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## **Global Citizenship Education Starts With Curricular Reform and Active Student Learning**

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**ABSTRACT:** In this new age of globalization, the concept of global citizenship has taken root and become the subject of increasing scholarly attention and analysis. While the study of global citizenship has become part of high school curricula in several countries around the globe, it has not become so to the same degree in the United States (U.S.). To expand upon the existing literature and advance the study of global citizenship in the U.S., this qualitative, interpretivist case study evaluates the perceptions and experiences of an administrator, two teachers, and six students of a global studies course at an urban high school in New Jersey.

This study advances three primary findings: first, the need for continued curriculum development and design of global-studies-related courses and content in U.S. high schools; second, the importance of experiential learning in furthering the goals of global citizenship education; and third, the need for class projects, international education programs, and other experiential learning opportunities (such as fieldwork, service-learning, or community programs) to cultivate student interest in global citizenship.

### **Introduction**

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With the continued growth of the internet and the advent of a new digital age, the dissemination of information is accelerating at an unprecedented rate (Gentz & Kramer, 2006). Through the rapid flow of capital, goods, and services, the world has become an increasingly interconnected global system (Centeno, Nag, Patterson, Shaver, & Windawi, 2015). The divides that once kept peoples and countries apart—be they cultural, economic, geographic, historical, or linguistic—are smaller and less recognizable than before (Friedman, 2000; Maguth, 2012; Oblinger, 2001).

People (particularly of younger generations) are not as tethered to their national or ethnic identities, and the concept of citizenship has expanded to include global belonging

(Bagnall, 2015; Vallory, 2012). While the idea of global citizenship has roots extending as far back as ancient Greece and Rome (Dower, 2000; Schattle, 2009), trends of the last few decades toward globalization have continued to redefine notions of global community and connection (Gamble, 2010). Terms like “globalization” and “global citizenship” have become increasingly common vernacular (Rapoport, 2013; Tully, 2014) and “represent concepts that are connected intricately and complexly” (Langran, 2016, p. 1).

In this new age of globalization, global citizenship education has become part of high school curricula in several countries around the globe, including Japan, China, the United Kingdom, and Canada (Bickmore, 2014; Brown, Morgan, & McGrath, 2009; Chong, 2015; Davies, Evans, & Reid, 2005; Evans, Ingram, MacDonald, & Weber, 2009; Motani, 2007). Global citizenship education has not become part of high school curricula in the U.S. in the same way that it has in other countries (Burnside & Mackesy, 2015; DiCicco, 2016; Rapoport, 2010; Reimers et al., 2016), despite becoming the subject of increasing scholarly attention.

This study evaluates the perceptions and experiences of an administrator, two teachers, and six students of a global studies course at an urban high school in New Jersey. The findings from this study affirm the need for continued curriculum development and design of global-studies-related courses and content in the U.S. Experiential learning, in particular, serves to further the goals of global citizenship education by helping to engage student interest through class projects, international education programs, and other experiential learning opportunities (e.g., fieldwork, service-learning, or community programs).

Based on the findings of this study and reviewed literature, the author proposes that an elective course on global citizenship should become a part of high school curricula across the U.S. As further detailed below, this course should include the following 10 units: 1) Introduction to Global Citizenship; 2) Sustainable Development; 3) Poverty and World Hunger; 4) Global Health Issues; 5) Child Mortality; 6) Peace and Conflict; 7) Human Rights and Gender Equality; 8) Universal Education; 9) Liberal Democratic Governance and Rights; and 10) Global Citizenship Action Plan.

## **Background**

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### *Modern Globalization and the Concept of Global Citizenship*

The modern global system emerged from the destruction of World War II (Close & Ohki-Close, 1999). At the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, 730 delegates from 44 countries agreed to foster cooperation through free trade and open markets, leading to the creation of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and other trade organizations (Ahn, 2016; Rodrik, 2011). Shortly thereafter, the founding of the United Nations (UN) at the San Francisco Conference in 1945, along with the development of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and European Economic Community (EEC)

during the 1950s (precursors to the European Union (EU)), marked a new commitment to global peace and security (Gilbert, 2012; Meisler, 2011). As the Cold War between American democracy and Soviet communism took root in the mid-to-late 1940s, these nascent multilateral institutions would align around American leadership for decades to come (Hook, 2005; Saperstein, 2008). As Zakaria (2011) points out, “For most of the last century, the United States has dominated global economics, politics, science, and culture” (p. 2).

At the same time (and particularly since the start of the 21st century), the combined forces of nationalism, populism, and protectionism put strains on the post-World War II international system (Quirk, 2008). The strain was particularly evident in the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008 and, more recently, with the United Kingdom’s vote to leave the EU (‘Brexit’) and the election of a U.S. president who made “America First” a central tenet of his campaign (Pettifor, 2017; Trump, 2017; Wolf, 2017). Theresa May, the British Prime Minister who led the UK’s initial Brexit efforts, averred in October 2016: “If you believe you’re a citizen of the world, you’re a citizen of nowhere” (May, 2016). Then President-elect Donald Trump echoed similar sentiments in December 2016, declaring: “There is no global anthem. No global currency. No certificate of global citizenship” (Trump, 2016).

President Trump has repeatedly reiterated this mantra, including at his inauguration and before the UN. Indeed, during his inaugural address, he declared: “From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land. From this moment on, it’s going to be America First. Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs, will be made to benefit American workers and American families” (Trump, 2017). He continued: “We will seek friendship and goodwill with the nations of the world—but we do so with the understanding that it is the right of all nations to put their own interests first” (Trump, 2017). These statements stand in contrast to the long-held conception of America as a “city upon a hill” that sets an example as a beacon of democracy for the rest of the world to emulate (McDougall, 1997; Saperstein, 2010).

Despite recent events and trends, proponents of globalization still look to the U.S and other leading powers of the international community to confront the most pressing political and economic challenges facing the world today (Cohen & Gabel, 2017). Multilateral institutions like the UN have recently taken steps to address these growing challenges. On September 25, 2015, the UN General Assembly (2015) adopted a resolution for “transforming our world” (p. 1), known as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The resolution set forth a to-do-list of 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) to achieve greater social, economic, environmental, and institutional development around the globe.

The SDGs encompass: no poverty; zero hunger; good health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation, and infrastructure; reduced inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; climate

action; life below water; life on land; peace, justice, and strong institutions; and partnerships (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). To meet these challenges, the UN General Assembly (2015) resolution calls for a “spirit of global solidarity” (p. 10); a spirit in which “children and young women and men are critical agents of change and will find in the new Goals a platform to channel their infinite capacities for activism into the creation of a better world” (p. 12). American leadership will be required to realize these goals.

### *Global Citizenship Education*

As the world becomes more interdependent, scholars and practitioners in the U.S. have increasingly recognized the imperative for an interdisciplinary K-12 program that explores a range of pressing issues related to global citizenship from the environment to education, security, and human rights (Huitt, 2013, Reimers et al., 2016). The U.S. federal government, state and local entities, and the private sector have made recent efforts to refocus high school curricula. For instance, the U.S. Department of Education (2012) designed a 2012–2016 strategy to help produce a more globally competent citizenry. The 2012-2016 strategy recognized that, “[i]n today’s globalized world, an effective domestic education agenda must address global needs and trends,” (United States Department of Education, 2012, p. 2) and that “[s]tudents will need to have the substantive knowledge and understanding to address issues, phenomena and catastrophes that cut across borders, like the spread of disease, climate change, natural disasters, and financial crises” (United States Department of Education, 2012, p. 2). Objectives of the strategy include: 1) increasing global competencies of students; 2) applying lessons from high-performing countries; 3) promoting American interests in high-priority countries through “active education diplomacy”; and 4) continuing to focus on improving international activities (United States Department of Education, 2012).

At the state level, for example, the North Carolina State Board of Education (2013) and Kentucky Department of Education (2014) have also drafted policy proposals aimed to improve global competency. In North Carolina, the State Board of Education’s (2013) Task Force on Global Education stated their commitment to achieve five goals: 1) providing support to prospective and current teachers; 2) emphasizing foreign language instruction; 3) designing new school models through partnerships with non-governmental and other organizations; 4) expanding networking opportunities; and 5) developing strategic international relationships. Similarly, a position statement issued by the Kentucky Department of Education (2013) emphasized that global competence is necessary to prepare students for the 21st century.

Teachers, administrators, and other school district employees have also sought to work with their local representatives with regards to global competencies. Indeed, certain schools, such as Avenues: The World School (a private school in New York City), have fostered a global learning environment (Kaplan, 2011; Reimers et al., 2016). At Avenues, the World Course seeks to teach students global citizenship education through an interdisciplinary curriculum which includes social studies, economics, and geography

(Reimers et al., 2016). Through local commitment to global issues, otherwise known as “glocalization” or “global localization” (Benyon & Dunkerley, 2000; Vallory, 2012), students can learn to “think globally and act locally” (Sparapani & McClain, 2016, p. 111).

As for the private sector, certain companies have developed a global citizenship strategy to respond to the challenges of living and working in a more interconnected world. Notably, Hewlett Packard (HP) (2011) created a Global Citizenship Council to “promote and advance global citizenship through integrated risk and opportunity assessment, governance, and policy oversight” (p. 11). PepsiCo (2014) has supported organizational policy initiatives (e.g., global citizenship initiatives) to improve food security and reduce poverty and hunger worldwide by partnering with high schools and youth programs across the U.S. As Dill (2013) points out, HP and other corporations “share a conviction that the educational system in the U.S. is terribly inadequate and not up to speed with the twenty-first-century world” (p. 56). By engaging with policymakers, including regional or national governments and regulators, the private sector can help to further the goals of a more sustainable global economy and environment.

There is yet an ongoing educational challenge to bridge local, national, and global issues facing the U.S. (Hilburn & Maguth, 2015; Myers, 2006; Rapoport, 2010). If public and private sector institutions do not take more action in the near future, the U.S. may become less relevant on the world stage and American students will not obtain the education and skills necessary to work at certain international or multinational companies (Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006; O’Hanlon, 2017). Global citizenship education can help the next generation of American leaders address climate change, poverty, world hunger, global health issues, child mortality, and many other challenges (Reimers et al., 2016; United Nations General Assembly, 2015). As Zakaria (2011) puts it, however, “Generations from now, when historians write about these times, they might note that, in the early decades of the twenty-first century, the United States succeeded in its great and historic mission—it globalized the world. But along the way, they might write, it forgot to globalize itself” (p. 61).

## Literature Review

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### *Curricular Reform*

A little more than a decade ago, only 15 U.S. states used the term “globalization” and only Maryland and Mississippi incorporated the term “global citizen” in their social studies standards (Rapoport, 2009). Terms like “globalization” and “global citizenship” are too often missing from U.S. content standards (Rapoport, 2009). Global citizenship education has not become a standard staple of high school curricula in the U.S. (Reimers et al., 2016), and there have been too few examples of curriculum development.

Teachers in the U.S. have not been granted enough discretion to tailor curricula or initiate discussions on global issues (Rapoport, 2013). To promote the study of global

issues in the U.S, DiCicco (2016) concludes that “curriculum frameworks like the Common Core need to be expanded to make room for robust global citizenship education” (p. 18). Myers (2006) analyzes two American high school programs that “teach about the world” and, based on his study, concludes that “social studies curriculum makers should consider the ways that curriculum topics can address the local-global relationship as well as integrate current scholarship on globalization” (pp. 389-390).

Curricula in other countries have, however, placed greater emphasis on global citizenship education (Bickmore, 2014; Brown, Morgan, & McGrath, 2009; Chong, 2015; Evans, Ingram, MacDonald, & Weber, 2009; Guo, 2014; Lee & Leung, 2006; Motani, 2007; Xing, 2015). Lessons and studies from other countries can serve as examples for the U.S. on how to connect local, national, and global issues through curricula. Japan, China, the United Kingdom, and Canada can each serve as examples.

During the mid-1990s, Japan incorporated global citizenship education into its curricula as part of a larger progressive educational movement (Motani, 2007). Specifically, the Ministry of Education in Japan created a new discipline entitled “integrated studies” to teach global citizenship education (Motani, 2007). Fields related to global citizenship education (including development, guidance, environmental, human rights, and global education) have gained traction in Japan (Motani, 2007). Moreover, the National Curriculum of 2002 developed specific student-centered standards intended to groom global citizens across Japan (Motani, 2007).

In Hong Kong and Shanghai, teachers have focused on integrating global citizenship education into secondary schools (Lee & Leung, 2006). In Hong Kong, the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) aim “to cultivate students’ sensitivity about diversity, and bring to light their interests and concerns for local, national and global issues” (Chong, 2015, p. 234).

In the United Kingdom, schools and organizations (e.g., Council for Education in World Citizenship, One World Trust) have a history of promoting global citizenship education within the National Curriculum (Brown, Morgan, & McGrath, 2009; Gough, 2013; Pike, 2008). In Northern Ireland’s Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA), for instance, 15- and 16-year old students are expected to “identify and exercise their rights and social responsibilities in relation to local, national and global issues” (Gallagher & Duffy, 2016, p. 532).

Within the past decade, global citizenship education has received increasing curricular attention in Canada from ministries of education, schools, non-governmental organizations, and governmental agencies (MacDonald-Vemic, Evans, Ingram, & Weber, 2015; Pike, 2008). Studying the curricula of some schools in Canada (and Brazil), Myers (2007) concludes that teachers had the necessary freedom to modify instructional practices and curricular standards when teaching citizenship education. In another study, Schweisfurth (2006) examines the civics curriculum in Ontario, Canada, which, like the U.S., can be

restrictive. Nevertheless, the more motivated teachers found creative ways to instruct students in global citizenship education (Schweisfurth, 2006).

### *Active Student Learning*

The literature also shows that students can actively learn to explore diverse cultural viewpoints and become global citizens of the 21st century through global citizenship education. Some studies have shown that a more inclusive global curriculum helps students better understand other countries and cultures along with their place in the world (Johnson, Boyer, & Brown, 2011; Myers, 2010), including as “an active global citizen and worker capable of taking on a new global identity and responsibility” (Vásquez, 2006, p. 48). As students engage in “active learning” and consider “diverse perspectives,” they can become more globally aware citizens (Johnson, Boyer, & Brown, 2011, p. 513).

According to Oxfam (2006), global citizens of all ages should actively engage in and learn about issues with varying and sometimes contentious viewpoints. Niens and Reilly (2012) agree that students should study controversial issues, particularly with regard to their country’s history. For instance, in their study of students from nine schools across Northern Ireland, Niens and Reilly (2012) demonstrated that global citizenship education may help students begin to repair fractured local identities. In some cases, however, teachers have shown reluctance to address such complex contemporary issues as war and conflict (Yamashita, 2006).

Johnson, Boyer and Brown (2011), Lim (2008) and Maguth (2012) examined the role of technology in preparing students for global challenges. In many classrooms today, students do not use technology enough to address global issues (Maguth, 2012) but, as more schools embrace technology, students are slowly gaining more exposure (Cennamo, Ross, & Ertmer, 2010; Wiley, 2014). Through student interviews, online discussions, and document analysis, Maguth (2012) correlates the use of technology with teaching global citizenship to students. Pre- and post-test scores on the technology-driven GlobalEd Project demonstrate increased student knowledge, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities related to global issues (Johnson, Boyer, & Brown, 2011).

Moreover, Lim (2008) explains how students can take on active roles as global citizens through the use of technology. Using a classroom computer game, students in two classes from Singapore explored diverse concepts related to English, mathematics, and science (Lim, 2008). The educational multiuser virtual environment (MUVE) helps keep students engaged through the learning process and conduct their own research on global and local issues (Lim, 2008). Yet, technology may not be enough. Rye (2013) examined the limitations of technology and the internet in developing global citizens among students and concluded that, despite providing useful information, the internet may not help them develop a strong connection to another area of the world.

To cultivate engaged, active learners in the study of global citizenship education, it can be helpful to create a student-centered learning environment both inside and outside the classroom (Reimers et al., 2016). Teachers, for instance, can integrate more field experiences (e.g., service-learning, community initiatives, and special out-of-school projects) and travel outside the community to another state or country (Gallavan, 2008). Classroom instruction, along with field experiences, service-learning, cultural activities, and study abroad programs, also help foster global values and attitudes (Gallavan, 2008; Wynveen, Kyle, & Tarrant, 2012).

According to Miller, Hahs-Vaughn, and Zygouris-Coe (2014), however, the majority of educators still prefer “teacher-centered over student-centered learning environments” (p. 74). Teachers may try to strike a balance between student- and teacher-centered instruction (Maloy & Laroche, 2010), but educators may need to move toward active student-centered participation on global issues to build an engaged student population of global scholars. The Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education examined the results of student-centered learning, concluding that it is “more likely to develop students who have transferrable academic skills, feel a sense of purpose and connection to school, graduate, and go on to college at higher rates” (Friedlaender et al., 2014, p. 3). Student-centered learning can help empower students to find practical solutions to real-world problems (Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010). As students become more independent and pro-active, they should be better prepared for the future (Crumly, Dietz, & D’Angelo, 2014; Daggett, 2010; Hodges, 2015), and better prepared to become lifelong learners inside and outside the classroom (Jenkins, Williams, Moyer, George, & Foster, 2016; United States Department of Education, 2016).

## **Methodology**

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This qualitative, single instrumental case study was conducted at a New Jersey urban public high school near New York City. Enrolled students must complete a curriculum of 125 academic credits and pass a proficiency examination to graduate. Required coursework includes: English/language arts (20 credits), mathematics (15 credits), health and physical education (20 credits), science (15 credits), social studies (15 credits), world languages (10 credits), 21st century life and careers (5 credits), financial, economics, and entrepreneurial literacy (2.5 credits), visual and performing arts (5 credits), and programs within the electives (17.5 credits). The research site also offers a number of extracurricular activities (e.g., music, dance, theatre, visual arts, media arts) and sports to supplement the educational experience of students outside the classroom.

To satisfy the curricular requirements, students may complete courses on the water management crisis, genetically engineered foods, free trade and globalization, or human rights offered as part of an “international seminar series.” Students who meet defined eligibility requirements may take these courses as part of an Accelerated Cohort (Accelerated Global Studies I and II) in the 9th and 10th grades. This accelerated curriculum comprises five units, listed in Table 1.

**Table 1** Accelerated Curriculum

<b>Grade 9</b>	<b>Grade 10</b>
Unit 1 - Water for life: Water uses, human rights, and gender	Unit 1 - Poverty workbook I
Unit 2 - Water management crisis, scarcity, pollution, and population	Unit 2 - Bridges out of poverty II
Unit 3 - Genetically modified organisms: The global debate	Unit 3 - Human rights issues I
Unit 4 - Pros and cons of GMOs, food safety, and fast food nation	Unit 4 - Human rights issues II
Unit 5 - Seven steps research and project	Unit 5 - Seven steps research and project

The goal of the Accelerated Global Studies curriculum is to help students prepare for Advanced Placement (AP) courses and the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP). The IB DP is designed to prepare students for college and the workplace in the 21st century through an international curriculum and service-learning experience (International Baccalaureate, 2012).

The Accelerated Global Studies curriculum includes topics on global studies in accordance with the following New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS) and Common Core State Standards (CCSS): civics, government, and human rights; geography, people, and the environment; economics, innovation, and technology; biogeochemical cycles; craft and structure; integration of knowledge and ideas; text types and purposes; production and distribution of writing; and research to build and present knowledge. The curriculum also provides for New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) student learning objectives, essential questions, sample activities, resources, and interdisciplinary connections.

Additionally, the Accelerated Global Studies curriculum contains differentiated instruction and enrichment strategies as well as suggested formative and summative assessments. The curriculum also includes suggested unit projects and field trip ideas. Unit projects include public awareness campaigns and digital petitions about the lack of clean water; and field trip ideas include visiting local water commissions, the United Nations, or Human Rights Watch.

This study included interviews with an administrator and former global studies teacher of the Accelerated Cohort (hereafter identified as ‘Administrator’); two current global studies teachers of the Accelerated Cohort (hereafter identified as ‘Teacher 1’ and ‘Teacher 2’, respectively) and six 10th grade students enrolled in Accelerated Global Studies II (hereafter identified as ‘Student 1’, ‘Student 2’, ‘Student 3’, ‘Student 4’, ‘Student 5’, and ‘Student 6’, respectively).

This study used three data sources: observations, interviews (one-on-one interviews and a focus group), and documents. Part of the pre-interview data collection process included observations of student interactions with their peers and the teacher. The second phase included interviewing the administrator, teachers, and student participants. The interviews included open-ended questions designed to elicit wide-ranging, personal responses (as per Creswell, 2012; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009) about global citizenship. The final sources of information were curriculum- and course-related documents provided by the teachers or the school administration. Data analysis included the sequential steps of: transcribing interviews and analyzing documents, categorizing data into codes, converting codes into themes, and describing the main themes and conclusions of the study.

## Findings

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### *Curricular Development*

Administrator included 12 Career Ready Practices (CRP) in the curriculum, six of which directly relate to the global studies courses: CRP 1 - act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee; CRP 2 - apply appropriate academic and technical skills; CRP 5 - consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions; CRP 7 - employ valid and reliable research strategies; CRP 8 - utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them; and CRP 12 - work productively in teams while using cultural global competence. During her interview, Administrator highlighted the interdisciplinary nature of the global studies curriculum.

When writing the curriculum, Administrator incorporated assignments and activities from other fields, such as: English/language arts, art, science (e.g., chemistry, geology, climatology), mathematics, technology, digital arts, world languages, music, personal finance, economics, and geography. Administrator stressed the time and energy it takes to teach an interdisciplinary global studies course, noting: “[A]n interdisciplinary approach requires a teacher to be really prepared and very creative. You cannot wing it when teaching a global studies class and you cannot wing it when using an interdisciplinary approach.” As Administrator noted, “if you are going to do a literature circle, you have to prepare for it.”

For instance, in the fourth unit of Accelerated Global Studies I, Administrator assigned excerpts from Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* and Eric Schlosser’s *Fast Food Nation* and designed interdisciplinary activities and assignments regarding genetically modified organisms and food safety issues. As part of the assignment, students could make posters, submit an essay, create a commercial or short film, or conduct an interview and write an article for the school newspaper. Each of these assignments allowed the students to compare and contrast food safety issues from the 20th and 21st centuries and to examine the impact of these two works on American consumers.

Although Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 were not involved in writing the curriculum, they both discussed their views about the curriculum serving as a model for other schools across the country. Teacher 1 explained his thought process:

If we are going to have compulsory education and particular hoops kids got to jump through to graduate, I think these types of courses definitely have to be part of the discussion. It is one thing to learn the facts and figures but how things actually apply to the human condition has got to be part of it as well. So whatever mechanism that ends up being I think courses are an answer to definitely do it. And I think kids seeing it as a required course will communicate that to them that this really is important stuff that has to be dealt with today and not tomorrow.

Teacher 2 echoed: “I hope that the curriculum is around for a long time . . . and I hope more schools . . . will be encouraged to start an elective like ours and adopt some of the curriculum or create their own.”

Teacher 2 also commented on the interdependent nature of the curriculum (with each unit building upon each other). For instance, regarding Accelerated Global Studies II, Teacher 2 noted that poverty was a consistent theme throughout the course, even though it had been the main focus of the first unit. Another recurring topic in this course was ‘human rights’ (even though it received more attention during the second half of the year). Teacher 2 concluded:

So it is a very diverse curriculum . . . There is something in this curriculum for everybody . . . There is always a new and interesting type of unit that is just on the horizon . . . The way the curriculum is designed and paced is very important because literally each unit builds on each other. And at the end you have . . . this really nice full picture of what is going on.

Administrator, Teacher 1, and Teacher 2 stressed how this curriculum incorporates various global issues in the four main areas of study.

### *Content and Pedagogy*

Consistent with the structure of the curriculum, teachers have the flexibility and discretion to emphasize certain content and pedagogical techniques. Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Administrator have developed their own teaching philosophies on how best to convey the course material. In designing the curriculum, Administrator chose to focus on what she considered to be the most germane global issues. On the other hand, Teacher 2 chose to teach more topics with less detail. Teacher 1 fell somewhere in the middle, favoring teaching more topics, but at the same time trying to concentrate on specific areas that appeal to his students.

Administrator noted that she prefers “doing an in-depth analysis . . . on not necessarily fewer topics but the most relevant topics . . . It is important to go very in-depth but . . . make sure that you give students enough of a variety of topics so that they see the global perspective.” Teacher 2 has consistently stated that he likes “to have more topics and keep it at a shorter length . . . because it gives you a lot of freedom . . . You can . . . choose what you want to talk about based on what is relevant in current events or even student interest.” Teacher 1 has advocated presenting students “with lots of different issues . . . to . . . give them a broad understanding on the range of issues . . . being debated currently in the field. But then you . . . keep your eye out for the one or two that resonate . . . most and . . . those are the ones you dive into.”

When asked which of the 17 UN SDGs they would include in a year-long course, Administrator, Teacher 1, and Teacher 2 responded as follows:

- Administrator: no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, climate action, and peace, justice, and strong institutions;
- Teacher 1: no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, industry, innovation, and infrastructure, reduced inequality, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, and life on land;
- Teacher 2: zero hunger, quality education, clean water and sanitation, and climate action.

Of note, Administrator, Teacher 1, and Teacher 2 all chose to include zero hunger, quality education, clean water and sanitation, and climate action.

### *Fostering Global Citizenship Traits*

Global citizen character traits identified in the literature include global awareness, caring, cultural diversity, social justice, sustainability, and the responsibility to act (Oxfam, 2006; Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013; UNICEF, 2013). The study participants addressed these traits in the course of their interviews.

#### *Global Awareness*

Global awareness was a recurring theme throughout the interviews. Administrator highlighted: “If you are truly a global citizen, you are constantly keeping up with what is going on in the world.” Teacher 2 added that a global citizen needs “to be aware of what is going on. Because if you are not aware, then you are . . . on that same plateau that you were. You are not increasing your self-knowledge. You are not adding any worth.”

Administrator noted that awareness requires ongoing exposure and, therefore, she would prefer that students take four years of global studies courses. Nevertheless, for those students who take two years of courses through Accelerated Global Studies I and II, Administrator still found that such students can achieve the desired outcomes. Administrator encouraged every student at the high school complete at least one year of global studies and explained her reasoning for designing these courses:

I was adamant that the kids were not going to miss out on these topics . . . Now in a perfect world, I think it is important to have all four. But in the interest of making sure that all the IB [International Baccalaureate] students were able to take it, I thought it was important to do . . . I made it a requirement of the IB program that they get these global studies topics because I think it is super important.

The majority of students who participated in the focus group interview affirmed that they have become more globally aware citizens as a result of these courses. Student 1 explained that with global awareness “you are capable of making changes on not only a local scale, but also . . . to impact the world . . . by spreading knowledge.” Student 3 added that the global studies courses fostered global awareness and helped her understand the roles and responsibilities she has in the community and beyond as a global citizen.

### *Caring*

Another theme is the importance of caring for others around the world. Both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 have found it more challenging to motivate students to care about global issues that do not affect them directly. Teacher 1 explained this predicament:

It is a little tricky to get the caring . . . But at the same time, I find if you show an image of kids in a dusty desert somewhere having a walk two hours each direction to a muddy hole in the desert, then it kind of brings it home . . . It is kind of a mixed bag.

Teacher 2 disclosed that the course made many of his students a little more empathetic and sympathetic, while acknowledging, in Teacher 2’s words, that some felt “it does not affect me, so I can keep my head down and keep moving on.”

To illustrate the importance of caring, Teacher 2 provided a historical reference to the Holocaust. Citing a poem by a Protestant pastor, Martin Niemöller (1946), Teacher 2 explained that the Nazis first came for the socialists and that this pastor did not speak out since he was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists and he did not speak out since he was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews and he did not speak out since he was not Jewish. Then they came for him and there was nobody left to speak out on his behalf. Teacher 2 added that, “If no one is empathetic or sympathetic and gets that ball rolling and no one is willing to take that risk or no one is willing to say something,

to what extent are we going to effect meaningful change?” He concluded that “those are the biggest challenges. Getting people to realize that this is you . . . We are definitely globally connected.”

In addition, Teacher 1 discussed the reasons his students should care about global challenges. Teacher 1 tried to make the point that students can relate to the issues someone is facing in sub-Saharan Africa, Australia, or China by posing the following question: “Why should I care any less about the pain of someone on the polar opposite of the planet versus somebody down the street?” Student 2 noted that “a global citizen is someone who considers every human on Earth when making a decision . . . They are very selfless and . . . all they want is for the right thing to be done.” Student 4 added that “a global citizen cares about helping others and the environment.” As a consequence, Teacher 2 believed that completing a degree in one of the social sciences is helpful “because you are dealing with humans and human beings and empathy or sympathy where you are trying to walk a while in other people’s shoes.”

### *Cultural Diversity*

As the high school embraces an IB curriculum, the administration and faculty have discussed ways to become more culturally responsive to their student population. Within the IB program, there are standard level and higher level students (International Baccalaureate, 2012). In addition to fulfilling the requirements of the standard level, higher level students must exhibit critical thinking skills and be able to synthesize difficult concepts while fostering intercultural understanding and international-mindedness (International Baccalaureate, 2016).

Consistent with these objectives, when Administrator selected higher level extension topics and case studies, some of the areas included Asia, Oceania, and the Americas. Administrator stated that the school would focus on the Middle East and Africa since their “students are not getting a serious dose of world history that focuses on the places that they are from.” Administrator added that their goal is to “make the program as inclusive as possible. We have ELL [English-language learners] students as well. We . . . take pride in the diversity within the program because . . . it is better for all students.”

Some students also commented on the importance of cultural diversity to being a global citizen. Certain students mentioned that learning about different cultures helped them confront challenges and become more interested in global issues. Upon learning about different cultural affairs, Student 3 explained how she has become more passionate about helping improve other societies. Student 4 and Student 6 also discussed their plans to assist other cultures around the world by volunteering in the community.

## *Social Justice*

In order to groom justice-oriented citizens seeking to effect systemic change, Administrator stressed that students should study human rights and learn about different case studies related to genocide. In Accelerated Global Studies I and II, the student participants were exposed to issues of equity, justice, and ethics. To teach social justice, Administrator mentioned “it is just about being ethical. Understanding that ethics is a part of everything . . . It is about looking at the ethics and respecting that people have different views, different beliefs, and different perspectives.” Emphasizing Administrator’s point, Teacher 2 has asked students to write an essay that defines the characteristics of an ethical individual.

Both Administrator and Teacher 2 cited examples related to social justice and ethics. Administrator raised the following issue:

Because when you talk about water privatization and what is going on with Coca-Cola around the world where they are privatizing water rights and the governments are selling off water rights to Coca-Cola, students have to evaluate if that is ethical. Is it ethical that we are getting Coca-Cola in the bottle and there are people in small villages in Bolivia who do not have clean water and they are 25 feet from a Coca-Cola factory?

Teacher 2 also brought up an important point with which social justice activists struggle:

Unfortunately, child labor is used heavily in the cobalt industry . . . You could be mining that cobalt and some other kid in another country is going to have it in his computer and think nothing of it. And that kid might launch this great charity that is going to end up helping kids in Africa or in developing countries. But . . . he is still using a product . . . that was created by a child . . . The kids definitely struggle with a lot of the ethical questions.

According to study participants, these topics and class discussions can serve to inspire future social activists and justice-oriented citizens.

## *Sustainability*

Sustainability was another theme that emerged throughout the course of the study. In Accelerated Global Studies I, Teacher 1 discusses ways to meet the needs of today without impairing the needs of the future. As part of the discussion, he identifies ways to conserve water and promote sustainability. For instance, he explained to his students how many gallons of water they can save each month by turning off the faucet when they brush their teeth or by taking shorter showers.

To elaborate, Teacher 1 assigns student groups to debate sustainability and vegetarianism. In this debate, students discuss the pros and cons of vegetarianism and examine the impact of eating meat on water, land, fertilizer, fuel, and other resources from earth. Although not everyone accepted the premise that vegetarianism is better for the environment, students wrestled with these issues and considered their roles and responsibilities in promoting sustainable development. Teacher 1 emphasized:

The statistics are fairly stark as far as consuming different types of meat, vegetables, and grains . . . Eating one pound of meat consumes much more water. We get into different types of meat. Is it grass fed versus factory bought or grain fed? But all of that comes back to what impact one person can have. What I try to harp on them a lot and I use myself as an example is yeah it is one person making one choice. But people see you making that choice and then they might ask you about it or they might just model your behavior because they see you doing that.

### *Responsibility to Act*

Responsibility to act was another common theme throughout the study. When defining the qualities of a global citizen, Teacher 2 emphasized being “willing to take action and make an improvement . . . Many people are afraid to act . . . Being a little bit of a risk taker would definitely help and be a skill that a lot of these global citizens definitely need to have.” Administrator added that a global citizen “has to be an active participant in the global community.” Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Administrator each stressed the need for their students to act within the community and beyond; what Teacher 1 called thinking globally and acting locally.

Nevertheless, Administrator, Teacher 1, and Teacher 2 spoke to the challenges of getting students to take action and make a difference. Teacher 2 pointed out that his students find the global studies topics interesting and are engaged in class. However, when asked if they would be willing to address certain issues, most students showed reluctance and even noted that these issues do not personally affect them or others whom they know. Teacher 2 expounded:

You see the broken bodies on the screen and they care for an instant. But when it comes time to actually act or make a moral change, they find it very difficult to really want to have that change. That is the most challenging thing I think I found so far.

Nonetheless, Student 4 and Student 6 stated their commitment to act and make a difference in the world as a result of the global studies courses. According to Student 4, global citizens work “towards giving back to the global community. They look beyond their surroundings and are driven by wanting to make a change in the world. They realize that they have a part to play in the grand scheme of things.” Although Student 5 questioned her

role in making change and solving global problems at the age of 15, she acknowledged that “to be a global citizen, a person must be active . . . whether it be through spreading awareness or participating in fundraisers . . . A global citizen must . . . make the right decisions to benefit the world rather than just one person.” Student 5 stated her willingness to spread the word about certain global injustices and to speak out against the exploitation of children and workers.

In Accelerated Global Studies II, students also grappled with the issue of fair trade versus free trade. One example included free trade banana companies such as Chiquita or Del Monte being accused of unethical labor practices, exploiting child laborers, and using pesticides that impair the health of workers. Nevertheless, most students told Teacher 2 they were still likely to buy Chiquita bananas.

## Discussion

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### *Curriculum and Course Design*

Given that few high schools across the U.S have incorporated current global-studies-related courses or content into their curricula, there is little literature on the subject (let alone on the topic of global citizenship education). As such, there was not much scholarship against which to compare the curriculum and course design of global studies at the research site. As Myers (2016) points out, the scholarship is insufficient in this area, and methodologies of this limited scholarship have otherwise varied depending on context and country (Alviar-Martin & Baidon, 2016; DiCicco, 2016; Tichnor-Wagner, Parkhouse, Glazier, & Cain, 2016; Wang & Hoffman, 2016).

Based, therefore, on independent observation and analysis, the author concludes that the research site did offer students a clear and defined curriculum and course structure, in line with the objectives of global citizenship education. As described above, the curriculum at the research site was both interdisciplinary and interdependent. Students could complete either two or four years of coursework on topics ranging from the water management crisis to genetically engineered foods, free trade and globalization, and human rights.

In the absence of literature on the topic, the research site can serve as an example for other high schools in the U.S., as the administrator and teachers expressly noted in their interviews. Some other schools currently offer courses like World Studies and Contemporary Global Issues or an AP seminar addressing global issues, among others (Myers, 2016). However, notwithstanding Avenues in New York City and some others like it, most U.S. high schools have not sufficiently infused their curricula with current global-studies-related content or global citizenship education (Reimers et al., 2016).

The way that the research site structured the global studies course differed in certain respects from the models discussed in the literature, despite there being little basis for comparison. At the few schools that offer global citizenship education (or a variant thereof)

in the U.S., students tend to take a half-year or full-year course on relevant subjects. By contrast, the multi-year curriculum at the research site is more ambitious. The absence of a two-to-four-year curriculum, however, does not and should not prevent schools from at least trying to achieve the objectives of global citizenship education. As the proposed elective course (see Elective Course section) demonstrates, a half-year or full-year course can obtain desired student learning outcomes and emphasize global citizenship content knowledge and skills. Given that so few schools currently offer global studies courses in the U.S., it is more likely than not that, if a school was to offer such a course, the course would at least initially be part of a half-year or full-year sequence (and not span two to four years).

Regarding the content and structure of the curriculum at the research site, there was both agreement and varying opinions among the administrator and two teachers. There was consensus that a course on global studies should include such topics as global hunger, education, water and sanitation, and climate action. Yet, the administrator and one of the teachers also stressed that additional topics be included such as poverty, global health, and gender equality. The teachers were also of the opinion that students would benefit from making global studies more of a survey course.

Ultimately, this study has confirmed what a small, but growing, number of scholars and practitioners have already concluded: the importance of incorporating global citizenship education in K-12 curricula across the U.S. (Burnside & Mackesy, 2015; Myers, 2010, 2016; Reimers et al., 2016). Notably, the Vermont Agency of Education (2017) has made global citizenship education the centerpiece of its K-12 social studies curriculum. As a result, the areas of civics, economics, geography, world language, cultural studies, and history now all fall under the umbrella of global citizenship (Vermont Agency of Education, 2017). It is this commitment to global citizenship education that should serve as an example for other state curricula across the country, as few private and charter schools, and even fewer public schools have made global citizenship education a part of their curricula.

### *Cultivating Student and Civic Engagement*

A critical lesson from this study is the need to further cultivate student interest in global studies and citizenship. The research site has tried to accomplish this objective through the adoption of the IB DP and the international seminar series (Accelerated Global Studies I and II). For IB students at the research site and elsewhere, developing an international mindset is a precondition to furthering the objectives of global studies and citizenship (Brunold-Conesa, 2011; Culross & Tarver, 2011). That is, learning about “the cultures of different people, finding commonalities and differences and accepting difference in the world are key points for the IB in relation to becoming a global citizen” (Castro, Lundgren, & Woodin, 2015, p. 193). As Culross and Tarver (2011) explain, “students become situated culturally, geographically, historically and personally within the context of being a global citizen” (p. 233).

Despite the IB program’s advantages, some of the literature has shown that the IB program has sometimes failed to sufficiently address important political and social issues and failed to equip students with the skills needed to advocate for social justice or promote cultural awareness (Castro, Lundgren, & Woodin, 2015). Belal (2017) demonstrates that the IB DP does not groom global citizens on its own. Instead, “the diversity of the student body” (Belal, 2017, p. 30) may play a greater role in promoting international mindedness and global citizenship. In addition, Andreotti (2006) and Haywood (2015) have questioned whether the IB DP and other related curricula focus too much on Western values. As Haywood (2015) concludes, the IB, among other organizations, is “a product of Western, largely Anglophone, philosophy and practice” (p. 53).

Aside from the IB DP, there are other ways that schools can promote the objectives of global citizenship education. Certain states have provided students with the opportunity to obtain a global certificate (Singmaster, 2018). In Wisconsin, students can receive a Global Education Achievement Certificate (GEAC) by taking a world language course (four credits) and a course on global issues (four credits), writing book reflections on global content, participating in cultural events, and completing 20 hours of global service-learning (Fischer, 2013). Furthermore, in Illinois, students can earn the Illinois Global Scholar Certificate through demonstrating global competence in coursework, service-learning, collaboration and dialogue, student activities, and a capstone project on a global issue (Illinois State Board of Education, 2016).

At the local level, certain school districts also have supported global competency and citizenship programs for the student body (Singmaster, 2018). In Massachusetts, for example, various schools currently grant global certificates to their students, including Hingham High School and Needham High School (Shea, 2013; Singmaster, 2018). In addition to taking global studies courses, students may pursue study abroad or international service-learning activities (Shea, 2013; Singmaster, 2018). At Hingham High School, students may become part of the Global Citizenship Program (GCP) by participating in the GCP Club and applying for the GCP Certificate (Singmaster, 2018).

The research findings of this study regarding student interest and civic engagement align with much of the prevailing literature. As an IB World School, the research site embraces the types of curricula and experiential learning activities found in the literature which serve to further the objectives of global citizenship education. Nevertheless, as previously outlined in this paper, other approaches can effectively engage student interest in global studies and citizenship.

## **Elective Course**

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Based on study findings and literature, the author proposes that high school students in the U.S have the opportunity to take an elective course on global citizenship. This course should be, at minimum, a half-year course focused on student-centered learning which includes the following 10 units (five units per marking period):

**First Unit.** The first unit should define the meaning of “global citizenship.” Students should discuss the attributes of a global citizen and the objectives of global citizenship. As part of this exercise, students should read and analyze UN SDG #4.7.1. Students also should write an essay on what it means to be a global citizen (similar to an assignment at the research site).

**Second Unit.** The second unit should cover sustainable development (a common trait in definitions of global citizenship). Students should work in groups and examine key environmental or ecological, economic, and social issues affecting the well-being of the global community.

**Third Unit.** The third unit should explore poverty and world hunger (also common traits in definitions of global citizenship). Students should identify the underlying causes of these problems, as well as offer prescriptions (through international partnerships and agreements) to improve food security and reduce poverty and hunger worldwide. Students should conduct independent research using online resources and databases (e.g., WebQuest) and should also complete the Random Life Project (similar to an assignment at the research site).

**Fourth Unit.** Caring is a key trait in definitions of global citizenship. Therefore, the fourth unit should cover global health issues, namely epidemics, as well as examine the various types of prevention and treatment programs. Students should explore ways that the global community can confront health issues in the Global South and increase sources of funding to combat disease. Students should design an action plan to combat a health epidemic and present their findings to the class.

**Fifth Unit.** The fifth unit should examine the issue of child mortality, particularly in the Global South, to further address caring as a key component of global citizenship education. Students should consider solutions and ways that children under the age of five can have better access to health care. Students should conduct research and simulate a mass media campaign to educate their peers.

**Sixth Unit.** The sixth unit should examine issues of peace and conflict on a global scale (also common traits in definitions of global citizenship), considering theories and practices of peace-building, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation. Students should learn about the role of local, national, and global institutions in shaping peace and security worldwide through a series of role-playing scenarios and simulations.

**Seventh Unit.** The seventh unit should address “human rights” and “gender equality” (e.g., ‘Bring Back Our Girls’ campaign in Nigeria). As part of this unit, students should consider the international human rights system and the evolving definition of gender equality and related principles set forth by the United Nations Evaluation Group. Students should design a social media campaign and explore the connection between liberal democracy and human rights or gender equality.

**Eighth Unit.** The eighth unit should examine universal education (SDG #4). Students should investigate recent efforts by international groups and organizations to expand educational opportunity. Students should propose recommendations to overcome educational inequities and, as part of this pursuit, collaborate through a problem-based learning project (e.g., UN Global Education First Initiative or UN Academic Impact) on a local, national, or global initiative.

**Ninth Unit.** The ninth unit should teach students about the liberal democratic ideas expressed in both the British and U.S. Bill of Rights, among other seminal documents. Students then should create their own bill of rights for the community of global citizens, incorporating the ideas and topics discussed in previous units. Students should discuss and consider the relationship between global citizenship and liberal democratic governance and rights (e.g., freedom of the press, speech, assembly, association, or other forms of expression).

**Tenth Unit.** Students should design and implement a plan of action on a pressing global issue based on a historical or current global initiative. The final project (e.g., drafting a research paper or creating a website) should be presented to the class.

## Conclusion

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Three main conclusions derived from the qualitative data of this study: first, the need for continued curriculum development and design of global studies related courses and content in U.S. high schools; second, the importance of experiential learning, among other forms of pedagogy and instructional practices, in furthering the goals of global citizenship education; and third, the need for class projects, international education programs, and other experiential learning opportunities (such as fieldwork, service-learning, or community programs) to cultivate student interest in global citizenship. The author of this study proposes that U.S. high schools offer an elective course with 10 units: 1) Introduction to Global Citizenship; 2) Sustainable Development; 3) Poverty and World Hunger; 4) Global Health Issues; 5) Child Mortality; 6) Peace and Conflict; 7) Human Rights and Gender Equality; 8) Universal Education; 9) Liberal Democratic Governance and Rights; and 10) Global Citizenship Action Plan. Through this course, the next generation of U.S. students can begin to learn about critical issues facing the nation and the world, with the hope and expectation that they will play a part in bringing about change and solutions in the future.

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