Rust, V. D. (1991). Postmodernism and its comparative education implications. *Comparative Education Review*, *35*(4), 610-626.

**Summary**

            In this article by Val Rust (1991), an attempt is made to discuss the advances in the postmodernism school of thought and how these advances will impact the field of comparative education. In it, Rust (1991) argues that while ideas and theories from the postmodern school of thought are prevalent and discussed frequently in academic circles, those within the community of comparative education have yet to jump on the bandwagon, so to speak, and address this school of thought within their research.

            Rust (1991) begins with a brief foray into the realms of postmodern thought and areas such as architecture and philosophy which are greatly impacted by the tenants of this brand of thinking. Major arguments are outlined such as whether postmodernism signals a completely new era in human history or if it is just yet another style or method of thinking. Rust (1991) leans heavily on the thinking of major players in the game of postmodernism such as Habermas, Weber, Bloom and Lasch being just a few of the mentioned proponents. He then delves into a discussion on the importance of metanarratives as explored through the disillusionment of Jean-Francois Lyotard. Next, a discussion on the idea of “other” is presented, wherein Rust (1991) argues that in this era of postmodernism, the voice of the many will begin to overturn the voice of the few. Rust (1991) claims social movements will begin when those on the outskirts of traditional society that have been overlooked so often by governments and people in power will rise up and organize to advance their positions within society. With this rise of the others, education must take note and begin to hear and represent those voices within the field.

Rust (1991) then enters into a discussion on the inclusion of technology within the postmodern school of thought, where those who have the best and brightest technology are able to advance more quickly than those without. He presents two viewpoints on technology, one where technology is only a vehicle in which to drive capitalism and domination of the people and one where technology is the great equalizer, breaking down the walls of information to include all people and voices. Postmoderinsim in art is the topic next presented where an argument of the link between culture and art is presented. A debate over what is classified as art in the postmodern world is discussed where the focus lies in pop art versus classical or high art and the impact that can occur when one is stripped of one or the other as a means of expression. Finally, Rust (1991) concludes with his thoughts on why postmodernism cannot be ignored by comparative education stating, “Postmodern criticism is so crucial because questioning the basic tenants of modernity challenges the basis of the world’s recent social and cultural history on which we have come to rely, including the meaning of modern schooling throughout the world” (Rust, 1991, p.625).

**Reflection**

Rust (1991) is attempting in this article to show educators the importance of understanding and utilizing the postmodern school of thought within the field. He argues that we cannot overlook these thoughts and discussions, because we have based our own understanding of the world, and by extension our ideas about education, on these principals. If our thinking and understanding is flawed in any way, then inherently so is our ability to educate (Rust, 1991, p 625). If we choose to ignore these discussions, we will be at a disadvantage and will be of less benefit to our schools and to society.

I felt that Rust’s (1991) article was somewhat disorganized. It took me many attempts of reading the article to get even a small strand of continuity, where I felt I understood what he was saying. I also feel as though he made many assumptions about the familiarity readers would have with the various disciplines he mentions, especially a reader’s familiarity with postmodernism and comparative education. In order to even begin to understand this article, I had to do outside on research on these topics to feel as though I was somewhat grasping his arguments. It was a difficult article to digest, and one I am still not sure I fully grasp.

**Expansion**

            Rust (1991) included many different arguments about postmodernism in various arenas, such as art and technology, but he failed to expand on ways that education needs to rise to meet these arguments within the field. For example, he discusses the postmodern thoughts on metanarratives, but offers no practical advice on how to advance metanarrative within the field of education. If he were to expand on this article, I think it would be best to move away from laying out many theories and arguments from the postmodernism movement, and focus on the impact these will have in education and how we should be preparing and utilizing these thoughts within the field.