

Putting global citizenship at the heart of global learning: a critical approach



**This is the third in a series of articles that provides a critical introduction to key concepts of relevance to the Global Learning Programme (see GA and GLP websites).**

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**ABSTRACT:** *What is involved in encouraging learners to think critically about the state of the world? And what may be required to make it more just and sustainable? This article answers these questions by focusing on global political economy, governance and citizenship. It draws on critical theories relating to network society, global deliberative democracy, reflexive modernisation and global citizenship education, to show how geography teachers might respond to the concerns of contemporary youth. Readers are encouraged to consider the contested discourses surrounding global citizenship education and recognise the limitations of curriculum guidance offered by the Global Learning Programme.*

*Introducing Generation C*, a report from Demos commissioned by the National Citizenship Service (Birdwell and Mani, 2014), suggests that today's teenagers are 'digital natives'. Social media and new technologies have transformed the way they view the world, politics and possibilities for the future. While they are often labelled as apathetic, selfish and narcissistic, the research informing the report shows that young people are tolerant, compassionate, concerned about social issues at home and abroad, and prepared to take action to make the world a better place.

The report suggests that, given the right opportunities and support, young people might transform our notions and expectations of active citizenship. While some have labelled teenagers 'Generation C' because they will be the most connected generation in history, the report suggests that 'C' is apt for another reason. Generation Citizen could include the most active citizens we have seen for a long time with 56% of the teachers participating in the research considering 14 to 15 year olds (and 60% considering 16 to 17 year olds) to be more engaged in social issues than was the teachers' own generation at a similar age (p. 15).

Generation C is growing up in 'an age of austerity' and risks becoming a 'jilted generation' (Howker and Malik, 2013) denied the jobs, housing, pensions and other benefits available to most of their parents and grandparents, and facing a precarious future. Addressing the issues that most concern the teenagers surveyed (unemployment and access to work (mentioned by 43%); living costs (34%); and student debt (23%) (Bradwell and Mani, 2014, p. 63)) may require alternatives to current forms of political economy. It is therefore of concern that 'very few pupils knew how to describe what the concept *politics* meant' (Bradwell and Mani, 2014, p. 55) and that significant minorities consider that they do not know enough about politics to make informed decisions (39%), and feel that 'voting doesn't change anything' (38%) (Bradwell and Mani, 2014, p. 55).

## Global citizenship education and the Global Learning Programme

Prior to the election of the (Cameron/Clegg) coalition government in 2010, global citizenship education (GCE) was strongly promoted in English schools, by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Oxfam, 2006) and the Labour government (DfES, 2005; QCA, 2007). Guidance encouraged the development of both global cultural and political citizenship, prompted the publication of many resources still to be found on the Global Dimension website, and contributed to the emerging theory of global learning (Bourn, 2013).

While the current English National Curriculum programme of study for citizenship at key stages 3 and 4 makes no mention of global citizenship (GC), GCE continues to be encouraged in Wales and Scotland. The subject guidance accompanying the current Global Learning Programme (GLP, 2015a) does, however, outline a significant role for citizenship (GLP, 2015b) while making little mention of GC and preferring the term 'global learning' to GCE. The programme aims to enable young people to 'better understand their role in a globally interdependent world and explore strategies by which they can make it more just and sustainable' (Hopkin, 2014, pp. 24). The GA is currently involved with the GLP as it supports teaching and learning about global issues in key stages 2 and 3 (GA, 2014).

One of the aims of the GLP is to 'stimulate critical thinking about global issues both at a whole school and at pupil level'. This is best realised by introducing pupils to theories that are 'critical of the current way society is organised and seek to provide reasons for why it ought to be changed and organised along different principles or with different institutions' (Barry, 2000, p. 10). Critical theory has the potential to empower learners as critical and active citizens and, here, I will focus on its role in GCE, believing this to lie at the heart of effective global learning.

My argument echoes that of the GA's working group on citizenship, which concluded that geography:

*'cannot make citizens, but it can create the language and intellectual space for explorations of the meaning, spatiality, and contextualisation of what citizenship is, where it plays a role, and what future citizenship rights might or might not entail'* (Anderson et al., 2008, p. 39).

## Understanding network society and the network state

The basics of how the world works can be taught to pupils in the early secondary years. The key actors are global industrial, financial and media corporations, nation states and institutions of regional and international governance, and the social movements of a global civil society seeking the conservation, reform, or replacement of the status quo. Economic, political, military and cultural power is unevenly distributed and it is the lack of democracy at all levels – from the local to the global – that prevents the majority of citizens realising their common interests in social justice and sustainability (Bennis, 2014).

The rise of neoliberalism in recent decades means that the majority of governments now put the needs of capital and wealth generation before those of their electorates, cutting taxes for the rich, reducing regulation on business, eroding spending on welfare and allowing inequality to rise (Seery and Arendar, 2015). Democracy has come under attack and protests against undemocratic global governance have spread around the world.

Castells (2010, 2012) links the changes of recent decades to the rise of network society – a form of neoliberal global capitalism enabled by information and communication technology. This is used to deepen the logic of profit-seeking by enhancing the productivity of labour and capital; globalising production, circulation and markets; and providing new goods and services for profitable sale. In network society almost everyone and everything is connected to global networks, through which flow people, energy, materials and information, and connectivity is key to economic success. Networks include global financial markets, global production and distribution of goods and services, international trade, global networks of science and technology, global media and global communication networks.

As power shifts to those who control networks (particularly financial and corporate networks) it becomes more diffuse and more difficult to regulate. The powers of nation states are reduced and they are increasingly unable to deliver such goals as social justice or sustainable development and thus face a crisis of legitimacy. Populist parties advocating a retreat from globalisation are a response to this crisis as are networked social movements advocating the reform of global capitalism or its replacement by alternatives.

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**Figure 1:** Some discourses shaping global society.  
Note: Dryzek also lists realism, human rights, counter-terror, industrialism and discourses of identity.  
Source: Dryzek, 2006.

At the global level there is no single authority responsible for global governance (or what can be described as the sum of the processes whereby global society and its institutions determine who has power, who makes decisions, how other players make their voice heard and how account is rendered). There is, however, a network of global governance mechanisms ranging from the highly formalised to the completely informal. These include international organisations, markets, regimes, treaties, international law, military force, coercive diplomacy, NGOs, private arrangements, confederations of states and public spheres (areas of civil society where individuals can come together to freely identify and discuss issues and through that discussion influence political life). Decision making within networked global governance moves from vertical to horizontal approaches with both the UN (2015) and the UNDP (Woods *et al.*, 2013) seeking improved global governance, partly through the greater involvement of global civil society.

## Contested discourses and deliberative global politics

Discourses play a key role in global governance and associated decision making (and non decision making). They are sets of concepts, categories, and ideas that provide ways to understand and act in the world. Competing discourses underlie many of the world's conflicts and issues, and are used to

**Market liberalism:** the dominant global economic discourse that emphasises free trade, capital mobility and deregulation.

**Globalisation:** highlights the increasing intensity of international social, economic and political interactions, and the degree to which systems are increasingly organised at the global level, eluding the control of nation states.

**Neoconservatism:** rejects realism in favour of an idealism that believed peace could be secured by making countries liberal, capitalist and democratic (shot to prominence in the United States after 2001).

**Anti-corporate globalisation:** an emerging counter-discourse that challenges economic globalisation and incorporates a variety of local and justice concerns.

**Sustainable development:** (the dominant discourse on global environmental affairs since the mid-1980s) stresses collective action to secure mutually reinforcing values of environmental protection, justice within and between generations, and economic growth.

support or challenge the power of those who control global networks. Market liberalism (neoliberalism), globalisation, neoconservatism, anti-corporate globalisation and sustainable development are examples of discourses (Figure 1), while political economy, international security, human rights and sustainability are examples of the issues they address. Discourses draw on alternative theoretical approaches in such fields as economics (Chang, 2014), globalisation (Held and McGrew, 2003), environmental politics (Dryzek, 1997) and international relations (Baylis *et al.*, 2011) and are transmitted by such agencies as the media and education. They are continually contested and some see greater deliberation among discourses as the key to global democratisation.

Deliberative democracy (Dryzek, 2015) puts talk and communication, rather than elections and voting, at the heart of politics. It involves respectful, rational and constructive argument in which contrasting views are evaluated and consensus is sought. Such democracy is widely practised around the world (for example in citizens' fora, participatory budgeting and consensus conferences), is enabled by the growth of social media and digital democracy, and has considerable potential to make global institutions answerable to

**1. Public space** in which citizens with a variety of viewpoints and discourses can interact without legal restriction. Such spaces are real and virtual and include media, social movements, public hearings and classrooms.

**2. Empowered space** where authoritative collective decisions are made. Such spaces include legislatures, constitutional courts, corporate boardrooms, international negotiations and community meetings.

**3. Transmission** whereby events in public space influence those in empowered space. This happens through campaigns, activism, cultural change initiated by social movements, etc. It changes the outlook of those in power.

**4. Accountability** where democratic legitimacy requires those making decisions in empowered space to be accountable to citizens in public space. Elections offer limited accountability.

**5. Meta-deliberation** whereby those within a deliberative system should continually reflect on the way the system is organised and how it could be improved.

**6. Decisiveness** requires the system to be consequential (not a side show) as regards the content of collective decisions and outcomes.

**Figure 2:** Elements of deliberative systems.  
Based on Dryzek and Stevenson, 2011.

publics as well as states (FDGG, 2015). It is easier to apply at the global level than electoral democracy, but to be effective deliberative democracy should draw on multiple perspectives; prioritise public goods and general interests over sectional interests; include moments of collaboration, contestation, and consensus; and make use of discourses that facilitate consensus (such as ecological modernisation (Dryzek, 1997)). Dryzek and Stevenson (2011) examine the role of deliberative systems in global environmental governance, identifying six elements of such systems (Figure 2), which serve as a template for the analysis and evaluation of real-world political processes.

Deliberative democrats offer a model of global democratisation that has advantages over those offered by neoconservatives and cosmopolitans (Held, 1995) (see Figure 3). It promotes change without co-ordinated collective decision making by working in the myriad contexts where public and

empowered spaces interact and where transmission serves to change the outlook of those in power (Figure 2). It requires citizens who are committed to universal (cosmopolitan) values; knowledgeable about competing discourses and global issues, and active in global public spheres.

## Reflexive intelligence, youth and new social movements

As the *Generation C* report suggests (Birdwell and Mani, 2014), network society has the potential to produce such global citizens, as it requires reflexive intelligence on the part of actors – be they states, corporations or citizens. With the erosion of secure employment and welfare states, citizens have to become 'entrepreneurs-of-the-self' (Zizek, 2014) as companies and states outsource risks to individuals. Citizens require reflexive intelligence (Beck, 1992) to manage employability, falling living standards, reductions in social

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**Figure 3: Three discourses of global democratisation. Based on Dryzek, 2006, chapter 8.**

	<b>Neoconservative global democratisation</b>	<b>Cosmopolitan global democratisation</b>	<b>Deliberative global democratisation</b>
<b>Aim</b>	To spread democracy to ever more parts of the world. To promote neoconservative values as universal values.	To create democratic international institutions that promote global governance based on a body of universal law.	To promote dispersed and competent control over the engagement of discourses in transnational public spheres.
<b>Political economy</b>	Liberal capitalism universally applicable, bringing freedom and democracy to all. Integration into the community of democratic states makes development more likely and conflict less likely.	Ultimately an international legal system enforcing democratically determined laws; a global parliament to hold global institutions to account; and international control of a military force. A global social democracy committed to social justice.	Stresses the importance of deliberative global politics and the informal communicative realm that can influence the constitutional exercise of authority. Views conflicts in the international system in terms of the clash of discourses.
<b>Global democracy</b>	Scornful of extending democracy and citizenship into the international system and relations between states. Order in this system to be dictated by the benign superpower of the USA. Hostile to international institutions, especially the UN.	International institutions directly accountable to citizens: for example a reformed EU, a reformed UN Security Council, more inclusive and effective international courts, and cross-national referenda.	Transnational democracy is sought in communicatively competent decentralised control over the content and relative weight of globally consequential discourses. Deliberative global politics allows conflict resolution and promotes social justice.
<b>Citizenship</b>	Will of people expressed solely through competitive elections and markets. Little opportunity for ordinary people to participate in their own democratisation projects.	Individuals come to identify themselves as global citizens and consent to the subordination of other identities to this identity.	Citizens are active in global public spheres that seek to influence corporations, states and intergovernmental organisations.
<b>Problems</b>	Democracy is seen as going hand-in-hand with capitalist markets and institutions that support them. Global capitalism imposes limits on the kinds of policies that governments can choose. Inconsistency between means and ends. If necessary, democracy is imposed at the point of a gun. Meets resistance in many parts of the world. The rise of anti-Western and anti-capitalist discourses and movements.	Cosmopolitanism suffered setbacks after 11/9/01 with unilateral action by US undermining multilateralism. Requires excessive negotiation of rules and hierarchical administration in a complex and fluid world. Identity politics has been growing and some identities, such as those of Islamic radicals and US neoconservatives, are very resistant to cosmopolitanism.	Faces the challenges of decentralised yet undemocratic authority; oppressive discourses; and discourse manipulation. Can be seen to deal only in influence and not authority. Lacks formalized connection to binding collective decisions.

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services, and environmental risks; with neoliberalism offering only consumerism, debt and speculation as compensations. Debt and anxiety become key means of governance and anxious citizens may then turn to such fundamentalisms as radical Islam (reflexive traditionalism) or recognise the need to further democratisate global society in order to realise their true interests (reflexive modernisation). While there are strong constraints on states (e.g. a pursuit of security) and corporations (e.g. pursuit of profits) acting reflexively, civil society actors have more freedom to do so.

Reflexive modernisation means that increasing numbers of young people are attracted to the advocacy networks (e.g. internet fora), coalitions (e.g. the Fairtrade campaign), and social movements (e.g. the Occupy movement) of global civil society (Yarwood, 2014). NGOs are key actors here and seek to appeal to the young by linking their campaigns to cosmopolitan values, popular culture and consumerism. That Generation C channels its concerns into ethical consumption and campaigning on single issues, rather than formal politics, is a product of neoliberalism's outsourcing of risk and responsibilities. As Yarwood (2014) argues, people's understanding of citizenship is being transformed from that of a subject entitled to rights guaranteed by a state, to that of a consumer exercising choice in the marketplace.

Elsewhere in the world young people have been more prepared to engage in political protest against austerity or oppressive regimes. A feature of the past two decades has been the rise of the anti-globalisation (anti-capitalist, anti-corporate, pro-global justice) movements and a series of global revolutions, which are 'still kicking off everywhere' (Mason, 2013). These movements have prompted a renewed interest in anarchism (Albert, 2014; Graeber, 2013), Marxism (Harvey, 2014; Saad-Filho, 2003) and green socialism (Swift, 2014; Woodin and Lucas, 2004), and in related forms of global democracy and citizenship (for example, Dobson, 2011; Monbiot, 2003; Open Democracy, 2012; Smith, 2009) that include those considered by Dryzek (Figure 3) and others originating in the global South (Smith *et al.*, 2014).

## Discourses of global citizenship education

Social movements focusing on such issues as the environment, development, human rights and peace were influential in developing the theory and practice of new adjectival educations (environmental education, development education,

etc.) from the late 1960s (Dufour, 1990). A number of these coalesced in the late 1990s under the label of GCE (Priestly *et al.*, 2010) and it is significant that, following the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, GCE is now a strategic area of work within Unesco's current education programme (Tawil, 2014; Unesco, 2015).

As the reader might expect, given the diversity of discourses surrounding GC and education, there is a variety of approaches to GCE in schools. Marshall (2009) suggests that advocates of GCE have a range of agendas (economic competitiveness, internationalism, sustainability, social inclusion, social justice, multiple identities, etc.) and identifies key tensions between the two dominant agendas: equipping pupils for work and life in global society (arguably a neoliberal agenda) and developing commitment to a fairer and more sustainable world (arguably a socially-democratic agenda).

Shuttle (2008) examines the ideological currents emerging within the contested idea of GC and how they have shaped GCE. From a study of the literature, he suggests that GC is aligned with four ideological constellations (moral cosmopolitanism, liberal multiculturalism, neo-liberalism and environmentalism) and concludes that while there is no new and distinctive ideology emerging, established ideologies, most notably liberalism, are adapting alongside increasing public recognition of global interdependence (Shuttle, 2008). The majority of references to GC are in the educational arena and most are calls to promote moral cosmopolitanism rather than a critical understanding of the politics of global society. Hence Andreotti's (2006; 2014) distinction between soft and critical approaches to GCE.

Moral cosmopolitanism suggests all people warrant equal respect and concern, and have a moral obligation to further the well-being of all humankind. Liberal multiculturalism promotes mutual respect and engagement across cultures and pays particular attention to the rights of minorities.

Environmentalism focuses on our obligations to live more sustainably so that human and non-human nature has a more secure future. Shuttle (2008) traces the influence of these ideologies on GCE in the UK paying particular attention to the policies of the Labour government after 1997 and the way in which it turned to NGOs such as Oxfam and the Development Education Association to assist with guidance for teachers.

Priestly *et al.* (2010) highlight the tension between social and political conceptions of citizenship within the policies of UK governments on citizenship education (CE). While the emphasis is on CE as a vehicle for social cohesion, consensus, the acquisition of core competences and the promotion of 'British values' (given the terrorist threat); GCE requires an emphasis on plurality and difference, the quality of governance, and critical political activism rather than social compliance.

## Deliberative democracy and critical school geography

Faced with the diversity of approaches to GCE, how should the geography teacher respond? The answer lies in recognising that Habermas' critical theories of universal pragmatics and discourse (Horster, 1992) underpin both the rethinking of political community and the desirability of a global cosmopolitan and/or deliberative democracy (Devetak, 2013) and theories of critical education (Young, 1989; Huckle, 1997). Such education seeks to assist the learner in reflecting and acting on her or his formation as a person, the society and place that has shaped that formation, and the role of discourse and ideology in masking or revealing the learner's true interests. Education should reveal the systematic distortion of human interests and democracy in contemporary capitalist society, and develop deliberative citizens aware of the possibilities inherent in the public domain and more deliberative forms of democracy.

Both Dewey and Habermas adopted a pragmatic philosophy of education for democracy, emphasising its role in improving the methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion. Englund (2000; 2015), Johnson (2010) and Walsh (2008) revisit their work, with Englund reminding us that schools should be pluralist public spaces fostering encounters between different social and cultural groups and different worldviews and discourses. Indeed, Englund outlines five components of deliberative classroom communication (Figure 4) and the challenge for critical global educators is to develop values education, simulations, role plays, decision-making exercises and opportunities for media analysis that incorporate these components. Englund also argues they should reflect the elements of effective deliberative systems in the real world (Figure 2), allow real contestation among discourses and encourage communication with young people elsewhere in the world (see, for example, youthXchange).

1. That different worldviews and discourses confront one another, and arguments for these different views are given time and space to be articulated and presented in classrooms
2. There is tolerance and respect for the concrete other, and that participants learn to listen to the other person's argument
3. That elements of collective will formation are present, i.e. an endeavour to reach consensus or at least temporary agreements, and/or to draw attention to differences
4. That authorities and mainstream views can be questioned, and there are opportunities to challenge one's own worldview
5. That there is scope and a permissive atmosphere for students to communicate and deliberate without teacher control, i.e. for the continuation of argumentative discussions between students with the aim of further shedding light on issues from different points of view.

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**Figure 4:** Five components of deliberative communication. After: Englund, 2015.

In planning and delivering such lessons, geography teachers can learn much from the Open Spaces for Dialogue and Enquiry website (Andreotti and Warwick, 2007; OSDE, 2015), which provides guidance on developing critical global literacy. This suggests that the aim of global learning is not to discover 'the truth' but to provide space for learners to reflect on their place in the world (Gruenewald and Smith, 2008), how they came to think/be/feel/act the way they do, the implications of their systems of beliefs for local/global power relations, and the desirability of alternative placements, beliefs, and power relations. This approach is similar to the transformational approach favoured by Schultz (2007), which she associates with the postmodern politics of network society.

## Advancing and defending GCE through geography

This article challenges much in the GLP's guidance for teachers of geography (GLP, 2015c). It suggests a focus on causes (powerful minorities and a lack of global democracy) rather than symptoms (poverty and underdevelopment); reminds readers that such concepts as interdependence, development, globalisation and sustainability take on different meanings within different discourses, and that critical thinking requires exposure to critical ideas. The guidance on citizenship is generally more progressive than that for geography and it is to be hoped that many schools will adopt a cross-curricular approach.

Meanwhile a global reform movement (NUT, 2005) seeks to erode the role of democracy in and through education, and there is evidence that

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reliance on support from government departments (GLP is supported by the Department for International Development) and corporations is leading to the de-radicalisation of development education (Bryan, 2011) and education for sustainable development (Huckle, 2013). Standish (2009) has launched an attack on GCE through geography adopting a pessimistic and reactionary view of the rise of network society, the resulting cosmopolitanism and its the impact on school geography, which is very different from that advanced in this article (see GLP, 2015c and Morgan, 2009),

The case for advancing GCE through school geography continues to be developed (see, for example, Gaudelli and Heilman, 2009) and this article has suggested that there is a substantial body of theory that can be applied in the classroom. The idea of teaching geography for a better world (Fien and Gerber, 1988) continues to motivate many teachers and, given adequate attention to GCE, they can now employ the GLP to this end.

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Putting global citizenship at the heart of global learning: a critical approach

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