

Global Citizenship Education:

Empowering Change with a Global Mindset

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Introduction

In this new era of globalization, principals, teachers and educational leaders need to develop and implement an intentional strategy to include a global component—Global Citizenship Education (GCE)—in our current school curriculum. GCE can help students understand the interdependent and interconnected nature of global society. It aims to develop the skills, attitudes, dispositions, and global and intercultural competencies which students will need to solve some of our many global challenges, a few of which are climate change, global inequality (among individuals in a country and among countries), racism, migration, and poverty.

As I have learned about global injustices, I have also reflected on and desired to understand injustices closer to home, and one in particular: the US public school system's process by which kids are learning—or not learning enough—about the new, globalized world.

I then realized that Global Citizenship Education defines the scope of my major and practical social justice interest and, consequently, the topic of my thesis project. It combines my desire to raise awareness about inequality, globalization, and the impact of our lifestyles, to name a few, and also to encourage the US Education system to create a new curriculum that includes GCE. The book *Empowering Global Citizens – A World Course* is one of many suggested curricula to empower students to become global citizens. For example, one reason this curriculum is recommended is that it states that GCE must “provide all students with effective opportunities to develop the dispositions, knowledge, and capabilities necessary to understand the world in which they live, to make sense of the way in which globalization shapes their lives, and to be good stewards of and contributors to the Sustainable Development Goals” (Reimers et al. Preface xx). Accordingly, I believe schools must provide the ideal learning environment to promote global citizenship that will prepare students to succeed in our globalized, diverse, and interdependent

world. From kindergarten on up, students can become aware that we are all citizens of the same world, and that together, we have a civic responsibility that will require our collective action if we hope to achieve justice and peace.

Schools should not only teach students how to write, read, and perform at science and math, but also teach ethics, global solidarity, and human values. Students must learn to feel, think, and act with the awareness of global citizens through activities that gradually open their minds to understand our interdependence, diversity, and shared humanity. As a researcher, I acknowledge that this is my own perception of the school's role. However, I have interpreted all my fieldwork participants' answers as agreeing that it is important to teach these concepts, and it has given me hope that I might be have a chance to introduce it in my community.

In response to the era of globalization and its impact around the world, the education system of Lake Washington school district must create space for a Global Citizenship Education (GCE) curriculum to help students develop an understanding of the world in which we live, learn to collaborate with people with different backgrounds (Culture/Diversity), and comprehend the way in which globalization shapes our lives.

This thesis represents not only knowledge and skills I have acquired during this master's program, but also my desire to find new ways to tackle global problems so as to help create a world with sustainable peace. Once I realized that people still need to learn how different parts of our global system work and how they influence one another within a whole, I knew that our education system could play a vital part in tackling global problems. Therefore, the first section of my thesis will explain the theories of globalization and relevant concepts that further make up the problems: the impact of our consumer lifestyle, free trade agreements, mass media, and climate change. Second, the thesis will show how our education system can introduce a holistic

view of our global system by teaching Global Citizenship Education (GCE). This method will include its historical context and explain the world's need for Global Citizens whose values and self-identity as global citizens, not only national ones, will aid them in solving global problems. Finally, I will explain the barriers in integrating GCE in current educational curriculum, include my fieldwork experiences, and provide my plan to begin teaching GCE in alternative, afterschool programs.

Globalization theory

Globalization is referred to as the process of global integration and interaction by which people and countries become more closely connected. It is not a new concept since the "processes of global interconnectedness are a continuation of trading links and forms of cultural and political exchange which have been going on for centuries" (Willis 197). Advances in technology, transportation, and telecommunications infrastructure have been major factors in globalization. Consequently, more and more world citizens experience economic, political, social, and cultural activities more easily and at a larger scale. Globalization, however, has different meanings for different people; because of it, each person is affected in various ways, and it is real to almost everyone. Indeed, a new global society, not simply a global economy, has been forming all around us.

Globalization, however, is not new; the scales of these processes have increased significantly in the last decades. In its many different waves, it has always affected people in different ways; "no one experiences globalization in all its complexity, but globalization is significant insofar as it reshapes the daily lives of billions of people" (Lechner 106). Since globalization has so changed people's lives, it is important to understand its real interconnective

impact. For example, the manufacturing cycle of products can cause negative externalities such as human exploitation, health problems, and massive amounts of toxic waste in depository locations. I have become aware that even the people who seek to live in a just world are caught in the middle of intertwined complexities of economic and ecological injustices woven into our lives. Systematic exploitation of people and of the earth through economic systems has led to human injustices and environmental degradation. Some of us want to build a peaceful global society; however, if we don't understand how our world's complex system works, we will negatively acquiesce to injustices and collaborate with the negative system without knowing it.

Consumer lifestyle

A culture of consumerism, a for-profit capitalistic economy, and the lack of policies in developing world have led to sweatshops, environmental degradation, and human health problems. Consumerism is the culture or ideology of excessive consumption of material goods or services. Although we know that consumerism is good for the economy, we often do not realize its side effects. For the economy, consumerism is a virtue because it makes people want material things, so people work hard to buy those things which then ensures that the economy stays active and healthy. However, a society based largely on materialistic consumerism loses the real value of its products—wants are not needs.

Economic growth should instead go hand in hand with fairness and environmental sustainability. Uncontrolled consumerism creates shopping habits where clothes are not "a need" anymore but "a want." Cheap, virtually disposable products, clothes are one of many concerns in clothing production. Corporations need to compete with lower and lower prices, so they gain profits by demanding factories lower their costs. Still, factories must make their own profits. Therefore, if a factory does not accept the corporation's low price of production, it loses the

work, and the corporation will move to other factories. Lowering manufacturing costs also contributes to worker exploitation. In the Guardian article “Sweatshops are Still Supplying High Street Brands,” Madeleine Bunting emphasizes that many famous brands such as Adidas, Nike, Speedo, and Puma constantly break the rules that protect workers. It is worth noting that “[f]actories in three countries – the Philippines, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka – were surveyed, and not one of them paid a living wage to their combined 100,000-strong workforce. Many of them didn't even pay the legal minimum wage” (Bunting). According to International Textile Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF) report, “76% of the surveyed workforce are women” (Bunting). The report found that “sexual intimidation and abuse was common” (Bunting) among young women in Sri Lanka, and “excessive overtime was the norm in sportswear and leisurewear factories in Indonesia” (Bunting). The corporation/factory/worker trio often minimizes rights. Human rights, labor rights, and labor standards are every citizen's right. The dismal living conditions of many women workers around the world is unacceptable. When workers have low wages, work long hours, and suffer cruel treatment from management, they are being exploited.

One of globalization’s benefits is lifting populations out of extreme poverty by creating jobs. Developed countries import a significant percentage of goods from overseas; in the United States, for example, Asian and Latin American factories make most of the large brand corporations’ garments. It makes perfect sense to manufacture the products in a country where wages are cheaper, but what does not make sense is the hidden costs workers are paying. The clothes we buy are part of a global industry that affects all parts of the world, and often we, as consumers, are not aware of the “rights” impact that the “hidden costs” have on the people who makes our clothes. Sweatshops, for example, are one of the challenges of globalization.

In *Everyday Justice*, author Julie Clawson explains that illegal working conditions, child labor, worker exploitation, and forced labor are some of the problems workers face in factories that make our clothes. These sweatshops allow "working environments with dangerous conditions, where the workers have few rights and often work long hours for little to no pay" (Clawson 125). To eliminate the sweatshop concerns, corporations must have social responsibility and, together with factories, be held accountable if they do not follow the code of conduct in labor rights. If they act responsibly, it will prevent sweatshops from violating human rights. In addition, consumers should also share the responsibility and buy ethically made clothes.

Clawson suggests that we practice justice every day by being aware of our choices and knowing the truth behind the products we use daily. However, she warns us that acting justly requires making changes in our lifestyles which can be difficult and can make us feel overwhelmed (Clawson 14). Clawson adds that this change involves our applying our moral values and ethical standards to our consumer habits (26). After reading Clawson's book, I knew I could not live in the same way as before. I started doing my own research, and it was clear that work exploitation was not a problem in only the garment industry but also in many other industries such as coffee, chocolate, banana, and tea, just to name a few. That said, I was able to buy these products via fair trade and make a weekly subscription to Full Circle Organic Local Farm. I could also pay more attention to package or single-use plastic, but I still found it difficult to buy ethical clothes in local stores. However, I was able to find brands such as Pact and Patagonia, and I installed mobile apps such as "Good on You" and "Better World" to learn which brands are ethical and to help me in the process. In all, our family is decidedly involved in trying to reduce our consumption and to be more conscious about our new purchases.

We are just one family, but in our globalized world, every choice we all make reverberates around the world. It is so important for consumers everywhere to become aware of their choices and seek to understand the process involved to make each item. When buying clothes or footwear, we don't readily think about the environment or cost to human health but doing so will make us socially responsible. The solution is not to claim that low paying jobs are preferable to lower paid farm jobs; neither of these shut down the sweatshops. Yes, the people need the work the sweatshops provide; however, that is no reason to justify mistreating them, and corporations and factories should not be able to do so. Everyone can make a difference by choosing ethically made products or supporting NGOs campaigns against Western multinationals' use of sweatshops.

The hidden costs do not stop there. The garment industry also contributes toward environmental destruction. The process of creating the garment starts in the cotton fields where workers use large amounts of fertilizers and pesticides, and "since cotton is not intended for human consumption, there are few regulations regarding the amount of chemicals applied to this crop" (Clawson 122). Unsustainable practices such as chemicals dumped in water, fields contaminated by pesticides, and the use of toxic products without precautions and warnings are causing vast land destruction and serious health problems. The garment industry does not negatively affect only human rights, it also damages the environment.

Consumerism lifestyles, then, are problematic in many ways, and globalization has led to an increased consumerism which has affected the planet's ecological cycle. With significant consumption increases, the production and processing of commodities require an extensive extraction and use of natural resources such as wood, fossil fuels, and water. In addition, these processes require more factories whose operations create pollution and waste as toxic

byproducts. These factors have also contributed to negative climate change because "global warming results from the release of greenhouse gases in specific manufacturing centers and high-consumption countries" (Lechner and Boli 4). Beyond the garment factory workers' exploitation and the industry's environmental damage, the garment industry has—as do many other industries—hidden costs, too. For instance, we have not even considered the millions of clothes that end up in landfills, and few think of clothes' recycling costs.

Globalization, then, requires that we school ourselves on topics that we may not have considered before. The impact of the fast fashion industry alone is having on our world demands our life changes. For instance, consider the disruption of local textiles industries in Africa. In the Guardian article "How second-hand clothing donations are creating a dilemma for Kenya," Jackeline Kubania emphasizes, "According to Oxfam, more than 70% of the clothes donated globally end up in Africa." (Kubania). East African head of states proposed to stop importing used clothes so that the country can recover its own local industry. Kubania explains that Kenya's textile industry decline happened "when market liberalization policies spearheaded by the World Bank opened up the local economy to second-hand clothes" devastating the livelihoods of the local textile industry.

This used clothing situation links to what sounds like a good option—free trade. Such is not always so, for "[u]nder the name of 'free trade,' very inexpensive textiles produced in the United States were 'dumped' (sold at very low price) in [the African] nation" (Moe-Lobeda 24) driving local people out of business "from self-sustaining livelihoods into poverty" (Moe-Lobeda 24). One of the Global Citizenship Education's goal is to teach about international trade and this example demonstrates the potentially negative impact of local actions on global repercussions.

Free trade

Regardless of any negative effects, however, globalized trade is likely here to stay, and it connects to countless aspects of our daily lives. Free trade has thrived. From food, clothes, appliances, etc., it has become indispensable, and with its transportation advances, free trade has not only been beneficial, it has also made economic sense. Globalization's economic results are visible. For example, "the total value of world trade exploded from \$57 billion in 1947 to an astonishing \$18.5 trillion in 2015" (Steger 42). Via an integrated global economy, globalization is affecting a profound influence upon national and international lives. In fact, free trade and the interconnected global economy have the potential to benefit everyone in the world, particularly the poor. In 2015, according to the United Nations, the Millennium Global Reports indicates that "the percentage of people living in extreme poverty (on less than \$1.25 a day) in developing world fell from nearly 50 per cent in 1990 to 14 per cent in 2015" (Steger 43). China and India are prime examples of that benefit: "Millions of people have been lifted out of poverty in developing countries such as China, India, or Indonesia" (Steger 43). In 2015, China, "the world's leading manufacturer, was responsible for 12.7 per cent of global merchandise exports, whereas the USA, the world's most voracious consumer, accounted for 12.9 per cent of global merchandise imports" (Steger 42). Besides lifting people from extreme poverty, free trade can lower costs of products and services. Since production using low cost labor can take place far away from the markets to which products are shipped, free trade also promotes openness, encourages technological exchange, and allows for efficient use of resources.

Moreover, free trade goes against protectionism which leads to inefficiency, higher prices, and limited economic growth. In 1995, the World Trade Organization (WTO) was created to deal with the global rules of trade between members. The WTO has since been criticized and

the focus of many protests, including Seattle's protest in 1999. A new debate started taking place in relation to WTO role, rules, and “[c]oncern about stagnant jobs, job losses, growing inequality, and environmental degradation” (Capling and Higgott 280). In *One World Now – the Ethics of Globalization*, Peter Singer claims that the four charges against WTO and the economic globalization are as follows:

1. Economic globalization places economic considerations ahead of concerns for the environment, animal welfare, and even human rights.
2. Economic globalization erodes state sovereignty.
3. Economic globalization affects everyone, but a small group of rich countries dominate trade negotiations and push through the trade deals that favor them.
4. Economic globalization increases inequality; or (as a stronger charge) it makes the rich richer and leaves the world’s poorest people even worse off than they would otherwise have been. (Singer 73)

For example, one of its criticisms targets protectionist agricultural trade policies such as market access restrictions, export subsidies, and domestic support. Farmers in South and Central America, Africa, and Asia struggle to compete in the agriculture markets. “Agriculture is one area in which developing countries often produce more economically than developed countries; but because both the United States and the European Union subsidize their farmers, developing countries cannot sell their products on the world market” (Singer 75). Stiglitz emphasizes that Western countries have pushed trade liberalization for the products that they export but have protected those sectors in which competition from developing countries might have threatened their economies. Critics of globalization have accused Western countries of developing an unfair trade agenda in which they “have pushed poor countries to eliminate trade barriers, but kept up

their own barriers, preventing developing countries from exporting their agricultural products and so depriving them of desperately needed export income” (Stiglitz 104).

In the recent book *Globalization and its Discontents Revisited Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump*, an updated version of the best-seller nearly two decades ago, Joseph E. Stiglitz, a Nobel Prize winning economist, emphasizes that if Globalization is well managed, it can benefit a huge percentage of the population. Stiglitz advises that we adopt broader progressive reforms to build and manage a more inclusive global economy. Yet, he claims that the discontent with globalization has fueled a wave in US populism in other advanced economies and that the new Trump protectionism will make this heightened populism worse. Although Stiglitz is very critical of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization, he gives examples of some globalization benefits such as hundreds of millions of people moving out of poverty, increasing in life expectancy, and decreasing in global diseases. In fact, he states that globalization "has contributed to creating the fastest rate of global economic growth ever, the successes of emerging markets in particular, with hundreds of millions moving out of poverty—more than 800 million in China alone—and the creation of a new global middle class" (Stiglitz Introduction xix). Stiglitz argues that “globalization’s opponents in the emerging markets and developing countries are joined by those in the middle and lower classes of the advanced industrial countries” (Stiglitz Introduction xvi). For example, the author claims that American citizens’ discontent arises from many reasons such as stagnant incomes and an increase in poverty and inequality rates.

Free trade agreements seek to eliminate barriers to imports and to foster international trade, which can bring economic benefits, efficiency, and growth. However, free trade comes at a price which, although largely ignored, has caused significant environmental degradation. One

such degradation is the increase in transportation products. For instance, in earlier times, people consumed locally-grown food, but with free trade and globalization, people today consume products that have been grown in and shipped from foreign countries. While we all enjoy the resulting varieties of foods, they come at a transportation cost. The vast amounts of fuel required to transport these products have led to increased pollution levels in the environment. Moreover, as free trade increases the scale of economic activity and produces more material goods, the process results in more byproducts which, in turn, cause more air and water pollution. Certain free trade agreements remove the protection of natural resources, sometimes described as trade barriers, and the positive effects of the trade sometimes overshadow the negative environmental effects which makes it more difficult for member countries to enact new environmental regulations. Within a free market system, "environmental controls may be regarded as limits to free trade or providing too great a brake on potential economic growth" (Willis 185). And that is why we need international trade agreements working side by side with environmental concerns; otherwise, we can face a massive social, economic, and ecological disaster. Working together will be essential, for global capitalism has made it convenient for powerful multinationals and corporations to protect their own interests and for-profit business models over the impact on the environment.

With environmental concerns and business profits as daily news topics—whether political, local, or national—they are likely to stay in the public eye here in Seattle or worldwide. The ever-present mass media will ensure we know staggering facts, and at the same time, the media's advertising speaks its own language.

Mass media

Real or “fake” news, the mass media informs us about climate change, free trade, etc., but it also aids and abets our consumer complex. We see cars, clothes, trips, homes, lessons, and more, and we think, “I want it.” But again, want is not need.

Spreading consumerism ideology creates and sustains the need for the products; consider the times when "the advertising industry just exploded with this goal—fabricating consumers, trapping people into consumerism, and it's done with great sophistication" (Chomsky 126). In a way, the media has manipulated us, and perhaps we have not realized the consequences of sometime wasteful lifestyles. But, every year, nations in the “global North” produce millions of tons of toxic waste, much of it the result of consumerism, and "the United States generates more than 275 million tons of toxic waste every year and is the leading waste-exporting country in the world" (Shiva 570). Consequently, these actions affect the health of people who are less responsible for the ecological disaster caused by unsustainable global capitalism.

After learning how my lifestyle was affecting others, I wanted to understand the media’s role in my consumerism. In her book, *No Is Not Enough – Resisting Trump’s Shock Politics and Winning the World We Need*, Naomi Klein, a Canadian author of *No Logo* and *This Changes Everything*, social activist, and filmmaker, explains how branding become more important than products themselves. Klein points out that corporations create an idea or brand associated with it and then “[u]se it to connect with consumers who share its values” (Klein 24). She explains that large corporations and multinationals such as Nike, Apple, Tommy Hilfiger, and Starbucks have preferred to spend their money on marketing and advertising rather than on manufactures. Klein observed that highly branded companies have claimed the following:

Producing goods was only an incidental part of their operations, and that, thanks to recent victories in trade liberalization and labor law reform, [highly branded companies] could have their products produced for them at bargain-basement prices by contractors and subcontractors ... It didn't really matter who did the physical work, because the real value lay not in the manufacturing but in design, innovation, and of course market. (25)

Such branding, of course, is recognizable everywhere. At the same time, it does not support sustainable business development, one of the main topics of GCE. We cannot sustain positive growth when business success is measured by a brand image not by the actual product plus the business's positive impact on the environment and manufacturing. Today, brands exercise an incredible amount of cultural power. However, through GCE's teaching about sustainable development, students can learn the facts about brands and then learn how to make ethical purchasing choices themselves.

These ethical choices are in front of each of us. How do we counteract our own consumerism? We can look for answers in *Resisting Structural Evil*, in which Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda introduces a three-fold moral vision: "1) [consider] the consequences of economic and ecological injustice woven into our lives; 2) [make] more just and sustainable alternatives; and 3) [assume] moral-spiritual power for embracing these alternatives" (Moe-Lobeda 5). The book is a wake-up call for all of us who seek to live in a just world but are caught in the middle of the intertwined complexities of economic and ecological injustices woven in our lives. I agree with Moe-Lobeda when she writes, "If I am professing love for my neighbor by feeding the poor and sheltering the homeless, and yet I am ignoring the systematic factors that have made them hungry and homeless, am I loving my neighbor?" (Moe-Lobeda 57). In these thoughts, she moves us from recognizing the reality of structural injustice to envisioning its practicable

alternatives. Our "moral vision must extend beyond interpersonal relationships to social-structural and ecological relationships" (Moe-Lobeda 61).

In our capitalist culture, our present model of economic growth is not ecologically sustainable. It fails to account for the negative environmental impacts of unchecked global trade agreements as well as of a materialist, consumer culture. Together, these agents are causing social costs and the depletion of natural resources. The resulting cost of pollution and environmental damage is causing our climate to change.

Climate change

Climate change is now a household word, and globalization has increased the world's concern about it. In recent years, globalization has led countries to overexploit their natural resources, and consequently, it has led to increasing environmental degradation.

For instance, some state that "global warming and environmental degradation are inevitable byproducts of economic development, and states are too much concerned with their own development to take serious action about such problems" (Lechner and Boli 229). Climate change, however, not economic growth, is the earth's most serious and pressing problem. The world needs both proactive involvement and interventions from each nation, global organization, and non-governmental organization (NGOs) to deal with this immense threat to humanity and all ecosystems on Earth. All nations must work together to find and implement solutions to transition society towards a carbon neutral world such as applying carbon emissions tax to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, one of the causes of global warming.

Climate change is not only an environmental problem; it can also disrupt social, economic, and political systems. Every country will be affected by the impacts of climate

change, but certain countries are more vulnerable than others. Unfortunately, the people who are the least responsible for the problem are the ones most vulnerable to it, not only because of the impact they will suffer, but because of their limited ability to mitigate and deal with the problems.

Global warming, an aspect of climate change, refers to an increase in the average temperature near the earth's surface, which affects its ecosystems. Thus, climate change is a global problem. Many factors contribute to the overall climate change, but the main one is the increase of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane in the atmosphere.

Organizations such as the United Nations help coordinate conferences to reach informed solutions, and "peoples and their governments around the world need global institutions to solve collective problems that can only be addressed on a global scale" (Slaughter 285). These global problems are only getting worse, not better.

Increasingly, some attribute frequent natural hazards such as hurricanes, floods, and fires to climate change; these affect many people and often cause deaths and economic losses. The fact of climate change may make possible more and more disastrous scenarios such as the US has recently experienced with hurricanes Harvey and Irma, each causing destruction, flooding, and displacing large numbers of people. Wildfires in the US West have increased in frequency and intensity. Many other countries such as India, Bangladesh, and Nepal are experiencing unprecedented heat waves as well heavy rain which causes massive flooding in recent years.

Unfortunately, the impact of some disasters falls disproportionately on poor people as they are more likely to live in vulnerable areas, and they have fewer resources to prepare for or recover from disasters. Comparing the average annual per capita carbon footprints of the rich and poor—and the many poor in the Global South—researchers see a clear difference between the

two. "The average American's annual carbon footprint—20.4 tons—is around 2,000 times that of someone living in the African nation of Chad. And the average Briton will emit as much carbon dioxide (CO₂) in one day as a Kenyan will in an entire year" (Oliver). This difference is called an emission debt. The article "Climate Debt Denial," by Andrew Ross, a Professor of Social and Cultural Analysis at New York University, explains that "carbon debts can be measured more reliably, on the basis of atmospheric emissions estimates, and it is this portion of the ecological obligation that emerged as the main vehicle for demanding repayment of what subsequently became as climate debt" (Ross). These measures can help hold the rich nations accountable. Countries responsible for the majority of emissions have the social and moral obligation to help the countries that will be most affected yet have done little to cause the damage. Preventive planning is vital in mitigating impacts on socio-economic and environmental systems, particularly the most vulnerable, and it can increase resilience in local communities. Countries also need an over-all picture and plan of mitigation and recovery which includes their local communities' resilience and external assistance.

That over-all picture shows the environmental destruction which also contributes significantly to climate change, and such destruction occurs in the oceans, in the globe's dwindling ice supply, in weather patterns, and in ecosystems. Understanding the root causes of the problems together with providing education that makes people aware of the impact and teaches them about solutions, we can take actions and make choices that will have a positive effect on the world.

The Global North, however, has built up an enormous ecological debt based on unrestricted use of fossil fuels to develop and build its economy. Consequently, it must lead in climate change justice. It owes reparation and concern to those locations that will suffer most

because of its environmental damages—the small islands, the least developed countries, landlocked countries as well as vulnerable communities all around the world. Climate change creates new interdependence among countries, large and small, and this connection of complex dynamics requires global co-operation if climate justice is to prevail. It will not be easy, but it is crucial to the future of humankind and all life on earth.

This vital change needs to happen on small as well as on large scales. For example, our family has been keenly aware of climate change effects. In the last several years, we have experienced heat waves while in Portugal, and we have breathed low quality air from the smoke spreading from California wildfires. These climate events have become more frequent and more concerning for us. As a result, around four years ago, we questioned what we could do to minimize our climate impact, especially regarding carbon emissions, by reducing our carbon footprint. Our goal was to be the change we'd like to see in others; since then, we've adopted new technologies and new behavioral changes as well. First, we traded our gasoline cars for electric cars that use clean energy. Thus, we stopped giving our money to the fossil fuel companies. This change also required us to sell our trailer since we no longer had a car that could pull it. We've also subscribed to a Green Power Plan where we pay a bit more for electricity, but the plan ensures that our electricity comes from renewable energy sources. Even though we don't get as much sun in western Washington as in some other states, it is still a viable region for solar energy. Consequently, we have invested in rooftop solar panels which will allow us to generate about 70% of our yearly electric consumption.

More recently, we have decided to fully electrify our house and stop using natural gas for our home or water. After improving the insulation of our house, we replaced our old furnace and water heater, which were at the end of their lifetimes, with new technology based on heat pumps.

The heat pump is a highly efficient technology that allows us to use clean energy to heat our house even during the coldest days of winter. There's no exhaust coming from our house anymore, and once again, we have stopped contributing to the fossil fuel companies that extract and sell natural gas. Some of our new behavioral changes involve reducing consumption of different items such as clothing and red meat. We also avoid buying products that are not ethical; we don't exploit employees; and we consider environmental impacts of our actions. Some of our changes have been experiments for us. We have wanted to show that these changes have enhanced our quality of life and that even in places like Seattle, it's still feasible to rely heavily on solar energy and fully electrify transportation and houses to use clean energy and stop relying on fossil fuels.

Education is the keystone to connecting humans with other humans and with nature. Enhancing people's sensibility to nature will help restore this connection, increase their compassion and concern, and motivate them to get involved to protect the environment. Being aware of the negative impacts that trade and consumerism have on the environment and on us all will help lead to a new global, civil society. Knowledge and awareness are the first steps, but without action no change will occur. Schools can play an important part if they implement Global Citizenship Education into their curriculum.

Possible curricular solutions

Global citizenship education

For some people, GCE is a movement; for others, it is a complex concept difficult to fully define. Although there is no unique way to conceptualize it, in the context of a global society, GCE contains ideologies about “globalization,” “citizenship,” and “education” that promote

giving students an education with emphases on human rights/civics, sustainable development, poverty, cultural diversity, and global solidarity. It is an education that encourages engagement, understanding, critical reflection, and meaningful connections between past events and current ones; its goal is to motivate students to adopt active roles to resolve global challenges and contribute to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, and sustainable world.

Globalization, itself, demands a new kind of education. For that reason, the US will need to reevaluate its education system and its purpose and eventually develop actions and comprehensive education strategies such as the Global Citizenship Education (GCE), hopefully as an educational priority in the twenty-first century.

GCE is a complex concept because the words in the acronym—global, citizenship, education—often mean different things to different people. There are no official practices, no single curriculum, nor unique ways to educate for global citizenship. For example, the environmentally destructive view I described in the first part of my thesis shows ways in which globalization has negatively affected other people and the environment. To avoid further negativity, I recommend an approach that also includes the facts and values of Humans Rights, Social Justice, Peace, Sustainability, and Diversity Education.

Sant et al argue, “GCE contains in itself different underlying ideologies about the meaning of citizenship, globalization, and the role of education in a global society” (Sant et al. 21). Although this broad definition might seem an obstacle, it can have a positive effect since it will require curriculum to be contextualized, not a mandatory one-model-fits-all style or one to “be reduced to a specific set of educational practices” (Sant et al. 27). If we impose a unique framework it “can be understood as a way to impose Western version of what a ‘Global citizen’ should be to non-Western countries in order to maintain the Western hegemony” (Sant et al.

24). Therefore, I will examine GCE via its underlying ideologies about the purpose of education and global citizenship. Based on the context of my qualitative research, I will work from a definition that seems needed in a global society.

There are various conceptual frameworks for GCE: Oxfam, the Maastricht Convention, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Savvy, and the Center for Global Education at Asia Society.

Historical context

A predecessor to GCE is global education “which emerged in the late 1960s at the peak of the Cold War, in the context of various emancipatory movements throughout the world and with growing awareness about environmental concerns” (Gaudelli 38). Much of its literature focuses on “denuclearization, war/peace studies, and third generation human rights” (Gaudelli 40). Global education experienced a sudden increase and “began to appear in NGO and school curriculum materials in the mid-1990s, mainly in the UK and North America” (Sant et al. 14) in the literature towards multiculturalism and diversity. Around the first decade of the twenty-first century, with the shift from not just understanding the world or raising awareness about global concerns about social action and engagement, global education was renamed GCE “to emphasize activism and social justice while highlighting civic duties and belonging, thus the inclusion of citizenship” (Gaudelli 40). Around the world, “it is included as part of some national curriculums (e.g. Ecuador, Republic of Korea, and Scotland)” (Sant et al. 21). It is a worthy inclusion.

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) created a plan of action called “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” which consists of 17 Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. Global citizenship is included on Goal 4 of SDGs: Quality Education. And according to one of the agreed targets indicators, it is a sound goal:

By 2030, ensure all learners should acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development. (“Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 4”)

Global competencies included in GCE teach students ways in which they can act to resolve our global challenges, ways that are aligned with SDGs; thus, GCE is essential because is the key to the achievements of all the other SDGs.

Global citizenship

A global community requires global citizens who connect across borders and boundaries of nation and state. Global community is a somewhat a new concept and surely a contested one by theorists. Often, global community is defined “as a way of gathering people together across borders to recognize commonality and shared purpose” (Sant et al. 40). Since many of these global problems such as climate change are inside and outside our borders, we need global citizens. Global citizenship, by contrast with national citizenship which defines who is or not a member, “crosses multiples borders – political, cultural, social, and historical – and is entirely inclusive” (Reimers et al. Preface lxii). In our modern day, and with the growth of International Free trade, it is almost impossible not be a global person when we think about our clothes and food. If “being global means having a part of your life dependent upon and tied to people, places,

and events in other parts of the world” (Israel 12), we are global. For example, the economic inter-dependence event between countries was evident during the 2008 global financial crisis. Because of the impact of these events, “global citizens need to develop increased awareness of how the actions of their country’s financial institutions impact economic health and wellbeing of people around the world” (Israel 53). The global citizen is a new identity for tomorrow.

The world needs global citizens to find collective solutions for our 21st century problems of extreme poverty, climate change, inequality, work exploitation, and many other problems. Because global citizens understand that the world has changed, their mission is to place our current global challenges in proper context. GCE, an education that promotes “thinking globally,” helps students understand the world through multiple perspectives offering knowledge about other people, systems, and structures that work locally, nationally, internationally, and transnationally, and lead us to become global citizens. Global citizenship is a growing movement and promoting GCE supports this movement. As part of this movement, students will need more than simply being informed about the global risks, they will need to embrace and take responsibilities for the principles of common humanity. Becoming global citizens “is not just about how we think, but also how we feel; not just what we know, but how we act” (Gerzon 155). Acting on this belief will require changes, not only individual changes but scalable and systemic change, to fulfill a sustainable movement, and education can be a vital part of this sustainable movement.

Each country experiences the interconnectedness with the rest of the world in different ways. For example, if we in the US consider the sources of our food, clothes, goods, electronics, etc., we will find a global connection. However, not everyone considers themselves as global citizens. Some people will see global education as anti-American and will claim that they are

citizens only of the American government; therefore, the need arises for those concerned to teach about our interconnectivity and to show that we cannot opt out of humanity. In the *American Citizen, Global Citizen: How Expanding Our Identities Makes Us Safer, Stronger, Wiser - And Builds a Better World*, Mark Gerzon, an author, leadership consultant, veteran convener of cross-party conversations, and the president of Mediators Foundation, addresses the resistance of Americans in identifying as global citizens. According to Gerzon, “65% of American Citizens – the two thirds of us ... maintain that we are not global citizens” (12). In the *Global Citizenship Education Everyday Transcendence*, author William Gaudelli talks about the intersection of globalization, education, and the efforts of globally-conscious classrooms to prepare students to recognize that we live in a connected and interdependent world. Gaudelli explores different points that have been raised about the definition of global citizenship and what it means to engage in GCE. The statistics are understandable since it is not an easy concept to comprehend; “no one is a global citizen in a legal sense, and so the phrase can invoke uncertainty, disbelief and even disorientation” (Gaudelli 9). It is more intuitive to people to know they have rights and responsibilities in a specific place, and national citizenship brings a sense of belonging. However, in global citizenship, “there are no commonly shared symbols to arouse people's sense of belonging to the global society that are comparable to those associated with national identity; such as flag, anthem, or emblem” (Gaudelli 14). In fact, the emblem field is open and ready for new icons.

To create a vision of what it means to be a global citizen, we need to understand or develop the principle of “all human beings as one family.” In this way when we accept a global community as our own, we self-identity as member of humanity. Gerzon points out that finding our global common ground will help some people embrace global citizenship and expand our

identities. He writes that our genes, ancestors, economies, possessions, food, societies, religions, and environments are global (Gerzon 12). We do not have to give up our national citizenship or our cultural identity to become a global citizen. Being a global citizen does not prevent us from being patriotic; there is nothing wrong with loving our country. Regardless, some countries may still feel threatened to think of promoting global citizenship. Therefore, we need to explain that global and local citizens can coexist if we work at it together and become complementary.

This new understanding of our place in the world requires often difficult changes in thinking and acting. For example, we naturally belong to our family, community, state, or country, and globalization now suggests that we belong to the global community. It's also true that without global jurisdiction, concerns about rights and responsibilities will remain contested; however, "the international human's rights law does provide some legal foundations for rights and duties that transcend those stipulated by national legal covenants" (Reimers et al. Preface lxiii). Becoming global citizens is a process that will challenge each of us. It will test our limits and question our sense of belonging and of responsibility to our "global neighbors." After all, the core of global citizenship resides in the idea that we all deserve human rights and that because "the relevant rights are shared across national, ethnic, and linguistic lines, they carry with them a responsibility that also cross these lines" (Reimers Preface lxiii). Rights across lines—can it happen?

Global Citizenship may be a relatively new term, but the definition of citizenship has changed throughout history. For example, in the post-World War II era, citizenship "shifted increasingly away from ethnic/racial identity and gravitated towards nation-states and the making of new aggregate identities" (Gaudelli 11). Thus, it can change again. By knowing that "culture derives from one's social environment rather than from one's genes" (Hofstede 6), we

can retreat from a national concept and shift into a culture that promotes action towards empathy, compassion, and kindness in a global community.

Global Citizenship calls for a more specifically informed citizen. In his book *What Kind of Citizen? Education and Our Children for the Common Good*, Joel Westheimer claims that if we want to educate democratic citizens, we should teach them to think critically about contemporary concerns, social problems, and civic engagement. Based on a research of US and Canada citizenship programs that intended to develop virtuous citizenship skills among youth, Westheimer and Joe Kahne conclude that these programs teach more about charity and volunteerism and less about “grappling with the kinds of social policy decisions that every citizen in a democratic society needs to learn how to do” (Westheimer 37). They recognize three types of good citizens: the personally responsible citizen, the participatory citizen, and the social justice-oriented citizen. They argue that good citizenship requires more than obeying the rule of law and volunteering: citizens need to get involved in the community, question and change established systems, and work on the root of the problems and injustices. Westheimer points out that “[i]f *Participatory Citizens* organize the food drive and *Personally Responsible Citizens* donate the food, the *Social Justice-Oriented Citizens* – some might also call them critical thinkers – ask why people are hungry, then act on what they discover” (Westheimer 41). Global citizenship must encourage all of us citizens to think critically and to assume roles locally and globally to recognize and act to solve our current challenges. To affect change on a global scale, we all need to be personally responsible, to participate in remedy injustices, and to understand the causes of problems and injustices worldwide.

Global citizens, then, have to be “grown.” And because teaching GCE relates to “growing” global citizenship, it’s relevant that Oxfam’s approach of GCE is “by engaging in an

ongoing learning-think-act process” (Gaudelli 43). Basically, GCE helps students acquire knowledge of some global problems that will influence our actions in our everyday lives. In the *Education for Global Citizenship – A guide for schools*, Oxfam sees a global citizen as someone who practices the following values:

- Is aware of the wider world and owns a sense of his/her own role as a world citizen.
- Respects and values diversity.
- Understands how the world works.
- Is passionately committed to social justice.
- Participates in the community at a range of levels, from the local to the global.
- Works with others to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place.
- Takes responsibility for his/her actions. (“Education for Global Citizenship”)

Even though the Oxfam definition of a global citizen seems appropriate for any community, it should not be an imposing set of rules. In fact “a global citizen is not a person with a view from ‘nowhere’ or ‘everywhere,’ but a person who understands his or her own location in the world and acknowledges that this location provides only one of many views of the world and how it does and should work” (Sant et al. 43). This definition is simply one perspective of the term.

Values

Global Trade and people's migration have existed for centuries; however, they have increased significantly, perhaps because in recent decades, the infrastructure for communication and transportation has improved dramatically. When all forces act together, changes in cultural values, attitudes, and traditions are inevitable. Some people will need a new mind set if they are

to see themselves as part of a global community and understand that humanity is one. The path to global citizenship will require us to know the core values of a global community and “feel that [we] have some level of responsibility for the welfare of the planet and the wellbeing of others around the globe” (Israel 21). This responsibility goes along with rights crossing boundaries.

Knowing how the world is interconnected is important but not enough. Through my MAICD studies, I have learned about many injustices and negative impacts that society’s lifestyle and consumerism have had on vulnerable people. Yet, sometimes we are caught in the middle of it all. So, knowing how the world works economically, politically, socially, spiritually, environmentally is essential but still not enough. The path to becoming global citizens will also require a reflection on global values, attitudes, and identity so that we build a global ethic at the core of developing and sustaining equity and justice.

Another dimension in this process is to learn certain values. In *Global Citizenship A Path to Building Identity and Community in a Globalized World*, Ron Israel argues that to build a world community, we need common human values. He suggests eleven core values that will define a global community:

1. Basic Human Rights
2. Religious Pluralism
3. Gender Equity
4. Participatory Governance
5. Protection of the Earth’s Environment
6. Sustainable Worldwide Economic Growth
7. Poverty Alleviation
8. Humanitarian Assistance

9. Elimination of Weapons of Mass Destruction
10. Cessation and Prevention of Conflicts Between Countries
11. Preservation of Cultural Diversity (Israel 21)

The Oxfam framework for global citizenship is organized over key elements such as “Values and Attitudes,” “Knowledge and Understanding,” and “Skills.” Its curriculum develops and enhances the following values and attitudes: “Sense of identity and self-esteem; Commitment to social justice and equity; Respect for people and human rights; Value diversity; Concern for the environment and commitment to sustainable development; Commitment to participation and inclusion; Belief that people can bring change “ (“Education For Global Citizen” 20). Such a curriculum may seem ideal to some, but for global citizenship, it’s essential.

In the book, *The Common Good*, Robert B. Reich, a Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy at the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkley, who served in three national administrations, argues that the common good has become an outdated societal value in America. The common good “consists of our shared values about what we owe one another as citizens who are bound together in the same society – the norms we voluntarily abide by, and the ideals we seek to achieve” (Reich 18). Because politics are often empty of moral arguments, Reich claims that we are losing our sense of the common good, a sense necessary for society to function. Instead of companies being responsible for the well-being of workers, customers, and the communities they serve, they are in pursuit of power and profit, and even to bringing an enormous flow of corporate money into politics. Reich claims that we need to restore our shared commitment to democratic norms and principles and suggests several ways to revive the common good, such as to recover the notion of virtuous leadership and redeployment of honor and shame. Reich also emphasizes that “restoring the common good

requires a new commitment to civic education” (Reich 173) and the importance that students learn about justice, human rights, and the political system. Restoring the common good is a step in the direction to becoming global citizens.

Identity

Today, with the world’s closer than ever connection, people and cultures merge their own values, beliefs, and traditions. This change has created a need for our becoming global citizens which means understanding, respecting, and accepting the many differences among us all. This understanding and acceptance, however, does not come naturally to us; we must learn it. As human beings, we tend to categorize people and label them as groups. Then we treat them as one block with identical actions, opinions, or even crimes. As a society, we must learn from our past “categorical” mistakes such as the genocide of Native Americans or slavery of Africans where human beings were called “inferior” or “savages.” To improve relations between different cultures, we must avoid generalizations, a current example of which is that “all Muslims are associated with terrorists or part of extremist Islam.” Becoming global citizens requires us to include, not exclude, to learn about other cultures, not simply stereotype them.

Connected or not, we still tend to exclude “the other,” or those different from us, and exclusion is still responsible for many of today’s conflicts. Miroslav Volf promotes a framework which he believes can defeat the “us/them” divisions and help create communities that can live peacefully together. According to Volf, exclusion can have many forms, such as elimination, assimilation, domination, and abandonment. Volf distinguishes “differentiation” from “exclusion” to help avoid and solve conflicts. His definition of differentiation consists in “separating-and-binding”; “we are both separate and connected, both distinct and related; the boundaries that mark our identities are both barriers and bridges” (Volf 66). Identity is a complex

concept formed from many characteristics such as religion, race, nationality, sexual preference, etc., making us unique; therefore, identity includes difference. One way to avoid and solve conflicts is to embrace different identities and cultures, to become open to understanding differences and connecting, not excluding the “other.”

We all ought to learn to live well together independent of people's religious or political beliefs, ethnicity, or racial origin. Consciously or not, by not honoring other's cultures, we have allowed our own culture's personal experience of norms and biases to oppress those different from us. We must make a conscious shift in both our attitudes and behavior when dealing with people and cultures “new” or “different.” And if we want a world where all know social justice, we all must learn to be a respectful global citizen and embrace differences.

Awareness of and empathy for different perspectives help us to develop the “double vision,” as Volf calls it, that encourages us to develop and practice an “enlarged thinking.” The practice of enlarging our thinking requires our “letting the voices and perspectives of others, especially those with whom we may be in conflict, resonate within ourselves, by allowing them to help us see them, as well as ourselves, from *their* perspective, and if needed, readjust our perspective as we take into account their perspectives” (213). This double vision bears considering.

The new global dimension of our lives necessitates a global identity as global citizens. This new identity will encourage us to think about our interconnected lives and expand our local and national identities to form a global identity. One advantage of such a change is that it makes us reflect on the ways we have interpreted our traditional identities. For example, my nationalities are Brazilian, Portuguese, and American, and my culture is a blend of all these

cultures. Historically, national identity has bound humans together, but globalization is loosening the traditional identities of nationality, ethnicity, race, and culture.

Introducing this new philosophical thinking about our society as a global one requires a series of steps that includes a change in people's mindsets regarding identity. Global Citizenship Education can help expand students' identities from simply local or national to the trio of local, national, and global. After I learned about the benefits of GCE, I began my qualitative research to understand how the school district close to my home perceives GCE and, further, to explore ways in which I can eventually help this district provide GCE in afternoon programs.

Researching the challenges

Qualitative research

In response to my quest to inquiry about GCE in US educational systems, I have chosen schools in the Lake Washington and Issaquah School Districts, Washington. I used my Fieldwork to interact with teachers and parents to understand what they know about Globalization, Social and Environmental Injustices, and Global Citizenship Education.

Interviews have composed the main form of data collection in my qualitative research. Interviewing teachers and parents is not only giving me a chance to share the knowledge I have learned in the master's program, but it also gives me the opportunity to listen to, understand, and value another person's perspective. In fact, in qualitative research, the researchers themselves are the main instruments for data collection, and "no matter where they conduct their research, they take their perspectives along" (Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater 165). This combination of personal perspective plus objective data allows researchers to highlight what they consider important and

follow the patterns of the research. Although finding a unifying perspective is a natural process for researchers, encountering contradictions can be equally important.

Since researchers bring their own perspective into the field, they must constantly reflect on the data gathered and analyzed. Actually, acknowledging that we select what we see and bring our own perspectives can also help provide context and understanding of resulting interpretations. As Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater point out, "How we understand an informant's worldview is dependent on our own" (166). Such a context, the, necessitates that we come to know ourselves, too.

For example, my assumption that all classrooms are similar to the ones that my kids have attended demonstrates that assumptions depend on past and present experiences. However, one interview proved me wrong. During one interview, a teacher described a class in which one student, who had just started kindergarten and was experiencing homelessness, did not know how to write his name or count to five. She explicitly said that it is not important to teach extra curriculum topics [GCE] when kids do not know the basics. Reflecting on this interview, I saw that because equity in education is a field of my interest, this part of the interview called my attention. As Merriam and Tisdell claim, "Whether or not a bit of information becomes data in a research study depends solely on the interest and perspective of the investigator" (105). During fieldwork, it is essential not only to try to interpret the participant but ourselves as well. As I analyze my fieldnotes and resulting actions, I have found it is important to revise my interview questions to cover my bias.

The research questions vary from asking "How do teachers define GCE?" to "What are the barriers to implementing a new curriculum or adapting changes in the current curriculum?" I

am curious to know how aware teachers are about the impacts of globalization, what they know about existent GCE curriculums, and what specific GCE materials they already cover in class?

On the other hand, I want to know if the students' parents are aware of the same topics, and more important, if they are comfortable in allowing their kids to learn GCE in school. Do parents think it is an important topic?

Actually, my favorite definition of GCE came from the first Interviewee who explained, "It teaches students their relationship to the world beyond just their own community and our own country, an education that is comprehensive and covers many different subjects from science, technology, literature, art, and culture, and then the third thing I would say is that it is a relevant modern type of information for 21st century" (Harrison). Overall, all teachers understood the meaning behind the term.

I found that although teachers were not aware of existent GCE curriculums, some seemed interested, and I felt hopeful after some interviews. I was encouraged when it was clear that some teachers were aware of impacts of globalization and were finding ways to incorporate GCE concepts such as making connections between past and current events and assigning non-fiction books to cover some of the material not included in the curriculum.

Also, every teacher and parent said that the Lake Washington School District (LWSD) is very culturally diverse and can help kids grow up in a multicultural environmental. One teacher commented, "I think they are aware about different cultures because many of the students in our class are from different countries. Their parents are from India, China, Korea, Sri Lanka, so we have a lot of different cultures represented" (Howden). And yet, when I asked if they teach about cultural differences, she explained, "There is a bit of education on learning about different cultures, understanding different cultures, understanding what makes up their identity, but I don't

think there is a huge emphasis on it ... we will talk about different holidays celebrated around the world. They learn about different traditions that different cultures celebrate” (Howden). Another teacher acknowledged that although in his teacher training certificate “multicultural education is a big component. That a whole quarter of the program was spent on this the concept of multicultural education” (Interview4), but in reality, in the curriculum multicultural education becomes “this phenomenon that they call ‘heroes and holidays’” (Brandy). In the book, *Different Schools for a Different World*, McLeod and Shareski argue about the same topic when they state, “In the 20th century, students often learned about people in other cultures through stereotypical presentations of those cultures’ food and holidays” (8). However, they point out that “in the digital world, our ability to interact with our peers in other countries requires us to go far beyond such minimal levels of awareness in order to achieve a deeper understanding and appreciation of who those peers are and how they think” (McLeod and Shareski 8). In other words, interactions among people of different cultural origins will benefit from having a framework of global values that deals with different worldviews.

Regardless how it’s presented, some students will learn and be more prepared on the topic than will other students, depending on the school and teachers. When I talk with teachers and parents from Choice schools (lottery based) such as the International Community School (ICS) - 6th to 12th grade, Tesla STEM High School, or Quest (high achievement program), I find that they have more flexibility in their curriculum, and perhaps that is why they were teaching more about important subjects such as climate change, the United Nations and its Sustainable Development Goals, and using technologies to solve global problems.

For example, ICS wants to include a global perspective. By contrast, when talking about the new science curriculum, one science teacher claimed that in any regular public school, “You could almost teach all of the middle-school NGSS standards locally without too much global perspective. [However,] High Schools force a little bit more global perspective, but I think it still varies on like teacher choice of how they want to teach or what context they want to teach those standards in” (Vasiliauskas). Mrs. Vasiliauskas, one teacher I interviewed, explained that ICS teachers have the mindedness to include international perspectives in their curriculum. She finds ways to bring in the UN SDGs where they fit, and so many of them fit directly with science. Mrs. Vasiliauskas explained that kids learn by doing projects, so she assigns them, what she called “impact projects,” in which kids choose a problem and then build a solution to it. I purposely interviewed her because she was my older son’s eight grade teacher, and I was very impressed with the work my son was doing. For instance, on one occasion, my son’s group went with her to the Kirkland City Hall to present a project about the positive impact of installing solar panels on business buildings across the city. Also, she brings lecturers to class to talk about many environment problems. After students learn about these problems, she asks them to choose one and then pledge to act in one specific way to help counteract this problem. It can be as simple as turning off the light when they leave a room or not using plastic bottles. A month later, she checks on them and their pledges. In the end, my son pledged to save water, and the speaker’s organization provided us aerators for all of our house faucets.

While I encountered teachers who are making UN SDGs part of their curriculum, I also encountered teachers and parents who had never heard of them. A seven-grade teacher commented, “UN Sustainable Development Goals are not in the curriculum; it is not required to teach it. I am putting it in there because I know education needs to be relevant and kids are more

engaged when it is relevant, so they can understand why it is important or why it matters” (Harrison). Also, when I asked parents who have kids in my neighborhood middle-school, they said that they did not think their kids had learned about globalization or about UN SDGs. It is unfortunate that not everyone has the same learning opportunity. In my research, I acknowledge that the context in which I conducted the interviews might have encouraged answers that would have been different if I had interviewed other schools and teachers.

During my fieldwork, I asked questions about the barriers of implementing a new curriculum, and these questions help anticipate the concerns that I will encounter. With teachers and parents, time is the most crucial barrier. Teachers claimed that they don’t have time to teach everything that the school district mandates, so adding new material will be hard. And hearing their stories has taught me to have empathy for them because I am interpreting teachers’ and parents’ lives through their eyes. They have a curriculum to cover with increasing demands for accountability. It is just not fair to give them all the responsibility for building a new curriculum. Moreover, teacher training was also mentioned as a barrier.

This question emerges in the debate over the heavily “taught to” standardized tests and their consequences. There is no question that changes in the public school’s curriculum must pass board criteria and be revised by committees; I do not question that. However, curricula such as social studies that are not now part of the standardized tests may have been left behind as outdated, and this omission concerns me. As I expected, schools’ districts follow standards mandated from the state, sometimes curriculum are ten years old, and changes in the curriculum can take years to implement. Social Studies, the subject area with which the GCE most integrates, has not been updated for a long time. At that point in my process, I knew that I had to

investigate standardized tests more thoroughly, and eventually, I needed think about the real purpose of education.

Barriers to integrating GCE in the actual curricula

The best approach to incorporate Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in the K-12 (USA) schools is to integrate it with the current curriculum using multidisciplinary approaches.

However, barriers such as standardized tests to cover material mandated by the state or district make it difficult for teachers to incorporate it. This testing applies to math, English, and science. Consequently, more time will be assigned for these subjects and less time for subjects such as social studies, civics, economics, politics, religion, and history—subject that easily relate to the education proposed by GCE.

During the George W. Bush administration, the US government passed into law the “No Child Left Behind Act” in 2002. Its goals “were to raise academic standards in all schools, to make teachers accountable for student achievement, to raise levels of college preparation and in these ways to reinvigorate the economic competitiveness of the USA” (Robinson “Out of Our Minds” 61). However, to do so, it focused on standardized testing exclusively concerned with math and English. The testing intends to provide data to determine how well schools are performing. As a result, curriculums emphasize mathematics, language, and science first and foremost. “In a study by the Center on Education Policy, 71% of districts reported cutting back on time for other subjects – social studies in particular – to make more space for reading and math instruction” (Westheimer 14). Surely, this change pressured schools to cover the tested subjects, turning social studies, arts, and creative disciplines into afterthoughts. Although the cross-party coalition had good intentions, in reality, “it has largely failed to meet its own objectives and has been widely condemned for demoralizing teachers and students, for

inculcating a numbing culture of teaching to test, and for encouraging schools to adapt the testing system to avoid financial and other penalties” (Robinson 61). Regardless, the testing is still in place.

Also, educational leaders raise concerns about tying teacher evaluations to these assessment results. “In 2009, Barack Obama and his Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, unveiled the ‘Race to the Top’ initiative, effectively bribing states to implement programs to hold teachers accountable on the basis of their students’ performance on standardized tests” (Wagner and Dintersmith 26). With these approaches, schools’ funding was linked with their students test scores. Thus, it’s simple to understand that teachers feel pressured “to teach to the test.” Teachers can make a positive impact on societal and educational transformation, but not if they are burdened by the standardized tests. Westheimer argues that standardized tests limits teachers’ abilities to perform in a professional capacity; “These restrictions too often result in the loss of opportunities for rich and engaging curriculum based in the experiences of teacher and students alike” (Westheimer 85). The common core testing, however, is still active.

The recently adopted Common Core State Standards Initiative is an educational initiative that specifies the knowledge that K–12 students across the United States should have in English language arts and mathematics at the end of each school grade. The goal’s aim was to use advanced standardize tests to accompany the new, higher academic standards. The Common Core has tried to raise the level of rigor in these subjects, the tests “have been designed to align quite specifically with college admissions requirements” (Wagner and Dintersmith 120). Assessments are decidedly useful; indeed, they can help both teachers and students to understand what was achieved and what needs to improve or change. Assessments contribute to the constructive purposes of education; however, the problem with the Common Core is that it

presents too many measures and perhaps too high standards and has created a culture of national testing and standardization. It's complicated more by the fact that students have less time to learn other subjects.

Some US educational leaders argue that our public education system schools still use old fashioned approaches to learning, that students memorize concepts and take tests with the goal of performing repetitive tasks quickly and efficiently. They claim that the current system needs to change since it cannot meet the challenges we now face. In *Creative Schools: The Grassroots Revolution That's Transforming Education*, Sir Ken Robinson, Ph.D., author of many books, an internationally recognized leader in education, and famous for his 2006 TED Talk "How Schools Kill Creativity," has advocated for transforming our out-of-date and troubled education system which appears based on the principles of standardization, compliance and conformity. Sir Robinson explains "that to transform any system you need three forms of understanding: a *critique* of the way things are, a *vision* of how they should be, and a *theory of change* for how to move from one to the other" (Robinson and Aronica 58). He claims that the US transformation is rooted in the wrong story, and he mentions that Finland has reformed its educational system in an entirely different set of principles. Sir Robinson further critiques the educational transformation:

The *critique* that underlie the standards-based reform movement is that traditional academic standards are too low and have to be raised. The *vision* is of a world in which academia standards are very high and as many people as possible have college degrees, and there is full employment as a result. The *theory of change* is that the best way to do this it to specify exactly what the standards are and to focus relentlessly on them through an insistent process of standardized testing. (Robinson and Aronica 60)

In GCE context, standardized testing is a barrier, too, and some educational leaders are rethinking the process so that schools provide students a relevant education that will prepare them for life in our changing world.

Purpose of education, schools, and teachers

One thing I hope everyone agrees is that education is immensely important. One of the questions still asked today concerns the purpose of our educational system; obviously, differences of opinions on this topic abound, and given our complex society, finding a widespread agreement on it is difficult. For some, education means a possibility for social mobility, and for others, a way to prepare students for a happy, successful, and fulfilled adult lives, just to name a few. However, the fact that the whole world is changing in every aspect—cultural, political, social, and environmental—leads us to understand that the US education system must consider these changes and includes Global Citizenship Education in its curriculum.

Sir Robinson claims that education advances when seen as a living system. This system can recognize that students thrive in some conditions and not in others. He makes an analogy between Organic farming and Education and translates farming's four organic principles about education:

Health: Organic education promotes the development and well-being of the whole student, intellectually, physically, spiritually, and socially.

Ecology: Organic education recognizes the vital interdependence of all of these aspects of development, within each student and in the community as a whole.

Fairness: Organic education cultivates the individual talents and potential of all students, whatever their circumstances, and respects the roles and responsibilities of those who work with them.

Care: Organic education creates optimum conditions for students' development, based on compassion, experience, and practical wisdom. (Robinson and Aronica 44)

Also, according to Sir Robinson, education has four basic purposes: “economic, cultural, social, and personal” (Robinson and Aronica 45). The first purpose is that “education should enable students to become economically responsible and independent” (Robinson and Aronica 45). The economic role makes sense; hence, it is one of the reasons governments invest in Education, because historically, “mass education has always had economic purposes” (Robinson and Aronica 45). However, education discussed only in terms of “human capital” with arguments that it produces a skilled and educated workforce that brings economic prosperity is deficient and requires the cultural, social, and personal components as well. McLeod and Shareski point out that the primary function of schools should not be prepare students for specific careers, yet “schools can’t ignore the global transformations that are reshaping careers and employment demands” (McLeod and Shareski 13). Even while some discontentment arises when education’s economic role becomes the priority one, Westheimer writes that “the goals of K -12 education have been shifting steadily away from preparing active and engaged public citizens and toward more narrow goals of career preparation and individual economic gain” (Westheimer 13). Basically, the education system needs to find the balance, and understand that life is not all work and profit; it includes work, but it also includes the cultural and social aspects.

Yes, careers and jobs are significant challenges for adults. However, when we define the purpose of schools, we must recognize those other challenges. For example, in the personal area,

failure in building relationships or connecting with one another are still major problems in our society. There is still an inherent gap in our ability to understand each other (marriage, work, cultural diversity), communicate, listen to one another—all fundamental to living well and peacefully together. While growing, if kids learn and practice skills such as empathy and respect, it will help them respond to future situations. So, it is important to provide all students with life skills to deal with the most relevant personal and career difficulties they will likely to encounter in their lives. Schools can play a significant role in teaching students' skills that lead to exploration, innovation, creativity, independent thinking, and inquiry. They can learn not only to obey, follow orders, and accept existent frameworks without challenging them. As parent, I am advocating for the same personal growth at home. This type of approach, together with values, rights, and responsibilities create the framework of global citizenship.

Questioning the purpose of education, then, elicits contradictory opinions. The approach here, however, is to identify the skills, competencies, mindsets, values, and sense of awareness needed to prepare students for the 21st century challenges. Next comes the task of building the varying parts of such an education that includes life worthy content. This content must focus not only on the economic aspect but also on the individual, social, and emotional skills that will help students build healthy relationships. The goal, then, is to, prepare students for a successful life and work/career in our globalized world, all the while training them to set their goals for a sustainable, peaceful and just world.

In *Most Likely to Succeed: Preparing Our Kids for the Innovation Era*, Tony Wagner and Ted Dintersmith claim that education should teach how to solve problems using creativity and innovation rather than mastery, memorization, and standardized content. They state, “The purpose of education is to engage students with their passions and growing sense of purpose,

teach them critical skills needed for career and citizenship, and inspire them to do their best to make their world better” (Wagner and Dintersmith 44). Wagner and Dintersmith assert that most educators of kindergarteners to grad students should embrace the following educational goals, but on the appropriate student level:

1. teach students cognitive and social skills.
2. prepare students to be responsible, contributing citizens.
3. build character.
4. help students in a process of self-discovery.
5. inspire students through the study of humanity’s great works.
6. prepare students for productive careers (Wagner and Dintersmith 35)

Fernando Reimers claims that the purpose of education is to empower all students to become global citizens; therefore, he argues, schools must offer curriculum that does the following:

[P]rovides all students with effective opportunities to develop the dispositions, knowledge, and capabilities necessary to understand the world in which they live, to make sense of the way in which globalization shapes their lives, and to be good stewards of and contributors to the Sustainable Development Goals. (Reimers et al. Preface xx)

The main point in this definition is the inclusion of the SDGs, set to be achieved by 2030.

Teachers can make a positive impact on societal and educational transformation by including SDGs into their curriculum. Along with teachers and parents, we can all participate in the transformation of our world. For example, teaching about sustaining development in the local and global world is a way to engage students with the relevant challenges that are important to

all of us. Every day we do not achieve these goals, we miss an opportunity to send a student to school, to save a child from dying from a preventable disease, to take some climate change action, just to name a few. With some SDG outcome-based lessons, students can gain deep knowledge about the history and social-political context of specific world problems. Then, when they are prepared, they can act on these concerns of global significance toward providing sustainable development.

Education can help society and our world deal with our complex global problems and challenges. Following the advice of some educational leaders, we can adjust the purpose of education to better prepare students to influence the future of globalization and to live in a world of rapid changes, interdependence, and diversity. Teaching GCE is one way to adjust education toward this goal. However, GCE is a complex concept, so even though its aim is to prepare students for our globalized world, it will need a contextualized curriculum that is relevant to students locally.

Contextualization

Educational leaders around the world engaged in promoting GCE must contextualize GCE concepts locally—and that can be quite complex in itself. Introducing and practicing GCE ideology presents many challenges. Our worldviews sneak into play when we least expect it. For instance, while giving a talk about international law and human rights, William Gaudelli, a GCE researcher and Chair of the Department of Arts and Humanities and Associated Professor of Social Studies and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, presented a global framework and found himself applying his Western worldview. As a result, one of the participants said that “he was convinced that it was a discourse most appropriate for the West, where national sovereignty and identity are more concretized than in India where a sense of

nationhood is still developing” (Gaudelli 18). Then Gaudelli pointed out "the significant limits of GCE as a global framework" (Gaudelli 18). Education for global citizenship can be applied to any school using the right context in its topics. In the same way that community development programs cannot be applied to another community without understanding the new context, teachers need to take the same approach with a GCE curriculum since there is no one-curriculum-fits-all. The context can be the location of the schools, the socio-economic status, or political norms. When promoting GCE, educational leaders must design their GCE curriculum so that the material is adaptable for their current context. Professor Fernando M. Reimers, an expert in the field of global education policy and innovation at Harvard Graduate School of Education and his team developed the “World Course Curriculum;” however, any adaption of this curriculum will need variations and modifications to best serve a local context. For example, one activity that involves visiting a particular museum in New York city will need to be adapted for another city, but “the principles which underlie the choice of these activities can be generalized, such as drawing on local resources and institutions such as museums, engaging parents and community members as sources of knowledge and experience, or explorer the particular cities where the schools is located" (Reimers Preface XX1).

Our culture travels with us—our attitudes, behaviors, ways-of-doing things, principles, and assumptions—and they all influence our communication and interaction with others. A context can be defined by a set of factors such as location, identity, environment, etc. that can be specifically observed or tracked. However, context also includes the community’s multi-layers of ethnicity, social classes, gender, religion, and political aspects.

Some programs might start with a broad cultural contextualization. In the book *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, author Geert Hofstede, and other researchers,

identifies differences in national value systems and offers a six-dimensional model of national culture: Power Distance, Collectivism-Individualism, Feminine-Masculine, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long-term Orientation, and Indulgence, models that are applicable to cultures all over the world. Beliefs, behaviors, attitudes, and costumes are some characteristics that define culture. While there are many culture definitions, Hofstede defines culture "as the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others" (Hofstede 6). Every country, community or even group has a culture associated with it, and we all carry different levels of culture. Hofstede's dimension corresponds to a national level, and it characterizes each country in the model by giving it a score on each dimension.

Hofstede's dimensions model is considered a framework for cross-cultural communication, and it can be applied in a broad range of fields such as business, advertising, politics, training, and community development. Solutions such as applying the Hofstede's cultural dimensions can help developers to better understand the country's complex written and unwritten cultural values and beliefs.

Since my research concerns promoting Global Citizenship Education in schools, I am interested to understand how the Hofstede cultural dimensions can be applied in schools and how being aware of cultural differences can improve the relationships between teachers and students. According to Hofstede, in small power distance societies, "Students treat teachers as equals," "Teachers expect initiatives from students in class," and "Teachers are experts who transfer impersonal truths." (72). However, in large power distance societies, "Students give teachers respect, even outside class," "Teachers should take all initiatives in class," and "Teachers are gurus who transfer personal wisdom" (Hofstede 72). These key differences show how certain behaviors or attitudes inside the classroom could challenge students with ingrained social norms,

knowledge, and experiences. Therefore, it is important to process a contextual learning approach that can help teachers and students. When teachers are aware about these differences in behaviors, values, and attitudes from students coming from cultures different from their own, they can find working strategies that best integrate these students in the classrooms. Also, it contributes to a concept of education that sees each student as a unique individual. With multicultural students bringing different cultural, ethnicities and social backgrounds, it is important to advocate for cultural competence in schools.

Because of how globalization changes our demographic composition, new dispositions such as intercultural competency will be essential to promote effective social interaction among people. Improving our understanding of cultural diversity and embracing it, leads us to demonstrate respect and empathy toward people from different cultural heritages. The challenges here for school teachers, and for parents, is to ensure that students/children learn to accept and respect beliefs, values, and traditions different from their own. This is a complex task even for adults, since we are still learning how to do it. From a global aspect, differences in viewpoint and culture are to be cherished and appreciated rather than judged. However, different cultural values can negatively affect relationships and lead to cross cultural misunderstandings and communication challenges. So, when we teach our children that cultural factors shape human behavior, they can learn to have empathy for those who behave differently from them. If the younger generation is aware of and sensitive to cultural diversity, its members can better improve their perceptions, cognition, and actions because they can understand the reason for that behavior.

In the curriculum, *Empowering Global Citizens*, Professor Reimers developed a framework of competencies, and one of the characteristics of global competency is Intercultural

competency which incorporates interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. Based in tolerance and respect toward cultural differences, students who develop interpersonal skills will be able to:

1. Work productively in and effectively lead intercultural teams, including teams distributed in various geographies through the use of telecommunications technologies
2. Demonstrate empathy toward other people from different cultural origins
3. Demonstrate courtesy and norms of interaction appropriated to various cultural settings.
4. Resolve culturally based disagreements through negotiations, mediation, and conflict resolution (Reimers Preface lvii)

While students who develop intrapersonal skills will acquire:

1. Curiosity about global affairs and world cultures
2. The ability to recognize and weigh diverse cultural perspectives
3. An understanding of one's own identity, of others' identities, of how other cultures shape their own and others' identities, and of where one is in space and time
4. The ability to recognize and examine assumption when engaging with cultural differences
5. The recognition of cultural (civilizational, religious, or ethnic) prejudice and the ability to minimize its effects in intergroup dynamics
6. An understanding and appreciation of cultural variation in basic norms of interaction, the ability to be courteous, and the ability to find and learn about norms appropriate in specific settings and types of interaction (Reimers et al. Preface lviii)

Today, the world—and the classroom—has experienced a rise in the flow of migration. An increasing number of people from different cultures and races are now part of our community. As a result, we need to develop new skills to understand, respect, and embrace cultural diversity so that we live peacefully with them. Recognizing the newcomers is not enough; we must respond to the diversity because it will change our lives. Hopefully, for the better, but that depends on our response to it. Mark Gerzon comments that “[o]nly recently have behavioral scientists documented how profoundly culture shapes our vision” (43). He then writes, “Just because all human beings have eyes does not mean that we all see the same thing. What we see depends in large part on what we are trained to look for” (Gerzon 43). Teachers need strategies such as teaching interpersonal and intrapersonal skills so that both the current students and the newcomers begin to understand and accept one another.

Fortunately, some schools are already working on these competencies. In one my fieldwork interviews, one teacher, mentioned that she had representatives of nine different languages in her classroom. Our education system must acknowledge the cultural context that the classroom demands and find ways and opportunities that allow students to share their differing norms, values, and beliefs with one another. For example, she pointed out that in “the last couple of years, the Issaquah school district has really focused on cultural diversity and cultural competence” (Ferreira) and building it into the curriculum. Subjects such as “Cultural Identity” is now being taught, “so that kids can [understand] self-identity by answering such questions ‘Who am I?’ and then ‘How does that make me different from the people around me?’” (Ferreira). Also, she mentioned that in her classroom she leads a “show and tell” activity where kids can bring artifacts from home. She shared that one girl brought her prayer mat, and the

child's mother came to school and talked to the kids about her headdress and explained why she wears one.

Moreover, because education relates to economics, a students' being culturally competent can greatly affect their economic opportunities. The competition for industries and high skilled jobs have become more intense, and companies also seek to hire culturally informed employees for market or international negotiations. For example, "Effective intercultural negotiations demand an insight into the range of cultural values to be expected among partners from other countries, in comparison with the negotiator's own culturally determined values" (Hofstede 400). In our interconnected and digital world, "our ability to interact with our peers in other countries requires us to go far beyond such minimal levels of awareness in order to achieve a deeper understanding and appreciation of who those peers are and how they think" (McLeod and Shareski 8). So that they successfully collaborate in jobs and general participation, students must learn to appreciate that different cultures can hold different values, ideas, and behaviors, and that knowing these differences will empower them as global citizens.

Finally, to participate fully in our globalized society, students will need to learn and develop skills as part of the education for global citizenship's framework. Although, these skills are not unique to GCE, they will advance students global understanding. Thus, the idea is to reinforce these key elements, beginning at elementary school.

Teaching skills for the big challenges of 21st century

As discussed previously, educational leaders today recommend a shift away from content-oriented learning experience to high-level thinking such as critical thinking and problem solving. Sir Robinson suggests eight core competencies also known as the eight Cs: curiosity,

creativity, criticism, communication, collaboration, compassion, composure, and citizenship (Robinson 135). He believes schools should teach and value these critical skills to help students succeed in their lives. To be competent and responsible global citizens, students will need to understand our global system integration. Developing GCE skills from an early age will help them find effectively solutions to counteract the systemic complexity of some global challenges.

The Education For Global Citizenship – A guide for schools, Oxfam model for global citizenship curricula, describes seven skills required to participate fully in a globalized society: Critical and creative thinking, Empathy, Self-awareness, Communication, Cooperation and conflict resolution, Ability to manage complexity and uncertainty, and Informed and reflective action” (“Education For Global Citizenship” 19). These 21st skills will help students respond to some of globalization’s effects and global risks. They are “necessary for understanding and functioning efficaciously in global context” (Reimers et al Preface liii). Although, it is important to understand and promote all of them, I will describe only a few of them — curiosity, collaboration, empathy, and critical thinking.

Curiosity

First, curiosity can lead students to explore how the world works, and their curiosity can lead them to become future global citizens. When schools develop students’ natural inquisitiveness by encouraging them to pay attention to the world and “ask questions and take initiatives” (Bornstein and Davis 84) about what they find, students start to become changemakers and develop their own ideas. Combining play, fewer structured activities, and using themes that draw their interest in projects, teachers can give students opportunities to explore, experiment, and discover. Teachers can nurture curiosity in classrooms “by encouraging

students to investigate and inquire for themselves, by posing questions rather than only giving answers, and by challenging them to push their thinking deeper by looking further” (Robinson 135). When educating students to grow with the sense of responsibility for each other's welfare and social justice, teachers teach "a collective belief that with citizenship comes responsibility to serve society” (Bornstein and Davis 45). Democracy requires active participation from its citizens; therefore, “[t]he best way for schools to produce social entrepreneurs’ tomorrow is for them to encourage students to practice changemaking today” (Bornstein and Davis 85) by challenge them to find innovative solutions to our global challenges.

In his book *The Global Achievement Gap*, Tony Wagner describes seven survival skills that all students need for career, continuous learning, and citizenship in the 21st century. The skills promote critical thinking and problem solving; collaboration across networks and leading by influence; agility and adaptability; initiative and entrepreneurship; accessing and analyzing information; effective oral and written communication; and finally, curiosity and imagination. Again, these survival skills can also help develop social innovators. While Wagner explains the curiosity and imagination survival skills, he cites that according to Annmarie Neal, curiosity is about the following:

[T]aking issues and situations and problems and going to root components; understanding how the problem evolved – upstream and downstream components, looking at it from systemic perspective; not accepting things at face value but being curious about why things are the way they are. (Wagner, “The Global Achievement Gap” 39)

Living in our interconnected and interdependent world, we need student curiosity, and as part of my research, I argue that Global Citizenship Education promotes curiosity and the other

skills as well. By developing activities that explore how the world works and encouraging students to create the habit of asking good questions, especially “Why?” and “What if?” schools encourage an environment that nurtures curiosity. And, ultimately, they encourage students to take initiatives and consider new possibilities that help them build the essential characteristics of social innovators.

Collaboration

Collaboration is essential as we become global citizens who are able to identify with a set of common global interests shared by many. Advances in communication technologies enable forms of collaboration and organization which allow us to work together as global citizens to solve global human and environmental problems such as poverty, environmental degradation, pollution, inequality, and climate change. As the countries of the world have become more connected, they also have become more interdependent, and "greater interdependence gives rise to a greater need for collective actions to solve common problems" (Stiglitz 280). To succeed, we cannot work alone, we must be connected and build a network to approach such problems globally. The example of working together to manage Ozone depletion "was one of the most successful cases of environmental action to date." (Lechner and Boli 500). It also shows the collaborative effort in action.

Moving forward, much of the work will be accomplished in teams, and in many cases, global teams. Schools can encourage students to work in teams and teach and encourage them to work constructively with others; “Through group work, students can learn to cooperate with others in solving problems and meeting common goals, to draw on each other’s strengths and mitigate weaknesses, and to share and develop ideas” (Robinson and Aronica “Creative Schools” 138). When schools build cultures of teamwork that promote collaboration and creativity, they

provide an environment that nurtures innovation. With many societal problems and complex global challenges, the global world needs solutions via collective effort, "a teamwork - the right combination of leadership and grassroots activism - to achieve innovation at that scale" (Kelley and Kelley 175). Teachers can assign students to work on team projects where they learn to organize, compromise, and resolve conflicts as a group, a goal that may require them to discuss and understand different perspectives, not simply to compete. Building collaboration skills with intercultural competency helps students learn how to negotiate, to solve conflicts, and to find and agree on solutions while working with individuals representing diverse cultures. Through working together in school, students "can learn to cooperate with others in solving problems and meeting common goals, to draw on each other's strengths and mitigate weakness, and to share and develop ideas" (Robinson 138). Indeed, we cannot be fully global without inclusive collaboration.

Empathy

In schools and possibly in their future careers, students will interact with people from all around the world, bringing their religion, beliefs, traditions, and values with them. When assigning team projects that require students to generate new ideas, solutions, or new approaches, teachers not only introduce creativity, but they also have an opportunity to teach students to practice empathy. It's empathy that puts students in someone else's shoes. It's empathy that helps students see the emotional impact of some topics on students of other cultures. It's empathy that allows a student to say, "I may not agree, but I hear you." Undoubtedly, empathy is key in solving social problems and understanding peoples' needs. In *Creative Confidence*, Kelly and Kelly suggest that empathy helps cultivate a creative spark to build insight. They observe that people "come up with more innovative ideas when [they] better understand the needs and

context of the people [they] are creating solutions for” (Kelly and Kelly⁷⁴), i.e., when they empathize with them. Schools can create an environment that fosters creativity with activities that teach ways to form new ideas, come up with different solutions, and gain the initiative to put them into practice, all while students collaborate, listen, observe, respect, and learn from each other. “As the world becomes more interdependent, cultivating compassion is a moral and a practical imperative. It is also a spiritual one. Practicing compassion is the truest expression of our common humanity and a deep source of happiness in ourselves and others” (Robinson and Aronica “Creative Schools” 139). Also considering the bullying going on in today’s schools, having students learn empathy will help them to be good citizens first, and then better able to learn GCE.

Critical thinking

Together with the other skills, critical thinking and problem solving will aid students in finding find creative solutions to our challenging problems. Most of our global challenges are global in nature, and yet their causes and consequences are completely disproportional. A new way of thinking will test our assumptions about our preconceived ideas, teach us to think deeply and broadly, and teach us to work with diverse people with different opinions. Critical thinking “involves interpreting what’s intended, understanding the context, fathoming hidden values and feelings, discerning motives, detecting bias, and presenting concise conclusions in the most appropriate forms” (Robinson and Aronica “Creative Schools” 137). This is yet another reason I advocate for a GCE curriculum in schools: it gives students the opportunity to learn about our world’s interconnections and complex problems, and to develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes they need to participate in a globalized society. Since the impact of our actions are not only local anymore, I am convinced that many topics recommended in the GCE curriculum

can help students make connections between the local and global. And yes, these topics must be contextualized.

For example, I think it's important to teach students in Lake Washington School District about the life cycle of consumer products, the lifestyles of a consumeristic and materialistic society, and the ways each negatively affect people and environment. For older kids, we can teach about their phones and discuss minerals. Students can research how phones are made and learn where the materials originate. They can read about the conditions of people who build them as well as the lifecycle of each phone. These lessons would help students not only understand externalities, but they also create awareness about how products that we consume today are implicated with many injustices. I chose a cellphone because it contains the mineral tantalum, known as "coltan," which is implicated with many injustices. Actually, "80 percent of the world's supplies are in the politically unstable and violence-plagued eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo" (Lenard 27). In a world where the cellphone becomes an essential device, and even disposable when corporations launch new models, the consumer should know that when the global price of the metal rose, "thousands of Congolese scrambled into the country's lush green forests to get at it, destroying national parks and other pristine land, killing gorillas for food, and ruining the animal's habitat" (Lenard 27). And not only the environment and animals suffered the consequences, "Various armies (official and rebel) rushed in to take over the trade, often employing children and prisoners of war, brutally raping local women (the UN estimated 45,000 raped in 2005 alone)" (Lenard 27). Many consumer products such as coffee, chocolate, and bananas have a history of work exploitation, child labor, and health concerns.

Then we must consider the big, global challenges such as climate change. One of the recommendations is to create environmentally sustainable societies, and reduce our carbon footprint, and the use of fossil fuels. It does not make sense to teach kids living in poverty stricken, rural places to save water or electricity in their homes when they do not even have access to these resources inside their homes. For them, it will not matter, the subject is not relevant. At the same time, in an agriculture community, it will make sense "creating curricula that are locally relevant (e.g. agricultural education in farming regions)" (Gaudelli 23) because it makes their education more effective. Design activities, strategies that works in the USA, might not work in another country or even in another state or school district inside the USA, and for different reasons. Sometimes the content is not relevant, or the content is controversial in schools. In the New York Times article "Setbacks Aside, Climate Change Is Finding Its Way into the World's Classroom," Gardiner points out some contentions in covering climate change in classrooms. Gardiner writes that the United States "has stirred opposition in states like Wyoming, a coal and oil producer. Lawmakers there last month blocked funding for the standards, saying teaching climate change could hurt the local economy" (Gardiner). Political opposition can be one setback and make it difficult to reach every student using the traditional curriculum. In almost all fieldwork interviews, however, interviewers said that we live in a place where people are more progressive and would be receptive to this type of curriculum. They mentioned that Seattle is a progressive place in which some of the topics are more welcome than in a conservative place. Thus, "The social context and political norms of a given community influence local curricular decisions as well as the impact of curriculum on students" (Westheimer 66). Context influences both the restrictions placed on teachers and the curriculum's impact on students.

Another context is subject relevance with current problems and ways the problems are presented in classes. When students learn about energy, it is not enough to teach them the different sources (coal, natural gas, hydroelectric). Instead, teachers must discuss the impact of each source in relation to humans and environment. In this way, they can also teach new skills such as critical thinking and complex analyses of multiple perspectives and help students make connections from past events with current events. And some of them are doing it, one parent emphasized how her son's Environmental Engineer teacher made a huge difference when he taught "about the impacts of burning fossil fuels and CO₂ and why the actions of people clearly have an impact on the environment and on climate" (Stuart). She said: "when my son turned sixteen, he asked for an electric car; he said: mom I don't want a gas car they're bad for the environment" (Stuart). He educated his mother on this topic and "when was time for [her] to get a new car, [she] got an electric car" (Stuart). Stuart added that we can support the environment even more, that "we can vote in elections and we can vote with our dollars" (Stuart). Voting allows us all to make these changes locally and nationally.

Fortunately, some schools are applying the knowledge and skills education leaders are recommending. A Tesla STEM teacher pointed out that his school has created a list of the global, engineering challenges for the 21st century. The National Academy of Engineering (NAE) lists the Grand Challenges for Engineering as follows:

1. Make solar energy economical
2. Provide energy from fusion
3. Develop carbon sequestration methods
4. Manage the nitrogen cycle
5. Provide access to clean water

6. Restore and improve urban infrastructure
7. Advance health informatics
8. Engineer better medicines
9. Reverse-engineer the brain
10. Prevent nuclear terror
11. Secure cyberspace
12. Enhance virtual reality
13. Advance personalized learning
14. Engineer the tools of scientific discovery (“NAE Grand Challenges for Engineering”)

One teacher explained how he integrates a research project with the global, engineering challenges. He starts with his students:

I ask them to read some background material, maybe one of the areas they're interested in. And then pulling that material into like 10 main ideas and then pulling the main idea into a series of so ‘how did it get this way?’ what are the paradoxes? who are the stakeholders? and what's at stake for them? and get them to identify a problem ... And then [he] ask[s] them how do they get to be a problem? and then [he] say[s] can you see a STEM solution for this? if we applied more science or technology can you see a solution for this? ... then they come back with [solutions] and he says ‘terrific, but *why aren't we doing anything*’? (Lenocker).

This brief lesson plan demonstrates that some schools and teachers are incorporating GCE in their curriculum and motivating students to want to learn about it.

Conclusion

The International Community Development Master's program has changed my life. While attending classes such as Culture Studies in Global Context, Globalization, Spirituality, Culture and Social Justice, Disaster Relief and Development, and Social and Justice Environment, I began to see the unethical and amoral nature of my First World lifestyle. These classes were all really eye opening, and they first showed me the power of a relevant education and then proved that it can do wonders for the future of humanity. I intend my thesis to show others the vital need for relevant education, in this case, GCE. I hope also to inspire us all to take appropriate actions in refining our educational system. I want my audience to see this work not as another critique of our system education, nor extra work for our teaches. Instead, I hope they can encourage and support a new movement and that all of us are involved in it—we parents, teachers, youth groups, clubs, sports teams, after-school programs, community support, and more. All of us together can ensure that our schools' academic subjects and life skills are more relevant to our changing and increasingly connected world.

I am convinced that students are more motivated when they can connect to the topics being taught; the curriculum needs to make sense to the world around them. It is a complex problem since there are no right solution or good-for-all contexts. Educational leaders cannot conform to one curriculum and accept that all topics are equally important and relevant to all students. Education for global citizenship is itself a critical 21st century skill that promotes global understanding in our local context.

Globalization, then, has created a need for global citizens, and since many of us are unaware of it, we need a new guideline or moral code for our actions. No human beings should be submitted to slavery, exploitation, contamination, etc. to produce our goods. All of us need to change our attitudes to see these acts as immoral and that if we condone them, we may be part of

the problem. Global citizenship Education is certainly not the whole solution; it will not automatically change the world. Yet it can inform our young people about the world's problems and encourage them to seek a global understanding for the good of our humanity and our planet's wellbeing. Together, we all can positively change the world, so *why aren't we doing anything?*

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