Chapter 1
Global Citizenship as a Means for Teaching Environmental Education to Gifted Learners

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ABSTRACT

Increasingly, social issues are expanding at global proportions. Some of the biggest threats surround sustainability and environmental challenges. Global learning can prepare future global citizens to acknowledge and resolve social issues. Global citizenship can be used as a means for addressing awareness, knowledge, and action relative to sustainability and environmental education. For the purpose of teaching sustainability and environmental education via global citizenry to gifted learners, a curricular framework was developed to use across disciplines, grade levels, and service delivery options. In essence, the curriculum prepares advanced and gifted learners to raise their awareness of sustainability and environmental issues, teach the necessary tools for taking action, and to prepare them to inspire future citizens who engage in related global community change.

INTRODUCTION

Common social issues plague communities everywhere, but when is a problem a considered a global concern? The simplest answer to this question is that a global issue effects a large number of people across national boundaries. In other words, a global issue is significant to one or more countries and its citizens simultaneously. Most significantly, a global issue presents a problem that is beyond the capability of

any one nation to solve alone. Therefore, as society educates the next generation of global citizens, education must include the development of global competence. An individual's capacity and proclivity for understanding and taking action regarding issues of global significance comprises global competence (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011). Global competence can be developed within any discipline, and across disciplines through intentional teaching and learning (Gibson, Rimmington, Landwehr-Brown, 2008). Through global learning, teachers develop and nurture their students' global competence.

Global learning is an educational approach that emphasizes the significance of the interconnectedness of people and their issues throughout the world. Students examine global issues and the impact of individuals' actions. The infusion of global learning across disciplines of study positively impacts student achievement (Reboot the Future, 2019) while nurturing global citizenship. Specifically, global learning is a student-centered activity whereby learners of different cultures develop global perspectives in order to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for world citizenship (Gibson, et al., 2008). Global teaching leads to the development of global citizenship aligned with both academic and affective learning outcomes.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Global teaching develops knowledgeable and engaged global citizens who are open, sensitive, and positive toward other cultures, as well as toward their own culture (Sisk, 2010). The concept of global citizenship refers to a level of citizenship that brings diverse people together in their communal concern and responsibility to resolve shared problems. Teaching global citizenship can lead to increased cultural diversity, increased interconnectedness, and increased interdependence (Gibson, et al., 2008). Citizenship is expressed by individual and collective action in solving the problems of a shared community. Global citizens are engaged in action based on increased knowledge about common issues in order to bring about change. The act of becoming aware and trying to resolve communal issues is expressed as engagement, which is the hallmark of global citizenship. Thus, the outcome of global citizenship is awareness that leads to action to bring about change.

Although all students should develop the knowledge and skills related to global citizenship, our most able students are predisposed to global learning. In particular, gifted learners possess the dispositions, cognitive processes, and inclination for social justice needed for world citizenship. Gifted students' exceptional intellect, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, as well as strong penchant for social justice hold the promise of students evolving as leaders and problem-solvers in our future (Gibson, et al., 2008).

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