



Global Citizenship 1-2-3: Learn, Think, and Act

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GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP 1-2-3: LEARN, THINK, AND ACT

by S. Michael Putman and Erik J. Byker

Abstract

By integrating the model presented here into instruction, teachers can help students develop the knowledge, skills, and mindset necessary to become effective global citizens.

Key words: 21st-century skills, elementary education, international education, teacher education

both locally and globally, and understand their role in acting to make our world a more equitable and sustainable place. In essence, Global Citizenship 1-2-3 helps students develop the knowledge, skills, and mindset necessary to become global citizens.

Why Global Citizenship?

We are all part of a global community of citizens and have the collective responsibility to act for the mutual benefit of all people and for the sustainability of our planet (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2013). This is the undergirding principle of global citizenship, and it directly and indirectly influences how an individual engages with the world. UNESCO (2013) described education for global citizenship as empowering individuals to “assume active roles both locally and globally to face and resolve global challenges and ultimately to become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world” (p. 3). Global citizens have also been characterized as demonstrating respect for and valuing diversity, being actively engaged with the local, national, and global community, and promoting human rights that are part of a shared common humanity (Byker, 2016; Oxfam, 2019). While there is no universal definition of global citizenship (Guo, 2014), we view global citizenship as encompassing engagement with the world based on an appreciation of diversity in all forms, a commitment to sustainability, and the eradication of inequality and injustice of any form through local and global activity (Byker & Marquardt, 2016). In short, being a participant in the world means being a global citizen.

Whether through electronic or face-to-face interactions, people around the world are connected like never before (Byker, 2016). Within and through our ever-expanding networks are increased opportunities to experience diversity among people, perspectives, and opportunities, as well as to develop an awareness of culturally and contextually specific issues and events. As a result, if we are truly going to prepare children to be connected, global citizens, we need to think about an expanded vision of citizenship. In doing so, we must consider the critical role education has in global citizenship. Schools and teachers are conduits to initiating engagement in global citizenship education (GCE), and thus both students and educators need to think and act in local and global ways.

This article describes a model for development of learners’ global citizenship through implementation of globally competent teaching strategies. We call the model Global Citizenship 1-2-3, and it is based on a three-step approach to educate students (citizens) who (a) learn, (b) think, and (c) act in globally responsible ways. Through the model, we seek to help teachers comprehend how GCE can be integrated within instruction to effectively support students in becoming aware of the world,

The importance of the development of global citizens is evident in the United Nations Sustain-

able Development Goal 4: Quality Education. Specifically, Target 4.7 states:

By 2030, ensure that all learners 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. (United Nations, 2015, p. 21)

Acknowledging and accepting the characteristics associated with global citizenship and important ideas presented by the United Nations means that both learners and educators need to think and act as global citizens. With today's kindergarteners graduating from high school by 2030, it is important to prepare these learners for the world in which they inhabit.

Global Citizenship Education

A commitment to GCE affirms the important function of schools and teachers in developing children's global awareness and, subsequently, their global citizenship. Today's learners need to be engaged in GCE to have the knowledge, skills, and mindset necessary to take direct actions to address global issues. Learners also must have their eyes opened to appreciate how global issues are interconnected and influenced by factors (e.g., political, cultural, environmental) within a particular location (Byker, 2013; Freire, 1970). GCE helps learners to understand and actively tackle authentic issues and challenges, and to engage in collaborative work—both locally and globally—to develop potential actions and solutions.

To prepare individuals to engage as global citizens, UNESCO (2013) has organized GCE into three dimensions: socioemotional, cognitive, and behavioral. The socioemotional dimension relates to the development of empathy, skills for communication and interactions, and respect

for diversity—among people from different backgrounds and cultures, and among those with different perspectives. This dimension also includes participants' sense of belonging to a common humanity. Within the cognitive dimension, GCE helps students to gain knowledge of global, national, and local issues; to understand the interconnectedness and interdependency of issues in affected areas; and to use critical thinking and problem-solving skills to systematically and creatively address these issues. This dimension also seeks to develop an understanding of universal values such as justice, equality, dignity, and respect. Finally, the behavioral dimension recognizes the capacity to act collaboratively and responsibly toward goals associated with the collective good.

Global Citizenship 1-2-3

While we find the UNESCO dimensions valuable, teachers may not always find them relatable as they seek relevant and direct applications of GCE within their practice. With this concern in mind, we created the Global Citizenship 1-2-3 model (see Figure 1) as a tool that can support teachers as they pursue development of their learners' global competencies and, subsequently, enable them to become global citizens. The model is intended as an organizational tool for the development of instructional activities that help learners develop their emerging perspectives around global interconnectedness and interdependence and that create the willingness and capacity to take action to address global issues.

Our Global Citizenship 1-2-3 model is situated in the three GCE dimensions yet introduces what we feel is more practical terminology in describing the dimensions: (a) cultural responsiveness, (b) global-infused content, and (c) experiential opportunities. We use the term *cultural responsiveness* to describe how GCE is anchored in the socioemotional connection to empathy and the respect for diversity. As Geneva Gay (2002) explained, cultural responsiveness is the connection to "characteristics, experiences, and perspectives" (p. 106) of culturally and ethnically diverse people.

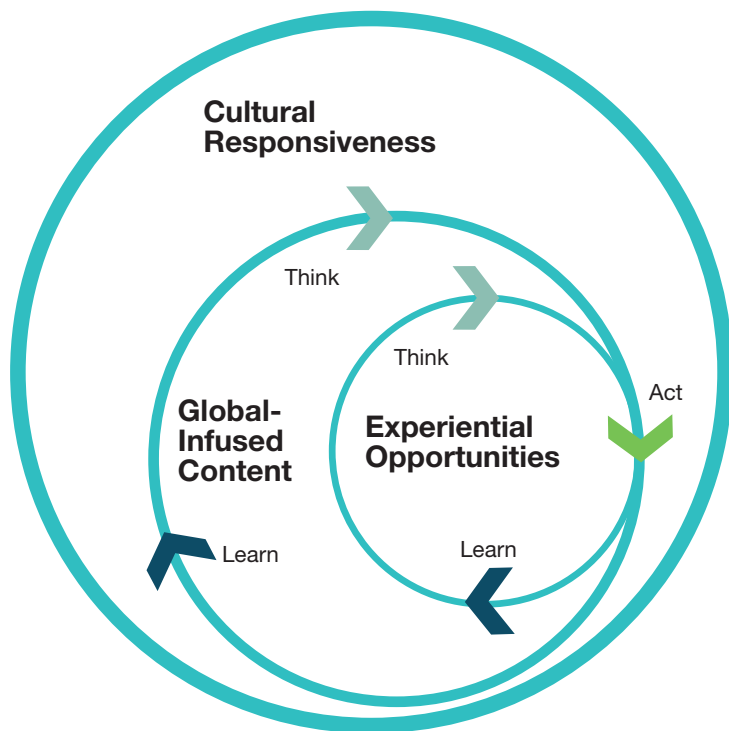


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Global Citizenship

Figure 1. *The Global Citizenship 1-2-3 Model*



Cultural responsiveness represents an important component of GCE as it provides a foundation for knowledge of and an appreciation for cultural differences. This dimension can and should be infused throughout the school year through literature, content instruction, discussions, or experiential opportunities, among other activities that highlight people of various backgrounds, origins, cultures, and perspectives. The aim is to prepare learners to respect diversity and differences and to develop the intercultural competencies necessary for engagement as global citizens.

In describing the cognitive dimension, we employ the term *global-infused content*, which captures how GCE includes global awareness and examination of the interrelatedness of global, national, and local issues. Global-infused content could include having a globe or world map in the classroom to spark young learners' curiosity about geography. At more advanced levels, teachers may engage students in examinations

of current issues that have local and global significance. For learners to develop knowledge and skills associated with this dimension of GCE, the content they experience must be infused with global connections.

Finally, we use the term *experiential opportunities* to describe UNESCO's behavioral dimension. Experiences are a critical part of helping learners develop as global citizens. Notably, they help to develop global awareness, build empathy, and move learners to the recognition of interconnectedness and shared challenges. Teachers can incorporate an experience like the Global Read Aloud classroom (<https://theglobalreadaloud.com>) as a way to connect learners to classrooms around the globe. In addition, students could poll community members to determine what local issues have global significance and then brainstorm ways to address an issue. For older students, experiential opportunities could encompass a visit to a museum that displays cultural artifacts or the creation of a newspaper that reports on local and global issues of significance.

An important component within the Global Citizenship 1-2-3 model is the Learn-Think-Act Framework (Oxfam, 2019). The framework's cycle represents a primary process for developing the knowledge and skills necessary within GCE. The cycle begins with the introduction of topics and content associated with global citizenship. Under the guidance of a teacher or mentor, students explore (i.e., *learn* about) these topics for the development of relevant knowledge. Topics might include, for example, 21st-century skills, immigration, or environmental sustainability. As learners become familiar with the topics, the teacher provides opportunities to examine and reflect (*think*) on solutions and potential courses of action to most effectively address the issues. Finally, learners are asked to individually and collectively identify and take some form of action related to an authentic global or local issue. Within this final step (*act*) is where the development of an understanding of participation and

involvement as global citizens is most evident. This culminating step represents the intersection between knowledge and direct (experiential) opportunities to see, implement, and reflect on the various facets of GCE.

Implementation of Global Citizenship 1-2-3

Various international organizations, such as Asia Society and UNESCO, have cited the pivotal role teachers play in children's global citizenship development. In their role, teachers equip our learners to be effective global citizens by infusing activities throughout the curriculum with the principles of GCE. To help teachers exhibit competent GCE teaching, we share two specific examples of how Global Citizenship 1-2-3 could be implemented—one in a primary classroom, and another in an upper elementary or intermediate classroom.

Implementation of Global Citizenship 1-2-3 in the primary classroom can begin with the students *learning* about their similarities and differences through a classroom reading such as *The Sneetches* by Dr. Seuss or *Why Am I Different?* by Norma Simon. The reading could be followed by engaging the students in an activity that helps them reflect (*think*) on their similarities and differences. For example, the class could graph eye or hair color, height, or native language to illustrate the findings or examine the data mathematically. To extend the learning, the experiential opportunity might involve taking a community walk to look for similarities and differences observed around the school or interviewing family or community members about their childhood and comparing it to various facets of childhood today. With the teacher facilitating, students begin to perceive diversity all around them and to build a positive perspective about it. Lastly, within the *act* phase, learners could practice their creative arts and literacy skills by creating a display or newsletter that shows all the similarities and differences among the students in the class, school, or community at-large.

The upper elementary and intermediate levels offer opportunities to engage with the content on a deeper level. Notably, teachers can introduce globally oriented learning resources, provide specific global examples within content instruction, and facilitate discussions around global issues to help learners understand the world in relation to their local context. For example, students could seek to *learn* about current issues through research of a real-world issue, such as food scarcity or immigration, that has both local and global significance. Alternatively, they could study a historical issue with local and global significance, such as civil or political rights, and examine the causes and outcomes. As learners examine the issue, teachers could create opportunities for critical examination to help them actively *think* about the topic. For instance, students could examine specific cause-and-effect sequences or debate the topic from different perspectives. These activities would further develop students' reasoning and problem-solving skills and support development of skills for considering topics from multiple perspectives.

As an experiential activity, learners could visit a local agency that supports recent immigrants or a food pantry and interview the director, or visit a museum displaying cultural and historical artifacts relevant to marginalized groups. The *act* phase could be embedded with authentic performance tasks that facilitate the development of content-area knowledge. For example, learners could write to officials advocating for changes in policies (while learning literacy or social studies content), create a public service announcement (while practicing literacy and information/communication technology skills), or construct a museum exhibit or display that conveys information about the issue and proposes potential solutions (while demonstrating skills in literacy, social studies, and creative arts).

Globally Competent Teaching

Tawil (2013) articulated that teachers have an essential role in "preparing children and young

Global Citizenship

Table 1. *Implementation of Global Citizenship 1-2-3 in a K–12 Classroom*

Characteristics of globally competent teaching	Learn	Think	Experiential opportunity	Act
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledges the use of communication in multiple languages 2. Creates a classroom environment that values diversity and is respectful, inclusive, and interactive 3. Provides opportunities for students to experience learning in varied contexts, including the classroom, school, and local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a book that incorporates multiple languages, e.g., <i>El Pez Arco Iris</i> [The Rainbow Fish] by Marcus Pfister or <i>My Abuelita</i> [My Grandma] by Tony Johnston. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare common words in different languages. • Examine a map and discuss where various languages are spoken around the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a relationship with a classroom in another country (e.g., ePals) and digitally interact with students. • Bring in guests who are fluent in other languages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a list or wall of words that mean the same thing in various languages. • Conduct a book drive for dual-language books.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Includes globally oriented learning resources, with specific global examples within content instruction 5. Incorporates discussions focused on global issues to help students understand the world 6. Involves authentic performance tasks that facilitate the development of content-area knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research a real-world issue, e.g., food scarcity or immigration, that is local and global in nature. • Study a historical education issue, e.g., segregation, and learn the causes and outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboratively or individually develop a list of conditions that contribute to the issue or concern. • Hold a debate that requires students to frame their arguments based on specific perspectives associated with the issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit a local agency that supports recent immigrants or a food pantry; interview the director. • Visit a museum displaying cultural and historic artifacts relevant to marginalized groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a museum exhibit or display that conveys information about the issue and proposes potential solutions. • Create a public service announcement. • Write to officials advocating for changes in policies.

people to deal with the challenges of today’s increasingly interconnected and interdependent world” (p. 5). While Global Citizenship 1-2-3 aims to help learners acquire the skills, attitudes, and dispositions associated with becoming global citizens, success is ultimately associated with the practices of teachers, or globally competent teaching (Byker & Putman, 2019; UNESCO, 2014). While a full description of the characteristics of globally competent teaching is beyond the scope of this article, we provide a reference guide on how implementation of Global Citizenship

1-2-3 can effectively lead toward these competencies. Table 1 demonstrates GCE connections as well as presents additional examples of activities that encompass the Learn-Think-Act cycle.

Take another look at Figure 1 in the context of globally competent teaching. The outer circle reinforces the idea that cultural responsiveness is the foundation for the development of a classroom environment characterized by respect, inclusivity, and collaboration. We believe that teachers cannot help learners develop traits such as empathy or respect for differences without directly introducing information related to cultural characteristics, perspectives, and experiences of people from diverse backgrounds. The goal is to build content knowledge emphasizing various aspects of diversity (e.g., culture, race, language) and connect that content to learners’ lived experiences. Teaching with these principles in mind can create a positive environment by helping teachers and students learn about one another’s lives and cultural backgrounds and establish deeper relationships. This approach also helps learners build the cultural competencies and dispositional attributes necessary for cultural responsiveness, including a willingness to self-reflect, acknowledge personal bias, and recognize others’ perspectives (Martin, Smolen, Oswald, & Milam, 2012).

Shifting attention toward global-infused content, the middle circle in the figure, topics that have international implications and therefore develop global awareness should be visible within K–12 classroom instruction. Taking a global orientation and using globally oriented resources helps learners understand complex challenges that affect people in communities and societies around the world (UNESCO, 2014). The teaching strategies should help learners draw on the content to examine global issues, such as poverty, human rights, and access to education, and to understand how what is happening in the world relates to their local circumstances (Byker & Putman, 2019). As learners improve their capacity to understand the interrelationships among global

and local issues, they are empowered to take on active roles and contribute to resolving local and global challenges.

Asia Society and UNESCO, among other organizations, have noted the importance of using experiential opportunities in varied contexts to help learners gain firsthand knowledge and new insights about an issue or topic (e.g., see Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; UNESCO, 2013, 2015). These experiences can occur in varied contexts, including the classroom, school, and community. The most impactful experiences occur in contexts where learners directly engage with diverse people and communities that are unfamiliar to them. Through cross-cultural experiences, learners can develop their socioemotional skills and gain a greater understanding of diverse perspectives.

Experiential opportunities may occur through partnerships with local non-governmental or community-based organizations, where learners work with mentors to explore local and national conditions or issues, such as clean drinking water, poverty, and hunger, on a global scale (Byker, Putman, Reddy, & LeGrange, 2019). Working with international agencies (e.g., Oxfam International, CARE) that engage in work around significant issues could offer students access to virtual global communities. Students working with these organizations, whether local or global, have an opportunity to gain greater knowledge and a more thorough understanding of the relationships between local and global challenges and, in turn, to further their development as global citizens.

Closing Thoughts

Global citizenship education can be implemented in various ways, from enacted state-level policies to school-level programs to practices of individual teachers. Yet, if we are to create an ethos of global citizenship in our K–12 learners, we must engage in deliberate actions to move global citizenship education from a peripheral concept to an integral component within classroom instruction. To

do so requires a commitment to encourage and educate our learners and to direct activities that nurture global competence.

Developing global citizens may not truly be as easy as 1-2-3, but we feel that our Global Citizenship 1-2-3 model provides a necessary framework for breaking down the process into manageable components as well as offers a common vocabulary. We encourage use of the model to help teachers and students “think deeply about their actions . . . and discover other ways to become active and responsible global citizens” (Martin et al., 2012, p. 163). ■

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