Chapter 18

Can Higher Education Really Produce Global Citizens?
Self-Identification and Architectures of Mobility

David Starr-Glass
University of New York in Prague, Czech Republic

ABSTRACT

Globalization profoundly impacts our economics, societies, and educational systems yet doubt exists in higher education as to an appropriate response. Some colleges have embarked on a process of comprehensive internationalization; others are considering how to graduates global citizens, even although global citizenship remains a deeply contested issue. Considering teaching and learning perspectives, particularly perspectives informed by acquisition and participation metaphors, the chapter critiques higher education efforts to develop global citizenship. It examines inbound international student programs, outbound study abroad initiatives, and changes in learner identification and self-categorization. It argues that while student mobility initiatives have great potential, that potential goes unrealized unless learners have been comprehensibly prepared to engage actively with their new environments and experiences, and to consciously reconsider their identities and self-categorizations.

INTRODUCTION

In U.S. higher education there is a growing rhetoric, often passionate, about the need to produce graduates who are internationally aware, and who can function as global citizens in a globalized world. Globalization and global citizenship are not synonymous, but it is frequently assumed that they are, or that one will inevitably lead to the other. Part of the confusion lies in the ways in which globalization and global citizenship have been defined. Part of the tension that exists between them is that globalization is rooted in considerations of economics, trade, and resource acquisition; whereas, global citizenship is grounded in understandings of human interdependence, ethical consideration, and cooperative engagement. Although
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the construct of globalization, or its proxy internationalization, may fit well in the contemporary U.S. academy, the same cannot be said of global citizenship, which seems neither comfortable nor confident in higher educational contexts in which the “historical view of universities as elite institutions with a role to critique society has been replaced… by the expansion of tertiary education to a larger cohort and an orientation of the curriculum to the market economy” (Clifford & Montgomery, 2014, p. 43).

In attempts to further internationalize their curricula and to produce internationally aware graduates – and perhaps incidentally to create opportunities for advancing global citizenship – most institutions of higher education have developed architectures of mobility. These architectures provide bridges and pathways that allow students to cross national boundaries and engage with national culture difference. These institutionally-created architectures facilitate the inbound and outbound flow of students, commonly in the form of international student programs and study abroad initiatives. Inbound and outbound programs allow students to move from domestic environments to places and experiences that they have not previously encountered.

Physical displacement provides a powerful way to recognize, appreciate, and develop a sense of difference and to cultivate international awareness – for both the students involved and for those who encounter them. However, international mobility does not necessarily promote global citizenship. For that to happen, there needs to be a significant shift in the student’s outlook and a fundamental realignment of his or her self-identification.

This chapter is structured as follows. The next section provides background by briefly examining globalization, internationalization, and global citizenship in U.S. higher education. This is followed by an exploration of the existing architectures of mobility, specifically international student programs and study abroad initiatives. This section considers the structure of these programs, the educational opportunities they present, and the teaching-learning perspectives needed to encourage and support participants shift their self-categorizations and self-identities in ways that may make them more receptive to global citizenship. This is followed by a number of suggestions and recommendations that might provide assistance in institutional moves towards global citizenship. The penultimate section considers future research directions, while the final section briefly reviews the central issues of the chapter and points a way forward for global citizenship in higher education.

BACKGROUND

Globalization, internationalization, and the question of global citizenship have all significantly challenged, and to some extent reshaped, higher education in the 21st century. Although these three constructs present multiple challenges and opportunities for the academy, it is important to appreciate that they differ significantly in their nature and cannot be regarded as synonymous, even although there has been a persistent tendency to do so.

Globalization

All of us, whether as citizens or members of academic communities, are immersed in a broader experiential landscape that is increasingly dominated by globalization. At its center, globalization represents the shockwaves caused by the dramatic expansion of interconnected economic markets and of world trade. Globalization is not an abstraction: it very real and ever-present. For most people, a realization of