

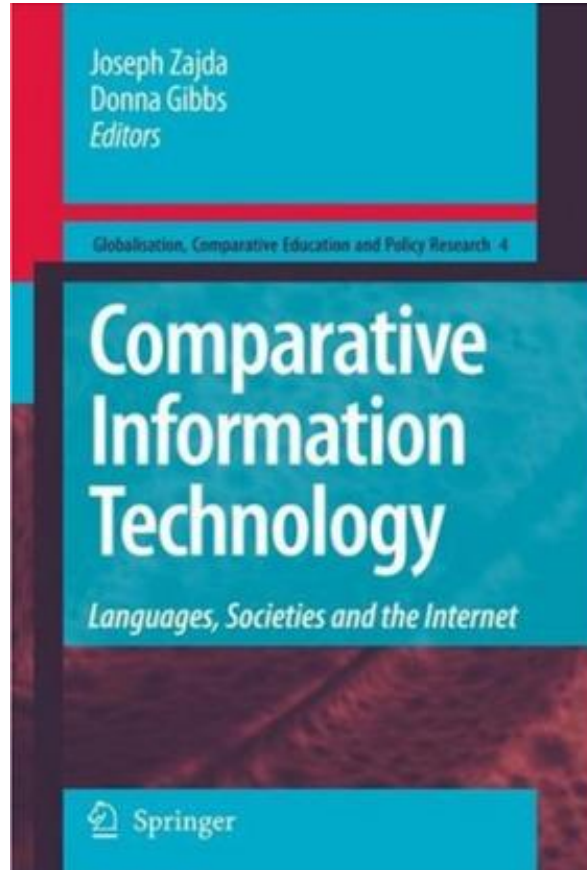
Comparative Information Technology: Languages, Societies and the Internet

(Book Review)

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Book details:

Comparative Information Technology: Languages, Societies and the Internet

Joseph Zajda & Donna Gibbs

Springer Science + Business Media B.V. (2009) xvi + 170 pp.

ISBN: 978-1-4020-9425-5

e-ISBN: 978-1-4020-9426-2

DOI: 10.1007/978-1-4020-9426-2

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Introduction

There is a book series called as the Globalisation, Comparative Education and Policy Research, and the aim of this book series is to supply the research needs of the areas interested by using comparative education research. The book series also has been providing, for last decades, the overview of developments, changes in policy and comparative education researches. Possible strategies, which are for the pragmatic policy planning and the effective implementation of these at local, regional and national levels, are offered in this series (GCEPR). It has been published since 2008, and from that year, 19 volumes have been published.

The fourth volume in the 19-volume book series is the Comparative Information Technology: Languages, Societies and the Internet, which is published in 2009 by the editors named Joseph Zajda and Donna Gibbs, and this book consists of 10 chapters. These chapters also include some sub-sections. A critique of the attachment point between ICT and the effects of it on individuals, societies and educational institutions is presented in this book. According to book, in addition to our self-perception and our social identities in a global culture, our cognitive, linguistic and visual dimensions of communications, due to ICTs, have gone under a transformation.

The dedication point of this book is the impact of the ICT, in a global context, on the learning. In terms of education and policy research, there have been provided some directions related to reforms about transformational education in 21th century. The dominant discourses of the several book chapters have been criticized and discussed referring to ICT, pedagogy and cultural identity. Recent ICT, pedagogy and cultural identity studies have been used for this book. That making this book available for education policy researchers, policy makers, academicians, graduate students, practitioners and administrators in the educational contexts and the related professions is the general purpose.

There are some aspects making this book unique and these are listed below:

-It includes the studies about ICT, pedagogy and cultural identity in the last years and these are examined.

-Methodological approaches and conceptual frameworks which can be applied to the research of ICT, pedagogy and globalization are explored.

-Ideological necessities of technological determinism which affect pedagogy and cultural identity are demonstrated.

-As based on recent developments in ICT and cultural identity researches, some strategical educational policies are provided.

-Some directions about the democratic and entitling pedagogy in 21th century are suggested.

Presentation

The first chapter, *Comparative Information Technology: Languages, Societies and the Internet*, is written by the editors of the book, Donna Gibbs and Joseph Zajda, and it gives the general information about the book. It starts with the definition of globalization and discuss about the new trends in the ICT in a global context and its relevance to identity, effect on digital literacy and classroom pedagogies. It also gives some brief information about the other chapters of the book.

The second chapter, *Abstract Tools and Technologies of Learning: An Evolving Partnership*, is written by David Butt, Ichiro Kobayashi and Makoto Sasaki. This chapter generally discusses the effects of technological developments on the transformation of social, cultural and educational practices. It starts with the description of tools used by the humans, and focuses on the tools used by the teachers to explain the culture's abstract tools. There is also some information about the evolution and the history of tool use. It is examined the specific examples of the explanatory technique used by the teacher referring to multidimensional concepts. It also reviewed the findings and some implications were given for research. To shed light on the tool use in a current way, contemporary Japan example is used.

The third chapter, *E-Learning in Schools: Making Successful Connections*, is written by Jennifer Fergusson, Donna Gibbs, Maree Gosper and Robyn Philip. The aim of this chapter is to supply an instantiation of four latest projects, and to discuss whether these projects contribute to the students' success or failure. All these projects are carried out within the five years and their goal is to enhance students' learning advantages by using e-learning. All of the projects are developed with the collaborations of different centers. Projects' nature and their effectiveness are investigated and then the authors provide some significant implications about how we can approach to e-learning programs, how we can develop and implement them in educational settings in a global context.

The fourth chapter, *What is Needed for Global E-Learning in Higher Education*, is written by Patrick McAndrew. In this chapter, it is examined that the new trends and design approaches which are used to develop and distribute e-learning programs in a higher education for global market. This chapter starts with the failure of global e-learning programs and discusses the reasons of this failure. To enlighten the pros and cons, it is represented design approaches which are used to help produce flexible online courses, and it is also provided the ways to share them among practitioners. Distance education model of Open University in UK is taken into account in detail. There is also a comparison of the approaches about learning objects, patterns and design, and lastly, there are some advices to be successful in e-learning course and procedure design.

The fifth chapter, *Mobile Learning: The Significance of New Mobile and Wireless Communications Technologies for Education*, is written by Gerard Goggin. The aim of this chapter is to identify the use of mobile phones in educational settings. In the first section, it is outlined the overview of the history of mobile phones. There are some examples of mobile phone use in educational settings in a number of countries. It is analyzed the idiosyncratic feature of mobile learning and its contribution to education. Finally, some important issues in mobile learning for educational theory and practice are taken into account and they are identified.

The sixth chapter, *Connecting Schools to Their Communities: The South-East Asian Experience*, is written by Cher Ping Lim and Mykint Swe Khine. This chapter aims to identify the nature of technology integration in schools and the communities in the South-east Asian region and to examine the concrete benefits of it. Some examples of positive reactions and willingness to uptake of ICT use in schools, communities and homes are described and these examples are taken from the schools in South-east Asian countries, which are Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore. The education systems of these countries are explored. Besides, the authors of this chapter have also examined how technology can be used for establishing the links between the stakeholders and the world according to conclusion of examination of these countries.

The seventh chapter, *Digital Literacy and Activity Systems in Adolescents*, is written by Jose Luis Rodrigues, Illera and Monica Kaechele. They investigate the adolescents' use of technology, because their practice of it provides a confrontation for schools. Concept of digital literacy is examined as a social practice. Besides, it has been carried out an empirical study in two different contexts which are a secondary school and a locutorio. The term locutorio is also defined in the chapter. The chapter is based on this investigation and it gives some details about it, such as its research design and results. As a conclusion, in a global context, digital literacy, knowledge society and the information age is regarded as a cultural practice. It is believed that the use of technology in an immersed way makes the distinct skills of learners develop. And there are also some suggestions about the technology use in educational settings.

The eighth chapter, *Digital Literacy and Using Online Discussions: Reflections from Teaching Large Cohorts in Teacher Education*, is written by Anne Scott and Josephine Ryan. In this chapter, a research about use of online discussion as an inseparable constituent of the pedagogical design has been analyzed. The answers for three questions, which are mentioned in the chapter, are looked for in the research. This research is conducted in a compulsory literacy education unit and

almost 200 primary pre-service teachers are participated in. The data collected during 6 years, from 2002 to 2007. The findings of this research are discussed with regard to presuppositions which are needed to constitute online discussions. It is presented some useful ways to conduct online discussion settings because it is believed that the online discussion needs careful design.

The ninth chapter, *Development of IT-Infrastructure for Rural Connectivity: A Pro-Poor Approach to E-Governance for Rural Development in India*, is written by Karunamay Subuddhi. This chapter is about the importance of ICT and digital literacy on the rural development. The author, in this chapter, claims that the use of ICT and also web technologies enhance the people's living in rural areas, connectivity to the world and their participation in economic, politic and social activities in a more active and effective way. India is taken into consideration in this chapter because it is believed that there is a development of rural areas in India because of the ICT and digital literacy. There is also some information about the services for rural development of India with the help of ICT.

The tenth chapter, the last chapter, *Context is Everything: An International Perspective of, and Its Challenges to, Research and the Evaluation of Educational Technology*, is written by Ellen B. Mandinach. In this chapter, international technology literature is reviewed and as based on the principles of systems, a methodology is described. This methodology is seen as a good way to obtain a better and richer understanding of ICT implementation in educational settings. As a starting point of this chapter, ICT paradigm war is mentioned and then some new technology policy themes are discussed. It is found some intersections between interdisciplinary evaluation and educational technology.

Evaluation

Comparative Information Technology: Languages, Societies and the Internet, which is a book from a book series of *Globalisation, Comparative Education and Policy Research*, is a book offering a critique of the links between Information and

Communication Technology and its effects on individuals, society and educational institutions. From starting the definition of globalization, the book mentions about the tools used by the teachers and the others in education for years. It goes on with the projects about the e-learning and information about how to conduct an e-learning setting. Then, it mentions about the significance of the mobile phones and their impact on education. In the following chapters, we can see some instance projects for connecting the school to the community via ICT. It is also discussed the digital literacy of adolescents and beliefs of the pre-service teachers on the digital literacy. The examples of the approaches supported by the Indian government are represented and finally the book is concluded with the international perspective of ICT implementation and evaluation of educational technology.

Apart from the concerned subjects of the book, there are also some critiques about it. Firstly, the book is full of text and it is sometimes really hard to read due to the wording. Some words are the ones that are rarely used in English and also there is a few coinage words in it. It includes a lot of terminology, which is normal, but some people may have difficulty in reading this book. Besides, there is no image in the book, even if on its cover. There are just some tables about the researches mentioned in the book.

This book can be useful for the ones who are interested in both ICT and society. It also helps develop our own general culture because it gives some detailed information about different current subjects.