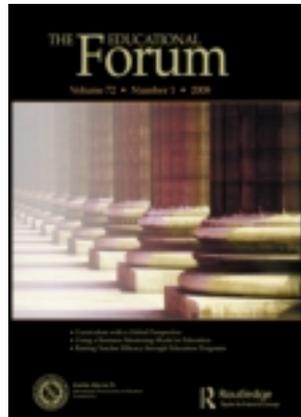


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Considering World History as a Space for Developing Global Citizenship Competencies

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Considering World History as a Space for Developing Global Citizenship Competencies

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Abstract

This article addresses how we might teach for global citizenship in world history classrooms. Despite the name, secondary world history courses in the United States have not consistently focused on global interconnections, multiple perspectives, and inquiry into global issues. We explore why this might be, as well as suggest specific learning activities and curricular topics in world history that could help meet global citizenship goals.

Key words: *curriculum, global citizenship, global education, world history.*

A recent Google search of the term “global citizen” yielded 1,840,000 hits, and a Google Scholar search yielded 8,980 hits. An examination of the search outcomes shows an intriguing range of references. Companies such as Cirque du Soleil and Anheuser-Busch set goals for becoming better global citizens; the Clinton Global Citizenship Award honors people such as Sting and Quincy Jones, as well as world leaders; and there are charter schools devoted to global citizenship, such as the Academy for Global Citizenship in Chicago and the High School for Global Citizenship in New York City. This range indicates the extent to which the term “global citizen” has become part of the lexicon and the degree to which it is viewed as a social good. In scholarly discussions that focus on schools, there is agreement that students should become citizens of the world as well as the nation, particularly at this time of rapid globalization through population movement, digital connections, and economic interactions (cf. Gaudelli, 2003; Merryfield, 2008; Noddings, 2005; Zhao, 2010). As

The authors' names are listed alphabetically to reflect equal contributions. We are grateful for thoughtful feedback on a previous draft from Stuart Carroll and Tamara L. Shreiner.

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Myers (2006) noted, a “national approach to citizenship, which is the norm in U.S. social studies classrooms, is unable to explain the complexity of global issues and their impact on students’ lives” (p. 370).

The concept of global citizenship is an important aspect of social studies education, and is integral to the related field of global education. In the National Council for the Social Studies’ theme of “Civic Ideas and Practices,” for example, students are asked, “What is the role of the citizen in the community and the nation, and as a member of the world community?” (National Council for the Social Studies, 2010). Scholars often list global citizenship as a central aspect of global education (Gaudelli, 2003). Indeed, Gaudelli (2003) contended that global education is a means for discussions of global citizenship to occur. Definitions of global citizenship vary to some degree in social studies and the global education literature, but typically, they include an awareness of the interconnected nature of the world, the ability to engage in inquiry around global issues, and an understanding and appreciation of multiple perspectives (e.g., Merryfield, Lo, Po, & Kasai, 2008; Zhao, 2010).

Despite an abundance of arguments for more inclusion of goals related to global citizenship in K–12 schools, there is less discussion about what specific courses in U.S. schools are particularly suited for such instruction. The secondary world history course, seemingly an ideal place to discuss and encourage some aspects of global citizenship, is often left out of these conversations, although there is some discussion of the synthesis of world history and global citizenship instruction at the college level (cf. Watt, 2012). In this article, we examine how the secondary world history course could potentially become a space in which students learn about and begin to take on the role of global citizens.

Background

In 1999, Parker, Ninomiya, and Cogan wrote about the lack of instruction in global citizenship in the secondary curriculum: “A required world geography course in the seventh grade and an elective world history course in the 10th grade have been better than nothing, certainly, but presently they function as place holders for curriculum deliberations about the proper education of citizens for anticipated world situations (p. 136).” Since that time, world history courses have grown in U.S. schools. Currently 44 states and the District of Columbia explicitly address world history in their content standards, and 23 states require the course for graduation; this marks an increase from 12 states requiring the course in 2004 (Martin, Maldonado, Schneider, & Smith, 2011).

Several studies have reported on the various ways that world history is represented in national, state, and local standards (e.g., Bain & Shreiner, 2005; Dunn, 2009; Marino & Bolgatz, 2010). Despite a few state world history standards that explicitly take a global approach (cf. Bain & Shreiner, 2005; Marino & Bolgatz, 2010), the majority of state standards documents still contain a disproportionate amount of Western history (Crocco, 2011; Myers, 2006). Marino and Bolgatz (2010) found the following areas of emphasis in their study of 23 state standards:

Analysis of the state high school world history standards in the United States suggests that if these documents are being used by teachers as guidelines for how

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to organize their courses, then the world history being experienced by students in classrooms is one heavily reliant on content related to European history in the years between 1500 and 1945, and decontextualized post-1945, with little attention to an integrated, comparative, or world systems approach. (p. 388)

Even courses that do include multiple regions of the world may not do so in a connected way (Marino & Bolgatz, 2010; Zevin & Gerwin, 2011). World history, then, can be seen as a catch-all course title that might include a regional approach, a current affairs approach, a “Western civ” approach, or a global approach depending on the state, district, or school.

Thus, even though past world history courses in the United States may not have been “global” enough to include instruction relevant to global citizenship, there are reasons to be optimistic about future world history courses. Presently, there are examples of state standards and course curricula that do contain a connected global frame. For example, Michigan’s World History Content Expectations include connected standards at the “cross-temporal or global,” “interregional or comparative,” and “regional” levels (Michigan Department of Education, 2007). The Advanced Placement world history course is organized around “key concepts” at very large scales including “emergence of transregional networks of communication and exchange” and “continuity and interactions of state forms and their interactions” (College Board, 2011). Moreover, some states, such as New York and New Jersey, have included standards that have a global emphasis related to more contemporary eras of world history (Marino & Bolgatz, 2010). However, none of the standards that we have examined include global citizenship as a goal or focus of the course. Interestingly, Michigan lists knowledge of world history as important for “citizenship in our democracy” (p. 12), but does not include the global aspects of citizenship. So, what would it take to incorporate the goals of global citizenship into world history courses? In what follows, we discuss the potential of the world history course to address some of the goals and skills of global citizenship.

Addressing Global Citizenship Competencies in World History Courses

Despite the uneven global perspective in world history courses, revising an existing course in most secondary curricula seems more plausible than finding room for another course in which to incorporate global citizenship goals (Thornton, 2005). We posit that courses in world history are ideal locales in an already full curriculum to incorporate and address some of the goals of global citizenship education. Here we would like to highlight the elements of global citizenship, specifically certain associated skills—or competencies—that world history courses are (or could be) well situated to address. To engage in this discussion, we use Zhao’s (2010) description of the nature of global citizenship:

As citizens of the globe, [students] need to be aware of the global nature of societal issues, to care about people in distant places, to understand the nature of global economic integration, to appreciate the interconnectedness and interdependence of peoples, to respect and protect cultural diversity, to fight for social justice for all, and to protect planet earth—home for all human beings. (p. 426)

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Other scholar-advocates for global education echo Zhao (2010). Merryfield et al. (2008, p. 8) highlighted the core elements of global education, including “knowledge of global interconnectedness;” “inquiry into global issues;” and “skills in perspective consciousness.” While researchers have cited additional—and sometimes conflicting—goals of global citizenship education (cf. Gaudelli, 2003, for a synthesis), in this article we focus on three skills that clearly illustrate how world history courses can be an ideal site for global citizenship development: (1) interconnectedness, (2) inquiry, and (3) perspective-taking.

Of course, world history courses would only be able to address some of the competencies that global citizenship advocates suggest. The intent of this article is to highlight the aspects of a robust world history curriculum that would simultaneously address some of the goals of global citizenship. Essentially, we are making two reciprocal arguments: On one hand, world history can be a site for teaching and learning related to the goals of global citizenship. On the other hand, the goals and skills associated with global citizenship can be used to reform world history courses to include a truly global perspective.

In what follows, we demonstrate how each of the three highlighted dimensions of global citizenship can be cultivated in world history classrooms by both considering the conceptual links between the habits of mind of historians and global citizens, and by providing examples of world history topics and activities that illustrate such potential cultivation. We draw these examples, in part, from World History of Us All (WHFUA), an online world history curriculum (<http://worldhistoryforall.sdsu.edu/>).

The WHFUA curriculum is useful for such illustrations not only because it is freely available to all, but also because it provides “a framework for a more unified history of humankind” (Dunn, 2009, p. 263). The curriculum aims to “survey world history without excluding major peoples, regions, or time periods.” What sets the WHFUA curriculum apart from other world history curricula or textbooks is that it offers units at multiple spatial scales: “panorama units” provide a large global story; “landscape units” focus on transregional, comparative, or cross-cultural elements; and “closeup units” focus on case studies. This organizational scheme recognizes the multiple scales at which world history is written and studied, and allows teachers to choose units at scales that best fit the goals of their courses. For example, a teacher might decide to present a large global picture of a particular historical era and then move into units that focus on smaller scales. Additionally, developing global citizens is an explicit rationale of the WHFUA curriculum:

A “global citizen” is simply a national citizen who knows and cares about the history and contemporary affairs of all humankind, a person who can in some measure think, speak, and write about world issues and problems intelligently and confidently. Most of us are generally aware of world interconnections and interdependence. . . . Intelligently addressing today’s world conditions, however, requires more than vague awareness of these realities. (<http://worldhistoryforall.sdsu.edu/shared/thinking.php>)

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Our other examples come from the Bridging World History (<http://www.learner.org/courses/worldhistory/units.html>) and Reading Like an Historian (<http://sheg.stanford.edu/rlh>), both of which are freely available curricular Web sites. Developed by world historians and teachers, Bridging World History is a multimedia online world history course intended for world history teachers and Advanced Placement and college students. The curriculum focuses on global connections and inquiry. The Stanford History Education Group's Reading Like an Historian Web site highlights the literacy practices of historians in lessons for middle and high schools. These sources share characteristics of potentially powerful world history and global citizenship instruction for student learning of inquiry, interconnectedness, and perspective-taking.

World History for Teaching Inquiry into Global Issues

World history provides a foundation for the kind of inquiry required by global citizenship. Whether investigating historical or contemporary global issues, students need practice in thinking and operating on a global scale. However, inquiring about global problems is a challenge, given the scale and scope of our planet and its history (Zevin & Gerwin, 2011). We begin here because, despite the challenge, pursuing global inquiries can undergird an entire world history course. By "inquiry," we mean a process by which information is gathered in response to a question or difficulty and then used to answer the question or resolve the difficulty. This holds across different fields of study, so we must consider what world history in particular brings to bear, and how it relates to inquiry into global issues.

Here, we rely on the work of Newmann and his colleagues (e.g., Newmann, Lopez, & Bryk, 1998; Newmann, Secada, & Wehlage, 1995) and their definition of *disciplined inquiry* (cf. Levstik & Barton, 2001). Disciplined inquiry is characterized by three components: (a) a foundation in a prior knowledge base; (b) an orientation toward deep (as opposed to superficial) understanding; and (c) products to share the knowledge gained, which can take many forms, including written texts (Newmann et al., 1995). World history can provide classrooms conducting global investigations with the needed background knowledge base, the kinds of questions that insist on deep understanding, and genres of writing, such as narrative (Barton & Levstik, 2004) and exposition.

Inquiry into global issues is dependent on the questions that the teacher poses. For instance, the Bridging World History Web site includes a central question for each of its 26 units. The questions are all at a scale that would require teachers and students to investigate many regions of the world to construct answers. Some examples include, "How do diverse political structures and relationships distribute power and material resources?" "What is globalization and when did it begin?" and "How was the story of the industrial revolution a global process?" (<http://www.learner.org/courses/worldhistory/units.html>).

Inquiry into global issues is also dependent on the evidence that is used. One example of an inquiry into global issues comes from the WHFUA curriculum, and its approach to teaching and learning about the Cold War and the impact of this global conflict on

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the “Third World” (http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu/units/nine/landscape/Era09_landscape2.php). The unit is organized around the question, “How did the opposing ideologies of the United States and the Soviet Union affect political, cultural, and economic developments in the Third World?” Across the unit, students examine evidence, including primary sources centered on cases like the Korean War and the Cuban Missile Crisis, to answer this question. Students develop an understanding not only of the competing ideologies of the United States and the Soviet Union, but also of the impact of that conflict on other countries and larger patterns of Cold War politics. The unit ends with students selecting a particular “Third World” country to investigate in depth and sharing their findings with the class via a poster and presentation.

This kind of teaching and learning aligns with the goals of global citizenship because it provides experience with investigating problems at a global scale, while being supported by the framework of history in asking meaningful questions and sharing the fruits of the investigation with others. Beyond practicing this essential set of skills, such global historical investigations also provide the knowledge base for investigating contemporary global issues. For example, students trying to understand contemporary developments such as the Arab Spring (e.g., Why does Russia continue to back Syria’s despotic regime?) would benefit from studying the issue’s historical antecedents, dating back to the Cold War and beyond.

World History for Teaching Interconnectedness

When taught from a global perspective, world history has the potential to help students comprehend the interconnected nature of the past and present. As noted earlier, however, not all world history courses facilitate comprehension of global interconnections that highlight the interdependence of regions, nations, and civilizations. When taught in civilizational or national silos, world history courses may seem disjointed to students and teachers. However, this disjointedness is a misrepresentation of the discipline. Dunn (2009) argued:

State education agencies and school districts have in recent years written scholastic standards that embody outdated and inadequate conceptions of world history. On the whole, world history curriculum in public schools lags well behind the research curve, and it fails to pose enough of the key questions that might help young Americans better understand how the fluid, transnational, economically integrated world in which we live got to be the way it is. (p. 257)

One of the hallmarks of world history scholarship is the inclusion of interregional or global connections, no matter how “small” the object of inquiry. Harris’s (2012) study of 18 years of the writings of a group of world historians found that the historians always included interregional or global connections no matter if the study centered on a large geographical area, the comparison of two nations, or the case study of a person or an object. For example, a world historical comparison of the role of education in China’s Cultural Revolution and Cuba’s Revolutionary Offensive would include not only the comparison, but also the connection of the two movements to global themes of educational reform (Harris, 2012).

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Highlighting global connections throughout history can help students understand the nature of economic, political, and cultural connections today. Merryfield (2008) argued:

Today's students need to see the world as one interrelated system in which increased demand for particular goods and services, lack of jobs, or acceleration of local religious and ethnic conflicts often lead to regional and global movement of people, increased urbanization, conflicts (over identity, land, and resources), and other societal and political problems. (p. 363)

These contemporary global issues have antecedents in earlier historical eras. For instance, the WHFUA curriculum titles the period of time from 1200 BCE–500 CE as “Era 4: Expanding Networks of Exchange and Encounter.” Students studying this period of time from a global perspective learn that:

Interregional systems of communication allowed goods, technologies, and ideas to move, sometimes thousands of miles. Interlocking networks of roads, trails, and sea lanes connected almost all parts of Afroeurasia and, in the Americas, extensive areas of Mesoamerica and the Andean mountain spine of South America. Among the ideas transmitted along these routes were new belief systems, which invited peoples of differing languages and cultural traditions to share common standards of morality and trust. (<http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu/eras/era4.php>)

Thus, even though all parts of the world were not directly connected during this time period, students can examine increased communication and trade networks across large interregions, such as Eurasia. They learn about “giant empires,” such as the Han, Roman, and Persian, that were able to consolidate land and different peoples through increased communication and technological advances. Students can even investigate complex issues of citizenship during this time period (e.g., Who were considered citizens of these empires? Did loyalties align with the empire or with smaller cultural groups?), and then consider the concepts of national and global citizens today. WHFUA presents the units in this era on larger scales than other curricula might do. Some of the “landscape” unit titles include “From the Mediterranean to India: Patterns of power and trade,” “Giant empires of Afroeurasia,” and “Empires and city-states of the Americas.” Even the use of the geographic term *Afroeurasia* signifies an examination of history from a larger scale than any one cultural group or civilization, and necessitates discussions of connections in that interregion.

In Bain and Harris’s (2009) pilot study of middle school world history teachers’ use of the WHFUA curriculum, they found that the teachers discovered and used historical concepts, such as Afroeurasia, “spheres of interaction,” and “zones of cultural exchange,” that were previously unfamiliar to them. The authors note that:

More than simply expanding teachers’ (and students’) vocabulary, the concept seemed to represent for teachers an important category to “contain” large scale, interconnected changes. Learning to use the concept “Afro-Eurasia” helped teachers look outside the standard “containers” for history, such as events or discrete political units. (p. 6)

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One of the teachers in the study explained that “references to Afro-Eurasia helped students make connections, even when focusing upon specific regions or civilizations” (p. 8).

Another way to highlight global connections in history is to examine the history of a particular object or food that students are familiar with. This could be done comparatively by examining, for example, the layout of living rooms in various parts of the world in the 19th century (<http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu/units/seven/closeup/closeup7120.php>), by investigating origins of various commodities or foods such as coffee (<http://www.thegatesnotes.com/Topics/Education/Bob-Bain-Big-History-of-Coffee>), or by engaging in inquiry over the invention of pizza and the origin of its ingredients (Zevin & Gerwin, 2011).

Focusing more on interconnections in world history need not require major curricular modifications. In some cases, it might involve using concepts, such as zones of cultural exchange or spheres of interaction, that can help students connect different regions to larger patterns. In other cases, it might involve having students use larger geographical scales, such as Eurasia, Afroeurasia, or the Americas, as lenses to the past. In still other cases, it might involve teachers taking some time to present or have students investigate case studies that show the interconnectedness of various regions of the world throughout time.

World History for Teaching Multiple Perspectives

Historical empathy, a central skill of historians (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Lévesque, 2008), is closely related to the global citizenship skill of understanding multiple perspectives (also referred to as perspective consciousness). Merryfield et al. (2008) argued that for the global citizen,

... perspective consciousness creates an appreciation of how one's cultural beliefs, values and norms of behavior shape perception and interpretation of events or issues. It . . . allows students to understand how and why individuals in their local community or across the planet may perceive events or issues quite differently. (p. 11)

But understanding is not enough for a global citizen. According to Zhao (2010), students need to *care* about people across the globe, and *respect* those differing views and positions on global issues. Lévesque (2008) concurred: “Historical empathy . . . is essential to a citizenry because it allows one to consider one's own and others' perspectives on a contested past and collectively envisioned future” (p. 169).

Historical empathy includes both the cognitive and affective components that global citizenship requires. Barton and Levstik (2004) differentiated between these two dimensions by discussing *empathy as perspective-recognition* and *empathy as caring*. Historical empathy as perspective-taking involves understanding the worldview and meaning-making structures of people in the past, akin to Merryfield et al.'s (2008) perspective consciousness. Empathy as caring, in contrast, allows emotion to enter into the classroom.

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Most curricular examples from world history, including those we will present below, emphasize the cognitive, perspective-recognition dimension of empathy.

These historical skills enable students to understand people around the world by coming to understand what makes up their worldview. Consider Lee's (2005) reflection on a challenge of historical understanding:

If [students] treat people in the past as less than fully human and do not respond to those people's hopes and fears, they have hardly begun to understand what history is about. But people in the past can appear to be strange and sometimes to do peculiar things (things we would not do) and so it is not always easy for students to accord them respect. (p. 47)

Whereas Lee is referring to understanding historical actors, no doubt the same charge could be leveled at understanding "others" around the globe. Just as there are both cognitive and affective elements to historical empathy, it also requires the individual to reconcile conflicting realities:

This imaginative achievement in understanding how people in the past felt, thought, and acted differently from people today demands thoughtful effort. . . . It requires two somewhat complementary but incongruent elements: (1) an appreciation for different perspectives on human activities and beliefs; and (2) an acknowledgement of a shared humanity that transcends space, time, and culture. (Lévesque, 2008, p. 148)

This is a challenge for all of us, not just students. Realizing that we must work hard to understand the worldviews and actions of people in different times and places, because they are different from us, can paradoxically allow us to see the common humanity that we share.

Fortunately, there is no shortage of opportunities in history to explore multiple perspectives. For example, in a lesson from the Reading Like a Historian curriculum on China's Cultural Revolution, students analyze a range of evidence, including memoirs of participants, to answer the question, "Why did Chinese youth get swept up in the Cultural Revolution?" Through this investigation, students experience the tension that Lévesque (2008) describes, since they are studying students about their own age who are living through a very unique set of historical circumstances. The lesson involves the universal human element of adolescent rebellion against authority, but also specific circumstances of a totalitarian regime undergoing massive changes in a short span. The Cultural Revolution is viewed as a tragic event from a Western perspective, but this lesson helps students understand how historical actors on different sides became participants.

Another example comes from the WHFUA curriculum—Era 9 (1945–Present)—and asks students to investigate developing trends in worldwide wealth and poverty since 1950 (http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu/units/nine/landscape/Era09_landscape4.php). The first objective of the unit centers on understanding different perspectives: "Explain what poverty and wealth have meant to different people and how

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the definition of each has varied at different times and in different contexts” (p. 2). Although not an explicit objective, the unit has the potential to increase students’ care about the fate of the poor around the world. The unit begins with a multiday lesson that explores the different, evolving definitions of wealth and poverty over time, growing inequality, and the causes of wealth inequality.

Both of these examples ask students to understand different perspectives, and it seems clear that in doing so, they would be practicing the cognitive dimension of historical empathy. In turn, this practice seems aligned with our highlighted competencies of global citizenship.

Conclusion

Perhaps the first thing to notice across the focal areas and curricular examples in this article is their mutually reinforcing nature. It is difficult to talk about inquiry without also touching on multiple perspectives. Many of our examples could have been used to illustrate different connections between world history and global citizenship. The world history course provides an opportunity to focus not only on some of the competencies desired of global citizens (understanding and appreciating multiple perspectives, engaging in inquiry of global issues, and understanding connections across time and space), but also to examine the content related to the concept of a global citizen (e.g., What has *citizen* meant to people in different time periods and regions? What do we mean by *global citizen* today? How do people outside of the United States think about global citizenship, or do they?). As Myers (2006) has noted, “The implications are that ‘global’ citizenship is fundamentally a local practice that diverse cultures will conceptualize and construct differently” (p. 377). Focusing on some of the understanding and appreciation skills of global citizenship—as articulated by Zhao (2010) and discussed in this article—may provide a foundation for the social justice advocacy goals that he also includes: protecting cultural diversity and the earth, and fighting for social justice for all.

As mentioned earlier, there are currently some world history courses with a global framework that are already primed for including skills and content included in global citizenship goals. Given the multifacetedness and overlapping nature of these skills, it would not be necessary to completely overhaul the curriculum in these cases, but instead would require teachers and curriculum writers to be more purposeful about how to connect world historical content with global citizenship skills. For world history courses with a regional approach, more of a focus on comparison, two-way contact and exchange between regions and cultures, and cases connected to global and interregional patterns (cf. Harris, 2012) would allow for a “globalization” of the course and allow more of a focus on global citizenship.

World history is but one course in the larger social studies and school curriculum. To truly produce global citizens, there will need to be sustained efforts across multiple courses and grades (Merryfield, 2008). However, with more explicit attention paid to a global framework in world history and the incorporation of global citizenship skills, world history can be an important space where this work takes place.

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