



The New Wave in Education

Paul Loranger

Center for Global Education (Canada)

wisdomwill@shaw.ca

Abstract

This paper will look at the use of the inquiry method in doing active research, the interlink between classes on a global scale on said inquiry for open discussion, the use of enhanced reality technology to complete the project and the resulting critical students' assessments of their participation which is presently lacking within our schools as stated by the Gordon report (April 2013) in noting a decline of critical thinking among our students by not having a way to assess their capabilities? This paper wishes to show through a survey of those participating in these global conferences which I am presently involved and monitoring on current issues from schools around the world how it has or has not improved the critical thinking of students. The results will be qualitative in nature as each student does their own subjective evaluation but a summation will be given that will highlight their main points. The benefit to those who attend the talk will be to explain how it was achieved and answer the question "Are students more motivated to do inquiries if it involves active research, global sharing and modern technology? If the answer is yes, will this be seen as a new wave for the future of education? I look forward to the questions and comments of those who attend.

Old disciplinary instructor Waves: New added multidisciplinary student Inquiry Wave:

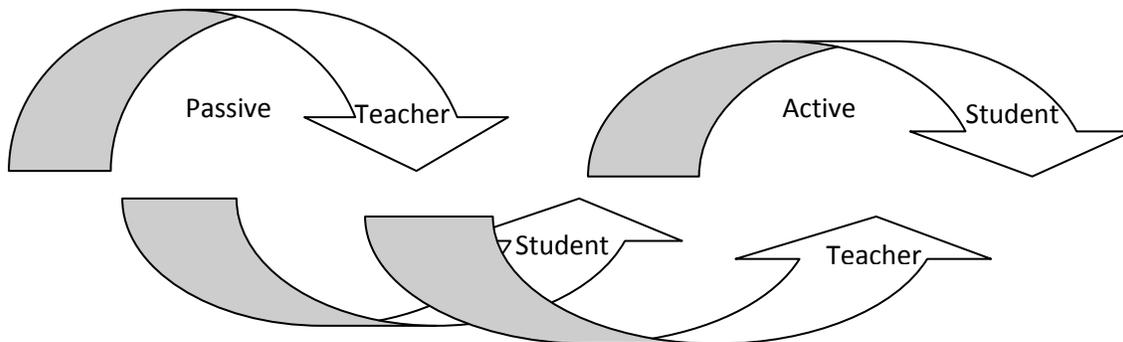


Fig.1 - Waves

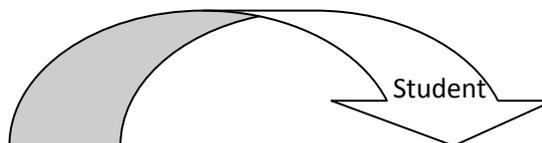


Fig.2 – Inquiry wave – part 1

As an instructor in any field where knowledge and skills have been accumulated, it becomes a passive research presentation to determine which points or skills need to be imparted to gain some mastery over the subject. In compliment to this, after some mastery has been attained by the student, as noticed by objective test results, a

new active research inquiry method that does not give answers but rather poses questions seems to engage the student in a multidisciplinary way by investigating present circumstances to gain hindsight as to what can be done now.

Let me give as an example the questions on the “Child soldier” video conference.

1. What are the main reasons behind the continued use of child soldiers? Who is to blame (rebel groups, unstable governments, economic conditions, etc.)?
2. Who should be responsible for overseeing the elimination of the use of child soldiers (The United Nations, NGOs, governments, etc.)?
3. What can individuals in the developed world do to make a difference in the lives of past and current child soldiers?
4. What NGO did you choose to sponsor and why?

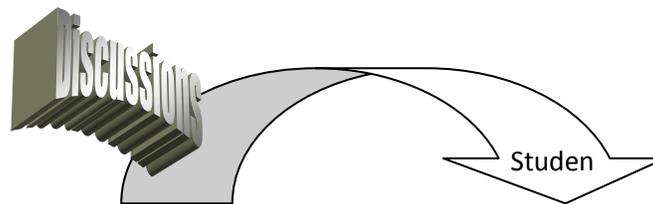


Fig.3 – Inquiry wave – part 2

The second part of the new wave is the actual video conference where students are not only exposed to those living under these circumstances but also reactions from other students who begin to gain insights as to why it is happening and what realistically can be done to change it as the student by himself can do very little. In contrast to the Instructor’s wave, where student learning activities try to show what to retain and master in such discipline, these conjoined activities ponder what can be done together that will impact on the present circumstance.

A common term used at these video conference is the term “we” as oppose to what “I” can do. The focus seems to shift from any one discipline to the way the advancement or regression in one can have a positive or negative effect on the dynamics of the situation. This is perceived by the stories told through the use of past behaviors.

In the case of the former Child Soldier event, those who were soldiers and had escaped, now seek a broader education as if in rebellion to the solely instructional mode of “Do only what I tell you to do”. This broad education needs to include this new wave as we learn that they have no intention of being re-indoctrinated to solely one discipline. The reformist focus on the development of the metacognition of the child in assuming that he/she is not a “tabula rasa”.

This interchange among the previous child soldier and students from classrooms from different regions seems also to prevent this indoctrination from happening within the schools as common ethics emerge that transcend all disciplines in that each person has a right to develop their own talents so as to make the most of what they have. The common objections by all participants towards these practices were the failure to recognize the other capabilities of the child soldier.

This capability to share one’s talent was not as apparent in this video conference as there was no project follow-up. Discussions tend to focus on what we all agree needs to be done. Group projects assume that what each must do, will be different, to achieve the same goal. This diversity becomes the third part of the wave.



Fig.4 – Inquiry wave – part 3

In the case of the Oil-sands conference where a report was due to the government, labor was divided according to personal interest and capability. Writing the report required the interweaving of many ideas as each student participated in its composition. Foresight had to be developing in each student to accomplish this task.

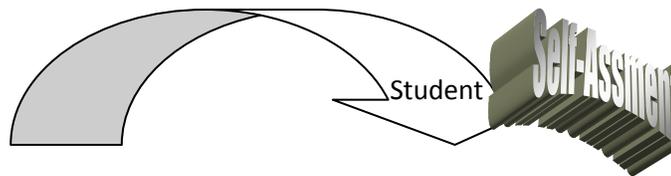


Fig.5 – Inquiry wave – part 4

After its completion came the fourth part of the wave, student self-assessment. This subjective critical thinking which I like to call “Geosight” is an evaluation of one’s present performance within reality based on capabilities used during the process. Here below are some examples.

“You hear about it in the news, what it would be like to go to school as a girl in some Middle East countries, but you never really feel it. Her story was so powerful, and it really made me feel lucky that I am a Canadian.”

- amazing to hear real stories coming from the people who experienced them
- much better in person (i.e.: Kowal) you can see the emotion they feel when they speak
- inspirational - empowering and thought provoking
- cool to interact with other schools to see what kinds of questions they had

Teacher - This is what my Social 10-1 class said all on their own. I wish I had more of this kind of interest from the APs last semester. They unanimously look forward to the next conference and we will spend more time preparing especially now that the students have accounts with TIG

“Thank you so much for organizing that VC. We read a novel lately that was directly connected to this VC. It really brought to life some of the issues we discussed while reading the novel. The students were very engaged and the speaker spoke to their level. My students really enjoyed it!”

“Great VC today! My students were talking about what they learned at lunch today! They are asking more questions that we will be following up in class with. This VC made it real for the students!”

“The reconciliation VC was incredible today! It was so nice to bring their learning to life by having them hear from real people! Thanks again!”

“As a teacher, we have to understand that we cannot know everything. Fortunately technology has created a platform with which we can reach out to find people who live what we are learning about every day. Global Encounters and Taking It Global have helped me to bridge the geographical gap between corners of the earth that a few years ago, we may never have been able to reach. Countless organizations are offering teachers and students the chance to meet people from around the world, but what GE and TIG do is build on curricular outcomes to advance what I am already doing in the classroom. What I appreciate about GE and TIG is that my



students and I feel prepared going into a video conference and supported through all the preliminary lessons, activities, rubrics and discussion questions. They take my students, students from all over the world and create a platform where meaningful discussion can take place and learning can occur. Students are taught material while building empathy and a sounder understanding of issues within the world that websites and videos just cannot do. Lastly, the ability to use social networking to keep the conversation alive and growing is second to none.”

“I can teach a student about child soldiers all day long and not even touch the complexities of this atrocity. But, when my students can ask questions and learn from someone who lived through it and escaped, not only are they learning things they will never forget but, they become motivated to make a difference. Students are more likely to believe one person can make a change when you make world events real and relatable.”

Perhaps the most memorable comment from all the video conferences was the following;

“I have never walked away from a video conference or day of teaching feeling like I did yesterday. The students did not want to leave yesterday after the VC they all wanted to keep discussing and decide on something to do right then and there. I feel very blessed to be a part of this experience.”

From these comments or subjective evaluation, one can but notice the increase motivation of the student in the inclusion of this wave in their learning process.

For more detail information see my references, on taking your board global, I have prepared a brochure which you can collect after the talk or download it from my web at <http://www.teacherzones.com/> under future of education. Now I would love to answer any of your questions.

References

Surveys

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Educational psychologists and multiculturalism education

- [24] Due to limited space see the bibliography of my e-books at <http://www.teacherzones.com/www.teacherzones.com> on the metacognition of the child from my book "My name is Johnny" – from many educational psychologists and passive and active cultural education from "Preparing the child to live within the global village"