The Power of Problem-Based Learning for Building Democratic Adult and At-Risk Youth Communications

Abstract

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) forges effective communications between adult (communicational and pedagogical workers and parents) and at-risk youth (jeopardizing their present and future adjustments) to explore their engagements with community activism engaging in building their communities. PBL is vital for them to be engaged citizens, informed individuals and dynamic members of their society. This paper, therefore, introduces a theoretical approach for undeveloped, developing and developed countries to understand effective practices in developing democratic adult and at-risk youth communications in social justice. This framework emphasizes how PBL fosters multi-generational Communications and facilitative relationships between them to implement collective action. Also, this framework focuses on promoting dialogue amongst adult working with at-risk youth to improve their critical thinking skills by owning knowledge acquisitions. Developing these strong engagements between them brings about dialogical and democratic changes in communities that this framework provides adults and at-risk youth with inexpensive communication milieus to develop their common visions of social justice, and be engaged as part of a community working toward these visions. The main purpose of this paper, therefore, is to explore and discuss the main features of PBL to promote democratic adult and at-risk youth communications to build global knowledge networks and authentic learning milieus to bring democratic changes in their communities; to; understand critical participation possibilities and potentials about social justice issues for lifelong learning; to recreate dialogical and democratic forms of pedagogy and community engagement; and explore powerful democratic communicational practices.

Introduction

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) forges effective communications between adult, *who are communicational and pedagogical workers and parents*, and at-risk youth, *who are jeopardizing their present and future adjustments*, to explore their engagements with community activism engaging in building their communities. PBL is vital for them to be engaged citizens, informed individuals and dynamic members of their society. This paper, therefore, not only introduce a theoretical approach how to utilize PBL in undeveloped, developing and developed countries but also discuss effective practices in building democratic adult and at-risk youth communications for social and environmental justice. This emphasizes a conceptual framework which shows how to foster multi-generational participations and facilitative relationships between them to implement collective actions. In this context, focusing on promoting dialogue amongst adult working with at-risk youth through PBL can improve their critical thinking skills by owning knowledge acquisitions. These active participants, therefore, can be able to become knowledge constructors to represent new understandings about their communication processes, reflect about what s/he learns to scaffold their ideas and opinions (Jonassen, 2000), and also empower meaning-making with empowering their dreams with abstract mental images. Developing these strong engagements between them brings about dialogical and democratic changes in communities and

provides adults and at-risk youth with inexpensive communication milieus that empower their common visions of social justice to be engaged as part of a community working toward these visions. Furthermore, PBL breakthroughs in communication technologies are juxtaposed with increasing needs and demands to manage political, social and ethical dilemmas associated with new technological developments.

Purpose

In considering how best to optimize democratic adult and at-risk youth Communications for collective action, equity (gender, accessibility, minority, language, religion etc.), communication technology (new media), and economy (cost effectiveness and efficiency) are important to enhance cultural responsive to the demands of diverse groups and strategically develop programs. As mentioned by Huerta and Igbaria (2003), moreover, how adult and at-risk youth can equally share and exchange knowledge and resources for educational purposes, how they can promote their higher-order thinking skills as well as how they can cope with the limitations they have (such as time, age, gender, language etc.) are the major concerns of egalitarian interactions. PBL can appreciate diversity and promote multicultural communication atmosphere, enhance the educational experience of adult and at-risk youth, support positive collaboration milieus, advance excellence in democratic participations, and develop the individual growth of the entire collective actions. The main purpose of this paper, therefore, is to focus on engaging enthusiastically with antiracist concepts and analytic thinking of democratic adult and at-risk youth communications for collective action. Based on the main purpose of this study and the concerns discussed above, the key research inquiries are how to:

1. build global knowledge networks and authentic learning milieus to bring democratic changes in their communities;
2. understand critical communication possibilities and potentials about social justice issues for lifelong learning to recreate dialogical and democratic forms of pedagogy and community engagement; and
3. explore powerful democratic communicational practices that promote dialogues between them, augment cognitive learning skills and generate motivations for multi-generational participations.

PBL can build knowledge networks among adult and at-risk youth in distance education. The capabilities and roles of PBL in transformative praxis can develop novel opportunities in collective action to open for reconstructions through equal and diverse participations. This is one of the most valuable and constructive features on egalitarian Communications that this is crucial for adults with agitating cultural and political hegemonies currently confronting diverse societies. As strongly pointed out by Torres (1998), giving elaborated narratives of the cultural layouts of the antiracist interactions shows how this open approach heads to closer and sound connections between adult and at-risk youth. On the other hand, as noted by Freire and Shor (1987), this needs the movement of political and democratic reform to evolve strategies of collective action scientifically intellectual that explores the beliefs, norm and values support their communications. This reform must cope with the diverse dilemmas of its structure and the social and cultural problems it searches to solve as well as the features of racial inequity.

Theoretical Framework

Not only can PBL build new distance communication milieus that adult and at-risk youth can be able to take most of the responsibility for constructing their own knowledge, but also PBL can support extremely remarkable communicational improvements and provide adult and at-risk youth with knowledge-rich and continuously changing cultural opportunities. On the other hand, adult and at-risk youth around the world are under increasing pressure to improve their critical thinking skills for utilizing new communication technologies (Jonassen, 2000), because of the rhythm of life and the sources of poverty in the 21st century. In this context, PBL explains how critical multicultural experiences for social justice is based on post modern conceptions and analyses of how at-risk youth learn and grow by confirming the strategies of collective actions. The changes in advancing novel and challenging approaches to make strong connections for democracy with critical multicultural education help adult and at-risk youth clarify their understanding of cultural values, norms and ethics. In a rapidly change world, this is critical to realize the meaning and importance of the political and social pressures by which the transformative potential of critical multiculturalism to foresee the interests of global capitalism. Therefore, the author discusses how to *develop critical thinking skills through PBL* and *built democratic adult and at-risk youth communications for collective action* as the foundations of adult and at-risk youth participations.

Developing Critical Thinking Skills through Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

While cutting-edge communication technologies are increasing challenges (such as digital gaps, digital diversity etc. due to their high prices) to design interactive communication opportunities, PBL is providing more open and flexible milieus, which are mutually supported democratic Communications for empowerment. Educational degree programs and courses, therefore, can be constructed over PBL with the emerging communication technologies to engage at-risk youth interacting with knowledge from diverse resources around the world fast and with out time barriers. PBL can effectively integrate and utilize in any distance education systems. Democratic adult and at-risk youth Communications can improve their proficiencies of these people including practical advice about how adult build an environment in which programs are really for at-risk youth that these activities promote their critical learning skills and engage them in projects designed to be realistic, intriguing and relevant real life experiences. In this context, PBL can model their interactions how theory translate into practice and give them guidance as needed as well encourage them independence thinking. PBL, furthermore, can propose situate learning in authentic contexts to encourage adult and at-risk youth, and, as mentioned by Rudinow and Barry (1994), help them take ownership and responsibility for their critical thinking process. PBL is vital for at-risk youth to be an engaged citizen, informed individual and dynamic member of their society. These learners with different communication styles and strategies are most in need of opportunity and encouragement for improving their critical thinking skills. In this context, as discussed by Bowers (2000), adult can go beyond the mere social and cultural collaborations that emphasize democratic Communications related to attitudes, ideas, feelings and also way of thinking to take at-risk youth's improvement levels into account. To enhance the distance connections and networking of all at-risk youth groups and organizations with specific consideration given to diverse groups, PBL

can provide adult with finding the sound answers of these questions (Kurubacak, 2005):

1. To what extent do at-risk youth abilities continue to improve their critical thinking skills?
2. What kind of online experiences are associated with critical thinking skill development?
3. What are at-risk youth patterns of participation in critical thinking skill improvements?
4. What are the impacts of critical thinking skill developments on their learning outcomes?

Thinking critically helps at-risk youth solve problems, make decisions, analyze and evaluate beliefs and ideas, and give reasons about their daily lives to adjust them this continuously chancing world. Critical thinkers are independent learners who wonder about the essence and clarity of truths and arguments, and the impalpable of facts, principles, skills and concepts. As underlined by Schrum and Benson (2002), therefore, adult can have an opportunity to take a proactive stand in development of the programs, which are pedagogically sound and organizationally strong. There is no doubt that PBL can promote the self-confidence of both adult and at-risk youth by unimpeachably improving their critical thinking skills. Besides, PBL can extend the borders of their democratic Communications inexpensively to emphasize the equality of tolerance combined with a strong wisdom of values, ethics and morals of societies. The improvement of these qualities empowers adult and at-risk youth Communications to find various systematic and logical approaches Tony and Smith (1999), by discovering how to manage their times professionally. Increased reliance on PBL build radical challenges revolving around access issues to education and communication issues in online interactions in implementing professional guidelines and codes of conduct, along with quandaries.

Democratic Adult and at-Risk Youth Communications for Collective Action

Adult and at-risk youth in this century are surrounded by dramatically changed technologies and immerse amount of knowledge. Learning is becoming a lifelong process and the most essential part of jobs. Collective actions, therefore, can be an answer for these individuals to obtain global knowledge in this high-rhythm society, and also serve interactive methods with using different communication technologies. Due to a dialogic leadership role in this transformation age, as mentioned by Huerta, Ryan, and Igbaria (2003), and Spring (1999), adult and at-risk youth Communications must embrace not only new learning pedagogies and models, but also fundamental educational reforms with antiracist concerns and approaches. Emerging technologies, however, cannot always provide adult and at-risk youth with flexible time schedules to access indispensable knowledge due to the very high tempo of their life styles in the 21st century. As strongly highlighted by Kurubacak and Yuzer (2004), living in this transformation age has a very high rhythm, especially in cosmopolitan metropolises, which are extremely crowded with multicultural and diverse people. Now, both adult and at-risk youth in cities have to spend more time to reach their jobs and/or another target places, such as movie theaters, shopping centers, etc. on time. Besides, it is becoming impossible for these individuals to travel between small villages and cities, because of the rash traffics on the limited roads. Reaping promptly changing huge amount of knowledge with new communication

technologies requires unquestionably more time, new skills and powerful financial plans (Nichols, 2003; Palloff and Pratt, 1999). Moreover, adult and at-risk youth must have novel and complex specialties and needs to take control over their personal lives. Although learning about everything and using knowledge in the right way can provide these people with better lifestyles, it depends on how fast people access regularly to changing and increasing global knowledge. High-tech communication technologies have also essential roles to alter the way adult and at-risk youth collaborate and do business. The problem is that high-tech based life styles can offer limited flexibility and openness for learning; because these technological developments are based on the revenue reasons (Spring, 1999, p. 67). Finally, the legal and moral codes of the intellectual property must be redefined to access global knowledge. Distance communication milieus must provide individuals with racial identities to improve the broader democratic projects of critical multicultural goals on global citizenships. As underlined by Giroux (1997), the role of adults as public and transformative intellectuals and of at-risk youth as critical citizens, who are capable of governing rather than simply being governed, can become *citizen-scholars* and *cultural workers* that reject dominant f*orms of rationality* or *regimes of truth* and commit themselves instead to furthering equality and democratic life. Democratic adult and at-risk youth communications for collective action are indispensable part of the lifelong learning. PBL can empower the relationships between societies and individuals to establish a sober approach of sharing culture and power, and also make adult and at-risk youth control over their times.

Adult and at-risk youth together must focus on how to utilize PBL with new communication technologies and how to integrate new pedagogical procedures, learning contents and collaborations in their participations. The main concern of integrating PBL in collective actions must be about the possibilities of diversity and digital gap among diverse participants, professionals, community and resources in regard to accessing global knowledge and real-life experiences fast. Paulo Freire, who delved into the miscellaneous issues of human consciousness, the origins of knowledge and the meaning of freedom, highlighted that "…*I didn't understand anything because of my hunger. I wasn't dumb. It wasn't lack of interest. My social condition didn't allow me to have an education. Experience showed me once again the relationship between social class and knowledge*" (The Paulo Freire Institute, 2004). Freire gains a deep understanding of the silence effects and dilemmas of socio-economics on education. Needles to say, the socio-economic conditions of individuals are one of the most dominant issues on in the 21st century, but time is becoming the another basic element of their mutual lives in this high rhythm societies. Therefore, individuals as long-life learners are the victims of not only *oppression*, but *time* as well. While beliefs, political affiliations, national origins, ages, sizes, and physical and intellectual handicaps are the most noticeable structures of domination, *time* is the most prominent form of working, communicating and learning of personal freedom in this century. Today's societies, therefore, are in transmission to construct dynamic learning communities (Burniske and Monke 2001, Picciano, 2001), which require effective political strategies, philosophical approaches and technology plans for lifelong learning. Besides, time increases the expenses and limitations of living in a knowledge-based diverse society. To manage new technology-based problems in distance learning (Keith, 2000), PBL is an inevitable answer to build knowledge-based networks and communications among people, communities and resources economically in a short time.

To understand why PBL is one of the most important tools, the term *poverty* needs to be redefined derived from the high rhythm of life styles in the 21st century. Kurubacak and Yuzer (2004) describe that *poverty* is the severe critiques, dynamics and boundaries of time to share power and culture in lifelong learning process. According to this definition, the sources of poverty are the diverse backgrounds of adult and at-risk youth, whose lives are shaped by time. These people, consequently, are oppressed by not only social, political, economical, educational, physical, psychological, and ethical hegemonic agents, but also time. PBL can provide adult and at-risk youth, who are oppressed by the sources of poverty in the 21st century, with high quality learning services and democratic and multicultural communication settings (Torres, 1998) to serve the public good by building progressive alliances. To better understand and construct democratic adult and at-risk youth communications through PBL, it is crucial to focus on the management strategies of global knowledge networks among societies. These strategies help these people be aware of providing *critical multicultural* environments to transfer gradually more overwhelming amount of knowledge, and also deal with the quandaries of *digital diversity* generated by emerging communication technologies to build knowledge-based network societies. Furthermore, PBL can help adult and at-risk youth collaborate with each other to not only establish new interactive milieus but also share power and culture for promoting the well-being of their community. This virtual reformer society can be able to enroll an alignment of power adequate for the purpose of adult and at-risk youth partnerships.

Democratic Adult and At-Risk Youth Communications via PBL

Unquestionably, the most important advantage of using PBL is the equal access to global knowledge inexpensively from diverse resources easily and shortly. This is evenly excellent for rural and/or isolated adult and at-risk youth in the cosmopolitan areas with no time to attend the learning sessions of new communication technologies. PBL, moreover, provides adult and at-risk youth engagements with lifelong learning, professional updating, in-service training and community education from a cradle to the grave position. These people can gain knowledge without feeling any digital diversity, as noted by McQuail and Windahl (1993), to share and exchange their experiences, values and ethics with others from different cultures. PBL can support distance collaborative life experiences by harmoniously envisioning cognitive apprenticeships among adult and at-risk youth. Moore and Kearsley (2005) suggest that distance education must use new tools to gain the full benefits of cutting-edge communication technologies. These emerging technologies, however, can empower the dominant cultural groups against the minority ones, form new dilemmas about critical multicultural education and advocate the current political powers that make collective an action process undesirable. It is crucial to break through the arguments between low-tech and high-tech communication technologies.

Building Authentic Learning Milieus for Global Knowledge Networks

PBL can build knowledge networks among adult and at-risk youth in distance education. The capabilities and roles of PBL in transformative praxis can develop novel opportunities in collective action to open for reconstructions through equal and diverse participations. This is one of the most valuable and constructive features on egalitarian partnerships that this is crucial for adults with agitating cultural and

political hegemonies currently confronting diverse societies. Giving elaborated narratives of the cultural layouts of the antiracist interactions shows how this open approach heads to closer and sound connections between adult and at-risk youth. Resta (2002) suggests that distance education must use new tools to gain the full benefits of cutting-edge communication technologies. These emerging technologies, however, can empower the dominant cultural groups against the minority ones, form new dilemmas about critical multicultural education and advocate the current political powers that make collective an action process undesirable. It is crucial to break through the arguments between low-tech and high-tech communication technologies. PBL as low-tech educational tools can increase the quality and speed of learning by reflecting the dynamics of communicational choices, as strongly discussed by Hodson (1999) and Spring (1999), enforcing the dimensions of human rights and promoting the foundations of democracy and critical multiculturalism. On the other hand, as mentioned by Kurubacak (2006), the universities and schools shaped by capitalist hegemony and its political and economical aegis, few adult-youth experience the reality of democratic communications in their every day lives. Schooling, therefore, must be a boarder concept than formal institutional education. PBL have democratic-egalitarian challenges for adult-youth engagements to build formal and also awesome informal progressive knowledge networks. These technology-based collaborations encourage them to be altruistic to make democratic decisions for dialogic leaderships that have a direct relevance to their own lives. Also, these engagements increase awareness of their own identities and differences to define the democratic values associated with equalizing of access to human rights.

The new model can provide adult and at-risk youth engagements with alternative holistic forms and total strategies of social justice to fight the hegemonic power of capitalism and its unfairness structure. Bowles and Gintis (1976) emphasize that *an educational system can be egalitarian and liberating only when it prepares youth for fully democratic participation in social life and equal claim o the fruits of economic activity.* Building a theoretical framework can develop strong adult-youth engagements to their shared responsibilities in distance learning. Besides, the needs and expectations of how adult-youth engagements in bringing about democratic decision-making for dialogic leaderships play an important role in effecting deep community change. These are crucial concerns to examine the multifaceted responsibilities of adults in supporting youth actively engaging in building their online knowledge networks that they can become well-rounded knowledge-workers to shape this society based on authentic and participatory decision making. PBL empower egalitarian decision-making environments of how adult-youth engagements learn from and with each other to develop a common vision of social justice by dismissing power and culture oppressions. Building global knowledge networks to bring democratic changes and understanding critical communicational possibilities and potentials as well as exploring powerful democratic communicational activities are the inevitable concepts behind the powerful democratic communications to encourage adult and at-risk youth to express their own ideas, emotions and feelings. Poverty and educational disadvantage are strongly linked. In this case, building authentic learning milieus for global knowledge networks requires having the knowledge, skills and confidence to make the best use of political and social services and human rights. The social, economical, political and educational exclusion associated with poverty is worsened by bullying, harassment and discrimination. Global knowledge networks must build effective adult and at-risk youth partnerships

to enhance social networks and opportunities for each participant. Generating online learning experiences to build a bridge between adult and youth from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds can develop understanding of the construction of advantage and disadvantage for different groups, and learn how these power relations are reflected in community.

Building authentic learning milieus as leaning communities can helps adult and at-risk youth understand in-depth. As strongly mentioned by Morch, Reimann and Suthers (2006), that the following questions can address other questions related to global knowledge networks:

1. *How can theory and practice inform design for learning communities? What aspects of learning in communities can be designed for, and which are primarily emerging? How can these designed and emergent aspects mutually reinforce each other?*

2. *What affordances does a given technology offer for social aspects of learning, and how do these affordances compare to alternative technologies? How can instructional scenarios or collaborative strategies best realize the advantages of the technology?*

3. *How can technology-mediated learning environments be designed to support heterogeneous members and their various trajectories of participation? For example, how can a learning environment support transitions from apprenticeship to expertise? How can "lurkers" not only learn, but also become assets to the community? What are the learning needs of multidisciplinary teams? What considerations arise in international community settings?*

4. *What tensions between individual needs and the needs of the community exist in learning communities? How can these tensions be leveraged to drive learning in communities, and how can technology amplify this potential while mitigating the problems of conflicting needs?*

5. *What is the relationship between self-identity and group identity in learning communities, and how do these identities motivate participation that leads to learning? How is change in identity itself a form of learning? How then should identity be reflected in technology-mediated environments?*

6. *Which research and analysis methods are adequate for studying technology-enhanced learning in communities? Can experimental methods address learning that takes place over long time periods and many individuals in communities that are self-governed? Are ethnomethodological approaches viable alternatives? Do we need other methods? Do we need to invent new ones?*

Authentic learning milieus for building global knowledge networks can provide adult and at-risk youth with a broad perspective on PBL with the nature of new communication technologies, how to utilize and adapt a variety of these technologies, and the impact of PBL on society. The PBL-based activities are not intended to stand alone, but rather to be infused within core adult and at-risk youth partnerships. A main focus of PBL, therefore, is to inquire about improvement in diverse understanding of designing for online learning in such a way that PBL can translate effectively into practice.

Understanding Critical Communicational Possibilities and Potentials

PBL can build global knowledge networks and authentic learning milieus to bring democratic changes in their communities by implementing collective action to investigate real-life experiences in pedagogical situations. In this context, PBL can support at least two-way communications among diverse presenters, lifelong learners, and global resources; and also equalize power and culture with improving the quality of human rights, understanding others from the globe and empowering the quality of learner lives by controlling over their personal worlds. As highlighted by Goodman (in Spring, 1999, p. 64), complex technology can make people to unsuccessfully participate in the political controls of their own communities. To understand critical communicational possibilities and potentials about social justice issues for lifelong learning can recreate dialogical and democratic forms of pedagogy and community engagement. In this context, PBL can support adult and at-risk youth communications to share and exchange their ideas, beliefs, opinions, knowledge, and information with others. Moreover, these people can have freedom to move outside from their learning milieus to interact with global resources closely related to the diverse lifestyles, experiences, and expectations of adult and at-risk youth.

Actually a flexible guideline to plan the necessary strategies, methods and principles of learning and communication can build successful PBL that depend on the existing source and possibilities of developed, developing or underdeveloped countries. Therefore, the perspectives of their social and cultural strategies, political identities, institutional management principles and educational policies all broadly influence their participations. As pointed by Kyrish (2004) and Sheets (2005), a distance program for collective can expand an institution's reach, enhance its prominence, and satisfy needs for its learners if planned properly. A well-designed plan can help adult and at-risk youth understand how political and social biases influence how they respect the viewpoints of others by thinking about diversity. PBL must carefully designed to think of approaches to search for alternative options within a well-defined indispensable philosophy of humanist interactions and allow adult and at-risk youth to not only build *open, flexible and distributed* distance learning environments, but also democratic and multicultural communication settings. To plan, deliver, maintain and evaluate any PBL applications for any developed, developing or underdeveloped countries, first, the three basics must define and analyze to clearly understand the nature of interactive communications (Yuzer and Kurubacak, 2004):
  1. developing *strategic technology plan* to deal with the distance educational problems, needs and expectations achieving equality of shared power and culture,
  2. implementing *program development* process (Type, Purpose, Strategies, Components) to cover intellectual freedoms, diverse ideas and expressions in communication process,
  3. managing *evaluation* process to increase the relationships among distance learners and reduce communications problems in each step of the framework.

Developing *strategic technology plan* is the first step to produce PBL and must define clearly the components and features of successful PBL. As highlighted by Stevens-Long and Crowell (2002), strategic technology plan must provide the opportunity to organize thoughts, actions and outcomes, and also help adult and at-risk youth

improve their analytic competence as well. This plan must adopt new educational methods, techniques and practices that PBL promote interactivity for collective actions, which accomplish successful communication results that define the current needs and expectations of adult and at-risk youth to recognize their ethnic identities, and critical and cultural significances. Planning the technology requirements of communicational media can provide assistance and technological supports, and quality and stability of communication contents, and also examine personal sources to provide professional guidance, support powerful communication activities and improve educational outcomes. Communicating with the stakeholders can provide diverse feedback and information to identify PBL for institutions, professionals, community, adult and at-risk youth; construct standards to cope with the future challenges to identify all distance participants with responsibilities and curriculum development activities for the future requests; and develop the goals, objectives and ethic codes of the proposed outcomes to benefit from using communication activities.

Building a clear partnership statement of PBL to empower social and cultural awareness develops critical strategies for a multicultural project to achieve its political and egalitarian goals, and reflect group identities. To develop new communication facilities, distance education institutions newly involved in PBL must establish an administrative organization to collaborate with other departments and offices. Therefore, as mentioned by Sheets (2005), policy makers and administrative people can talk over the diversity pedagogy of their distance education programs in greater depth. *Program development* provides distance participants with focusing on planning and budgets for training to support and encourage new learning approaches and skills to communicational activities for working on project timelines to define the project tasks, achievement strategies and outcomes, and budgeting to select the models of the broadcasting to estimate all costs and to identify the fund sources clearly (Kurubacak and Yuzer, 2004). The timeline and financial plan have extremely vital roles to broadcast PBL without any delay, and reduce labor costs and increase course enrollments. The imperative point, however, is that PBL must be cautiously connected with the quality of a distance education. Finally, the managing *evaluation* process can able to provide extensive professional supports and regular upgrading to adult and at-risk youth participants.

Exploring Powerful Democratic Communicational Practices

Exploring powerful democratic communicational practices provides adult and at-risk youth with specific ideas to promote dialogues, and augments critical thinking skills to generate motivations for multi-generational participations. New communication technologies impact on delivering knowledge with expensive and complex equipment, which has always been driven by economical and political arguments. It is assumed that the more high-cost communication media are integrated in distance education, the better interactive communications is provided. PBL with new communication technologies has the enormous potential to reduce diverse implications of belittling based on racisms by concentrating on the participations between adult and at-risk youth. On the other hand, emerging technologies can be coupled with PBL to empower distance learning systems. As noted by Williams (2003), not only adults but also at-risk youth should know how to deal with change that requires reformist actions in the quality of online education in all its aspects to accomplish excellence in learning. In this context, identifying the future issues and challenges, categories, priorities and needs of adult and at-risk partnerships can

provide them with the democratic space and the skills to discover their own voices and leaderships. Exploring powerful democratic communicational practices for any developed, developing and underdeveloped countries, PBL must integrated distance curriculum based on the current conditions and potentials of the societies. However, any PBL applications to make the philosophy of distance education worthwhile for building democratic adult and at-risk youth communications must cover these issues given below (Apple, 1999; Hodson, 1999; Jonassen, 2000; Huerta, Ryan, and Igbaria, 2003; Nieto, 1996):

1. enhancing distance participant academic achievements to link powerfully the theory, policy and practice of actual collective actions,
2. providing adult and at-risk youth with an apprenticeships model to make sense of their educational and personal experiences,
3. serving adult and at-risk youth equitable and high-quality educational opportunities to encourage interactive communications among them to attain a wide perspective,
4. taking account of the knowledge, experience, needs, interests and aspirations of each participant, regardless of their social, educational, cultural, economical and political backgrounds,
5. clarifying the relationships among academic, technological and multicultural knowledge to benefit from personal experiences,
6. building opportunities for diverse collective action activities to help adult and at-risk youth become critical thinkers and also productive members of a democratic distance society,
7. encouraging their attempts to rethink and reconstruct their ideas, views, needs, expectations, beliefs and attitudes toward cultural pluralism, and
8. exposing democratic adult and at-risk youth communications to different perspectives through a variety of pedagogical and philosophical strategies.

As the 21st century begins, the communication and education sector is undergoing many profound changes associated with global social, societal, political and economic forces in the world. PBL, therefore, play a leadership role in the global reflection on higher education reform. Although provides a platform for critical dialogues on how best to adapt education systems to the emergence of knowledge societies in generating and delivering multicultural knowledge, as mentioned by Beaudoin (2003) and McLean, 2006), it is often less responsive than its diverse challenges and obstacles of how to utilize cutting-edge communication technologies in activist reactions to greater competency and assurance within its complex reality and comparative perspective. To investigate in various ways to both a prospered variety of inquiry and a deepen focus on the meaning of quality in digital communication ways can emphasize the value of adult and at-risk youth partnerships. To fortify adult and at-risk youth performances, there must be careful efforts to not only reform communication systems but also support virtual participants with ready access to information that provide them with improving equal access opportunity to the system.

Although majority of people define quality as largely synonymous with better test scores, PBL concentrates on in-dept attentions on the diverse aspects of distance communication and education quality. As mentioned by Barone and Hawkins (2001), Bolliger and Martindale (2004), Frydenberg (2002), Oblinger, Jones (2003), Oravec (2003), Roffe (2002), and Yang and Cornelious (2005), quality in PBL is a

multidimensional concept, which should encompass all the functions and activities of attentions about scholarship, academic programs, staffing, learners, buildings, facilities, equipment, services to the society and the academic milieus. To accomplish in multifaceted efforts to improve online education policy and practice can able to support critical discussions of the criteria for evaluating the rigor and effectiveness of PBL that reflect the broadened perspective on practice. The critical issues of quality PBL, the identification of qualifications and develop international policies for globalization can merge the interests of international public goods, the traditional public education sectors, the needs of adult and at-risk youth and their worldwide public interest (UNESCO, 2006). Finally, PBL can be able to assist with a range of issues in education, such as academic mobility, international exchanges of excellence, knowledge production, curriculum innovation, leadership roles for especially at-risk youth, content development, and the defense of quality in communication qualifications. These activities can provide well-built proposals for knowledge exchanges on quality assurance and accreditation as well as the identification of qualifications for PBL.

Conclusions

Distance education can promote justice, equity and human rights by enhancing the values and ethics for building interactive communication milieus, as mentioned by Fisher and Wright (2001), and Habermas (1984), the capabilities of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in transformative praxis develop new opportunities to reconstruct equal and diverse communications between adult and at-risk youth. This study, therefore, is breaking a new ground by addressing key questions about adult and at-risk youth participations, PBL and critical thinking. Being people in this century is not an easy job. PBL provides woman, minorities and other disadvantages individuals with better access to global knowledge by listening real-life dialogues to make their knowledge construction process more personal. Finally, adult and at-risk youth have not numerous skills to learn, because PBL requires very low-priced equipment. Also, the institutions do spend less money to establish interactive milieus in their organizations. PBL is breaking digital walls around the world and adhering to digital gaps among people, communities and sources powerfully. As strongly discussed by Shor and Freire (1987), *poverty* is one of the most important features of the people, surrounded by the cutting-edge technologies.

PBL help adult and at-risk youth reach their attainable dreams about equality and justice by promoting unique partnership milieus to encourage them to reap knowledge from diverse resources easily and inexpensively. No matter is in which country we live, PBL must be a part of our education. Education must promote justice, equity and human rights by enhancing the values and ethics for building interactive communication milieus. There are efforts around the globe to reform online education, progressively considered as a critical action for curriculum change (Cecez-Kecmanovic and Webb, 2000; Nieto, 1996; Spring, 1999) to improve equity of access and opportunity, and strengthen communication milieus. It is very crucial that knowledge obtained in authentic partnership settings should have suggestions for policy and practice in education, and researchers and policymakers increasingly recognize the importance of comparative perspectives on PBL.

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