980). By empathic relating and understanding, students open spaces to learn more about being human and the conditions that influence (Frie, 2011).

Negotiating differences or unsettling relations requires effective critical communication. How does the space for communication become critical and how could we

train students to become critical communicators? First, as previously discussed, the elements of safety and empathy will open the space. Training the student to become a critical communicator means facilitating the students' learning beyond superficial transformations, multicultural platitudes, and beyond tolerance (Liu & Dall'Alba, 2012; Shim, 2011; Rogers, 1980). Critical communication begins by developing a skeptical view of one's paradigm through questioning. As such, critical communication in a hyper-curriculum allows students "to use knowledge of their own culture to learn new cultural rules through comparing the differences in communicating in different cultural contexts" (Liu & Dall'Alba, 2012, p. 21). By negotiating the complexity of cooperation, discussion, and collective effort, students begin to appreciate how critical relationships are to learning.

When students are perceived as essential to the knowledge construction process, their learning becomes more meaningful. As Moustakas (1956) described, "In spite of the divisional curriculum, many teachers realize that the child's entire self comes to school and is involved in every activity and experience. Every child wants to be responded to as a person" (p. 1). The holistic elements of hyper-curriculum appreciate that curriculum extends beyond books and classrooms (Pinar, 2012). Education is not the average of test scores, but the gamut of emotional, cultural, and life experiences that help a person's self-actualizing tendency flow.

7. Tenet III: Crossing borders, for new networks to form

In a hyper-curriculum, the classroom becomes a cosmopolitan center by empathizing and engaging worldly issues—by expanding understandings and praxis of community. Hyper-curriculum does not seek to marginalize groups by blending cultures into one. Rather, it seeks to engage cultural differences as a means to deepen understandings of *being* human (Hammerich, 2014; Said, 2001). There are many people, cultures, and experiences that standardized curriculum disregards. Hyper-curriculum seeks to be inclusive.

National and cultural borders have created an existing network in which people may develop worldviews and actions. Standardized public school curriculum in the United States has narrowed this network by having students learn about *us* and *them* (Anzaldúa, 1987). However, in places of physical borderlands, between nation states, there are many that live in the border, such as along the U.S. and Mexican border. These border communities are neither one nor the other culture. Rather, a liminal space where emotional, historical, and cultural residue mix and flow (Kazanjian, 2011). These spaces are found throughout the world and are metaphorically power for understanding the possibilities of dismantling borders with a hyper-curriculum. Moreover, if schools are not located in physical borderlands, teachers can work to open these types of liminal spaces.

Opening liminal spaces for new networks to form in the classroom is possible with a hyper-curriculum. New networks of culture, ideas, science, technology, are possible if students cross standardized curricular borders. For example, Henry A. Giroux's (2005) *Border crossings: Cultural workers and the politics of education* is an important text for the pedagogy of cosmopolitanism in hyper-curriculum. Giroux studied ideas from postmodernism, multiculturalism, and critical pedagogy to offer a *border pedagogy* (Kazanjian, 2011). This pedagogy has a political function for reorienting the historicity and ideology of dominant institutions with the people, cultures, and identities that have been excluded.

The border pedagogy has three principles. The first is that students and teachers must recognize the boundaries of knowledge and privilege that they speak from. One calls forth the “epistemological, political, cultural, and social margins that structure the language of history, power, and difference” (Giroux, 2005, p. 20). The second principle proffers not just to help students cross borders, but redefine them. In this realm students are “border crossers in order to understand otherness in its own terms and to further create borderlands in which diverse cultural resources allow for the fashioning of new identities within existing configurations of power” (p.20).

Lastly, students will then reveal the historical and social limitations of institutions of the dominant curriculum, which directs and frames social relations (Giroux, 2005; 2014). The border pedagogy is an example of how to enable new networks to form in a hyper-curriculum. As a result, educators and students enter into the realm of democratic possibility. With a critical consciousness, teachers do not engage the diversity in the classroom as face value nor romanticize them, but “help students find a language for critically examining the historically and socially constructed forms by which they live” (Giroux, 2005, p.113). Teachers and students are presented with the strange and unfamiliar when they cross borders. Ultimately, these are areas of becoming.

Border pedagogy is a worldly adventure that is not limited to geographic or cultural region. It is for those that want to develop cosmopolitan students that communicate critically to work beyond tradition and locality (Kazanjian, 2011; Romo & Chavez, 2006). The border pedagogy opens new spaces for networks to form by “an examination of boundaries of ethnicity, race, culture, and power and urges us to move across psychological, social, and conceptual barriers to better understand our own lives and experiences and those of ‘others’” (Reyes & Garza, 2005, p. 154). Through the creation of new networks, students connect ideas, cultures, and experiences—which is the very fabric of hyper-connection (Cline & Necochea, 2008).

8. Hyper-curriculum in practice

How might the tenets of hyper-curriculum operate in practice? Hopper (2014) revealed a successful example of a hyper-connected school initiative in Texas, which “implemented

global projects to connect their students with many states and countries as a platform for integrating collaboration and communication skills, technology tools, and cultural diversity into an existing curriculum.” (p. 78). Videoconferencing for this K-8 school became a means for global learning projects that let students collaborate with partners around the world. Students engaged in this project-based learning are offered a global education in areas of science, culture, and language arts. Tracking the paths of Monarch Butterflies, or trying to understand how other cultures celebrate holidays, helped students to cross borders to learn and develop empathic relationships thousands of miles away with hyper-connected technology. In this kind of cosmopolitan approach, “students explore real problems, work in collaborative groups and develop cross-curriculum skills...improve development of problem solving, higher order thinking, and research skills” (Hopper, 2014, p. 79).

To further illustrate the hyper-curriculum, the Dove Project brought gifted and talented Israeli and Palestinian students to the United Kingdom for three years (Fanghanel & Cousin, 2012). This project is a meaningful example of how researchers, teachers or professors can create and facilitate growth in the complexity of religion, history, culture, and politics. The Dove Project students came from different cultural paradigms that have a history of intense conflict. However, outside the hot spot of their home country, Israeli and Palestinian students collaborated with each other on projects and discussed the controversial issues between homelands. The Dove Project did not focus on debating, but rather empathic discussions where they could experience different realities. Professors offered physical and psychological spaces for empathic relating and alone time for reflecting on personal narratives (Fanghanel & Cousin, 2012).

From The Dove Project experience, students reported that when they returned to their homeland, they felt isolated and dislocated from what was once familiar (Fanghanel & Cousin, 2012). Empathizing with the other offered them a new reality, one that dissipated the historical hate/prejudice. As a means to constructively deal with this new “gap” in their lives some sought community engagement, while others packed up and left the region. Many felt that going back home would be impossible. Reflection on The Dove Project, Fanghanel and Cousin (2012) argued that,

Cognitive disturbance emanating from physical dislocation with ‘the real world’ is an important factor in less severe circumstances too. A ‘worldly’ pedagogy takes account of this dissonance and harnesses it through ongoing debate and dialogue that provide a safe space for students and gradually develop their ability to apprehend plurality as richness. (p. 44)

Although The Dove Project is a dramatic example, teachers and teacher educators should be creative in creating these cosmopolitan spaces. While considering the (local and global) conditions and situations of students. Moving beyond superficial tolerance requires more than passing high stakes tests, meeting external standards, or acquiring

factual information about the world. Rather, it involves creating safe liminal space for students to be exposed to various perspectives, interact with diverse individuals by empathic listening, and collaboration. After these lessons students must reflect on their own meaning making processes and revisit the issues they found emotionally charged or important (Fanghanel & Cousin, 2012). Tension, anxiety, and dislocation are important psychodynamics for working with different cultural conflicts and dissonances (Giroux, 2014; Yalom, 1980). These dynamics of diverse interactions are not to be feared. Rather, that can become an opportunity with which one engages realities in a reflexive and critical way—a transformative space within which one opens the possibility of new perceptions of oneself, others, and the world.

9. Conclusion

By appreciating the philosophy of cosmopolitanism, educators may develop creative and innovative methods from theoretical foundation to meet the diverse needs of students. It will be important to facilitate the preparation of students to take responsibility, for their present circumstances and the future of their hyper-connected world. It may be difficult to ask teachers and professors to be creative within a system that does not allow room for creativity. However, the dimension of creativity may be what is required for teachers as well as students to contribute to hyper-connection (Wahlström, 2014). Creative curricular practices will challenge with the “intrusion of experiences or knowledge that contradict the transitory rational understandings respondents might reach in the process” (Fanghanel & Cousin, 2012, p. 44).

Classrooms have become cosmopolitan centers, “comprised of a *mélange* of people from differing geographical, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, with significant historical trajectories of movement” (Hawkins, 2014, p. 93). The hyper-curriculum opens the necessary classroom space to reflect on the complexity of perspectives, appreciate the interrelations, interconnections, and commonalities that are an essential part of human existence (Shim, 2011; Smith, 2013).

Hyper-connection and human progress are the result of collaborative, creative human efforts. According to Bronowski (1973), “The personal commitment of a man to his skill, the intellectual commitment and the emotional commitment working together as one, has made the *Ascent of Man*” (p. 438). As our ascent continues, cultures, languages, economies, and ideas are networking, blending, contrasting, in real life and through virtual space. This space can sometimes be a source of discomfort or anxiety, but it is also an opportunity for students to learn, expand, and meet others to actualize the potentials of a hyper-connecting cosmos.

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