

5-31-2012

Connecting the Disconnects: Human Rights and Global Citizenship

Giana Gleeson
Quinnipiac University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/jogc>

Recommended Citation

Gleeson, Giana (2012) "Connecting the Disconnects: Human Rights and Global Citizenship," *Undergraduate Journal of Global Citizenship*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 2 , Article 4.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/jogc/vol1/iss2/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Fairfield. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Journal of Global Citizenship by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Fairfield. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@fairfield.edu.

Historically, the idea of citizenship has been a complex facet of what it means to be a human with a status in the world. While the development of the term and of its application within societies are multifaceted, the meaning of citizenship, regardless of what that may be, is still somewhat conventionally understood across chronology and contexts. This paper does not inquire about the problematic concept of citizenship per se, but rather will explore how this term is being used today in the context of “global citizenship.” As the model of the nation-state becomes a progressively more problematic concept, globalization is taking the stage to create a new context for humanity. With this new environment, expectations, local social contracts, and individual awareness are being infused with a global regard. The idea of global citizenship is derived from this emphasis on global thought and action. As globalization continues to change the world, humans are struggling to become more conscious of their role amidst these transformations.

Making sense of global responsibilities seems to be at the forefront of the discourse on global citizenship. Whether in political arenas, classrooms, or coffee shops, the conversation of global citizenship is quickly increasing in its popularity. From college campuses to political jargon, it seems that everyone is talking about this relatively recent phenomenon. With such a strong importance placed on this term, it is necessary to provide an avenue through which this expression can be conceptualized. Several thinkers have offered definitions of global citizenship. Lori Hanson (2010) describes it as “a perspective to involve awareness of and commitment to societal justice for marginalized groups, grassroots empowerment, nonviolent and authentic democracy, environmental care, and North-South relations based on principals of quality, respect, and sharing” (p.75). Blackhouse (2005) defines a global citizen as one who “views the world and its inhabitants as interdependent and works to develop the capacity to act to advance both their won enlightened self-interest and the interest of people elsewhere in the world by understanding the interconnection of all living things”(p.21). These definitions attempt to define both the “global” and the “citizenship”; however, I seek a definition that addresses the idea of human rights as well, in order to identify a more holistic meaning of global citizenship. In other words, in the need to comprehend global citizenship, I choose to understand it as being inclusive of the concept of human rights. Seyla Benhabib (2007) best articulates this relationship in stating “all human beings have the rights to membership in a political community, and that as global citizens, we must work to affirm this universal human right through our own political practices”(qtd. in Martin, p.12). It is within this type of definition that the nature of the connection between human rights and global citizenship is seen and understood. Although the two seem to inhabit

separate arenas, they share an important quality that perhaps can be used in the effort to better understand them both.

While both human rights and global citizenship are “prestigious” theoretical topics, it is necessary to investigate the impact of these terms beyond the theory. Theoretically, both human rights and global citizenship are well-grounded with respect to their philosophical orientation; however as we look beyond this, there seems to be a disconnect between them and between their theoretical basis and practical implementation. Something has gone wrong with human rights and global citizenship that is divorcing them from one another, thereby disallowing global citizenship to be understood, as in our preferred definition, through the appropriate avenue of human rights. Current pushes for human rights work and global citizenship education have not necessarily succeeded in creating a new population of global citizens. Efforts in many different forms have consumed the discourse with beautiful theoretical articulations of these topics; this paper seeks to examine why these masterful theories aren’t translating suitably in creating global citizens of our world. We will first utilize sources that highlight some of the criticisms related to human rights work, then lead into personal research on existence of global citizenship on a local college campus, and discuss the further implications of global citizenship education. The final parts of the paper will connect all of these by showing how some of the shortcomings of human rights and global citizenship are related. Even though solutions to this dual problematic may not be clearly reachable, the purpose of this paper is to outline this connection between human rights and global citizenship. Differently put, my contribution to the discussion involves presenting problems in human rights and issues in global citizenship education separately, and then bringing them together in a conversation which shows how both are impacting the same general problem of global citizenship.

Human Rights

In an attempt to foster a largely comprehensive exchange between human rights and global citizenship, this section will discuss some of the strategies of the practice of international human rights work and relate it to the larger theme of global citizenship. Human rights work is certainly one of the most honorable and urgent tasks that one can take on. The theoretical orientation of human rights, has been, and continues to be the staple of universal moral ethics. Theoretically, human rights have provided humanity with a framework that enables us to be morally, consciously, and ethically engaged on local, national, and global levels. The conversation of human rights is extensive in many areas of the global society.

In an article for the *Sur Journal*, Barbora Bukovska (2008) brilliantly confers about the practice of human rights. She examines the relationship of theory and practice and focuses on the methodological implementation of human rights work. The article, while optimistic about human rights, critically analyzes the impact of the contemporary strategies employed by human rights workers with a special emphasis on the victims of human rights abuses (p.10-12). Because the concept of global citizenship is so intertwined with that of human rights, we can use Bukovska's discussion on human rights to bring light to what is happening in the realm of global citizenship and why they are so important to one another.

Bukovska's article is truly touching in that it isn't harshly critical of human rights, but rather only sensitive to some of its problematic practices. In this piece, she demonstrates how human rights have gone awry. She calls into question what this means for the practical application of human rights theories and how a disjunction from theory into inappropriate practice could perhaps put the entire network of human rights in jeopardy. The root of the inquiry lies within the question of the methodological approach used in practice. These methods are thought to advance human rights work, which includes the protection of and respects for human rights worldwide (Bukovska, p.13). Reporting, advocacy, and strategic litigation are the specific fractions used to categorize the practical human rights approach. The goals of human rights workers, of course, are well intentioned. Therefore, the methodologies employed are done so with a deep care and desire to promote peace and changes within downtrodden members of the global community.

Even though we are about to unpack some of the darker sides to human rights practices, let's first note some of the benefits to the current methods. Firstly, the presence of human rights workers allows for increased engagement surrounding human rights violations. In a time so strewn with human rights abuses, it is because of the human rights workers that the global community is capable of obtaining a knowledge base regarding these issues. Human rights workers are capable of collecting important data and documenting abuses through fact-based research. The workers then publish these findings and use them in both non-governmental and governmental arenas to leverage the importance of attention to human rights violations worldwide. It is due to the unwavering dedication of our world's human rights workers that there has been a global push to rectify abuses of the past and present as well as navigate appropriate protection for the future. Because of the usefulness of these methods, human rights advocates have been able to be a part of public policy forums, inter-governmental consulting, and various negotiations of issues of public interest (Bukovska, p.15).

In establishing such a widely appreciated identity, human rights advocates have set the stage for a serious worldwide consciousness about the protection of human rights on the worldwide level in a universal context.

With this begin said, it is still necessary to open up to the criticisms regarding the methodologies as the darker side to human rights work is still very important to consider. This conversation is written in an attempt to postulate a more responsible approach to the dignified work of human rights. “Promoting change by reporting facts” is one of the most well-known and practiced methods (Bukovska, p.15). This links together the reporting and advocacy factions of human rights work. Human rights workers believe this to be extremely effective. This nod towards its effectiveness comes from the power that information, such as research, reports, studies, and personal accounts, has in terms of lobbying certain groups to take heed in eradicating certain violations associated with the information. Because the human rights community isn’t shy in distributing their information to anyone who is willing to listen, this often well positions them to gain the support of governments and members of civil society. Information distributed by human rights organizations has been known to “shame” violators of human rights into changing practices and laws for the better (Bukovska, p.10). While theoretically this method seems flawless, we must look deeper into the practice. Taking our inquiry beyond the actual methods of human rights workers and into the actual practice as it plays out for victims and people in the communities on the ground. It is logical to forget to question this because of the international attention that human rights workers have gained for victims of human rights abuses. However, as the discourse of human rights progresses, and more action is being taken to eradicate injustices, we must examine the imperfections of the practice simply for the reason of strengthening the effort as a whole.

The actual focus here is clearly not to criticize the methodology or to suggest that it isn’t working in it’s entirety, but rather focus on the practical effects that we are seeing on the ground as the human rights work continues to steam forth. Bukovska (2008) addresses this issue across four topic matters. The first is victimization and how this phenomenon is sometimes perpetuated because of the angle human rights work comes from. As discussed previously, reporting is a large part of human rights work and within this method of reporting comes the process of victimization. This is not necessarily an entirely negative thing, because it does allow for uninformed or uninterested audiences to pay attention to the matter. However, this process has the power to forge an unfortunate disposition for the victim herself. While another human rights thinker, David Kennedy (2006) is perhaps too critical of the practice of reporting; he does

explain well how this process changes the existence of the victims. He says “no matter how carefully or sensitively it [reporting] is done, it transforms the position of the victim in his or her society and produces a language of victimization for him or her to speak on the international stage” (Kennedy, 2006). When the act of reporting, although well intentioned, puts at risk the rights of the victims themselves; it calls into question the responsibility of the group or organization and where the interests lie in producing the reports. One of the factors here is the not necessarily the disparagement of the reporting itself but rather the special attention placed on the multiple impacts it can have on the individuals and communities providing the information for the report. Some of the impacts don’t always prove as negative only for the victims or their communities but also for the organization attempting to gather the information. If there is not a reciprocation of information, then we must ask how this impacts the report or the data overall. Sometimes interviewers aren’t allowed to disclose information about themselves or the study, which leaves the victims disrespected and perhaps confused. There are also instances in which all information is disclosed, but the victim is unable to fully comprehend the research objectives (Bukovska, 2008). Also, because many human rights organizations are very fact oriented, their studies often lack longevity and therefore lose the ability to systematically monitor the validity of the data. These are really crucial factors to consider. We must look at the human rights work from a larger perspective. For the most part, the populations with which human rightists work are oppressed, displaced, and marginalized, therefore lacking the social or political ability to get their stories, frustrations, and abuses out to the international community. Therefore, in terms of the dynamic between the victims and the human rights workers, the human rights workers have a large responsibility to uphold as they represent the voice of the victims that otherwise, would not be heard. When there are examples of human rights practices that seem to almost look past this immense responsibility, it calls for an investigation. Thus, why this section is exploring the elements of the practice that connote a rather ineffective or hindering outcome in terms of the victims’ experience with it.

A part of this gap is due to the simple geographic location of the human rights organizations with respect to the areas with which they work; it is a difficult balance to strike. We must consider the process: first, trying to prepare extensive reports of what is happening on the ground, then bringing that information back to a city sometimes thousands of miles away, and finally attempting to compile the data into a report with the most humanistic detail as possible. This is quite the challenge. Furthermore, because many human rights organizations aren’t based in the areas nor with the people they are working to help, it can create a different understanding of the purpose of human rights work. It is much easier to sit at a desk thousands of miles from a conflict area and study the progression in a

general systematic sense and use that information as leverage for international attention. However, while this practice is still honorable in its objective, it doesn't truly get to the heart of the purpose of human rights; it doesn't have that consistency of the human. This is a prime example of how human rights practices are often full of theoretical orientation rather than practical or pragmatic responses.

I have seen the repercussions of this in my own experience. For the past three years I have worked with a local non-profit organization that has a mission founded in humanitarianism and human rights. The theoretical and philosophical orientation of the organization seeks to promote peace, ethics, and sustainability within its work. While the theoretical foundation is strong, I have seen first hand how the mission is weakened in its application. The goals of the organization are clear and very much filled with genuine intentions. However, without a pragmatic approach to the objectives, the organization is hard pressed to be fully aware of its overall impact in the communities with which it works. Much of what has previously been discussed with respect to Bukovska (2008), can be exemplified through the function of this particular organization. The work of this organization is dignified in that the people involved are wholehearted in their desire and consciousness to improve the lives of people in the world. However, the methodological iteration of these desires connotes skewed results that draw the actual impact further from the original intention.

From this discussion we can see that there are aspects in the practice of human rights that have proven to be flawed. Why is this important to the discussion of global citizenship? Well, given the nature of both human rights and citizenship, they work connectively with one another and have, together, created an apparent international consciousness. As we unpack imperfections of human rights, we are calling attention to the larger implications of these shortcomings as they relate to global citizenship. Those human rights workers who are striving to better the lives of individuals around the world, they are as close to identifying with the term global citizens as anyone could be. However, as we have seen, there are disjunctions between theory and practice, which leaves me to postulate how inappropriate or ineffective practice is perhaps cultivating a faulty sense of global citizenship. Without a true comprehension not only of the theory of human rights, but of the suitable practice of human rights, one cannot truly be practicing global citizenship.

Global Citizenship

The discourse demonstrates that global citizenship is seen as a relatively new concept. It is seen as the result of our globalizing world into an era where the

national citizen no longer encompasses the responsibility nor the breadth of identity needed to understand and engage in what we now know as our global community. Global citizenship is used on many levels, whether in civil society or within government, to reference the responsibility, participation, and identity of local or national citizens as part of a larger, more comprehensive world community. This yields a metaphorical universal language of understanding the context of what it means to exist in the world. Some of the most frequently referenced characteristics of a global citizen is one who is willing to break down the barriers of geographical distance to submit to a consciousness that sets aside ethnocentric values, is compassionate towards unfavorable world conditions, and is actively aware of his or her role within a global community. These few principles of global citizenship require a genuine commitment from an individual, as there are concepts such as ethnocentricity, poverty, and identity that alone necessitate a strong engagement with the concept.

With the recent push towards global citizenship, avenues that familiarize people with the phenomenon of global citizenship have been developed. One of the largest and most popular is through education. Educational institutions around the world are incorporating global citizenship into some component of the higher-education experience. Whether the concept is implemented specifically through global citizenship programs or by the means of a comprehensive liberal education, educational institutions around the world have entered in to a new chapter. The goals of education at the university level are under construction with the rise of importance in understanding the dynamic aspects of a global community. Education at the university level must stretch beyond the traditional guidelines in order to grasp this new concept that will play a major role in the preparation of the students. Regardless of how it is approached, ideas such as responsibility, global inequality, and engagement are the types of material that will foster a greater knowledge of the world in which we live on a much more humanistic and central level. This section will discuss the role of the higher educational institution in cultivating new generations of global citizens. Just as the last section unloaded criticisms of human rights work, this section will review some of the blemishes staining global citizenship education.

To begin this discussion we must first look at the theoretical orientation of global citizenship as it pertains to education. Because the confines of the high educational institution are bordered with philosophy and theory, it is thus even more important to critically process the relationship of global citizenship within this structure with respect to how it is theoretically used.

The theory of global citizenship actually begins before one can reach the status of a global citizen. Theoretically, there are multiple ways that an individual can be educated and engaged to certain standards to eventually be considered a global citizen. Global citizenship itself, as previously pointed out, is the practice of being engaged and knowledgeable about the world on different levels and across different contexts. For the most part, it is understood that the concept of citizenship and its meaning is changed over time. In terms of global citizenship, the meaning of citizenship has once again been altered to incorporate the contexts of the current era of rapid social change (Phillips, 2003). Globalization and its effects on local, national, and international communities have laid a framework constructed by factors such as migration, diversity, and postwar situations (Abdi 1998). These global changes are impacting the role of citizenry on all levels. Thus, global citizenship theoretically could be the principal means to foster a deeper form of “human development” that could eventually lead to the eradication or alleviation of global problems such as “poverty, ignorance, oppression, and war” (Tsolidis, 2002). This calls into question how a public purpose is created out of the realities of this era. In order to address this question, attention has turned to educational institutions. With respect to education, the more important side to the theory of global citizenship is the part that focuses on the process of becoming a global citizen. This process is important in theory because it is the method by which global citizens are supposedly developed. The entire new chapter that was previously referenced is premised on the goal that sets out to create global citizens within the university community. It is actually a beautiful idea that lies on a foundation of humanism, universal truths, and community. This idea is also not just something purposed for the students, but rather it is a holistic interpersonal effort to spread a consciousness, awareness, and engagement regarding the status of our existence in the world. This idea serves to define the motivation behind this push towards global citizenship. It isn't an identity that you can prove through a document or with a photo ID, but with devotion, understanding, and action. The importance of global citizenship to the framework of education exists within the component of preparation. Certainly a student could survive college having completed given assignments and taken necessary exams, but the idea of global citizen education is thought to introduce a new value and meaning to the traditional educational experience. It is the hope of educational institutions that this will be the factor that will provide students with the necessary capacity to perform well in a globalized world. The world awaiting the students' entry after graduation is a much different environment than it was even five years ago. Because of this, institutions seek to establish effective techniques for implementing global citizenship education into the overall academic and social experience.

Why is education important to global citizenship? Well, researchers and educators postulate that universities are the most appropriate environments to cultivate a sense of global identity. In western nations, and increasingly so in non-western nations, the college experience is a crucial time for young adults to explore their existence. Basically, students are vulnerable to impressionability; they are searching for passions and motives through which they will likely construct the rest of their lives. In introducing global citizenship to this population, it certainly increases the instance of positives gains towards the prospect of new generations with a global consciousness. Education is seen as the “indispensable asset” for humanity to work towards peace, freedom, and social justice (Tsolidis, p.214). In “A Conceptual Framework for Exploring the Role of Studies Abroad in Nurturing Global Citizenship,” Michael Tarrant (2009) discusses the necessity of global citizenship education as it relates to the future workforce of America. As a large part of the global economy and society, the future generations of workers that are coming out of universities need to be able to be “sensitive to and aware of global issues” (p. 3). According to Tarrant, one out of every six domestic jobs is involved with international trade therefore, he claims, college graduates today must be internationally competent (p. 2). Aside from the demands of a globalized workforce, global citizenship education renders a stronger meaning that goes deeper than just job performance. The impetus of global citizenship education, at its core, aligns with a consciousness that is latent with responsibility, interconnectedness, diversity, and identity. The result of this is hoped to produce a more engaged and active civil society within university communities. Then, as these students develop and eventually move on from being students, they can apply their comprehensive awareness, understanding, and engagement of global matters to the next role they assume. Whether this next step is a CEO of a major company or a librarian, it is the theoretical optimism of global citizenship education that these students will fully incorporate their global citizenry into their personal lives and professional jobs. In “Global Citizenship: Philosophy, Theory and Pedagogy,” Peters (2008) discusses global citizenship education. Peters claims that he has come to believe that “the promise” of global civil society is contingent upon an active global citizenship education (p.127). It is certain that the theory of global citizenship itself is strong in its conviction for an interconnected consciousness that is deeply rooted in the mind and heart of humanity. The theory of how this applies to education focuses on the idea that the institutions of education act as the catalyst or breeding ground for the larger philosophy of global citizenship to manifest.

Global Citizenship In Practice

How is an education in global citizenship structured? How do students experience it? To answer this question, we must explore the connection between theories of global citizenship and the pedagogy of how it is practiced in education. There are two constituents into which the methodology can be broken up: academic endeavors on campus and study abroad opportunities off campus. Both of these are equally important in gaining the perspective of how global citizenship is being fused through educational corridors to inspire sustainable global engagement.

The first component of the pedagogy deals with the curricula of the educational institutions. There are certain approaches that range from seminar series to expected competencies of university students. At the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas the faculty have decided to implement global learning through ethics (Simms, 2006). Ethics lie at the core of academia in terms of how disciplines are studied. Across the world ethics are studied on a multiplicity of levels. This particular university is now infiltrating a core subject area with the teachings of global citizenship. The approach that they have taken is through the conversation of hypernorms. With this, students are exposed to some of the different norms that exist within other cultures. UST claims that this then becomes the basis for “honoring global citizenship and applied practices” (Simma, p.172). While there is not a program that is stationed to be the official instructor for human rights, this is a strong example of how the diffusion begins. Other universities have actually gone a step further to create certified courses or programs that are designed to foster global learning or global citizenship. Quinnipiac University in Hamden, Connecticut has created a seminar series that is mandatory for all students. There are three levels of the seminar; 100, 200, and 300. As students move up in number, they move up in the scope through which the particular class assessing the role of the individual in the local (100), national (200), and global (300) community (Quinnipiac University). We will further explore the particular curriculum at Quinnipiac University later in our discussion, but this specific program is an important example in how universities are sanctioning mandated programs in an attempt to bring global awareness to the student body through the curriculum. There are also a couple specific teaching methodologies that are being employed at the university level. One of these comes from Monash University in Australia. The method outlines the ongoing tension between sameness and difference and instead of focusing on one or the other; it brings them together to concentrate on the shared aspects (Tsolidis, 2002). For example, this strategy would require a focus on a cross-cultural theme and then the activity would play out as a exploration of that theme as it relates to particular cultures or periods. This is said to add culture to the students’ pre-existing culture rather than replace it which is seen as a healthy way to approach

global learning (Tsolidis, p.222). Another method was taken from an associate professor at San Diego State University. This tactic was designed toward the idea of global competency; it is called the double-loop learning opportunity. This is interesting because it requires the student to first analyze a problem internally using his or her own framework of values and solutions. Then, the double loop comes in when within this process the student must begin to assess his or her own values or beliefs from an outside perspective. This is thought to ignite self-awareness and foster a self-motivation that will lead to “lasting change from within” (Bresciani, p. 910). The brief overview of these different methodologies stands to display the different efforts from various angles that are taking place around the world under the guise of the same objective: global citizenship education.

Aside from the empirical examples above, Martha Nussbaum (2004) expands on a single aspect of global citizenship education taking us into the realm of liberal education. She states:

...The idea of liberal education is more important than ever in our interdependent world. An education based on the idea of an inclusive global citizenship and on the possibilities of the compassionate imagination has the potential to transcend divisions created by distance, cultural difference, and mistrust. Developing this ideal further and thinking about how to modify it in the light of our times is one the most exciting and urgent tasks we can undertake as educators and citizens (p. 45).

Nussbaum’s thoughts fully capture the idea of global citizenship and its purpose, but put it under the lens of liberal education. Historically, the (Peters, 2008) liberal education has been a characteristic of western education, but with the advent of increased globalization, it is spreading to eastern cultures as well. The important idea here is to explore the role of the liberal education and how it serves to practically address the theory of global citizenship in an educational arena. Nussbaum proposes that in some places, especially the U.S., people have the tendency to remain only within the comfort zones of their own society without exploring the people or cultures around them. This is one reality of the world in which we live however; in a world that now yearns for interconnectedness in order to survive, this mentality is no longer acceptable. With this, Nussbaum proclaims that it is only with liberal education that we can have a chance to “undo these baneful and complacent habits of mind” and produce global citizens prepared to think critically and honestly about our world (Nussbaum, p. 42). Seneca also presents the idea of “the liberal” in the idea that it “liberates” students’ minds from the constraints of tradition and habit and forces them to take

ownership of their own minds. It is only through this process, he says, that one can become “fully human” (qtd. in Nussbaum, p. 45). Seneca’s term “fully human” relates almost synchronically with today’s idea of a global citizen.

Even though Nussbaum highlights many valid points, why liberal education? What she is really digging into is that a liberal education is designed to free the mind, liberate the human, and cultivate the citizen. It is in this process that a deeper understanding for identity, specifically global identity, is developed. Because of the nature of liberal education, Nussbaum draws the connections to the role it can play in our contemporary goal of cultivating a new generation of thinkers, actors, and world citizens.

While Nussbaum may argue that liberal education is the only way to cultivate global citizenship on the educational level, there are other educators and researchers that would disagree. The second component of global citizenship in education is the study abroad opportunities that take students out of the confines of classrooms and into the world. Other cohorts of leaders in the field of education may argue that study abroad experiences are the perfect component and proponent for global citizenship. Even though study abroad is talked about in a very general sense as being the practice of students going abroad beyond national borders to gain international experience with other peoples and cultures. However, I would argue that we must look intrinsically at study abroad and recognize that it isn’t general, but rather a complex opportunity that holds much leverage and attention on the institutional level of education.

In the latter half of the past decade, study abroad programs have begun to take on an external pursuit; one that encompasses the idea of fostering global citizenship at the university level. It has become perhaps the largest approach to cultivate global citizenship. Students travel and study in almost every corner of the world and when they return to their local campuses it is expected that they have obtained a higher level of consciousness and engagement in their citizenry of the world. Are students meeting these expectations? Is study abroad the magic bullet for creating global citizens? Based on deductive reasoning, the educators and scholars that would answer “yes” may employ a reliance on the study abroad system, as it is presumably the closest thing that students have that will get them real life experience. I question, however, how valuable is the experience if the student doesn’t become immersed in the local culture? As Nussbaum stated, there is a large tendency to remain close with your comfort level so, before approving or discrediting study abroad programs we must assess their effectiveness in terms of the global citizenship goal.

The theory of global citizenship education and study abroad is that the experience will inspire and cultivate the necessary transformations within the student so that he or she will be adequately prepared to assume the role of a global citizen. The literature in this area is latent with anecdotes and different methodologies that have been implemented at different universities around the world. Within this discourse, though, there are actually two main experiences that seem to fit under the same umbrella of study abroad. Students are able to study abroad for given amounts of time, whether a month, a semester, or a year. Essentially, students temporarily replant themselves in a different culture, but still take essential classes, work, etc. The other opportunity that has grown out of this more traditional one is service trips abroad. These could be for projects, cultural experience, research, etc. but they all require some form of an educational component prior to departure. Kimberly Jones (2006) suggests that these trips are unique in that the educational component adds a different “quality” to the experience. She suggests that service-learning programs offer more prospects in terms of reflection on both the connection between coursework and experiences as well as ethnic and cultural diversity (p. 75). There are opportunities built into the structure of the service learning model that encourage contemplation that can foster the type of consciousness and deep understanding of a global citizen. For example, one study done at Lehigh University found that students who participated in a study abroad program that had a required education component prior to departure had a much more valuable experience while abroad. “They prepared for the trip by attending a series of lectures and practicum that focused on their country of destination; this served as an intensive orientation into the destination’s culture and what they would encounter during the trip” (Hendershot, 2009). The aims of these sorts of opportunities are directly linked to the attempt to bring students to new realizations and develop as informed and active global citizens. In order to do this, Jones says, the students need to have a personal philosophy of service and understand that the individual is extremely important to larger social change (Jones, 2006). These service-learning trips are what she suggests to be the cultivator of this sentiment.

Educators at universities rely strongly on the methods displayed in this section. Whether by means of reorganization of curriculum, travel opportunities, or a combination of both, universities of higher education are bustling with movement in an attempt to get their students on a level of global thinking and action. While it is clear that the goals of many educational institutions have changed, have the students changed as well? Just as I critically analyzed the work of human rightists, I am also critically thinking about promoters of global citizenship. While the practices, programs, and methods sound wonderful, I am still left to question how impactful or effective they are within the lives of the

students. The literature on global citizenship is full of jargon and ideas about how to implement global citizenship in education and why it is important, however there is a lack of significant research that shows that the literature is having a positive impact on the students that they seek to transform. Despite the strong ideas found in global citizenship education, we must explore if there is equal strength in the practice of these ideas in order to ensure that the goals are being met.

To address this issue, I will review my personal research on the global citizenship education practices at Quinnipiac University and its students' experience with the efforts. While not all higher educational institutions function like Quinnipiac, this research will give a solid framework to then measure the effectiveness of other programs. This research was conducted through a summer research fellowship program funded by Quinnipiac University. My impetus for carrying out the study was that as a student at Quinnipiac, I often experienced frustration towards the apathy and lack of global consciousness on campus. Quinnipiac University, over the past few years has strived to make significant changes in the university goals, especially those concerning increased awareness of citizenship locally, nationally, and internationally. Earlier, I referenced Quinnipiac's QU Seminar Series that requires each student to partake in special courses designed specifically to target the three different levels of citizenship mentioned. Quinnipiac also boasts a large range of study abroad programs through the Office of International Education, domestic and international service trips through Quinnipiac affiliated organizations, and a new university synthesis that is heavily inclusive of global learning and global citizenship. With the university doing so much to set the theory of global citizenship education in motion, I was concerned as to why, within the student population, there didn't seem to be any sizeable impact. This is not to discredit the entire effort, as of course there are students at the university who do work towards increased global awareness and actively maintain engagement in global issues. However; the majority doesn't seem to share in the same level of consciousness or engagement.

The study had two components: a student survey and a series of interviews with faculty and administration. In other words, the interviews test the theory of global citizenship and the ideas that are flowing throughout campus as was reflected in the language and overall dialogue with faculty. The surveys, on the other hand, examine the practice of these theories and probe questions that unpack how well the theoretical goals of the university are being translated into student thought and action. The results of this study speak volumes about the disjunction that exists between the theory and practice. As we saw previously with the work

of human rights, the same sort of paradox is playing out with the movement for education for global citizenry.

The interview protocol was structured the same for each interview. In total I completed eleven interviews. Most of the interviews were conducted with the deans of the various colleges within the university, but the research also includes data from other faculty and administration members. The general responses from the interviews consisted of heavy optimism placed on global citizenship education programs. Even when probed, the interviews almost always returned the conversation back to a theoretical one rather than a practical assessment of how students are impacted. In fact, when asked about the QU seminar courses and how students receive them, one professor responded with “there is a lot of uncertainty there (Gleeson, 2010). It is evident that there is a lack of research in terms of assessing the impacts of these large global citizenship education initiatives. Out of all of the interviews, there wasn’t any mention of other programs that the subject had researched, nor was there any mention about intentions with assessment methods. It seems clear that the thinkers behind these global citizenship initiatives are so enveloped in the ideas, theories, and optimism, that there is not enough energy being focused on what’s transpiring on the ground. For example, when there are presumably good programs set in place for students to study abroad, why don’t students take those opportunities? Well, when I asked the Director of International Education, he didn’t seem to know the answer either. In fact, he asked me to include a question about it in my student survey. This is a really profound representation of the disconnect that exists between the theory and practice. It is not that the educators are not well intended, because as the information from the interviews shows, they are full of ideas and constantly thinking about this initiative. However, the actual pedagogy isn’t yielding as positive of results as the goals call for.

Out of approximately one thousand students who responded to the survey, almost 56% (see figure 1) responded that they did not know or were unsure of the meaning of global citizenship. Of this group of people, 86% have traveled outside of the country (not affiliated with a Quinnipiac program). This same group of students responded that 72% of them think about global citizenship sometimes or never. Regardless of the fact that the majority of this group of students hasn’t participated in a university study abroad program, there is still a large percentage of the student body communicating the disjunction between the theory that the university is trying to implement. Out of the total response pool of nearly 1,000 the majority claimed to have “little to somewhat of an understanding” of local, national, and global events. Out of the members of the senior class, 100% responded that they have little or somewhat of an understanding of the same

issues that range from economic problems in Europe to local elections in the U.S. What these few statistics show is deep. A professor in the interview is quoted saying “less than a quarter [of the student population] get it [global citizenship].” He, however, was the only one that alluded to disconnected student response. The other interviews boast a hopeful tone, however these survey results don’t seem to be cheering in the favor of global citizenship.

The purpose here is not to criticize Quinnipiac or other universities engaged in the same movement, but rather its purpose is to shed light on the importance of questioning the actual outcomes of our ideas. Even though most of the programs and plans for global citizenship education are hopeful and well intentioned, this paper is evidence that more pragmatism is needed to ensure a more cohesive connection between theories and practices. With a topic as important as global citizenship, it is crucial that we, as members of civil society, take the initiative to practically manage our ideas and take special consideration to how they are able to manifest within our communities, particularly within our universities. The literature on global citizenship is extensive. It seems that everyone has something to say—a new focus, a new method, however; if we don’t assess the effectiveness of this, we could be building upon a cracked foundation. Through the separate deconstructive analysis of both human rights work and global citizenship education disjunctions have been examined. In order to gather the entire significance of each independently, we must explore the power of their connection together.

Connecting The Disconnects

Both human rights work and the implementation of global citizenship education are experiencing a disconnect. The root of these disjunctions, in large part, comes from those separating theory from practice. With human rights we see well-intended individuals and organizations with the goal of alleviating suffering around the world. Because many don’t analyze their methodological actions, there is uncertainty about the effectiveness of their work. With global citizenship education, we see a similar phenomenon: groups of goal oriented educators and thinkers working to cultivate a global citizenry through education, but lacking the proper assessments with which to analyze their impact. The important focus of this paper is to highlight some of these flaws in both human rights and global citizenship, but, more importantly, to remove these two terms from their mutually exclusive positions in order to postulate the prospects of fusing them together in practice. In analyzing why these gaps exist within these domains, I have uncovered a powerful connection between them that could, perhaps, serve to inform future methodologies and tactics related to both fields.

The link between human rights and global citizenship arises in that they are both missing something that is preventing an effective practice of theory. Simply put, perhaps human rights practice lacks a sense of global citizenship education and the practice of global citizenship is near void of the intellectual prowess of human rights. These two domains are closely related, their theories crossing the lines of citizenship, human rights, global responsibility, and consciousness. However, paradoxically, the languages of human rights and global citizenship, respectively, do not include one another on a significant level – a level that would demonstrate such a connection. Ali Abdi (1998) points out that with the universal fight for human rights, the connection to global citizenship speaks volumes about how the entitlement of both citizenship and rights can be tied together, especially for the worlds “most marginalized” populations. The potential of the connection between human rights and global citizenship is potentially immense. It is, perhaps, the necessary focus in order for both human rights and global citizenship education to be able to overcome their shortcomings. Through the process of “using” each other, human rights workers can gain more of an understanding of the role that global citizenship can play in terms of a comprehensive approach to human rights work. Global citizenship educators can incorporate the nuances of understanding the human rights component. In heightening this focus and incorporating factors from each, we can see the transformative capability of this approach. Abdi (1998) beautifully articulates the powerful incorporation of human rights into education for global citizenship:

Although it is clear that these trends require students to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions that enable them to function in a global environment, it is not clear whether schools have realigned their purposes to prepare students to be competent citizens in an age of globalization and universal human rights (1998).

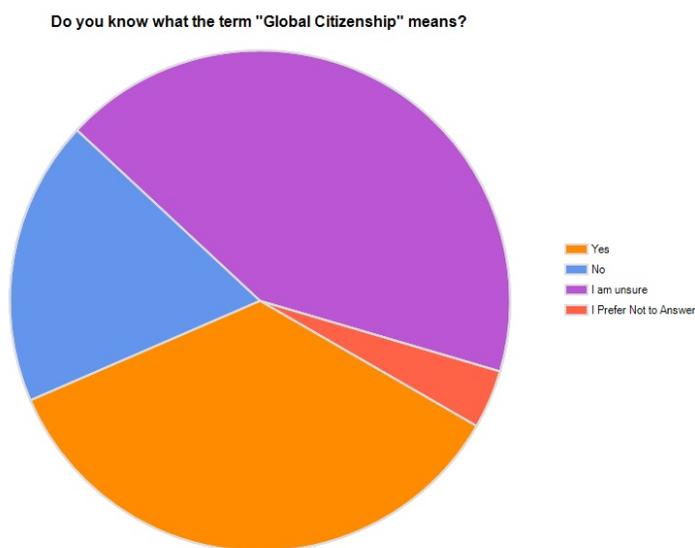
If we were to reverse this, we could just as well focus on how human rights workers haven’t “realigned their purposes” to incorporate the dimensions of global citizenship that clearly exist within human rights. This only takes us to a hypothetical, temporary working solution, which at this point, is only theoretical. However, it is my belief that when human rights workers and global citizenship educators commit to the practical application of this idea of convergence, changes will happen. With the evaluation of this methodology we may, perhaps, create a stronghold for a more official focus, both in education and in human rights work, beginning to permanently connect these two arenas. It is then that a pragmatic approach to global consciousness can be realized through human rights work and global citizenship education. Once the floodgates are down, the waters of

consciousness will be able to flow through new generations, creating informed global citizens primed with the nuances of the importance of human rights.

Appendix

Figure 1:

This graphic represents the responses of approximately 1,000 Quinnipiac University students to the question: “Do you know the meaning of global citizenship?” Over half of the students responded that they “did not know” or were “unsure” of the meaning of global citizenship.



References

- Abdi, A. (2008) *Redefining the Public Purposes of Schools in an Age of Globalization and Human Rights*. Alberta Journal of Educational Research.
- Blackhouse, F. (2005). *Invite the World into Your Classroom*. University Affairs. Journal of Studies in International Education.
- Bresciani, M. *Global Competencies in Student Affairs/ Services Professionals: A Literature Synthesis*. College Student Journal.
- Bukovska, B. (2008). *Perpetrating good: unintended consequences of international human rights advocacy*. Sur: The International Journal on Human Rights .
- Gleeson, G. (2010). *Conceptualization and Application of Global Citizenship at Quinnipiac University*.
- Hanson, L. (2010). *Global Citizenship, Global Health, and Internationalization of Curriculum*. Journal of International Education.
- Hendershot, K. (2009). *Study Abroad and Development of Global Citizen Identity and Cosmopolitan Ideals in Undergraduates*. Current Issues in Comparative Education.
- Jones, K. (2006). *Service Learning Abroad and Global Citizenship*. Academic Exchange Quarterly.
- Kennedy, D. (2004) *Reassessing International Humanitarianism: The Dark Sides*. Cambridge University Press.
- Martin, C. *Intervention*. Macalester Civic Forum.
- Nussbaum, M. (2004). *Liberal Education & Global Community*. Liberal Education.
- Peters, M. (2008). *Global Citizenship Education: Philosophy, Theory, and Pedagogy*. New Zealand Journal of Education Studies.

Phillips, T. (2003). *Citizenship in a Global Age: Society, Culture, Politics*. Journal of Sociology.

Simma, M. (2006). *The Citizen Factor: Engaging the Language of Citizenship in a Global Classroom*. Journal of Hispanic Higher Education.

Tarrant, M. (2009). *A Conceptual Framework for Exploring the Role of Studies Abroad in Nurturing Global Citizenship*. Journal of Studies in International Education.

Tsolidis, G. *How do we teach and learn in times when the notion of 'global citizenship' sounds like cliché?* Journal of Research in International Education.