Globalization and Education: Integrating the 21st Century Skills

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ABSTRACT

In today's world, the English language has become the dominant language of communication throughout the globe. The widespread of English and the advent of ICT's – Information and Communication Technologies- are one of the buds of the flourishing process of globalization creating by that a one-world global village. Thus, in the village-like world, globalization has affected various aspects of life not only the technological and financial fields but also the English language teaching in which the English language represents an industry in the true sense of the word. In fact, globalization has urged both students and teachers to master a certain number of skills, which are primordial in order to cope with the needs of this contemporary society to prepare students for future citizenship, called the 21st-century skills changing by that not only the way students are taught but also the way they are assessed. The current study sheds light on the integration of these skills in the teaching/learning operation as well as the assessment procedures to overcome the challenges of the present-day informational era for a balanced community.

Key Words: Globalization, Society, English Language Education, Teaching, Assessment.

INTRODUCTION

This paper suggests the integration of the so-called, « 21st-century skills » in an EFL context so that to overcome the recent challenges of the technological era that we are living in. Moreover, it will highlight the globalization process and its buds: linguistical, educational,

technological…In addition to that, the 21st-century skills are for teachers to teach and for evaluation purposes as well, i.e., the incorporation of the named expertise in both teaching practices and the assessment procedures in the English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms.

In our informational epoch, it falls to academic institutions, society, and more precisely teachers and instructors to prepare students-future citizens- for good civic citizenship which corresponds to the community's needs and the workplace's demand. Teaching, not least a foreign language, especially English is a tough job, but somebody has to do it with its great ups and downs. That is why a teacher bag should always be fashionable in the sense that, it ought to carry on all the innovative and updated techniques of teaching and testing procedures for better learning results and for positive learners' feedbacks.

Globalization : the Global Village

The process of globalization has become a central attention for the twenty-first Century. In very down-to-earth terms, it is the execution of a one-world system in the hosting countries. Recently, it has become a flourishing buzzword that is used here and there rightly and wrongly. However, a valid definition to the globalization concept would be too vague, and therefore it is difficult to define due to the vastness of the concept and the many-sided aspects it covers. Notwithstanding, the complex nature of the notion of globalization means « The intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happening are shaped by events occuring miles away and vice versa » (Giddens 1990:64). This definition tends to show the notion of distance and remoteness and makes reference to the advent of media and the coined term « the global village » proposed by Marshall McLuhan. Marshall McLuhan (1964) described how the world is contracted into a village-like planet by electric technology and the on-the-spot transmission of information. Actually, the metaphor of « Global Village », today, is used to express the wide use of Internet and the World Wide Web where the notion of physical distance is no more a handicap to the present-day communication activities of people.

The new created world of the highly web-connected computers enable people to link and share their new social structures and the same interests and concerns. In the same line of thoughts, we can say that globalization is « the widening, deepening and speeding up of interconnectedness on a worldwide basis » (Held et al. 1999 :69). The core of this definition is the interconnectedness which means the global unified communities of the our nowadays world. Moreover, the Wikipedia defines globalization as « an ongoing process by which regional, economies, societies, and cultures have become integrated ». This definition implies that the

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Globalization and ICT's

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Globalization and ICT's

However, one must speak about the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT's), by which the dramatical and increasing connections among nationalities and different geographical

areas cannot be achieved first and foremost without the advent of ICT's. Henceforth, ICT's help the worldwide exchange and the globe-spanning network of communication.

Worth noting at this level that ICT's are « generally relates to those technologies that are used for accessing, gathering, manipulating and presenting or communicating information. The technologies could include hardware (e.g. computers and other devices); software applications and connectivity (e.g. access to the Internet, local networking, infrastructure, video conferencing) » (Toomey et al. 2001 p.3).

So that, ICT's is an umbrella term that encompasses any communication device or application in order to communicate, create, store and manage information electronically in a digital form. ICT's are the bridge between nations and populations with the advanced technological improvement in the light of the globalization world. In fact, it is what ties the continent into a one-big globe of a highly speedy connected network.

Globalization and Education

One of the tentacles of the octopus-like process of globalization is the educational and linguistic levels of integration to impose the one-world system. In the Algerian context, this already started with the introduction of what is called the « competency-based education » in primary and secondary education. Nevertheless, in the English language classrooms at the tertiary level within the LMD system, we must start talking about the integration of the 21st Century skills in the English language classes. In order to reinforce the status of English as the world's first, dominant language which has become the new interest among a new mass of people wanting to learn English, because English as the global language is the linguistic tool for the purposes of technological advancement, economic development, and commercial expansion. Moreover, the academic institutions need to achieve the level of understanding and acceptance of the rights and responsibilities required for healthy communities worldwide.

The 21st Century Skills

The globalized world has its characteristics and buds of the offspring evolution of on-going changes in the village-like planet. One of these buds are the necessities to be mastered in the informational society which are the so-called 21st Century skills. The later skills mean the framework for 21st Century learning skills that was developed with input from educators, education experts, and business leaders to define and illustrate the proficiencies, knowledge, expertise, and support systems that students need to succeed in work, life, and citizenship.

Therefore, The 21st Century skills comprise skills, abilities, and learning dispositions that have been identified as being required for success in 21st-century society and workplaces by educators, business leaders, academics, and governmental agencies for healthy balanced communities, not least the teaching/learning situations and assessment sessions.

The Framework continues to be used by thousands of educators in schools abroad to put 21st-century skills at the center of learning. All elements of the Framework are critical to ensure 21st-century readiness for every student. When a school, district builds on this foundation, combining knowledge and skills with the necessary educational systems, assessments, curriculum and instruction, professional development, and learning environments - students are more engaged in the learning process and graduate better prepared to thrive in today's digitally and globally interconnected world.

Key subjects and 21st Century themes that they should incorporate in order to promote understanding of an academic content at much higher levels by weaving 21st-century interdisciplinary themes into key subjects:

• Global Awareness

• Financial, Economic, Business and Entrepreneurial Literacy

• Civic Literacy

• Health Literacy

• Environmental Literacy

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- **Learning and Innovation Skills**

Learning and innovation skills are what separate students who are prepared for increasingly complex life and work environments in today's world and those who are not. They include:

• Creativity and Innovation

• Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

• Communication

• Collaboration

- Information, Media and Technology Skills

Today, we live in a technology and media-driven environment, marked by access to an abundance of information, rapid changes in technology tools and the ability to collaborate and make individual contributions on an unprecedented scale. Effective citizens and workers must be able to exhibit a range of functional and critical thinking skills, such as:

• Information Literacy

• Media Literacy

• ICT (Information, Communications, and Technology) Literacy

- Life and Career Skills

Today's students need to develop thinking skills, content knowledge, and social and emotional competencies to navigate complex life and work environments. The 21's essential Life and Career Skills include:

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• Flexibility and Adaptability

• Initiative and Self-Direction

• Social and Cross-Cultural Skills

• Productivity and Accountability

• Leadership and Responsibility

The definitions above are by the P21 (the Partnership for 21st Century Learning) which is a membership organization that began in 2002 as a catalyst for change to bring together organizations from the public, private and non-profit sectors to advocate on the behalf of improving education for all children, not least teenagers, and adults.

It is the spark plug to position 21st Century skills at the center of U.S. education by building collaborative partnerships among education, business,community and government leaders to prepare the students to become effective citizens, workers and leaders, and to learn what they

need to join the 21st century communities and workplaces, in addition, to thrive in learning environments aligned with the real world.

The Teacher's Role and the Assessment Tools

As a matter of fact, we must mention the role of the teacher in the 21st Century classroom which has changed from the one who delivers knowledge or gives instruction to the one who sets up for different roles, for instance, to be an adaptor who should always make his/her teaching styles and stategies adaptive to the new requirements. Communicator : the teacher needs to use communication fluently. In addition to a learner, visionary, leader and a model of how the life long learner should be. Moreover, the teacher should be a collaborator, risk taker which means he/she ought to start initiatives in his own teaching (Churches, 2008).

However, the difficult part for many teachers is that to provide assessment tasks related to the 21st Century skills. As a result, if the students are required to master these new skills then teachers will need to set appropriate assessment tools so that the students can collect evidences of their skills development. E-assessment can offer new opportunities to assess these skills through the design of tasks that require web creative activities; interactive tasks through the use of global communication tools.

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E-assessment involves the use of digital devices to assist in the construction, delivery, storage or reporting of student assessment tasks, responses, grades or feedback. It can be undertaken with many devices, such as traditional desktop computers or laptops, with portable communication devices such as smart mobile phones, with digital devices such as iPads or through the use of electronic gaming devices. Teachers can use computers to construct their assessment tasks, to deliver these tasks to the relevant students and to record and provide feedback and grades to these students (Crisp, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Globalization is modeling the globe to a tiny one-system order in a village-like planet. Henceforth, the dominance of the English language and the advent of the ICT's have urged the teachers and the learners to cope with the present-day situation in which they are obliged to master a certain number of the informational era skills. The 21st century skills are the required necessities for better learning outcomes, teaching feedbacks, assessment results, and for good

future citizenship in a healthy society. The integration of the named skills in our tertiary educational level – university level- is the first and foremost the chief purpose of the proposed paper to supply the demand of the actual recent workplace of nowadays.

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