A Forgotten Concept: Global Citizenship Education and State Social Studies Standards

Anatoli Rapoport
Purdue University

In today's global environment, social studies educators have the opportunity to expand their students' vision of the role of citizenship in developing a democratic understanding by adopting multiple perspectives on citizenship. Global citizenship education is becoming an important component in citizenship education in many countries. However, unlike their colleagues in Europe or Asia, US teachers are still less enthusiastic about incorporating global citizenship perspectives into their instruction. This paper describes the obstacles that prevent social studies teachers from using global citizenship perspectives. It also explores whether state academic standards in social studies provide sufficient curricular guidance for global citizenship education.

Introduction

Thanks to Thomas Friedman (2005), we now all know that the world is flat. And it is going to become flatter yet. But it is also going to be “far more equal, far more active and energetic” (Zakaria, 2005, p. 92). We also know that the forthcoming and imminent equality, activism, and energy are going to challenge our traditional perceptions of the world. Global processes in economy, science, and technology have provided a tremendous impulse to changes in values, customs, and mores. Regardless of how positively or negatively globalization is seen throughout the world, it has already started to change the world, and these changes are irreversible. Economically, scientifically, and technologically, the United States has more or less, and I would argue more than less, succeeded in meeting the challenges of globalization. But are we prepared to face the inevitable moral, ideological, and political
changes that go hand in hand with the changes in global economies? Even more importantly, are we preparing our students morally, politically, and ideologically to become citizens of a future world that is going to be more equal, active, and dynamic than this one? The future world is not only a world of common markets of goods, capital, or labor. It is also a world of common values, a world of tolerance, a world of multiple identities and loyalties, and a world of shared responsibilities. The tragic events of September 11, and even more so, the events that followed, demonstrate that citizenship education, particularly in regard to its global dimension, faces multiple contextual, methodological, curricular, and even semantic challenges.

In this article, I will demonstrate how such concepts as globalization and global citizenship are represented in social studies standards in various states. I will also argue that despite the interdisciplinary nature and content of the terms globalization and global citizenship, the social studies classroom is the primary locus of their curriculum application. Further, the reasons for the lack of interest among educators in addressing these two powerful concepts in the US classroom will be discussed.

**Literature Review**

The terms global citizenship education and education for global citizenship as well as other terms related to the concept of global citizenship are becoming more and more frequently used at scholarly conferences and in various educational discourses. However, one can rarely hear these terms in the classroom. There are reasons for this, both objective and subjective. First, there is no consensus on the meaning of global citizenship. We cannot use the familiar definition derived from the definition of citizen, argued Noddings (2005), because global citizenship is not about allegiance to a global government that is nonexistent. To Noddings, a global citizen is one who can live and work effectively anywhere in the world, supported by a global way of life. Guadelli
and Fernekes (2004) referred to the non-normative stance of global citizenship and highlighted its complexity, transcendency, and inchoate status. McIntosh related the idea of the global citizen to “habits of mind, heart, body, and soul that have to do with working for and preserving a network of relationships and connections across lines of difference and distinctness, while keeping and deepening a sense of one’s own identity and integrity” (2005, 23). Dunn (2002) referred to “a citizenry that knows and cares about contemporary affairs in the whole world” (p. 10). The absence of a mutually agreed upon definition of global citizenship, which spans from a vague sense of belonging to a global community to more specific ways of individual and collective involvement in global politics (Heater, 1997; Ibrahim, 2005), has enabled researchers and educators to use this term and related terms loosely. It is not much of a surprise that this relatively new concept has also generated a lot of criticism, much of which is related to its social and political aspects. The emerging global civil society that perpetuates global citizenship and “is supposed to give it a ‘political’ character” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 349) faces several accusations itself: it is terminologically ambiguous, its supporters uncritically apply nation-state phenomena to global processes, and it undermines democracy by weakening the democratic institutions of nation-states (Corry, 2006). Armstrong (2006) argued that the supposedly “global” elements of global citizenship are much less universal and transcendental and thus, “the claim that a meaningful global regime of citizenship is emerging… should be treated with caution” (p. 355). Second, global citizenship education is usually conceptualized within the framework of international education, global education (Davis, Evans, & Reid, 2005), multicultural education (Banks, 2004; Dunn, 2002), peace education (Smith & Fairman, 2005), human rights education (Guadelli & Fernekes, 2004), or economic education. Practitioners are very well aware that none of these approaches, except maybe economic education, has secured a position in school curricula so far. Thus, global
citizenship education, if taught as one of the topics within those frameworks, has become even more secondary.

Obviously, global citizenship education should be placed within the broader framework of citizenship education due to the similarity of rationale and the variability of models that the latter offers (Davis, Evans, & Reid, 2005). Citizenship education is about civic knowledge, skills, and values. The traditional concentration on national citizenship compared to a more global perspective comprises one of the constraints in the national v. global dilemma (Davies, Evans, & Reid, 2005; Parker, Ninomiya, & Cogan, 1999; Thornton, 2005). Akhmad and Szpara (2005) argued that traditional citizenship education is inherently state-centered because it over-emphasizes teaching and learning about government. But out of the four levels of government, namely, local, regional, central/federal, and global/international, the lion’s share of curriculum covers central/federal government. Such an approach could be justified at a time of nation-state building, or during the fairly recent time of the Cold War. Such an approach was possible in a pre-globalized world. But to what extent is this position justified now? UNESCO resolution No. 39 affirms that the values of tolerance, universality, and mutual understanding are relevant to international organizations, states, and civil societies as well as individual citizens (Pigozzi, 2006). Global citizenship education is not expanded local or nation citizenship education (Davies, 2006). It is the logical development of a citizenship that is required for all citizens in the 21st century. It should help students to develop cultural, national, and global identifications; it also significantly contributes to civic democratic development (Banks, 2004). Educators outside the United States understood this long ago (Ebbeck, 2006; Engler & Hunt; 2004; Holden, 2000; Ibrahim, 2005; Oxfam, 2006), while the attitudes of many US educators to global citizenship education can still be described as cautiously suspicious. Teaching and learning about the functions of democratic government or about decision-making cannot be only
based on local or central/federal paradigms. Robin Richardson (quoted in Davies, 2006, p. 6) contended that global education “implies a focus on many different, though overlapping levels from very local and immediate to the vast realities named with phrases such as ‘world societies’ and ‘global village.’” Kristen Sheppard (2004) put it even more succinctly: “Global citizenship is a daily responsibility” (p. 35).

Another controversy that haunts education for global citizenship, the fourth obstacle in our list, is the fear that global citizenship education undermines patriotism towards the state. In most cases, patriotism is conceptualized in its traditional meaning. This is particularly true in the United States where, as John Myers (2006) argued, on the one hand, schooling disproportionately favors national identity over learning about the world and, on the other hand, teachers are accused of being unpatriotic when they allow critical discussion of government policy. However, the traditional meaning of patriotism is being challenged more and more often (Apple, 2002; Branson, 2002; Nussbaum, 1994; Merry, 2007). The idea of patriotism as a more inclusive construct, particularly in regard to multicultural and intercultural discourses, is becoming more acceptable. “A useful definition of patriotism,” noted Akhmad and Szpara (2005), “should not hinge on the legal status in a polity but embrace citizens' allegiance to universal human values, democratic ideals, and the human rights and dignity of all people in the world” (p. 10).

What happens in the classroom when practitioners teach about global citizenship? After examining how individual teachers in Ontario schools prioritized global citizenship issues in their teaching in the context of other curricular demands, Michele Schweisfurth (2006) concluded that the teachers had to and were able to “interpret the prescribed curriculum imaginatively” (p. 49) to justify their own aims in teaching about global citizenship. Despite global citizenship education-friendly Civics curriculum and standards in Ontario, the general encompassing message to
teachers was about curriculum standardization. Although teachers, who were interested in introducing global perspectives into their classrooms, were taught through the system of professional development how to look at the curriculum guidelines from a global citizenship education angle, they found themselves at the periphery of the concerns of the profession as a whole.

John Myers (2006) explored two exemplary programs that incorporated global and multicultural curricular perspectives. His research indicated that even in these selected programs, “the concept of global citizenship, suggesting a commitment and responsibility to the global community based in human rights, is less coherent” (p. 389). This is the result of the lack of attention to globalization and related processes in social studies education. The author argued 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).

Schools play a key role in citizenship education and, therefore, are one of the critical providers of global citizenship education. Due to the schools’ potential to be aligned with transnational efforts in promoting global civility (Reimers, 2006), the role of teachers can hardly be overstated. Nonetheless, as research demonstrates, teachers are mostly oblivious to the purposes, methods, and content of global citizenship education. For example, out of over 700 teachers in England who rated education for global citizenship as important, very few were confident of their ability to teach it (Davies et al. in Yamashita, 2006). Overall passive and in many cases skeptical attitudes to global citizenship and related concepts eventually has resulted in neglect of global citizenship education in many US schools. The growing amount of research, particularly comparative research, demonstrates that “the traditional notion of developing democratic understanding needs to be expanded to encompass attention to decision making, controversial issues, and civic action set in
multicultural and global contexts” (Hahn, 2001, p. 21). Furthermore, because the US education system has not yet overcome the stigma of globalization as being anti-American, “the reality of the U.S. education system at best approximates the goal of developing national citizens with some relativistic understanding and awareness of the rest of the world” (Myers, 2006, p. 389).

The works just mentioned as well as other scholarship (Bottery, 2006; Engler & Hunt, 2004; Reimers, 2006) clearly indicate that education practitioners, even those who are genuinely committed to teaching from a global perspective, need clear and straightforward curricular guidance to justify their initial interest in teaching about global citizenship. The absence of such unambiguous guidance only sends mixed messages and undermines teachers’ motivation to engage students in this most useful and necessary endeavor.

One of the most powerful tools in curriculum development is state standards. Since the mid-1990s, voluntary national, and later, state standards in various areas of education, including social studies, have defined what students should be taught and what they should know (Finn & Kanstoroom, 2001). Despite their relative rigidity due to the complex revision process, state standards can serve as a reliable indicator of curriculum content changes in various states. Thus, it has become possible to determine the general direction of content development in various areas of education by analyzing the state standards.

The purpose of this paper is to determine how the concept *global citizenship* is represented in state standards for social studies. The following questions guided this research: 1) Do state standards for social studies or equivalent state curriculum guiding documents contain the terms *globalization* and *global citizenship*? 2) What concepts or terms semantically related to *globalization* and *global citizenship* are used in state standards for social studies, if the former concepts are not explicitly mentioned in the text?
For the purpose of this work, the term *state standards* includes various curricular documents (Academic Standards, Content Standards, Frameworks, Courses of Study, Trace Maps, etc.) that contain content standards for social studies.

**Method**

The electronic texts of state standards for social studies or relevant curriculum content documents (usually in PDF files) were downloaded from the websites of State Departments of Education or state departments, agencies, or offices responsible for public instruction. In those cases where the standards for different content areas (History, Geography, Civics, or Economics) or grade levels were posted separately, all texts were downloaded. The downloaded texts were then scanned and analyzed using the conceptual content analysis technique (Holsti, 1969; Krippendorf, 1980) to determine if they contained the terms *globalization* or its derivatives (e.g. global, globalized, globalization) or *global citizenship*. The texts were also analyzed to find out what terms synonymous or closely associated with *globalization* and *global citizenship* they contained.

**Findings**

The texts of social studies standards of fifteen states contain the term *globalization*:

*Arizona Academic Content Standards/ Social Studies (2005):* PO 3. Analyze how world events of the late 20th century and early 21st century (e.g., terrorism, globalization, conflicts, interdependence, natural disasters, advancements in science and technology, environmental issues) affected, and continue to affect, the social, political, geographic, and economic climate of the world (p. 95).

Kentucky Standards/Core Content for Social Studies Assessment (2006): SS-HS-5.3.6: Students will explain how the second half of the 20th century was characterized by rapid social, political and economic changes that created new challenges (e.g., population growth, diminishing natural resources, environmental concerns, human rights issues, technological and scientific advances, shifting political alliances, globalization of the economy) in countries around the world, and give examples of how countries have addressed these challenges (p. 18).

Minnesota Academic Standards in History and Social Studies (2004): III. WORLD HISTORY. Students will describe and analyze processes of “globalization” as well as persistent rivalries and inequalities among the world’s regions, and assess the successes and failures of various approaches to address these. (p. 37).

Mississippi Social Studies Framework and Guide (2004): Describe movements that led to conflicts and revolutions in the late 18\textsuperscript{th}/19\textsuperscript{th}/20\textsuperscript{th} centuries (e.g., Enlightenment, nationalism, unification, liberalism, industrialization, imperialism, modernization/westernization, militarism, globalization, etc.) (p. 97).

Montana Standards for Social Studies (2000): Content Standard 6. 6. Analyze the interactions of individuals, groups and institutions in society (e.g., social mobility, class conflict, globalization) (p. 7).

Ohio Academic Content Standards/K-12 Social Studies (December 2002): Globalization - The act, process or policy of making something worldwide in scope or application (Glossary, p. 322).

Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Civics and Government/ History/Geography (2003): 7.3.12. GRADE 12: Analyze the significance of human activity in shaping places and regions by their economic characteristics. Forces that are reshaping business (e.g., the information economy, business globalization, the development of off-shore activities) (p. 9).

South Carolina Social Studies Academic Standards (2005): Gr. 5 Standard 5-6. 5. Summarize the changes that have taken place in United States foreign policy since 1992, including the globalization of trade and the war on terrorism (p. 45).

The Tennessee Social Studies Curriculum Standards (2001): K-Gr. 8/Economics/Content Standard 2.0. Globalization of the economy, the explosion of population growth, technological changes and international competition compel students to understand, both personally and globally, the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

Grade Expectations for Vermont’s Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities (2004): H&SS9-12:13. Students analyze how and why cultures continue and change over time by Analyzing the contributions of various cultural groups to the world, both past and present, including immigrants and native peoples; hypothesizing about the impact of the globalization of culture (p. 35).

The Washington State Social Studies Framework (2003): Compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of globalization to countries, regions, and people with different cultural and economic advantages (p. 87).

21st Century Social Studies Content Standards and Objectives for West Virginia Schools (2007, effective in 2008): SS.C.O.12.04.05 Students will examine the impact of sprawl (rural and urban) on society and the environment (e.g., globalization of agriculture, energy dependency, water/soil, green houses emissions, parking lots) (p. 104).

The terms and concepts that are semantically related to globalization are present almost in all state standards for social studies. They are (in parentheses are abbreviations of states): global interdependence of economies, global connections, global interactions, interconnected world (CO, GA), global interdependence of places (DE), global community, international interdependence (IN), tightly interrelated world (IL), human interdependence (MD), interdependence within global
communities (MI), connected and interdependent world (MN),
global understanding (NE), interdependent increasingly connected
world (NH), interrelationship (NM), interdependence of global
economy (OR), the effects of economic, geographic, and political
interactions (SC), worldwide economic interdependence (SC),
constantly changing, increasingly complex world (SD), global
trade interdependence (UT), global cooperation among groups
and governments (VT), networks of economic interdependence
(VA, VT), increasingly culturally diverse, and interconnected
world (WV).

The term global citizen(ship) is mentioned in the standards of two states:

1.0 Content Standard: Political Science - 2. Analyze the importance of civic participation as a citizen of the world.
B. Analyze the concept of a global citizen and how the awareness and responsibilities have changed during the information age (Gr. 7, p. 4).

The overarching goal of the 2004 Mississippi Social Studies Framework and Guide is citizenship education in order to foster the development of life-long, responsible, accountable, global citizens in a democratic society (Mission Statement, p. 1).

Other terms, concepts, or phrases that are semantically related to global citizen(ship) are: informed, responsible, and participating citizens at the ...international level (AL, MS, MO), responsible citizens and active participants in ...global society (AL), global stewardship (AK), members of the world community (AZ, NH, OH), citizen in an interdependent world (KS), citizens
and participants in an increasingly connected world economy (KY), citizen of the world (MD, WV), Americans as citizens of a global community (MS), economic citizen in a global economy (MT), capable citizens in a culturally diverse and interdependent world (NE), productive, informed citizens in a global society (NV).

Discussion

The development and implementation of state content standards possess their own dynamics that explain, in part, why standards lag behind real life. This is particularly the case in social studies education where, in comparison with other areas of education, the rapidly changing world dictates its own pace. This can be one of the possible explanations of the fact that social studies standards of only 15 states contain the term globalization, one of the most powerful and most controversial concepts at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries. Even in the 15 cases where globalization is presented, it is predominantly used as an economic concept (e.g. globalization of economy, business globalization, globalization of trade) ignoring or leaving unnoticed and therefore untaught its omnipotent and ubiquitous influence on all sides of human activity (Bottery, 2006; Waters, 1995). This is why it is so important and also promising that in more recently developed or revised standards, globalization is interpreted as a more complex phenomenon (e.g. globalization of culture). At least, standards developers are no longer focused on just one component, the economic component of globalization.

The case of global citizen(ship) is even more complex. This concept is only mentioned in the standards of two states. Although the terms related to global citizen(ship) (e.g. citizen of the world, world citizen, cosmopolitan) existed long before the term globalization, the controversial nature of the term global citizen, a narrowly and sometimes falsely understood patriotism, an outdated understanding of citizenship, obsolete views on civic education, let alone the notorious conservatism of many school districts have
all prevented the new/old concept from appearing in state standards. Standards developers and state boards of education faced a dilemma. On the one hand, life persistently required that the concept that would embrace new approaches to values education, human rights education, the role of international NGOs or global government be presented in curricular documents, while on the other hand, traditionalism and political relativism cautioned social studies educators not to move too fast. It would also be interesting to explore how the events of September 11 impacted the eagerness or reluctance to include the term *global citizen(ship)* in state social studies standards. The tragedy of 2001, which could have helped social studies educators demonstrate the deficiency of narrowly understood allegiances, was sometimes used as a pretext for unleashing ultra-patriotic hysteria with hardly predictable outcomes. It can be assumed that under these circumstances in the first years after the tragic attack, the developers of social studies standards experienced tremendous political and ideological pressures to nicely avoid the suspicious ideas of global citizenship and thus concentrate on more “patriotic” themes.

As a result, the term (and concept) *global citizen(ship)* is only mentioned in the standards of two states although attempts to conceptualize civic commitments that transcend national boundaries are made in the social studies standards (civics and government standards in particular) of many other states. Clearly, how much is the phrase *global citizen* semantically different from *citizen of the world*? Not much; they are almost synonymous. This is not, however, the case with other substitutes, or rather political and ideological euphemisms. Such phrases as “informed, responsible, and participating citizens at the …international level,” “responsible citizens and active participants in …global society,” “productive, informed citizens in a global society,” or “capable citizens in a culturally diverse and interdependent world” are ambiguous and shift the focus. They can be interpreted as an invitation to teachers to use the term *citizen* at their discretion.
Considering the tenacity of the existing traditions and ideological dogmas, there should be little doubt about how the majority of practitioners will construe such terms. There is really more than a two-letter difference between “citizen of an interdependent world” and “citizen in an interdependent world,” let alone “economic citizen in a global economy.” Mixed messages like these in a prescriptive curricular document eventually turn into neglect of a very important concept in the classroom.

Conversely, it should be noted that despite their vagueness and ambiguity, the terms mentioned provide classroom teachers with at least some guidelines regarding global citizenship education, unlike the social studies standards of those states where this concept is not introduced at all in any form. This does not necessarily mean, however, that teachers ignore global citizenship education in those states. But it does mean that teachers lack curricular justification and support if they decide to include elements of global citizenship education in their curricula. It also means that, under the pressure of omnipresent and omnipotent accountability, which as many practitioners know, usually implies that what is not tested is not taught, topics related to global citizenship are buried under more “necessary” materials.

The analysis conducted here also demonstrates some positive steps in the dynamics of curricular promotion of global citizenship education and its elements. For example, the “21st Century Social Studies Content Standards and Objectives for West Virginia Schools,” which were filed in 2007 and became effective on July 1, 2008 state, “Social Studies, as a field of study, embodies the essence of mankind and interconnects the past, present, and future. It investigates where people live and how they participate as citizens of the world” (p. v). This is a new phrase that was recently absent in the standards.
Conclusion

The analysis of the texts of state social studies standards demonstrated that the standards of only 15 states contain the term globalization, and only two states included the term global citizen(ship) in their social studies curriculum standards. This absence of the terms that define the rapidly developing phenomenon of global citizenship in state curricular documents can negatively impact an important area of civic education. Despite the existing criticism, content standards have become an inseparable part of the educational process. They are critical in curriculum development and they also provide in-service and pre-service teachers with curricular and content guidance. The nature and logic of content standards require that they should work for the future. Taking into account the dynamics of standards revision, it is crucial that their developers, in cooperation with teachers and scholars, consider and discuss changes regarding the introduction of emerging social phenomena such as global citizenship. This example of the term globalization, which has been in use in scholarly, educational, and informal everyday discourse for several decades but is only mentioned in the standards of 15 states, should serve as a serious warning. Content in social education is a rapidly changing area and we as educators have to make sure that our students will be prepared to become responsible and informed global citizens in the world of the future.

References


About the Author

Antoli Rapoport is Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at the Purdue University. He teaches courses in elementary and secondary social studies methods and comparative education. His research interests include: comparative aspects of education, influence of culture and ideology on education, and global perspectives in citizenship education. He has published articles in *International Education, Intercultural Education, International Journal of Social Education, Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, and *The Social Studies*. 
COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

TITLE: A Forgotten Concept: Global Citizenship Education and State Social Stud
SOURCE: Journal of Social Studies Research 33 no1 Spr 2009
PAGE(S): 91-112

The magazine publisher is the copyright holder of this article and it is reproduced with permission. Further reproduction of this article in violation of the copyright is prohibited. To contact the publisher: http://www.uni.edu/