

Vasilcovschi, Nicoleta

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The increasing importance of teaching and learning geoeconomics in a meaningful context

Nicoleta VASILCOVSCHI*

Abstract

Significant changes of national and global events require adequate responses not just from governments, but as well from the educational areas. The end of the Cold War in 1990, followed by the Economic Crisis of 2007-2008, and the Pandemic Crisis of 2020 were global challenges that increased the importance of geoeconomic field and the need to study Geoeconomics nowadays as an interdisciplinary subject, as a discipline that exercises crucial roles internationally, requiring learners to study it in a meaningful context. In the future, present learners of Geoeconomics will work for countries that will use their strategic positions to access resources and promote their economic interests. They will analyze different interconnections between geography and economics that are transforming the world and promoting a global demand for labour force flexibility. They will be workers that will migrate and study to find their place and role in this evolving geoeconomic system. In the present dynamic geoeconomic context, the field of education remains the key to prepare future generations to use a critical thinking approach when deciding how to apply internationally geoeconomic knowledge and skills. This research paper presents different aspects of Geoeconomics as a discipline and shows several steps that can be followed in order to teach and learn an interdisciplinary subject in a meaningful context, using an inclusive education and a cooperative learning approach. In fact, this research paper contains several authentic activities that can be used in the process of teaching and learning Geoeconomics, online or offline, and, more broadly, evaluates the needs of students and the role of lecturers in the process of international education, showing as well different techniques that can be used to prevent plagiarism. This research paper also includes an analysis of the process of meaningful teaching, its features, and the challenges that students can have with studying interdisciplinary subjects within the Social Sciences area.

Keywords: Geoeconomics, meaningful teaching context, cooperative learning, plagiarism prevention, inclusive education, authentic learning activities, knowledge power

Introduction

Globalization and its changes after the Cold War made countries around the world to adjust their main interests concerning conducting international relations, organizing their regional and

* Nicole VASILKOVSCHI is PhD Economics Lecturer Collaborator with Stefan cel Mare University, Suceava, Romania and Economics Lecturer for the International Sino - Canadian Program, Shandong, China, e-mail: nicoleta.vasilcovschi@usm.ro.

global involvement and coordinating internationally their geoeconomic strategies. In this sense, nowadays, countries focus on promoting geopolitical interests combined with a geoeconomic approach. More regional powers have a dominant impact on shaping international relations and their regional involvement increased after pandemic period of 2020. Geoeconomics is well-known as a group of international events that present changing aspects of international relations through geoeconomic strategies, but it's not enough analyzed as a Social Studies discipline.

There is still a lack concerning academic analysis of teaching Geoeconomics as a discipline and of identifying how can instructors help new learners to understand all the global changes and the behavior of different actors, represented by states, regional or global organizations. Therefore, there is an increasing need for more learners to use a critical thinking approach when studying changing characteristics of Geoeconomics as a discipline. Meanwhile nowadays, the teaching approach has to be focused on learners and their needs, providing them with the necessary tools in order to be able to apply in the real life what they learned in class. Consequently, internationally, a common goal on improving education is centered more and more around learners and it's perceived around the world as preparing students for an active learning role, able to use critical thinking when studying new subjects and ready to connect what they learned with experiences from their daily lives.

This research paper offers a general description of the development of Geoeconomics as a discipline that includes geoeconomic and geopolitical strategies, with changes after the end of Cold War in both Geopolitics and Geoeconomy. Then, emphasizes different learning problems that can arise when studying Social Studies in general and a discipline from this field in particular, and also describes general aspects of plagiarism as a learning problem, its causes and how it can be avoided, and presents different techniques that can be used by instructors to prevent plagiarism when teaching or preparing different assignments.

The second part of this research paper discusses the main challenges that can arise when teaching and learning Geoeconomics, online and offline, and continues with describing different skills, attitudes that are addressed in the process of teaching.

The purpose of this article is merely to offer a general description of the main aspects studied for Geoeconomics and to illustrate how the process of teaching can be organized in a meaningful context, where authentic studying and research activities are used for the promotion of a collaborative learning approach, completed by an inclusive education, able to prepare active learners of the present as future successful professionals.

1. Literature review concerning the development of Geoeconomics as a discipline, learning problems and solutions

Recent global events, after the Cold War in 1990, the Economic Crisis of 2007-2008 and the Pandemic Crisis of 2020 generated new challenges that increased the importance of studying Geoeconomics as an interdisciplinary subject that exercises crucial roles internationally, requiring learners to study this subject in a meaningful context. Meaningful learning is supposed to play a central role during the teaching process, offering learners the possibility to not just receive information, but to be able to understand and participate in the learning process.

Concerning teaching internationally or preparing different students from Europe, Asia, Africa, America or Australia to compete for jobs not just locally but outside the national borders, meaningful learning is very important when teaching different subjects, especially because a large number of learners may not be familiar with the content of different disciplines and subjects. For instance, in the case of teaching Mathematics, many students have basic knowledge from their previous mathematics classes, but teaching subjects like Geoeconomics, which is considered an interdisciplinary subject from the Social Science field, can be challenging because many students often have no prior contact with the content of the curriculum and have no prerequisite knowledge of the main concepts that they need to learn. At the same time, Geoeconomics as a discipline is based on the international changes of the global geoeconomic context and those changes cannot be always predicted or are not following a linear trend.

The term Geoeconomics was coined in 1990 by the American strategist with Romanian origin, Edward Nicolae Luttwak, in the article "From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics: Logic of Conflict, Grammar of Commerce" published in "The National Interest", No 20 (Summer 1990). Luttwak explains that geoeconomics focuses on promoting internationally economic interest, showing that Geoeconomics follows the logic of strategy by using the grammar of commerce. In fact, this is described as replacing the invasion of a specific place, with the conquest of a specific industry (Luttwak, 2021, Speech). In this sense, it's argued that today's power is no longer related to military control over an area, but mainly to the "capacity to integrate into the global economy". This fundamental international change creates more changes into the global "identity cards" with a business-trade world, where a win-win concept is applied in the context of a free trade (Neguț, 2016, p. 9).

In the research field, there are many descriptions of Geoeconomics as an important aspect that shaped the international relations after the end of Cold War, but there are relatively very few descriptions of Geoeconomics as a discipline. Geoeconomics is described as being based on both a

"strategic practice and an analytical framework". In this sense, geoeconomics can influence international distribution of power between states, shaping International Relations and determining the national interest and national power as well. On the global stage, there is the need for economic actors to develop a geoeconomic vision that follows integration and cooperation and not conflict (Wigell *et al.* 2018, p. 3).

Geoeconomics as a discipline was born after the Cold War and it can be depicted as an analysis of the general structure and global effects of the new application of Geopolitics with a new balance of power. In this new context, the field of economics plays a central role and this increasing of global economic interdependence opened new opportunities of collaboration for European Union, North American Free Trade Agreement and The Southern Cone Common Market. States, therefore, need to play their role internationally and cannot isolate themselves because there is the increasing need to benefit from international trade, to find and apply a geopolitical vision for promoting geoeconomic strategies for maintaining present or preparing future global economic collaborations (Csurgai, 1998, p. 2).

As discipline, Geoeconomics is described as being related to “the study of spatial, cultural, and strategic aspects of resources, with the aim of gaining sustainable competitive advantage” (Søilen, 2012, p. 8). When students need to study about a discipline like Geoeconomics, a learning problem that is considered to be a meaningful learning problem is related to their lack of ability to understand the multiple dimensions of this area and its impact from both economic and geographic perspectives. The problem can be related to a previous lack of information or the difficulty to find relevant data or to understand it. Learners are usually more familiar with geography or economics, but not with a concept like Geoeconomics that combines the two disciplines and includes different international strategies, containing general similarities and particular differences with Geopolitics. Therefore, when studying Geoeconomics, students need to learn how to differentiate between Geoeconomics and Geopolitics, to identify the main actors in both sides and their main goals. Examples of such actors can be corporations, state powers, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations. Generally, both Geoeconomics and geopolitics follow the same general goal: both of them “study power derived from the management of natural resources” (Søilen, 2012, p. 11).

The main misconception from learners in the process of studying Geoeconomics can be related to the perspective that for subjects like Geoeconomics students just need to listen during lessons and just memorize some texts in order to pass final exams. Trying to help them to understand what they are learning and to connect it with their involvement, is challenging. Therefore, in order to teach and learn a new subject, like Geoeconomics, it is very important to have a constructive approach.

One researcher who analyzed the role of constructive approach for the improvement of skills in Social Studies concluded that “learning is building upon students’ prior knowledge, and learning constructs meaning from experience” (McCray, 2007, p. 51). This view reflects the necessity to connect new information they received during a lesson with students’ prior knowledge about the subject. They can learn in a meaningful context, based on examples, following the history of a concept, starting from its definition and its role, and analyzing different sources related to the subject studied.

When starting to study and research about Geoeconomics, some students have prior theoretical knowledge concerning this subject. Students may be familiar with some concepts that in general relate with global geoeconomic events, like historical events that came with the changes after World War I, World War II, the Cold War, or the present pandemic and the research studies on the future aspects of access and distribution of strategic resources. The problem is that many of them do not receive any authentic learning concerning the history or aspects of Geoeconomics before learning the subject in a multidisciplinary context, and they need more time to research and reflect on the main aspects studied. In this sense, some studies argue that Social Studies instructors and researchers involved in the academic field need to go out of their desks and study the real economic changes from experience and direct observations in order to be able to present students with concrete solutions. Students need to be helped to understand how the factors of power are connected with the Competitive Advantage of a state, with its capacity to follow its national interest at international level through an active diplomacy, its strategies to keep a stable currency and to promote an economic growth that will build its capacity to attract in-migration of well-educated human resources (Søilen, 2010).

Another problem identified here is that some students are used to listen to lecturers and to prepare just to pass exams, playing the role of simple receivers of information and not of knowledge. Therefore, when they start learning a new concept in an international context, many of them are not prepared to use a critical thinking approach. Students from different cultures can have this problem and in order to avoid such circumstances it is necessary to adjust diverse teaching methods to the students’ needs, giving them the chance to reflect and share ideas or ask written questions. Gradually, students can start asking questions at the end of a lesson and also present different opinions in front of their peers if they are given the opportunity to reflect on the importance of understanding their role of an active learner able to influence the process of learning. Another strategy that can be used to solve this problem in the learning process is the use of a group work, where students with previous experience concerning different aspects studied can share their knowledge with other students helping them to receive additional expertise and to gain confidence during their learning process.

Another problem identified in the process of learning and researching for Geoeconomics is the problem of plagiarism. It's therefore, necessary to present an overview over plagiarism prevention. Plagiarism is not an isolated problem for a specific discipline, but a general problem for research, a problem that is arising around the world due to the easy access to internet data and the development of online teaching materials. In order to understand how to prevent it, it's important to observe what are the causes of plagiarism.

General causes of plagiarism include: studying under pressure; lack of maturity, experience; difficulty to understand the consequences that can arise from plagiarizing, insufficient training concerning the ethics of research or the research citing and referencing, lack of English writing skills, cultural differences, or the missing of time management skills. In this sense, causes of plagiarism are presented as being related to the technology and academic pressure, lack of knowledge, a collective cultural approach in Asian countries that makes learners to think that memorizing, reproducing and sharing ideas of others is a “good practice” (Sadruddin, 2021, p. 297).

Some observations from different studies on plagiarism showed that in order to prevent plagiarism it's necessary to observe the perspective of students on different aspects of plagiarism. In many cases it's not just an issue of ethics, but mostly this problem is related to their educational background. In fact, for many students when asked to present a description of acceptable paraphrasing, they mainly focus on trying to rewrite the original text rather than summarize it in using their own words in writing. Many of them mainly consider that using directly the writing of others is a method to better present their own ideas. This aspect indicates that some students "have a complete lack of ability in the practical application of paraphrasing" and it's implying that they need to be instructed and practice on proper ways of paraphrasing (Jackson, 2006, p. 425).

In order to help with plagiarism prevention not just instructors, but as well the students, need to understand what plagiarism is, to understand how to identify different plagiarized texts and to learn different ways to avoid plagiarism. A decisive step is to have instructors to write assignment specifications, including different alternatives to standard essays. Therefore, instead of using standard essays for assignments, students can be asked to work on case studies that can make it more difficult for them to plagiarize. (Culwin and Lancaster, 2001).

Teaching a Social Studies discipline, like Geoeconomics, involves having international students from different countries. From the introduction of this course, students need to receive information about research ethics, about how to properly use both citations and referencing in a research paper, and how to observe the structure of a properly organized research paper in any discipline of the Social Studies field. By instructing students from the beginning how to use sources in a proper way and how

to organize a research paper, it's most likely to help to avoid plagiarism to occur later during the semester. Consequently, the initial part of a course can include not just information about avoiding plagiarism, but as well a guide of how to correctly use references, how to organize ideas in completed paragraphs and how to find and filter information from online or printed sources. Students also learn the methodology of research, organizing a topic and a research thesis, presenting hypothesis of research and observing their outcomes. In fact, many research papers show that in order to teach skills and knowledge for avoiding plagiarism, it's mandatory to not just include a presentation on how to write and organize a research paper, but mainly to help students to learn the research methodology that can also help to prove initial hypothesis through the use of a suitable research method. Students are given the opportunity to learn how to use scientific methods when completing a project or a case study. They also can work for different group projects. Every week, students can prepare a draft that includes their project plans, objectives and tasks. Then, after presenting their first draft, the progress of research is followed with weekly project reports that can help students to work progressively on their research, can allow them to have enough time to consult different materials and select relevant information for their work and to build their work on constructive feedback. In this way, any motivation for plagiarism is reduced and students are helped to complete their work before the final deadline (Gunnarsson, Kulesza, Pettersson, 2014. p. 6).

Teaching Geoeconomics as a discipline in a meaningful context can build confidence on learning and academic research and can provide instructors with the chance to build courses that allow students to understand the important role that the studies have for their future working sphere in the context of international economic relations.

2. Authentic activities, attitudes and skills addressed when teaching and learning Geoeconomics in a meaningful context

After the pandemic crisis of 2020, it was mandatory for lecturers to provide their classes, combining online and offline strategies. The second part of this research paper seeks to present different aspects included when students need to learn Geoeconomics and to show the skills and attitudes that are addressed when teaching this subject in a meaningful interdisciplinary context. Here are described several approaches of the process of teaching Geoeconomics and how it can be applied to the needs of students, with specific attitudes and skills addressed in the process of teaching.

The authentic activities that work in an actual teaching context that combine online and face-to-face teaching are related to the use of modern technology. Therefore, many online programs were

developed and used worldwide and lecturers started to use more online platforms and to adjust them to the needs of their students. There are numerous studying platforms that can help to improve instructors' role in teaching Geoeconomics or other disciplines related to Social Studies area. Those platforms provide information for students before and after courses, allowing them to check their grades and allowing the instructor to observe, analyze and adjust the quality of materials that are delivered during lessons. It is also helpful for marking students' papers, providing feedback for their work, and keeping the attendance list updated.

Likewise, before 2020, regarding the process of online teaching and the use of modern technology in a Social Studies discipline, some authors believed that even if this process of teaching was criticized, it can provide different opportunities for lecturers and learners. For instance, Timothy Jenks (2018) presents the ways that can be used to deliver a history course face-to-face and online, by knowing how to adapt the online methods. Jenks affirms that he found out that “the reduction of the instructor’s personality interface equally permits students a more direct and unmediated relationship with the course material” (p. 605).

In the case of teaching Geoeconomics as a subject that students need to understand in the context of different historical, political, and economic changes, the courses can be delivered nowadays both in class and online with the online learning being for the students to review the material and to contact their lecturer with questions. Knowing that they are ready to get involved in online debate and asking online questions, they are provided with materials that can help them to select the information they consider relevant for their research interest. By having students involved in online discussions, it can help their instructor to observe if they understood what they learned in class and to receive and provide constructive feedback.

Meanwhile, it is crucial nowadays to consider the importance of teaching and learning in a meaningful interdisciplinary context and to allow students to receive different skills that can be applied in the context of the XXI century. The traditional ways of teaching that promote memorization and the simple application of short-term learning cannot help students to achieve an efficient learning approach where they can use critical thinking methods in the context of an interdisciplinary education. The importance of interdisciplinary studies is presented by Repko *et al.* (2017) showing that in order to get ready to make a change in our society, to be an active role player, we need to “develop the skills to make connections, solve complex problems, develop leadership skills, engage in strategic thinking, communicate effectively, practice analytical thinking, and work collaboratively” (pp. 3-4).

The main role of the subjects from Social Studies domain, such as Geoeconomics, Economics, and History, is to give students the chance to study in a meaningful context and discover their role in society,

to change or adapt their attitudes, to develop strong and successful beliefs that connect them with their identities and help them to understand other cultures or economic backgrounds in global context.

Learning attitudes addressed in Social Studies courses, like Geoeconomics, Economics, Geography or History are related to the ability to understand theoretical concepts and the ability to connect their knowledge with their daily life, the capacity to analyze different events and compare divergent points of view, and to give and receive constructive feedback. Different beliefs that are considered refer to understanding what are the beliefs and values of a multicultural society, to identify connections between the history of a nation and the construction of its economic system and to analyze its national and international perspectives.

The skills that students usually receive after successfully completing classes are the capacity to connect what they learned in class with what they already experienced and the ability to find similarities and differences between geoeconomic visions of different countries around the world. For example, for different assignments, students are invited to do research, to read more materials in order to better understand and develop their critical thinking abilities and to improve their skills related to “comprehension, application, analysis, evaluation and synthesis, creativity” (Dhandhanian, 2016). Through developing those skills, students can be more confident on learning and are better prepared to practice their knowledge.

A central instructional objective that has to be included in the teaching process is cooperative learning that allows students to have the chance to work in small groups and to receive and provide feedback by building collaborative relationships with the others (Doty *et al.*, 2003, p. 15). The relevance of teamwork is also presented by Adeyemi and shows the importance of cooperative learning and relevant strategies that can be used for problem-solving approaches (2008).

Other instructional objectives that can be included are the use of any previous knowledge and its adaption to the new context of learning; the concept map that is presented face-to-face, on the white board, and online, sharing white board of an online platform; in the review paper of each chapter; the adaptation of teaching methods to the learners’ abilities and cultural backgrounds; the presentation and reinforcement of different concepts; and the research that students can do to find more details about the concepts, events and perspectives they learned during courses.

All these activities also relate to the process of inclusive education. An inclusive education involves giving same chances to all learners during the educational process. A meaningful learning plays a very important role during the teaching process. Therefore, when having a group of students around, each instructor should find information about the particular needs of each group of students. Many students that learn new subjects have different learning problems that can affect their

performance, involvement in the course and learning process. In this case, they need to receive educational tools adapted to their situation. When teaching different disciplines is important to combine a collaborative learning and teaching approach with the process of an inclusive education.

Mel Ainscow (2005) identified four aspects of the inclusive education. The first aspect is to have inclusion as a process, is what the author calls a "never-ending search to find better ways of responding to diversity", involving to learn how to live with difference and how to learn from it. The second aspect is to have inclusion with both identification and removal of barriers. In this sense, Ainscow sustains that inclusion involves, on one side, collecting and evaluating information from many sources and, on the other side, the use of evidence that can help to stimulate creativity and the problem-solving process. The third aspect presents inclusion not just as presence and participation, but as well as achievement of all students. Presence is related to the place where learners receive education, while participation is related to the quality of their experiences and the sharing of the view of learners. Concerning the achievement, Ainscow emphasis that this is about the outcomes of learning across the curriculum, not just the results of exams or tests. The fourth and as well important aspect of inclusion mainly relates to a particular importance given to more specific groups of learners that are at risk of being marginalized, of feeling excluded or being underachievement. This should determine instructors to closely monitor those groups and to ensure the presence, participation and achievement of each student in the education process (p. 15).

The following description includes a general overview of the particular understanding of an inclusive education and the Individual Model and Social Model as approaches to education. This description was made by Stubbs in 2008, in his research "Inclusive Education: Where there are few resources 2008". According to Stubbs, the first step is to identify why a student is seen as a problem. It can be due to the lack of language knowledge, or it can be due to the fact that a particular student feels different when compared with "normal" people, or has special needs, or is not responding during the instructional process, or is not able to learn, or needs special equipment, or "cannot get to school", "cannot cope", or it's too poor, or feels that has no need to learn, or feels to young or old to learn (From Figure 1, *Individual Model*, p. 15).

Second step includes solutions, that are able to help or fail that student. In this case, Stubbs (2008) argues that students can receive education if there are few conditions respected, in this sense they are seen as:

- are able to "cope" with their peers,
- receive special equipment,
- receive one-to-one support,

- can have a "special teacher",
- can follow the curriculum,
- can have a special environment,
- are taught with special techniques that meet their special needs,
- can received extra resources adjusted to particular needs,
- can arrive to school and are able to communicate and speak the language in which they learn,
- they receive more help because they are different,
- they are at the right age or they feel being at the right age to learn (Adapted from *Solutions*, p. 15).

Concerning social interaction and an inclusive education with an education for all, Stubbs (2008) includes a social model that perceives the system of Education as a problem, as a rigid and an exclusive system. The several aspects of this problem presented by Stubbs refer to: a rigid curriculum or methods; discrimination of prejudice against an individual or a group; inaccessible environment; lack of hygiene, safety; teachers and schools unsupported; not enough use of local resources and lack of appropriate teaching equipment, not enough involvement of families and communities; stereotypes of marginalized groups, not enough use of local languages; no links between different forms of education; "lack of overall education strategy in the community, no early childhood education provision or no provision for older learners" (From Figure 2. *Social Model*, p. 16).

For this problem, Stubbs (2008) also includes solutions with the development of an inclusive education system through:

- a strong collaboration between stakeholders to develop a strategy for long life learning;
- collaboration between different forms of education, as formal, non-formal and alternative;
- creation of community centres of learning that meet the needs of all community;
- communication and involvement of all learners and marginalized groups in the process of searching for a strategy that satisfies their needs and its implementation;
- specific use of resources from the community;
- promotion of team teaching and offer training for teachers;
- accommodation of the environment to the needs of learners, making it welcoming and safe;
- development and implementation of policies to combat discrimination and allow diversity;
- development of "child-to-child and peer tutoring approaches";
- creation of links in the community;
- having school involved in taking responsibility and solving problems (Adapted from *Solutions*, pp. 16-17).

The benefits of authentic learning combined with the increasing importance of engaging students in more dynamic courses with sustainable learning tasks, has determined instructors of different educational levels to include into their curriculum an inquiry based learning approach that allows learners to be actively involved in the learning process.

Learning from participation enables students to be more involved in the learning process and facilitates for instructors to prepare and integrate new courses with online or offline participation. Therefore, when learning about the components of Geoeconomics, students are prepared to connect their knowledge with previous knowledge concerning national and international factors that affect international economic strategies and learn to analyze how nations are shaping their interest for promoting different strategic resources. To adapt the curriculum to their knowledge, they are taught to compare different systems and to find the similarities and differences between them. When modeling trade data during a research project, they can focus on: "gross basis, value-added basis, economic agent basis and game theory basis" (Chakrabarty, 2017, p. 24).

Different aspects when learning Geoeconomics also include the explanation of the theoretical aspects of international trade combined with various examples of geoeconomics and geostrategies tools used internationally for promoting or accessing different types of resources; the presentation of the list of factors that affect national interest and the involvement in international trade; the change in the role of different geoeconomic actors, that can be represented by individual countries and corporations or regional and international economic organizations. Students also learn to compare different visions, strategies and ways of shaping geoeconomic interests around the world.

Concerning the theoretical knowledge, students also can review about geoeconomic strategies of regional powers, with the distribution of economic power in the context of a strategic goal, based on cooperation or competition. Geoeconomic strategies include: liberal institutionalism, hegemony, neo-mercantilism and neo-imperialism. Neo-mercantilist and neo-imperialist strategies represent "a competitive frame in which foreign relations are treated as a zero-sum game in which one side's gain is another's relative loss", in this context being the use of economic power for the unilateral benefit of one of the countries national interests. The other two strategic goals represented by liberal institutionalist and hegemony strategies are based on a "cooperative strategic frame" where more countries gain mutual gains and benefits with a long-term collaboration at the regional level (Wigell, 2016, p. 141).

After studying a subject like Geoeconomics, students need to also be provided with the necessary skills and authentic activities that can help them to be active players in their society. In order to develop new skills, students should be engaged in meaningful projects that involve a long

term collaboration, that help them to understand the distribution of different tasks and resources, that provide them with a sustained implication and the possibility to connect what they learned with real life. Therefore, students are better to be actively learning if they are provided with a dynamic participation for different lessons that can help them to apply their knowledge, organize their ideas and compare different perspectives in a complex research that allow them not just to receive information, but as well to select data, write and analyze different sources that will later be presented online or offline. For instance, a research on more than 2100 students from 23 schools found a better achievement on challenging performance tasks for students who received this type of "authentic pedagogy". This "authentic pedagogy" includes standards for assessment tasks and for teaching methodology. The standards for assessment tasks include five categories, as the following: "organization of information, consideration of alternatives, disciplinary content, disciplinary process, elaborated written communication", where the teaching methodology is connected with the classroom instruction and stands for "higher order thinking, substantive conversation, deep knowledge, connection to the world beyond the classroom, problem connected to the world" and outside audience (Newman, Marks, Gamoran, 1995, p. 3).

Education facilitates a fast distribution of the "knowledge power" that can contribute as a long-term factor to the promotion country's geoeconomic power that leads to the increasing importance of investment in the "human capabilities", perceived as being the most significant aspect of power in the present world, due to the changes in demographic structure in Europe and Asia. Therefore, the investment in human capital is central for the development of future economies and the migration of human capital should be considered in this context (Baru, 2012, p. 54).

Education plays a more important role on preparing human capital ready to work on the requirements of international markets. Building skills on critical thinking, Geoeconomics as a discipline can help to have human resources ready to apply a complex knowledge in the future working fields.

Conclusions

In summary, in the dynamic geoeconomic context of nowadays, major economic actors are playing a decessive role regionally and globally. In this context, Geoeconomics as a discipline should be analyzed and studied in a meaningful context because education remains the key of preparing generations of the future as active citizens, able to use a critical thinking approach when deciding how to apply their geoeconomic knowledge and skills at local or global levels.

Understanding the main aspects of teaching Geoeconomics as a discipline is mandatory in connection with the dynamic influential change of international relations and it can be completed with a successful collaboration between the theory of the academic field and the use of real world examples. This implies having instructors to provide the adequate information that can help learners to be able to understand those changes, to analyze and research them and to use a critical thinking approach during their entire learning process.

The process of teaching and learning in a meaningful context involves authentic activities and an instruction based on collaborative learning. This model of teaching and learning can be included in different classes when teaching *Geoeconomics* or other discipline from the field of Social Studies. For instance, there is evidence that using an inclusive education with a collaborative learning approach can help students to gain confidence and take role of active learners. In this context, before, during, and after classes, students are guided to learn in a meaningful context where they can start to develop critical skills for organizing research in an interdisciplinary framework, to use arguments in debates, and to assume present and future active roles in their communities.

The fundamental skills that students receive after successfully completing classes taught in a meaningful context are related to the capacity to connect what they learned in class with what they recognize from their experience, or learning from the experience of others through group sharing activities; the development of different research skills in order to find similarities, differences and future opportunities between different countries, regions, or cities around the world; the ability to avoid plagiarism and to explore in their future research what they learned; and the achievement of the necessary skills that can allow them to use the knowledge power in the geoeconomic environment of their future jobs.

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