

Week 3: History of Comparative and International Education

EDUC 480 - Howard University

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1 Context



Figure 1: Artistic rendering of different countries

1.1 Comparative and International Education

International and Comparative Education is a field that examines educational systems, policies, and practices across different countries and cultures. This overview provides a foundation for understanding the key concepts, approaches, and significance of this discipline.

- **Comparative education** involves the systematic examination of educational theories and practices in different countries. More specifically, it aims to:
 - Identify similarities and differences between educational systems
 - Understand the contextual factors influencing education
 - Learn from diverse approaches to improve educational practices
- In contrast, **international education** focuses on cross-border educational activities and exchanges, global citizenship education, and international schools and curricula.

1.2 Approaches to International and Comparative Ed

There are multiple approaches to international and comparative education.

1. A **historical approach** examines the historical development of educational systems, and the impact of different historical events on those educational systems.
2. A **scientific approach** uses quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze educational data from different cultural and comparative contexts.
3. A **cultural approach** primarily considers the impact of cultural factors on education within and across different cultural contexts.
4. A **sociological approach** explores the relationship between education and society.
5. A **policy approach** primarily examines and compares various policies and laws at the national level.

2 Theory



Figure 2: James Baldwin reading a small book with young people

2.1 Baldwin's "A Talk to Teachers"

You can read the text here: <https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/baldwin-talk-to-teachers>

James Baldwin's "A Talk to Teachers" is a speech delivered by Baldwin on October 16, 1963. His address discussed the purpose of education and the challenges faced by educators in a society grappling with racial injustice. Baldwin's speech emphasizes several key points:

1. The purpose of education is to create individuals capable of thinking critically and examining their society.
2. There is a paradox in education: as students become more conscious, they begin to question the very society educating them.
3. Baldwin argues that the role of teachers, especially those working with African American children, is to help students understand and confront the societal injustices they face.
4. He also challenges educators to prepare students to change society, even if it means facing resistance.

2.2 Responding to the Moment

You can find the reading from NPR from last year here: <https://www.npr.org/hereandnow/2025/01/27/immigration-arrests-schools>

The article discusses recent changes to immigration enforcement policies under President Trump that now allow federal agents to conduct immigration arrests at schools and other previously protected locations. Some key points of the article include:

- An incident in Chicago caused confusion when Secret Service agents tried to interview a student at school about an anti-Trump video, highlighting the potential for disruption even with non-immigration enforcement.
- Approximately 733,000 school-aged children in the U.S. lack legal status.
- President Trump ended a policy that restricted immigration arrests at sensitive locations like schools, churches, and hospitals.
- School districts are preparing for potential immigration enforcement activities by informing teachers, students, and parents about the policy change.
- Some parents are keeping children home from school due to fears about immigration enforcement.
- Schools are advised to request proper documentation from law enforcement officials seeking access to buildings or individuals.
- The policy change has raised concerns about impacts on children and families, including potential family separations and disruptions to education.

3 Practice

3.1 Position Statement #1

National policies on immigration enforcement have shifted dramatically in the last year. Federal agents are now conducting arrests in previously protected spaces like schools, which as prompted widespread fear among many immigrant families and students. As an elementary school teacher in a diverse urban district, you have been able to see this first hand.

During a faculty meeting called to address the new political climate, the principal asks the staff to share strategies for supporting students and families amid reports of ICE activity near school zones. One teacher proposes a daily “safe space” circle time focused exclusively on affirming undocumented students’ identities and resilience, drawing from recent advocacy resources. Another teacher, concerned about equity across all vulnerable groups, questions whether similar affirmations should be extended to other students affected by policy changes, like those from mixed-status households or recent deportees from different regions. After some tense discussion, both turn to you as a newer team member for your perspective.

Specifically, they want to know if it’s appropriate to prioritize curriculum and activities centered only on undocumented immigrant experiences, or if teachers have a responsibility to broaden support for all students navigating this climate.

What is your position?

3.2 Responding to the Times

In this practice-oriented activity, we will consider the impact of the readings that we have read this week on our in-school practices. Dr. Alexander will provide a series of scenarios.

4 Next week

During next week’s class, we’ll do our cultural presentations and go over the set of educational theories.