Teaching in the Post Truth Era: A Narrative Analysis of Modern Anti-Scientific Discourses in the Classroom

Authors : Jason T. Hilton

Abstract : The 'post-truth era' is marked by a shift toward a period in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief. Applying narrative analysis techniques to current public discourses in education that run counter to scientific findings, it becomes possible to identify weakness in modern pedagogy and suggest ways to counter false narratives in the classroom. Results of this study indicate that a failure to engage with popular narratives lessens teachers' ability to be convincing in the classroom, even when presenting information supported by scientific evidence. This study seeks to empower teachers by illustrating the influence of story within the post-truth era and the ways in which narrative and rhetorical elements take hold in social media contexts. Equipped with this knowledge, teachers can create a shift in pedagogy, away from transmission of knowledge toward the crafting of powerful narratives, built upon evidence, and connected to the lives of modern learners.