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Some lessons from school on unravelling the global dimension and 'global citizenship'

Peter D'Sena

'As educators, we have a unique opportunity and a clear responsibility to help prepare our students to be responsible citizens of the future. The fate of our planet and all its life forms lie in their hands. The question, therefore, is how do we prepare the global citizen?'

Gillian Slater (DEA, 2003)

'We will aim to broaden staff and student horizons by ... promoting global citizenship in the curriculum'.

Assessment, Learning & Teaching Strategy, 2005-2008
(Leeds Met, 2005)

Promoting the global dimension in schools

In the UK, the significance of teaching the 'global dimension' was first acknowledged and articulated at length by those teaching in schools and in some respects this tier of provision, which remains a powerful driver of educational change, still influences university curriculum development. (GTP, 2003, 2005; D'Sena, 2006) For instance, the ways in which 'global perspectives' are beginning to be articulated in higher education now have clear roots in the activity of groups influencing the secondary sector in the 1980s and after 20 or so years this thinking is now given legitimacy and authority through statutory and non-statutory guidance to teachers. (DfES, 2004) For pupils aged 11 to 18 the contextualisation and exemplification of knowledge through global issues are becoming regularised in the school curriculum and there is now official guidance from the DfID, the DfES and the curricula of Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England about global education. Note: 'dimension' and 'perspectives' are the dominant terms, with policy makers in England, probably sensibly, showing a reluctance to give guidance about 'citizenship'. This short article hopes to prompt a debate on how the unravelling of global dimensions and perspectives (with its emphasis on alternatives to Anglocentrism and Eurocentrism) can encourage us to consider whether and how our academic practice might broaden our students' and even our own horizons.

The debate about the values and attitudes dimensions of 'global citizenship' became particularly vibrant in the 1990s as the introduction of citizenship education in 2000 drew closer. Taking established work on 'World Studies' influential writers such as Pike and Selby (1995, 1999) acknowledged the impact that utilising global-spatial and global-temporal dimensions could have on personal development when couched in an issues-led curriculum in the global classroom. Oxfam went further and were prepared to promote and mainstream the term 'global citizenship'. Their model, first published in 1997, is not itself new; quite the opposite, it is based on principles that underpinned a number of educational movements that have had a high profile since the 1960s, such as multicultural, anti-racist, development and environmental education. Inherent in Oxfam's model, and explicit in their accompanying literature, is the belief that it is morally unacceptable for so many people, both in the UK and elsewhere, to live

in poverty; and that educational outcomes, through a curriculum of 'global citizenship' can involve pupils/students in challenging poverty.

Figure 1: Key Elements for Global Citizenship (Source: Oxfam, 2004)

Knowledge and Understanding	Skills	Values and Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social justice and equity • Diversity • Globalisation and interdependence • Sustainable development • Peace and conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical thinking • Ability to argue effectively • Ability to challenge injustice and inequalities • Respect for people and things • Co-operation and conflict resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of identity and self-esteem • Empathy • Commitment to social justice and equality • Value and respect for diversity • Concern for the environment and commitment to sustainable development • Belief that people can make a difference

Both DfES and DfID have subsequently drawn on this and other models to frame the global dimension with eight interrelated concepts: citizenship; sustainable development; social justice; values and perceptions; diversity; interdependence; conflict resolution; human rights. (DfES, 2004; DfID, 2002). Perhaps the work done in the school sector in the past decade can provide opportunities and lessons for devising taxonomies of learning and tools for assessment for university provision.

Promoting global perspectives in a 'weak' university discipline – history

Eurocentric approaches to epistemology and the construction of university disciplines have, according to Thomas Bender (in Robinson & Katalushi, 2005), led to 'strong' and 'weak' subjects – in terms of vulnerabilities of their boundaries to other approaches to enquiry. One example of a 'weak' discipline is my own area of study, history, which because of its weakness, according to some, 'died' in the twentieth century. In Western Europe, the 'total history' approach of the Annales school in the 1920s and 'history from below', its UK descendant, were challenged in the 1980s by Foucault's suggestions that understanding multiple, interacting 'legitimate' and 'excluded' histories provided an even more secure route for interpreting the past. For many European scholars, this opened the door to many other contesting and complimentary paradigms such as those based in feminist scholarship, postcolonial and subaltern studies, Afrocentricism and, cultural studies. (Bloch, 1954; Said, 1995; Southgate, 1996; Asante, 1992).

A logical step, in terms of teaching and learning, has been the journey of these intellectual paradigms into the realms of undergraduate delivery. Hence, in the Carnegie Faculty, students being prepared to teach history in schools have, for

the past dozen years and more, engaged with the histories of non-European cultures via the pedagogic approach of 'critical thinking' in which non-European perspectives and problems are brought into focus. In a module called '*Many Cultures, Many Histories*', first taught by Max Farrar (Farrar, 2006, p. 14) students are challenged to investigate how 'race', gender and class discrimination have developed and grown and learn of the processes by which the concepts of 'social construction', 'representation' and 'discourse' were created in eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain. This provides the foundations for a negotiated, imaginatively structured analysis of a historical subject which, in traditional, Eurocentric terms, may be viewed as alternative (Surin, 1996, p. 194). The further journey between academic theory, historical knowledge and professional practice is addressed through a critique of related issues as they are depicted in the school texts currently available to children. The pedagogic approach bears many similarities to that proposed by the Development Education Association's suggestion for how a curriculum can be used to promote 'global citizenship'. (See figure 2).

Figure 2: Themes, Skills and Dispositions for a Curriculum for Developing Global Citizenship (Source: DEA, 2005. Available at: <http://www.dea.org.uk/>).

Themes	Skills	Disposition
Ethical	Critical enquiry	Commitment to global responsibility
Cultural	Active participation	
Sustainable	Practical application	
Local-Global		

The plurality of partial views (or more global perspectives) is more easily insinuated into history, one of the 'weak' disciplines, with permeable boundaries, but what of the strong disciplines, which tend to be the sciences and others outside the humanities, where some knowledge is more intractably knowledge? Any attempt to effect curriculum change and development might be well advised to understand reasons for resistance. Where the preservation of disciplines, their enquiry and content and their boundaries are sometimes given primacy, there may be fear amongst some that abstract principles and rigour either cannot be contextualised to enhance students' understanding of global dimensions or that traditional content has greater significance. (Though for an example of how disciplined scholarship can experience an understanding of the world we inhabit see Chapman and Clegg on praxis, chapter 6 in this issue).

Conclusions and observations

The key concepts of Oxfam's Curriculum for Global Citizenship have already found their way into higher education through the World Studies Trust's *Global Teacher Project*. Set up in 1999, this 6-year project, part-funded by DfID and hosted at Leeds Met, created opportunities, systems and paradigms for students in ITE, and ultimately in 15 HEIs, to incorporate the global dimension into their planning and teaching when on school experience (Steiner, 1996; GTP, 2003, 2005).

The project's work in that time provides a suggestive template for organisations wishing to promote curriculum development set within the contexts of pedagogic 'best' practice and academic knowledge and also the constraints of professional and governmental standards. The development of research instruments, training packages, networks for collaboration, dissemination and influence were established. (Lyle, 2005) A similar process was adopted by the Royal Geographical Society in its recent project auditing global perspectives in higher education which led it to conclude (unsurprisingly) that 'Global perspectives are important and relevant to Higher Education, but integrating them across disciplines, departments and institutions is a huge challenge' (RGS, 2006, p. 6).

Some observations:

- We should be mindful of students' pre-university experience and their concerns about their future in relation to global issues. (Osler and Vincent, 2002; Hicks and Slaughter, 1998; Oxfam, 2006).
- Build on good practice. Already, many of our intended outcomes for students prepare them to be autonomous in an evolving global society.
- Test experts in assessment on rationales and methods for measuring commitment, concern, respect, disposition and the like.
- Learn lessons from the teaching of other big and difficult issues of our time, like 'teaching race' (Farrar and Todd, 2006) or 'values' (Robinson and Katalushi, 2005).
- Notions of citizenship are hotly contested (indeed, the term 'citizenship' has no equivalent in some traditions) (Parekh, 2000; Panjwani, 2006).

The Dearing Report (1997) stated that one role of the modern university is to shape society, with an ethos valuing democracy, civility and inclusivity. Dearing's earlier work included chairing the History Working Group's progress under the Education Reform Act of 1988 (Phillips, 1998). That reminds me of the most obvious lesson we should take from school, (from one who taught for 16 years in the secondary sector during the days of initiative overload and prescription through the formation of a National(istic) Curriculum). It is that we should grasp the nettle ourselves – to decide, if a decision needs to be made, what we feel our contribution to delivering an ethos and curriculum for global citizenship should be. Better that than be told.

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