Global Citizenship Education

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INTRODUCTION: DEFINITIONS AND DEBATES

This article examines the nature of global citizenship education and how it could be part of peace education. This is a contested field, as definitions of 'global citizenship' are not without problems. Also disputable is the question of what sort of education prepares someone to be a global citizen. We cannot be citizens of the world in the way that we are citizens of a nation (or, for an increasing minority of stateless people, would like to be). So, is global citizenship a fiction, a paradox? Does it have meaning for young people today?

While global education or World Studies has been advocated and practiced in schools and colleges across the world since the 1970s, global citizenship education is a relatively new concept. The insertion of 'citizenship' into global education implies something more than, or different from, previous conceptions. The linked question is whether global citizenship education is not simply more informed local citizenship education. In fact, global *citizenship* education is usually directly concerned with social justice rather than the more minimalist interpretations of global education that focus on 'international awareness' or being a more well-rounded person. Neither is world citizenship education only about being economically active and technologically literate in a world system. Citizenship clearly has implications in terms of rights and responsibilities, duties and entitlements, concepts that are not necessarily explicit in global education. One can have emotions and multiple identities without doing much about them; citizenship implies an active role.

The UK Oxfam *Curriculum for Global Citizenship* defined a 'global citizen' as someone who:

- Is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen,
- respects and values diversity,
- has an understanding of how the world works economically, politically, socially, culturally, technologically and environmentally,
- is outraged by social injustice,
- is willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place,
- participates in and contributes to the community at a range of levels from the local to the global. (1997, p. 1)

In this definition, we see that empathy is not enough; there must be 'outrage,' so that motivations for change are high. This has profound implications for teaching and learning, and may not sit easily with current pedagogical philosophies tied to content knowledge and passing of examinations. The requirements for curriculum would be equally demanding in terms of the comprehensive understanding of how the world works and the preparation for active participation. This definition also raises the issue of whether a person in a low-income country who has little access to formal education or wide-ranging knowledge, and does not have the opportunity to participate internationally, can receive the title of a 'global citizen.' At one level, one could argue that we are all global citizens just by virtue of living in the world; yet clearly a global citizenship education, particularly one that facilitates peace, demands more than this.

A crucial but unresolved task concerns how people can "act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place" (OXFAM, 1997, p. 3). For example, many people who felt paralyzed by the recent Iraq war participated in massive marches opposing the invasion, signed petitions, and

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wrote letters, and experienced the frustration of living in so-called democratic societies and being apparently unable to change the course of a government action that seemed fundamentally unjust. Nonetheless, the OXFAM definition is important drawing attention to the 'active' role of global citizens.

Griffiths (1998) outlines the 'shared agenda' that characterizes various international NGOs, which suggests that global citizenship transcends the artificiality of national boundaries and regards 'Planet Earth' as the common home of humanity. For him, the common identity which unites human beings is not primarily cultural, national, political, civil, social or economic, but ethical. Global citizenship is based on rights, responsibility, and action.

> A picture, then, of the global citizen: not merely aware of her rights but able and desirous to act upon them; of an autonomous and inquiring critical disposition; but her decisions and actions tempered by an ethical concern for social justice and the dignity of humankind; therefore able, through her actions, to control and enhance the 'trajectory of the self' through life while contributing to the commonweal, the public welfare, with a sense of civic duty to replenish society. (Griffiths, 1998, p. 40)

An important point is that for him, pupils should be accorded the rights of citizenship and educated not *in* or *about* citizenship, but *as* citizens. This implies a different ethos in the school from conventional practice, where teachers have more rights and responsibilities than students.

Osler and Starkey in various texts have argued that international human rights declarations, adopted by the whole international community, provide a common set of universal values that can be used to make judgments about global issues and about implied responsibilities to respect the rights of others (see for example Osler and Starkey 2000). It seems that the growing acceptance of, or publicity given to, international rights conventions have impacted on the discourse surrounding global citizenship. It must be acknowledged, however, that although international rights conventions are intended to 'guarantee' rights, they are still enacted primarily at the national or local levels. Legal knowledge in global citizenship education is also needed, in order to be aware of how international conventions are translated into various national acts and where gaps or loopholes might be found.

One of the important tensions in global citizenship, then, is how to treat 'culture.' In discussions of cultural integration, there is often the language of 'one's own culture' and 'others' culture', yet this notion of 'us' and 'them' becomes more complex in a world of migration and dual or hybrid identities. Under a human rights framework, respect for 'others' is problematized when cultural practices infringe upon the rights of some members of society, at which point there must at least be a debate. Osler (2000) noted that while cultural pluralism propounds openness to all cultures,

> ...that openness [does] not mean accepting any position proffered but ...instead being willing to give a genuine hearing to the reasons for any position held. The respect that cultural pluralism calls for is critical respect. The critique must be carried out in practice. The outcome cannot be guaranteed. (2000, p. 56)

So, together with outrage, we have another possibly uncomfortable prospect for teachers in any country with a national curriculum and assessment guidelines: an outcome of a critical debate that is not guaranteed.

Culture is not simply about origins but also concerns current linkages, international trade, and economies. Some argue that we are all becoming global citizens whether we like it or not: the spread of international conventions gives us common rights and entitlements, but on the other hand, the globalization of trade and concentration of economic power may erode some of these

rights. Globalization can be seen as both a threat and an opportunity in terms of the varied impacts of trade, technology, media, social organization, and cultures. For Brownlie,

> Global citizenship is more than learning about seemingly complex 'global issues' such as sustainable development, conflict and international trade – important as these are. It is also about the global dimension to local issues, which are present in all out lives, localities, and communities. (2001, p. 2)

The now familiar slogan, 'act locally, think globally', is an attempt to overcome some of the problems in what can be an abstracted or far-removed concept of global citizenship. Because of the mesh of international linkages, the idea is that a local action (for example regarding pollution or choices that contribute to global warming) could have a wider impact.

THE LINK WITH PEACE EDUCATION

The concept of 'multiple identities' contains the idea that we have a number of cultural facets to our personal identities and, more importantly, loyalties. Yet this now taken-for-granted concept is in danger of lacking meaning in practice. Are multiple identities something that people 'naturally' have, that they acquire, or that they try to have? It is significant that only one or two people are needed to fan the fires of hostility and begin a conflict, but in order to achieve peace and security, very broad and strong bandings of people are needed who are comfortable with notions of multiple identities, and who have enough in common to work together. These groups will have found ways to work with diversity.

A global citizenship identity contains first, the recognition that conflict and peace are rarely confined to national boundaries, and second, that even stable societies are implicated in wars elsewhere, whether by default (choosing not to intervene) or actively in terms of aggression and invasion. A third or middle dimension to the usual phrase needs to be added: 'act locally, analyze nationally, and think globally.' Migration, for example, is a global phenomenon; but national policies on immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers have highly local implications. How robust is our acceptance of 'multiple identities' and 'dynamic cultures'? How far are we prepared to take action to defend the rights of those whom others see as threatening the local culture and economy? Who counts as a citizen in our own backyard or local school? These questions might be the true tests of a vibrant global citizenship education.

In a study examining the needs of teachers and learners in global citizenship education in the UK (Davies, Harber, & Yamashita, 2004), the predominant issue that young people were interested in was war. This was not war in any historical context, but rather current conflicts (specifically, at that time, the Iraq conflict). Students wanted to understand the causes of war, the reasons for hatred, and the reasons for UK involvement. They felt that many of their teachers avoided the topic for fear of raising ethnic tensions in their multicultural classrooms. But young people were aware that they might receive biased or superficial views from the media, and felt it was the school's role to provide deeper understandings of conflict.

Another key point that emerged from this study concerned the school's attitude towards activism. The logic of active citizenship education suggests that schools should encourage young people to take political action where they saw a need or when they were outraged by an injustice, as discussed earlier. Yet many schools are wary of such involvement. In the UK, students in some schools who took time off to join marches against the Iraq war were punished or labeled as truants. The key task of any citizenship education should be to give students a disposition to participate in politics – not only by voting but through actions to improve local or global communities.

Thus, a global citizenship education for peace would be a highly political education, not simply a bland multiculturalism, unquestioning 'tolerance' or "being nice to each other." It has four inter-related components: knowledge, analysis, skills, and action (KASA). First, there is the knowledge of world current events, economics and international relations. Second is the capacity to critically analyze media, religious messages, dogma, superstition, hate literature, extremism, and fundamentalism. Third, it involves political skills, such as persuasion, negotiation, lobbying, campaigning, and demonstrating. Fourth are dispositions for joint action, which these days include networking through communications technology, starting a website, or joining international forums of young people working for peace. These are all essential ingredients for a solid global citizenship education for peace that can produce active world citizens who understand the causes and effects of conflict, who do not join radical groups, who vote out politicians who go to war, who do not support religious leaders who preach hate, and who join others to make their voice for peace more potent.

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