www.rigeo.org ISSN: 2146-0353
RIGE
Review of International Geographical Education Online
Review of International Geographical Education Online ©RIGEO Volume 4, Number 2, Summer 2014

Global Citizenship Education in a Secondary Geography Course: The Students' Perspectives

Kyle MASSEY[1]

University of Texas at Austin, Austin, USA

Abstract

Global citizenship education is increasingly appreciated in Ontario, Canada, as an important component of formal schooling. Although all disciplinary areas have a role to play in global citizenship education, geography provides an especially relevant context in which to foster the values and attitudes often cited as important for global citizenship. This study investigates how Grade 12 students, who had recently completed the course "Canadian and World Issues: A Geographic Analysis", conceive of the concept of global citizenship, and experienced its values within this course. Qualitative data was collected through interviews with seven students. The interviews revealed four major themes relating to how the students conceptualized global citizenship: global awareness, belonging, caring, and commitment to action. It revealed students' personal involvement with the concepts studied helped them learn to be global citizens, as did the rich discussions of global issues they experienced in class. Careful analysis of both students' conceptions of global citizenship and how they experienced global citizenship in the curriculum exposed an uncritical perspective – one which emphasizes acts of charity and volunteerism rather than a commitment to social justice. The findings are valuable to teachers and teacher candidates seeking to better engage their students in global issues and equip them with global thinking strategies, and to curriculum developers wishing to effectively incorporate values and topics concerning global citizenship within school curricula.

Keywords: global citizenship, geography education, student perspectives, global awareness

Introduction

Global citizenship education is increasingly realized in Ontario as an important component of our youth's formal schooling. The Ontario Ministry of Education understands schools have a vital role to play in preparing young people as informed,

[1]University of Texas at Austin, Department of Educational Administration, 1912 Speedway D5400, Austin, Texas, 78712-1604, USA, kyle.massey[at]utexas.edu

engaged, and empowered citizens who will be pivotal in shaping the future of local, national and global communities (Bondar et al., 2007). Traditionally, global citizenship education in Canada has tended to stress learning about the world as opposed to encouraging students to become active agents prepared to address global issues of social, economic, and political significance. Within this framework of knowledge transmission, global citizenship education is based on the belief that knowledge itself is sufficient to prepare students to act as responsible global citizens. Social studies scholars (e.g., Merryfield, 2000; Richardson, 2002) have pointed out that global citizenship education was traditionally a force for cultural homogenization that tended to erase cultural difference, devalue non-Western cultures, and privilege Western ways of knowing.

Fortunately, history, geography, and social studies curricula in all provinces have moved away from the earlier rhetoric of British-Canadian or French-Canadian nationalism and have accepted that Canada is a country of cultural, religious, and regional differences. Multiculturalism, immigration, and human rights are common buzzwords in curriculum documents today. However, for Sears (1996), there is some indication that classroom practice may not be consistent with policy in citizenship education. Sears, Clarke, and Hughes (1999, p. 128) stated more than a decade ago that "there is little evidence as to what actually goes on in Canadian classrooms, the effectiveness of particular programs or what students know or are able to do". Regarding citizenship education, the authors surmise:

> *Although evidence from the official curricula indicates that conceptions of citizenship education have moved toward more activist and inclusive ones, we suspect that the actual practice of citizenship education in the nation's classrooms remains closer to the older, more conservative models of the past. (Sears, et al., 1999, pp. 130-131)*

Literature in this area confirms that there is a gap between "policy" and "practice." As a result, what happens in classrooms with regard to citizenship education "is an area in which extensive study is needed" (Sears, 1996, p. 125).

In recent years, especially since 2000, there has been increasing attention in Canada to what it means to educate for global citizenship. Global education has enjoyed renewed government support, as evidenced by increased federal funding for global education projects and provincial curriculum policy developments that pay increasing attention to global citizenship education (Evans & Reynolds, 2004). Recent research in the Canadian context reveals renewed Canadian scholarly attention to educating for the global dimension of citizenship (e.g., Evans, 2008; Richardson, 2004; Shultz, 2007). The idea that schools should equip children with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for participation in a more globalized world has become a standard feature of the education policy landscape in Canada (Schweisfurth, 2006).

It has been recognized, however, that the curriculum across Canada reflects a global citizenship education tied to neoliberal constructs of the world as a market. The value

structure inherent in this approach stresses individualism, competitiveness, and self-reliance, while it encourages students to look at the world as a single culture in which the dominant organizing principle is consumption (McMurtry, 2002). The aim of the Grades 9 to 12 curriculum in Ontario, introduced in 2000, was to ensure that "graduates from Ontario secondary schools are well prepared to lead satisfying and productive lives both as citizens and individuals and to compete successfully in a global economy in a rapidly changing world" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 3). The nature of this statement underlies a key tension between global and national citizenship, the insecurity of a world constantly in flux, and the sense of security and belonging cultivated by powerful national identity curricula.

In a study of how teachers in Ontario secondary schools have prioritized global citizenship issues in their teaching, Schweisfurth (2006) notes that globally-minded teachers dismissed the Ontario secondary curriculum as "superficial" in its treatment of global citizenship. Despite the unsatisfactory way that global citizenship is actually included in the curriculum documents, Schweisfurth discovered that teachers who are determined to make global education a priority do still find creative ways to do so: "As one teacher put it, there is a 'wealth of opportunity' to 'use' the expectations to drive a global citizenship education agenda in any subject area" (Schweisfurth, 2006, p. 47). This form of work is highly challenging, given that global citizenship is fairly low on schools' list of priorities and in the context of a "long period of creeping teacher demoralization" (Schweisfurth, 2006, p. 49). The teachers in Schweisfurth's study who were able to embed global citizenship instruction in their teaching were later described in her analysis as exceptional cases and rare among their teaching colleagues.

The approach to global citizenship education put forward by Andreotti (2006) encourages cultivating critical literacy and planetary responsibility; an approach concerned with encouraging students to be aware of and critically reflect upon their own position and background in relation to local and global issues and injustice, while becoming familiar with the multiple perspectives of diverse interest groups. Andreotti recommends that the global citizenship education agenda needs to create spaces and provide analytical tools and ethical grounds for learners to engage with global issues and perspectives addressing complexity, uncertainty, contingency, and difference. She uses a post-colonial lens to argue that learners need to move away from ethnocentrism and its claims of cultural supremacy towards Spivak's notion of planetary citizenship based on a deep understanding of interdependence and causal responsibility towards the South. From Andreotti's perspective, the development of students' critical literacy skills is central to preparing students to enact this version of critical global citizenship education. "Soft" approaches to global citizenship education, she warns, will result in the perpetual reproduction of relationships of inequity, power abuse, and exploitation that contribute to global injustice in North-South relations.

Another orientation in global citizenship education is described by Evans, Ingram, MacDonald, and Weber (2009), and is concerned with teaching and learning about social justice and civic participation in the global context. Particular attention is given to

the entrenchment of power and hierarchy in society rather than simply a celebration of different cultures (Davies, 2006). Oxfam, for example, advocates global action for justice. In its 2006 publication, *Education for Global Citizenship: A Guide for Schools*, Oxfam's global citizenship curriculum emphasizes the development of skills including critical thinking, the ability to argue effectively, the ability to challenge injustice and inequalities, and cooperation and conflict resolution. Learner-centered pedagogy is advocated, infused through specialized subject areas and integrated across the curriculum.

Attention to these approaches and orientations to global citizenship education alerts us to a range of ambiguities and challenges inherent in what it means to educate for the global dimension of citizenship in the 21st century. At the same time, this breadth of approaches to educating for the global citizenship also point to its possibilities—and to the need to prepare teachers, students, policy-makers, and educational researchers alike to stay attuned.

All disciplinary areas have a role to play in global citizenship education. The discipline of geography, however, which is primarily concerned with the study of people, places, and environments at home and around the world, is especially important to foster in students the values and attitudes usually cited as important for global citizenship. Where values have been studied empirically in the context of geography education, the focus has remained almost exclusively on the perceptions and experiences of teachers or student teachers (e.g., Chalmers, Keown, & Kent, 2002; Ellis & Birch, 2006; Lambert & Balderstone, 2000). Little is known about how students conceive, experience, and engage in values as they are presented in geography. This lack of knowledge reflects a neglect of students' perspectives and experiences in geography education research more generally. Wright (1992) and Williams (1999) both noted the persistence of this gap in the 1990s and called for more student-centered research. The literature in geography education published more recently continues to exhibit a paucity of studies that examine understandings from the perspective of students. Similarly, while studies regarding global citizenship education are increasingly numerous in education literature, the vast majority of the work in this field focuses on the conceptions, understandings, and perspective of teachers and teacher candidates (e.g., Cheung, 2010; Evans, 2006; Fizzel, 2012; Reimer, 2009; Schweisfurth, 2006). Studies that examine global citizenship or the education for it from the perspective of students are noticeably absent in the literature.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study is to describe how secondary students in Ontario make meaning of global citizenship through geography education. The study investigates how Grade 12 students who recently completed the course titled, "Canadian and World Issues: A Geographic Analysis," conceive of global citizenship. The study explores how students experience global citizenship education in the geography curriculum. Preparing students to be global citizens is a goal often cited in school board mission statements. The findings of this study support this objective by informing future

curriculum development and teacher preparation regarding global citizenship education in geography.

Methodology

The participants consisted of seven Grade 12 students in one secondary school in eastern Ontario who successfully completed the course titled, "Canadian and World Issues: A Geographic Analysis" during the immediately preceding academic semester. All of the school's current Grade 12 students who completed the course in the previous semester were invited to participant in this study, and each were provided a Letter of Information and Consent Form. The signed Consent Forms were returned to the school office for me to collect—in total, seven consent forms were returned. I scheduled a time to meet each participant at their school to conduct the interview. Of the seven participants, 3 were male and 4 were female, and all were 18 years old.

Each participant was interviewed once in a one-on-one, in-depth interview, lasting approximately 45 minutes each. The in-depth interviews were audio recorded and conducted in the school setting at times convenient for each participant, their teachers, and the school administration. A semi-structured interview approach was followed using an interview guide. Interview questions were open-ended in nature in order to give participants a chance to be flexible in their responses. They addressed topics identified in the course curriculum relating to common notions of global citizenship with a focus on global awareness, ability and willingness to affect change, and global civic engagement. Field notes were recorded during the interview documenting body language, gestures, and highlighting main points and ideas expressed. Immediately following each interview, a detailed field journal entry was prepared to record observations and reflections.

Using ATLAS.ti., a systematic process for coding data from a phenomenological inquiry was adopted (Creswell, 1998). First, sections relevant to the research questions were identified on each transcript. They were analyzed and categorized into clusters of meaning that represent the phenomenon of interest. Once the coding scheme was developed, all participants' interview transcripts, as well as the field notes from the interviews and journal entries in their entirety, were coded under this scheme. This aided analysis of taken-for-granted assumptions with special attention given to descriptions of what was experienced.

Why this course?

Many courses within the Canadian and world studies program in Ontario secondary schools (which includes Economics, Geography, History, Law, Civics, and Politics) include content and learning expectations related to aspects of global citizenship. However, it is the geography curriculum specifically that most directly speaks to the aspects of global citizenship that are commonly described in both the scholarly literature and educational resource documents related to this topic. Analyzing the course descriptions and learning expectations of the various courses as written in the Ministry of Education's official curriculum documents has revealed that the curriculum of the

Grade 12 course titled, "Canadian and World Issues: A Geographic Analysis" is strongly focused on engaging students in critical thinking regarding such things as global awareness, sustainable development, globalization, international cooperation and interdependence, and the importance of cross-cultural competencies. Curiously, the official curriculum of this course does not use the term "global citizenship" or any form of this term at all, but the strength of alignment of its curriculum with the various notions of global citizenship as presented in literature makes it the most interesting and justifiable course in the Canadian and world studies program around which to center this research.

Situating myself as the researcher

As a graduate of a university geography department, a former geography teacher in Ontario secondary schools, and now a college geography instructor, I am inherently partial to geography as a discipline of study in schools. In my teaching, I strive to showcase my passion for geography so that my students might also become passionate about the discipline. When the opportunity arises that I might advise a student on course selection, I regularly recommend any geography courses that are available. I firmly believe that exposure to this diverse discipline offers students the chance to engage meaningfully with a variety of social, cultural, and environmental issues that many students might otherwise not encounter in formal education. It is my passion for the discipline of geography that prompted me to consider global citizenship education in the context of geography education.

Findings

Students' conceptions of global citizenship

Students identified various characteristics of a global citizen, with four distinct characteristics emerging as key themes in students' descriptions: global awareness, belonging, caring, and commitment to action.

Global awareness

According to Evans and Reynolds (2004), global awareness refers to understanding the interconnected nature of the world and having the knowledge and understanding of global problems. In this study students felt they became much more globally aware as a result of completing the course "Canadian and World Issues." When speaking about injustices in the world, participants frequently referred to issues such as poverty and unequal access to education, claiming they had become knowledgeable about these topics as a result of the course. Awareness of global issues and of the interconnectedness of the people and places around the world was frequently mentioned as essential for global citizenship. This is illustrated by the description of global citizenship given by one student: "first not be ignorant of other countries. Be aware of the issues everyone has and don't make assumptions." This demand to be generally aware of "the issues" was common to all interview participants. As the comments of another participant indicate, students understood global citizenship to be a way of thinking:

> *I think that in a sense [global citizenship] might just be a mentality because sometimes it might just be hard for people to donate money or something like that. But I think that just by knowing that there's other things going on beyond like what's going on in your city, then I think that makes you a global citizen (Kalinda).*

This student's recognition of the importance of knowledge for global citizenship is in line with scholars who call for global awareness (Noddings, 2005) or "global intelligence" (Benhabib, 2002, p. 253). Her suggestion that global citizenship "might just be a mentality" and does not necessarily require participation or action, however, highlights her limited and even naive understanding. Global citizenship literature has consistently argued knowledge is only the first step towards global citizenship. Knowledge informs action, but action is necessary (Benhabib, 2002; Oxfam, 2006). This more sophisticated interpretation of global citizenship was expressed by other students. For example one student explained:

> *They need to know what they're talking about and they need to know what they're learning about and they need to know what's going on in the world, like they can't just randomly think that something bad is happening in the world (Megan).*

She is pointing out that being a global citizen requires more than just a general awareness of the existence of global problems. She identifies the willingness to learn more about them. Other participants similarly pointed to the need for a deeper understanding beyond superficial knowledge. Most participants acknowledged the need for meaningful global knowledge among other characteristics such as action, but highlighted that without knowledge one's efforts may be misdirected. For example:

> *If you don't really understand the impacts of what you do, if you don't have that knowledge of how the things that you do affect different people in different ways, then how are you supposed to know what to change? How are you supposed to know if you're doing something right already and how do you know if you're doing something wrong (Michael)?*

This student's description of global awareness reflects Evans and Reynolds' (2004) notion of a growing understanding of the interconnectedness of our everyday lives with others throughout the world. The participant claims in the quote above that without global awareness one is not equipped to make decisions about action. This contention reflects the central arguments presented in Oxfam's (2006) guide for schools, that is, with global awareness comes an understanding of moral duties and obligations to others.

Belonging

The theme of belonging was prevalent in the interviews, pointing to the recognition of the importance of membership in the wider community of humanity beyond the nation-state (Dower & Williams, 2002; Nussbaum, 1997). This conception was directly

described by interview participants, exemplified in the interview transcript excerpt below:

Interviewer: *What comes to mind when you think of the word citizenship?*

Kalinda: *I just pretty much think about being a part of something.*

Interviewer: *Can you expand on what you mean by that?*

Kalinda*: I guess like, if you're a citizen in something, you're like a member, you're kind of like an equal member. Like in Canada when you get your citizenship and like you get all the rights that all the other Canadians get. It's kind of like a membership type thing I guess.*

Interviewer: *what about global citizenship then?*

Kalinda: *Pretty much the same thing except going beyond their country.*

This idea of membership is congruent to the fundamental principle of global citizenship described by Pike (2008) when he says that "an individual's awareness, loyalty, and allegiance can and should extend beyond the borders of a nation to encompass the whole of humankind" (p. 39). This call to expand one's identity and loyalty beyond one's country is not meant to suggest that people should not consider themselves national citizens, but rather national and global citizens. Understanding one's identity in this way, Pike suggests, will result in active national citizens with an informed global conscience.

While the participants acknowledged that the nation-state system remained the dominant political paradigm and that national self-interest complicated notions of global citizenship, they expressed a willingness to look beyond the nation-state when they thought of how they should act as global citizens. As one participant stated:

It's a pretty big jump to think of ourselves as only a citizen of a city to a citizen of the whole world, but I guess if you think about it, we're all born of the same thing…. The countries don't own us, we created them (Ashley).

The participants' emergent sense of the way in which the civic ideal can play itself out on the global stage touches on what Boulding (1988) asserted over two decades ago, that "the concept of global civic culture requires the acceptance at some level of a shared identity with other human beings" (p. 56). The interviews revealed that the students acknowledged the need to take responsibility for one's actions is important for global citizenship. This was made apparent by the strong sense of principled decision-making that all of the students expressed, meaning that they are concerned about the effects of government policies as well as their personal daily choices. In essence, when describing themselves as global citizens, the participants described a sense of solidarity with others, near and far.

Moreover, the participants described global citizenship as an understanding of their feelings of commonality with people in other places. For example, one of the students expressed his idea of global citizenship in this way:

> *It's the recognition that we all have something in common…a lot of people just sort of think of the differences between people from different countries and don't realize that we all have things in common (Robert).*

This acknowledgment of the other, and particularly of the other who lies outside the confining and comfortable boundaries of the nation, again points to Nussbaum's (1997) idea of membership in the wider community of humanity.

Caring

Perhaps the most evident theme that emerged from the participants' conception of global citizenship was that of caring. One participant described her notion of caring in this way:

> *I think [citizenship] means, like, if you're a citizen then you care about where you live and you care about the people in it, and you just care about everything that goes on. Like, if I was a citizen of Canada, then I care about Canada and I want to know what's going on in Canada, I want to figure out what I can do to make everything better…. Just caring about other people, doesn't matter if you know them or not. Like, if people, if you're walking in the street and someone needs help with their grocery bags, you should stop and help instead of saying sorry. It would be a good citizen to do that (Megan).*

This understanding of "caring about" is reflective of how Noddings (2002) describes it, making the distinction between caring for and caring about. Caring for, according to Noddings, requires a response to expressed needs, and therefore caring for people is impossible at great distance without some means of direct contact. Noddings explains that this does not mean that we cannot care about many people for whom we cannot care directly. Caring-about, she says, "must be seen as instrumental in establishing the conditions under which caring-for can flourish" (Noddings, 2002, p. 23). This participant went on to describe caring in the context of global citizenship, saying:

> *So like, I would care about the people in Afghanistan. And I do, like, I'm really interested about what's happening there and I want to know why it's happening there and it's just…you just care about the people there even if you don't know who they are (Megan).*

This emphasis on caring came through to some extent in all the interviews. In fact, caring was the first characteristic that many of the participants identified as essential for global citizenship. Many of the participants made comments regarding the lack of care that many people have concerning world issues, and how this is an easy identifier of those who are not global citizens. For example:

> *I believe that I am one of the few people in our school that can actually carry on intelligent conversations about the world. The only other people I know who can partake in these conversations are the others who took the World Issues course with me. I am often shocked when I discover the closed-mindedness of most people when important global issues come up in conversation. People often don't care about anything outside their own tiny realm of existence. They're definitely not global citizens (Kalinda).*

These expressed frustrations with the perceived lack of care among others further demonstrates the emphasis that the participants placed on caring as a characteristic of a global citizen.

Commitment to action

The participants in this study did identify some degree of commitment to action as a necessary characteristic of a global citizen, however, the sort of actions they describe that a global citizen should participate in were limited in scope. A common conception of global citizenship communicated in the interviews was that global citizenship requires a commitment to action in order to make the world a better place. The suggested ways in which a global citizen should go about making the world a better place, however, seemed to represent a simplified understanding of the developing world as a homogenous and ahistorical place full of people in need.

Students who put a lot of emphasis on commitment to action seemed to be concerned particularly with how their consumer choices may impact those in less developed countries. For example, when asked how she might put into practice what she learned about global citizenship, one participant responded:

> *I've already taken a whole consumer power thing. Like, I've now tried to make myself aware of which stores use fair trade/organics. I shop at The Body Shop a lot more now because I know that it's helping people make a fair wage. And then stores like American Apparel are sweatshop-free and all that (Kalinda).*

Similarly, another student pointed to shopping choices when describing how one can 'do' global citizenship:

> *You can do it from your home, you know like, even just buying things like fair trade products like that kind of stuff that you're helping people in other countries (Robert).*

Buying fair-trade products is often presented to students as a concrete and constructive example of how they can make a difference in the world, such that they "don't have to feel powerless about the world's problems" (Holmes & O'Dwyer, 2010, p. 144). However, there is something problematic about a self-celebratory discourse which privileges the need to overcome a sense of disempowerment through self-gratifying purchasing practices which require minimal effort or sacrifice. Purchasing fair-trade products becomes a means for Westerners to feel empowered in relation to the

helplessness and powerlessness of the Other, whose entire lives are said to be 'transformed' by simple acts of Western consumerism (Holmes & O'Dwyer, 2010), a phenomenon exemplified by the student's comments above where he explains that by "just buying things… you're helping people in other countries".

Another student identified herself as a global citizen because of her own commitment to helping others, however, her perception of what it means to help seems to be limited to donating to or running charities:

> *I would say I'm a global citizen, just because I like to help out as much as I can in any way possible. And I always donate to charities and I always try to raise money for charities. And really just anything, if anyone needs help running a charity I will help them (Megan).*

Throughout the study it became apparent that participants most often defined their civic engagement in terms of volunteerism and charitable work, rather than in terms of political activism. Although important, acts of charity should not be conceptualized as solutions to social problems, neither locally nor globally. A global citizen should recognize that the demands of caring for others involve not only an immediate response, perhaps through charitable works, but also concern for the future. In the 2006 Oxfam publication titled, Education for global citizenship: A guide for schools, the need for global citizens to be "willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place" (p. 3) is highlighted. This presumably calls for committed work beyond charity in the form of demonstrated action promoting social justice. A commitment to social justice, as opposed to simply engaging in charity, involves an individual actively working toward equality for all society (Monard-Weissman, 2003), or in other words, working toward a world where charity would no longer be a necessary condition of survival.

Some of the participants discussed the local and global volunteer work that they pursued since completing the course titled, "Canadian and World Issues: A Geographic Analysis", often stating that their continued desire to volunteer was furthered as a result of the course. As one student explained:

> *Well, last summer I was selected by Rotary to go on a volunteer mission trip to El Salvador and while we were there we did medical clinics, we volunteered at nursing homes, painted murals at an orphanage, and helped kids learn how to read and write. What else did we do? There's so much that we did… like looking back at it now, I strongly believe global citizenship is just about helping others and trying to make the world a better place (Andrew).*

While this volunteer experience abroad certainly contributed to this student's desire for continued action, it is important to note that the types of activities he engaged in abroad were limited to acts of charity, rather than any initiatives for sustained social justice. Simpson (2005) has argued that volunteer abroad experiences can reinforce the notion that development is something that can be done by unskilled volunteers who are

willing to "help" those in "need". Volunteer abroad experiences such as this, which may not necessarily be embedded or framed with robust social justice or global citizenship curricula, supports the Eurocentric conception of the West as the "doctor" able to "prevent" and "cure", with the West being framed as the solution rather than part of the problem.

Some participants spoke of the motivations and the obstacles for participation. Identified motivations for civic engagement ranged from living up to one's responsibility as privileged members of the world to simply doing the right thing. Although recognizing the need to act as a global citizen, specifically to support the natural environment, one student referred to the difficulty in doing so caused by social pressures:

> *I think it's our culture in itself and it's our peers and everything, it's just we're raised to buy stuff and we are taught to buy stuff from these companies. That's just what they want, they don't want us to do anything else, they want us to buy. That's really all they care about. So it's kind of like being in a trap like that…. And I'm still kind of stuck in that transition between I know that I'm doing something wrong, but what can I do about it? And I don't really see myself being like ok well I'm not going to buy my nice clothes or I'm not going to buy my new car or I'm not going to go get my new phone because I've been raised into that culture. If I leave that, what do I have left? (Michael)*

He went on to say:

> *I don't want to be alienated for being leftist by everybody else if I do something different and I do something to support the earth. I kind of just want to be able to just fit in. So, if everybody were to do that, I'd be fine (Michael).*

The worries expressed here perhaps point to the less than full commitment to action held by many in this age group, but it is interesting that despite his hesitancy to "support the earth", he still identifies as a global citizen due to his recognition that he should.

Students' experience of global citizenship in the curriculum

Beyond their demonstrated ability to quickly and easily list many of the numerous topics or issues they remembered learning about in the course "Canadian and World Issues: A Geographic Analysis", the interview participants also described many ways in which they actually experienced learning global citizenship. Two broad themes emerged in the discussions related to students' experience of global citizenship in the curriculum; these were personal involvement and deep understanding.

Personal involvement

When directly asked about how they experienced global citizenship, or the education for it, during the course, participants spoke of the high level of active learning within the course, which, as they described, often resulted in them becoming "personally involved" with the issues at hand. They recalled how authentic student-centered

activities helped them to form a personal connection with some of the issues being studied.

One student described that because they didn't just study the issues in an abstract way, through a textbook for example, but rather engaged with the issues more meaningfully, his experience of global citizenship education in this course was memorable and powerful:

> *We did like fundraisings to sponsor children in India to go to school, so it made a more personal connection with our school, and specifically our class… So it kind of made that connection more personal I found. Because it wasn't just sitting in a class learning about world issues, we actually did something to make a difference in the world (Andrew).*

He described how they learned the stories of children in India who could not afford to attend school. He noted that discussing this reality while sitting in a classroom in a country where public education is a taken for granted privilege available to all (or almost all), allowed him and his classmates to reflect critically on social inequalities around the world.

> *Through the fundraising projects we did, we really learned about how children in India can't all afford to go to school, and that really makes you think since we don't have that problem here. Here, everyone is able to go to school and it's like no problem at all, but not everywhere is like that. Being involved in the fundraising made me really think about that (Andrew).*

It is clear that this personal involvement with an important global concern such as access to education contributed to the students' enthusiasm for global citizenship. Their involvement, however, was limited to charity only, as none of the participants made any reference to having been involved in a social justice initiative. Of course, it is acknowledged that these are 18 year old secondary school students, and their capacity to work for true social justice is limited.

When asked about her experiences of learning for global citizenship in this course, one participant described how a personal connection to the issues helped her to make meaning of global citizenship. She recalled a fundraising campaign that she organized as part of the course:

> *We were talking about orphanages like, out in Africa and we actually raised enough money to send three girls to a boarding school so they could get properly fed and clothed, and proper education for a year (Megan).*

In retelling this story during the interview, it was clear that she felt a sense of pride for having been involved in that effort. She not only spoke about the immediate effect of the actual dollars generated from the fundraising campaign in her school, but also of the positive impact of the awareness she and her classmates generated among their school population about social injustices in the developing world. She discussed that by

being personally involved in the issues in the course, referring to fundraising, she came to develop a passion for being part of a solution:

> *So yeah, the class made me realize how much things are going bad in the world and that I'm the type of person that wants to help it out. Because now I know that I want to become an environmental lawyer, just because a lot of stuff has to do with the environment down there (Megan).*

Her stated desire to become an environmental lawyer in order to work for environmental justice is certainly a noble goal, but the way in which she described this plan raises some questions about her understanding of the complexity of environmental issues and other global concerns. She seemed to imagine herself becoming an environmental lawyer and then immediately marching into a developing country and solving all the problems. Furthermore, her description of the places with grave environmental concerns as "down there," presumably a reference to the Global South, certainly points to her lack of understanding of the diversity in the developing world. Her descriptions of places in the world where she would like to help to solve problems, such as "out in Africa" and "down there", invoke critiques of North-South relations such as Heron's (2007), where what she calls the helping imperative is represented as a form of neo-colonialism. This calls to mind Andreotti's (2006) cautionary claim that if students do not examine the economic and cultural roots of inequality, they may learn only to "take up the 'burden' of saving/educating/civilizing the world," and consequently reproduce "power relations and violence similar to those in colonial times" (p. 1).

Deep understanding

The participant interviews revealed that the students truly believed that their knowledge and understanding of many global issues had been advanced and deepened significantly as a result of this specific course. Participants noted that prior assumptions they held about people in distant places were challenged during the course, and that they gained new perspectives as a result of this learning. This interview quotation exemplifies this:

> *I know before I took the [Canadian and] World Issues class I was just assuming, oh they're poor, oh they're this… Like you just have no idea until you really find out that they have more than just being chalked up to a stereotype (Jennifer).*

Another student explained that before taking the course he thought he knew quite a bit about global issues, but now having completed the course he realizes most of what he thought he knew was wrong. He attributed this to the fact that his prior knowledge of many important global issues was based primarily on what he learned from the media. He recognized that most of his friends in his school have not, and will not, complete the course titled, "Canadian and World Issues", and therefore will have little to no exposure to global citizenship education. This student's concerns for his peers' understanding of the world were expressed in this way:

> *They'll just kind of chalk other countries up to stereotypes they hear. And that's unfortunate 'cause they'll end up judging them based on how the media spins it on a negative way, or based on what they hear from other people,.... So, it's just unfortunate for them that they won't ever really understand or help in the same way that people who've taken the course would. Because we all look at the world differently now that we've taken the course whereas other people just don't (Robert).*

Each of the seven interview participants spoke about the value of the opportunities for discussion concerning global issues they experienced in this course. The class discussions in which they participated were memorable experiences for them, and served to strongly influence the evolution of their definitions of global citizenship. The participants conveyed that having the opportunity to participate in class discussions, framed around active-learning activities, and provided them with a deeper understanding of complex global issues. Rather than just briefly mentioning important global issues, or glossing over them in class using brief textbook readings, for example, the participants described that it was the engaging and meaningful way they considered the issues in class that deepened their understanding.

Conclusion and Discussion

For centuries the concept of citizenship has been associated with the nation-state and nationality. Today, this modern notion of citizenship has been challenged by globalization and global migrations. Contemporary global transformations have given rise to a renewed form of citizenship that is not constituted exclusively around the idea of territoriality. Instead, a theory of citizenship for a multicultural and global society has emerged, referred to as global citizenship.

The nature of global citizenship and the education for it are complex indeed, as are their implications for contemporary schooling—perhaps no more so than for contemporary geography education. The education for global citizenship is, however, critical and inescapably linked to the present and future status of Canadian public schooling, the expansion of democracy, and the eradication of social injustice throughout the world. Globalization requires young people to learn how to coexist with others in diverse and often conflict ridden real and virtual public spaces. Education should help students develop a sense of identity that can remain viable within multiple contexts of affiliation and this involves developing their theoretical and practical understanding of their existing and potential rights and responsibilities as citizens, at local, national, regional, and global levels, across all domains of their lives. As has been suggested, the discipline of geography is an ideal context in which to explore the values and issues related to global citizenship.

The Ontario Ministry of Education has included many course objectives and expectations within geography courses that appear to be aimed at developing global awareness and building a sense of global citizenship within students. Through in-depth

interviews with students who have recently completed the Grade 12 geography course titled, "Canadian and World Issues: A Geographic Analysis", this study examined the conceptions these students have regarding global citizenship, and how they have experienced the associated values within the course curriculum.

Summary of Key Findings

The findings presented regarding student conceptions of global citizenship indicate that there was some variation in the ways that the participants understand the meaning of global citizenship, in terms of what characteristics they emphasized more than others, however, the participants' discussions about global citizenship shared many similarities. While some students put the greatest emphasis on caring about others, other participants expressed more complex conceptions: we are not global citizens unless we are interested in learning beyond our communities, and actively participate and collaborate across borders to bring about positive change for all of humanity. Unsurprisingly, the sample did not present one easy definition of global citizenship, rather it revealed four themes that were most apparent in how the seven research participants conceptualized the idea: global awareness, belonging, caring, and commitment to action.

Through the analysis of my conversations with the students, it became evident that the participants described global awareness as a way of thinking that includes both an awareness of oneself and the outside world, including national identity and recognition of global interdependence and a shared fate. In this way, the students' concepts of self-awareness of who they are in the world was coupled with the concept of consciousness of the interconnectedness of all of our actions across the globe. With the common suggestion that global citizenship requires one to "really understand" issues and to be aware of how one's actions affect others, the participants are describing global awareness much in the same way that Schattle (2009) does when he says that global awareness entails personal qualities such as "understanding complex issues from multiple vantage points, recognizing sources of global interdependence and a shared fate that implicates humanity and all life on the planet" (p. 10).

Another major theme identified in the participants' conception of global citizenship was that of belonging. The participants understood that rather than identifying solely as citizens of their own nation or locality, they should also consider themselves as members of the wider community of humanity. It was clear that the participants recognized their solidarity and commonality with others, near or far. Caring about others, as an extension of their feeling of belonging, was also evident as a major theme in the interviews. Recalling one of the participant's comment that "if you have the knowledge and you don't have the caring then it really doesn't make a difference" (Michael), the participants ascribed great value to caring about others, and in many cases was the first thing that came to their mind when thinking about global citizenship.

While the participants did communicate that a commitment to action was necessary for global citizenship, they showed a limited understanding of what it means to work for social justice. Rather, their conception of acting as a global citizen was limited to such

things as buying fair trade products, volunteerism, and donating to charity. Andreotti (2006), using a post-colonial theoretical lens, argues for a need to take a more critical approach to global citizenship education that addresses issues of social justice not simply through the discourse of "making a difference", but through a more analytical understanding of global power dynamics and their historical origins. While the curriculum expectations for the course titled, "Canadian and World Issues: A Geographic Analysis" do point to the intention to engage students in questioning such things as inequities of power and access to resources, the effectiveness of national and international policies, and causes of economic disparity, it was clear from the interviews that the participants' notions of global citizenship failed to embody this critical perspective. The participants' understanding of what individuals can do—support campaigns or donate time and money—represents the implications of what Andreotti (2006) terms "soft" global citizenship education. This stands in contrast to a critical global citizenship education which results, for example, in individuals recognizing that they should analyze their own position and participate in changing structures, assumptions, and power relations in their contexts. While recognizing that their age and lack of autonomy as secondary students may limit their ability to engage in complex social justice initiatives, it is nonetheless a reasonable expectation that these students are able to identify such possibilities and speak about their importance. While advancing the students' knowledge of many global issues and furthering their understanding of many aspects of global citizenship, the experience of this course did not challenge the participants to think beyond charity and volunteerism, to more complex notions of social justice. This research demonstrates the reproductive conceptual outcomes of the notion of charity that simultaneously efface and undermine the possibilities of a social justice framework for global as well as local relations between those that benefit, and those that do not benefit, from current social, political, and economic relations.

Not one time during any interview was the validity of the concept of global citizenship brought into question by any of the participants. Additionally, none of the participants made any reference to global citizenship as related to a legal status. These results, and considering the combination of characteristics that the participants identified as being important for global citizenship, as well as the fact that the participants considered themselves to be global citizens, indicate that the students in this study have the desire to engage in "new kinds of wonderings" (Smith, 1999, p. 4) about the world community. Taken together, these wonderings constitute a global imaginary of citizenship that suggests it may be possible to conceptualize citizenship education with a global dimension.

The participants described their experience of global citizenship values in the "Canadian and World Issues" course as heavily tied to their experiences of feeling personally involved with the global issues addressed in the course. Having been given opportunities to reflect on social inequalities around the world, students reported this personal involvement with the issues as one of the key ways they experienced global citizenship education. Aside from the theme of personal involvement, the students also

frequently mentioned the deep understanding of various world concerns when asked about how they experienced global citizenship in the curriculum. The participants were quite deliberate in their distinction between the deep understanding they experienced in the course and the superficial knowledge of world issues they may acquire from other courses across the school curriculum. The class activities they described in this course were, however, limited to fundraising and awareness campaigns. While the issues being studied (global hunger, access to education, etc.) and their related curriculum expectations are valuable and important to developing global citizenship, learning only through fundraising efforts may have contributed to the students' uncritical perspectives.

Implications

This examination, conducted within an Ontario secondary school context, offers a student-focused, rather than teacher-focused, contribution to the limited body of work related to global citizenship education. The voices of student participants in this study fill an important gap in our knowledge of how to craft global citizenship curricula during an era of growing awareness of global needs. They speak powerfully of young adult students who are ready, willing, and able to take ownership of their moral and intellectual growth as they embark on their journeys both to mature adulthood and to global citizenship.

The findings presented here are valuable to both teachers and teacher candidates seeking to better engage their students with global issues and equip them with global thinking strategies, and to curriculum developers wishing to effectively incorporate issues and topics concerning global citizenship within school curricula. Teacher education programs in Ontario should consider how secondary students, such as the participants in this study, conceive of global citizenship and be intentional in training teachers to meaningfully engage with their students to help them navigate the complexities of what it means to be a global citizen. Specifically, would-be teachers must be given the opportunity to better understand the difference between, on the one hand, the deeply problematic idea of "charity" and its unavoidably conservative/reproductive outcomes, and on the other hand the potentially transformative concept of "social justice" aimed at understanding the deep social/political/economic roots of inequality that can only be addressed by a vast global paradigm shift in thinking. Teacher education programs that exclude these opportunities are themselves the source of the inadequacy in preparing young people for active participation in bringing about much needed economic, social, and environmental balance on a global scale.

While it is acknowledged that the results of this research should not be generalized to broader populations of students, a further practical value of this research is that the findings offer higher education curricular and co-curricular program designers detailed descriptions of the ways in which some incoming students might think about global citizenship. Given that an understanding of global citizenship is a core competency that intercultural learning experts have identified as important but are still grappling with to

fully understand (e.g., Deardorff, 2009; Hovland, 2009), the descriptions of how the seven participants in this study understand global citizenship offer valuable insight into student conceptions of this ambiguous term. If university and college educational program designers can be better informed about the complexity with which incoming students might understand the concept, they will be better suited to design curricular and co-curricular programming aimed at further developing students' understanding of global citizenship.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to the students who volunteered to be participants in this study, and to the eastern Ontario secondary school that granted me access to their students. I thank Dr. Magda Lewis of Queen's University for her guidance in conducting this research. Thanks also to the anonymous reviewers whose thoughtful comments were invaluable in improving this manuscript. I am appreciative of Dr. Eyüp Artvinli for ushering this manuscript to publication.

References

Andreotti, V. (2006). Soft versus critical global citizenship education. *Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review, 3*, 40-51.

Benhabib, S. (2002). Unholy wars: Reclaiming democratic virtues after September 11. In C. J. Calhoun, P. Price & A. S. Timmer (Eds.), *Understanding September 11* (pp. 241-253). New York, NY: New Press.

Bondar, R., Dudar, E., Foster, A., Fox, M., Schwartzberg, P., & Walsh, M. (2007). *Shaping our Schools, Shaping our Future: Environmental Education in Ontario Schools*. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/enviroed/shapingSchools.pdf

Boulding, K. E. (1988). *The Meaning of the 20th Century: The Great Transition*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Brubaker, R. (1992). *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Caney, S. (2000). Cosmopolitan justice and cultural diversity. *Global Society, 14*(4), 525-551.

Carpenter, S., Weber, N., & Schugurensky, D. (2012). Views from the blackboard: Neoliberal education reforms and the practice of teaching in Ontario, Canada. *Globalisation, Societies and Education, 10*(2), 145-161. doi:10.1080/14767724.2012.647401

Carter, A. (2001). *The Political Theory of Global Citizenship*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Chalmers, L., Keown, P., & Kent, A. (2002). Exploring different 'perspectives' in secondary geography: Professional development options. *International Research in Geographical & Environmental Education, 11*(4), 313-324. doi:10.1080/10382040208667499

Charmaz, K. (2002). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research: Context & Method* (pp. 675-694). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cheung, C. J. (2010). *The implementation of global citizenship education at junior secondary sector in Hong Kong secondary schools – The teachers' perceptions*. Doctoral thesis, University of Leicester, Leicester, UK. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/2381/8971

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five designs*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Davies, L. (2006). Global citizenship: Abstraction or framework for action? *Educational Review, 58*(1), 5-25. doi: 10.1080/00131910500352523

Deardorff. (2009). Understanding the challenges of assessing global citizenship. In R. Lewin (Ed.), *The handbook of practice and research in study abroad: Higher education and the quest for global citizenship* (pp. 346-364). London, UK: Taylor & Francis.

Dower, N., & Williams, J. (2002). *Global citizenship: A critical introduction*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Ellis, B., & Birch, J. (2006). Revisiting the role of values and attitudes in geographic education: The use of ethnographic methodology and materials. *Geography, 91*(3), 262-271. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org

Evans, M. (2006). Educating for citizenship: What teachers say and what teachers do. *Canadian Journal of Education, 29*(2), 410-435. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/

Evans, M., & Reynolds, C. (2004). *Introduction: Educating for global citizenship in a changing world*. Retrieved from http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/cidec/UserFiles/File/Research /Global_Citizenship_Education/intro.pdf

Evans, M. (2008). Citizenship education, pedagogy, and school contexts. In J. Arthur, I. Davies & C. Hahn (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of education for citizenship and democracy* (pp. 519-532). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Evans, M., Ingram, L. A., MacDonald, A., & Weber, N. (2009). Mapping the "global dimension" of citizenship education in Canada: The complex interplay of theory, practice and context. *Citizenship Teaching and Learning, 5*(2), 16-34. Retrieved from http://www.citized.info/pdf/ejournal/vol_3_no_1.pdf

Fizzel, K. (2012). *From the teacher's perspective: The complex nature of facilitating volunteer abroad programs in Ontario secondary schools*. Master's thesis, Queen's University, Kingston, Canada. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/1974/6979

Griffith, R. (1998). *Educational citizenship and independent learning*. London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Heron, B. (2007). *Desire for development: Whiteness, gender, and the helping imperative*. Waterloo, Canada: Wilfred Laurier University Press.

Holmes, H., & O'Dwyer, G. (2010). *Stand up, speak up! CSPE for junior certificate*. Dublin, Ireland: Mentor.

Hovland, K. (2009). Global learning: What is it? Who is responsible for it. *Peer Review, 11*(4), 4-7.

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lambert, D., & Balderstone, D. (2000). *Learning to teach geography in the secondary school: A companion to school experience*. London, UK: Routledge.

McIntosh, P. (2005). Gender perspectives on educating for global citizenship. In N. Noddings (Ed.), *Educating citizens for global awareness* (pp. 22-39). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

McMurtry, J. (2002). The iconoclast: Twelve questions about globalization. *Canadian Social Studies, 37*(1). Retrieved from http://www2.education.ualberta.ca/css/Css_37_1 /CLiconclast_john_mcmurtry.htm

Merryfield, M. M. (2000). Why aren't teachers being prepared to teach for diversity, equity, and global interconnectedness? A study of lived experiences in the making of multicultural and global educators. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 16*(4), 429-443. doi: 10.1016/s0742-051x(00)00004-4

Monard-Weissman, K. (2003). Fostering a sense of social justice through international service-learning. *Academic Exchange Quarterly, 7*(2), 164-169.

Noddings, N. (2002). *Starting at home: Caring and social policy*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Noddings, N. (2005). *Educating citizens for global awareness*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Nussbaum, M. (1997). *Cultivating humanity: A classical defense of reform in liberal education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Nussbaum, M. (2002). Education for citizenship in an era of global connection. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 21*(4-5), 289-303. doi:10.1023/A:1019837105053

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2000). *The Ontario curriculum grades 9 to 12: Program planning and assessment*. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum /secondary/progplan912curr.pdf

Oxfam. (2006). *Education for global citizenship: A guide for schools*. Retrieved from http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/gc/files/education_for_global_citizenship_a_guide _for_schools.pdf

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Pike, G. (2008). Citizenship education in global context. *Brock Education Journal, 17*(1), 38-49. Retrieved from http://brock.scholarsportal.info/journals/brocked/home/

Reimer, K. (2009). Conceptual clarity and connections: Global education and teacher candidates. *Canadian Journal of Education, 32*(4), 903-926. Retrieved from http://www.csse-scee.ca /CJE/

Richardson, G. H. (2002). *The death of the good Canadian: Teachers, national identities, and the social studies curriculum*. New York, NY: P. Lang.

Richardson, G. H. (2004). Global education and the challenge of globalization. In A. Sears & I. Wright (Eds.), *Challenges and prospects for Canadian social studies* (pp. 138-149). Vancouver, Canada: Pacific Educational Press.

Schattle, H. (2009). Global citizenship in theory and practice. In R. Lewin (Ed.), *The handbook of practice and research in study abroad: higher education and the quest for global citizenship* (pp. 5-20). New York, NY: Routledge.

Schuetze, H. G., Kuehn, L., Davidson-Harden, A., Schugurensky, D., & Weber, N. (2011). Globalization, neoliberalism and schools: The Canadian story. In L. Olmos, C. A. Torres & R. Van Heertum (Eds.), *In the shadow of neoliberalism: Thirty years of educational reform in North America* (pp. 62-84). doi:10.2174/97816080526841110101

Schweisfurth, M. (2006). Education for global citizenship: teacher agency and curricular structure in Ontario schools. *Educational Review, 58*(1), 41-50.

Sears, A. (1996). Something different to everyone: Conceptions of citizenship and citizenship education. *Canadian and International Education, 25*(2), 1-15.

Sears, A., Clarke, G., & Hughes, A. (1999). Canadian citizenship education: The pluralist ideal and citizenship education for a post-modern state. In J. Torney-Purta, J. Schwille & J.-A. Amadeo (Eds.), *Civic education across countries: Twenty-four national case studies from the IEA civic education project*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: IEA Secretariat. Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED431705).

Shultz, L. (2007). Educating for global citizenship: Conflicting agendas and understandings. The Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 53(3), 248-258.

Simpson, K. (2005). Dropping out or signing up? The professionalization of youth travel. *Antipode, 37*(3), 447-469. doi:10.1111/j.0066-4812.2005.00506.x

Smith, D. G. (1999). Globalization and education: Prospects for postcolonial pedagogy in a hermeneutic mode. *Interchange, 30*, 1-10. doi:10.1023/A:1007514907813

Williams, J. (2002). The idea of global citizenship. In N. Dower & J. Williams (Eds.), *Global citizenship: A critical introduction* (pp. 11-14). New York, NY: Routledge.

Williams, M. (1999). Research in geographical education. *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education, 8*(3), 301-304.

Wright, D. (1992). Perceptions on research imperatives for geographical and environmental education to the year 2000. *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education, 1*(1), 57-60. doi:10.1080/10382046.1992.9964882

Biographical statements

Kyle Massey is a PhD student in the College of Education at the University of Texas at Austin in the Program for Higher Education Leadership. Kyle is also the Coordinator of Curriculum at Texas State Technical College (TSTC). He is a former high school geography teacher, and continues to teach geography part-time as adjunct faculty at TSTC and McLennan Community College in Waco, Texas.