Education for Global Citizenship And Social Responsibility

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On November 10, 1995, Ken Saro-Wiwa, an Ogoni author and Nobel peace prize nominee, was executed for trying to stop the ecological devastation wrought by Royal/Dutch Shell Oil Company and the murders and human rights violations against the Ogoni people by the Nigerian government on behalf of Shell (Sachs, 1996: 11). Similarly, Chico Mendez was assassinated in 1988 for trying to protect the jobs of Brazilian rubber tappers and stop deforestation of the Amazon rainforest by wealthy cattle ranchers (Sachs, 1995: 1-2). How do these events pertain to people in the United States? Are teachers prepared to help their students develop the global consciousness needed to support human rights and ecological sustainability?

Our educational experiences did not provide us with the information and tools to understand what is happening in the world, how it affects our lives, the lives of others and the planet itself. We were not taught how we, as ordinary (non-rich) people, might live our lives and actively participate in creating a safer, more humane, sustainable world. Much of what I, Andrzejewski, now teach, I did not learn in my formal education. As a result of social movements, I encountered information that was never addressed in all of my years of schooling. Non-profit alternative press helped me realize that certain perspectives were also not represented in the news media I normally read. Information from these sources challenged and contradicted many things I had learned in my formal education. They connected deeply with my own life experiences, as a female, first generation college graduate, whose mother worked as a retail clerk and whose father was chronically underemployed. My experiences with this new information sparked a life-long self-education process through which I analyzed, questioned and investigated the conventional wisdom of many issues.

As the son of Italian immigrants, I, Alessio, was taught in school that immigrants came to the United States to escape the hardships of their backward cultures. What I learned from my father, and later from reading more accurate accounts of Italian migration, was that southern Italians

were recruited with promises of riches by American companies seeking cheap labor. My father, like so many others, found himself working twelve hours a day in unsafe coal mines for essentially no pay. His boat fare was taken out of his paycheck, so he was forced to buy food on credit from the company store. Each "payday" he received no money, only a note saying how much he owed the company. At a certain point the store cut off his credit denying him even a loaf of bread for his children. My father became a union organizer to seek basic rights and some sense of dignity. I did not learn about the deception and exploitation of immigrants in school, nor the importance of unions to millions of workers. Personal experiences such as this made me acutely aware of other major gaps and forms of misinformation in my education.

The fact that we had to engage in self re-education might not seem very startling or distressing if students in the United States today were learning very different things than what we learned. However, in spite of the sincere efforts and dedication of talented educators in underfunded schools, the students in our classes seem to arrive at the university with many of the same myths and misinformation that took us years to investigate and unravel. With few exceptions, the basic information and skills taught have remained, by and large, the same for many years. Despite two decades of various state rules and mandates for multicultural, gender-fair education, most school districts, lacking in resources and overwhelmed with problems, have found ways to meet the surface requirements of such rules while changing very little actual content. In far too many schools, Columbus still "discovered America." George Washington is still the "father" of "our" country. History is still too often the stories of great white males with the few "exceptional" women and people of color added for "diversity." The U.S. is presented as the best nation in the world; one which, despite a few "mistakes," fights for human rights and democracy. Other countries are primarily studied for the natural resources available in them. People from other countries are generally portrayed as less knowledgeable, less advanced technologically and often incapable of handling their own country's affairs. Science is presented as a value-neutral system representing the only accurate information in the world, and always working for the betterment of society. Nature is often portrayed as a commodity, to be exploited, sold or altered for human consumption or profit. Democracy is presented as the study of how effectively the United States government works within the comforting system of checks and balances. The familiar list goes on.

It is widely acknowledged that education rarely challenges the prevailing paradigms and interests of national governments, wealthy elites, or dominant groups, whatever the economic or political system. In fact, there is a substantial body of literature documenting the revision and misrepresentation of history, education, and science in the United States (Charnes, 1984; Fitzgerald 1979; Harding 1993; Loewen 1995; Zinn 1995). Such myths, lies, and distortions serve to certify the superiority of certain groups, maintain their dominance and privileges and project their view of the world. This is done by justifying their actions or policies, omitting differing perspectives, discouraging student concern or questions and downplaying the significance of the actions of ordinary people for constructive social change. Misinformation survives from generation to generation if teachers teach what they have been taught. As teachers, we have a responsibility to critically review our own education and seek out viewpoints that were not represented.

Is there a conflict between education for social responsibility and education for jobs?

This paper is not another attack on teachers and schools. Rather it is an effort to re-examine the political pressures on schools and teachers to narrowly prepare students for the workforce rather than for broader citizenship and social responsibility purposes. As McNeil points out, this is not a new issue.

Our public schools have evolved historically as organizations serving two potentially conflicting purposes: to educate citizens and to process them into roles for economic production. To accomplish the first, schools have the role of supplying students with information and with learning skills. The results can be unpredictable because children's intellects and skills develop in ways that we cannot predetermine. For the second goal, schools process students through stratified steps leading to predictable, marketable credentials for the workplace. The steps, and some of the outcomes, can be managed, controlled. Thus the school is organized to be in conflict with itself. (1991: 3)

Teachers and educational institutions, already under pressure from multiple studies of U.S. schools, beginning with Goodlad and Boyer in 1983, are seeing the pressure intensify as a plethora of school reforms are implemented to institutionalize additional workplace demands from the private sector. For example, The Summary Report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future entitled, What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future, developed for policy-makers and educators, sees educating workers for the global economy as the primary mission of education.

The Nature of the Problem
Good teaching is more important than ever before in our nation's history. Due to sweeping economic changes, *today's world has little room for workers* who cannot read, write, and compute proficiently; find and use resources; frame and solve problems with other people; and continually learn new technologies and occupations....The education challenge facing the United States is not that its schools are not as good as they once were. It is that schools must help the vast majority of young people reach levels of skill and competence once thought within the reach of only a few, while also supporting a just and civil society that helps maintain our democratic life.... (1996: 6-7) (italics ours)

"Supporting a just and civil society" and maintaining democracy are of less than secondary importance since they are never mentioned again in the report. Global issues, other than work, are not addressed at all. Smith contends that the focus of school reforms on producing workers is not accidental.

...as Barlow and Robertson (1994: 79) describe it, North America's corporate leaders have three fundamental goals in relation to the takeover of public education. The first is "to secure the ideological allegiance of young people to a free-market world view on issues of the environment, corporate rights and the role of the government." The second is "to gain market access to the hearts and minds of young consumers and to lucrative contracts in the education industry." The third is "to transform school into training centres producing a workforce suited to the needs of transnational corporations." It is these goals which underwrite the large scale move of corporate interests into the domains of curriculum development, environmental education, and funding-in-exchange for technology and brand rights in schools. (1998: 8-9)

Smith outlines three strategies used to mobilize public opinion toward the accomplishment of these goals: 1) to portray public education as failing; 2) to increase the fear of competition used to indoctrinate students into "cutthroat business management" and 3) to "engineer a break-up of public education systems through proposals for 'choice'" through vouchers, charter schools and the like. (9)

Evidence of the effectiveness of this strategy permeate the media (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). Blamed for any or all of society's ills, schools have become the target of severe budget cutbacks, business advertising contracts (Draper, 1998, p. A3), escalating standards for teachers and students, and threats ranging from privatizing public schools (Lowe & Miner, 1996, Hotakainen, 1998: A1, A10) to closing teacher preparation programs (Lively, 1998: A27-A28). Amidst all the blame, recrimination and punitive proposals, the most important question still goes begging. <u>What is the primary purpose of education?</u> Are we educating students for competitive employment in the global marketplace or are we educating global citizens who can respond creatively to the enormous and pressing issues facing humankind in the twenty-first century? What happens when these purposes conflict with one another? If education at all levels has a responsibility to prepare global citizens to address the problems of the world, what is that responsibility, and are we, as educators and policymakers, prepared to meet it?

Are educational institutions meeting their mission of educating citizens?

Preparing students to become knowledgeable citizens has been identified as a purpose of education throughout U. S. history from Jefferson to Dewey and beyond. Most schools still identify citizenship as a primary mission of education but how does this translate into the curriculum? What knowledge and skills are identified as important for good citizenship? A 1997 third grade textbook, <u>Living in Our World</u> (Boehm et al), provides a common answer. It emphasizes obeying the law as the primary responsibility of citizenship. On eight of thirteen pages relating to citizenship, laws are the focus.

"Citizens have rights, but they also need to be responsible. A citizen is responsible for obeying the laws. Citizens who do not obey the laws may face the consequences of their actions. The consequences may include paying a fine or going to jail" (261).

It is little wonder when <u>upper division</u> college students are asked to list the citizenship skills they have learned throughout their educational experiences, they inevitably list the same five "skills:"

1. vote
2. obey the law
3. pay taxes
4. salute the flag, and
5. say the pledge of allegiance.

Occasionally, a student will list the proverbial advice to write to your congressperson but when asked how many have actually done that, only one or two respond, indicating it was not part of their education. While "participatory democracy" is lauded in educational contexts, it is not what students are learning.

Why should citizenship be viewed in a global context?

As the millennium nears, people all over the world are struggling with problems of a magnitude no other generation has faced. Even in the most affluent nations, millions of people suffer from hunger, homelessness, and unattended health problems. Wars, civil conflicts and invasions take the lives of millions more. Global changes in the climate are creating severe local weather conditions, destroying lives and property. Human projects continue to despoil the land, water and air. For example, millions of tons of hazardous waste generated by industrial countries are exported to non-industrialized areas of the world (Sachs, 1995: 7). Over three billion pounds of pesticides a year are used globally causing "human poisonings, harm to fish and wildlife, livestock losses, groundwater contamination, destruction of natural vegetation, and more pests resistant to pesticides" (Jacobson et al, 1991: 45). Deforestation, soil erosion, destruction of habitat, extinction of species, depletion of aquifers are but a few of the many attacks on our planet. While natural resources are stripped from the earth, new "species" are genetically engineered by corporations for profitability and monopolized through complex international patent laws with few constraints for releasing them into the environment. Ancient knowledge of plants and animals, and even human genetic material, are stolen from indigenous peoples and used to generate wealth for a few while the cultures which generated the knowledge are decimated (Shiva, 1997). As these examples demonstrate, human rights and environmental issues are clearly intertwined.

Many contradictions exist. Countries with hungry people export grains or feed them to livestock for export. Millions of jobs are eliminated by technology or runaway factories as CEO salaries skyrocket. While the United Nations ratified a Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, more than 250 million children are forced into labor (Sanders, 1997). Enormous resources are wasted on the production of guns and weapons of destruction as social programs and education funds are drastically reduced. Projects to solve one problem have created other problems. Dams, viewed for decades as creating "clean" energy and providing irrigation, are responsible for destroying the means of subsistence for millions of people who are forced to relocate their homes. Altering the natural flow of rivers, these dams flood millions of hectares of arable land, create conditions for water born diseases and prevent fish from spawning. Aqua-culture, heralded as the answer to declining fish and shrimp populations, is despoiling the habitat of other species. McMichaels states the problem succinctly:

More recently, the human portfolio of burgeoning population size, overworked land, energy-intensive technology and waste-generating consumerism has resulted in accelerated and massive changes to the environment. As a consequence, the world's natural systems are today coming under increasing overload from one of its own resident species. This is a 'first' in Earth's history, and it has widespread implications for the health and survival of all species. (1993: 36)

While education has a long history of benefiting dominant groups at the expense of others, developments in the world today present a situation which we can continue to ignore only at our own risk. There is ample documentation that, in the short time human beings have been on earth, we have had an extremely deleterious impact on the planet, on other species and on each other. A small group of global elites and corporations continue to benefit from systems of extracting natural resources and concentrating wealth which were established during colonial and

neocolonial periods. Indeed, they are currently in the process of restructuring the world from nation-states into a global economic system to facilitate faster, more efficient resource extraction and cheaper labor for even greater profits at the expense of the environment and human lives. Because of fast track ratification, few people realize that international trade agreements like NAFTA and GATT have undermined the capability of national governments to develop and implement their own policies. For instance, Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch (1997) reports that the proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) would "dramatically undermine the ability of federal, state and local governments to shape economic and social policies that foster safe, healthy and equitable communities." Only because ordinary people around the world have begun to protest such global policies being made without their involvement has MAI been stalled at the moment. Yet, every social institution is being transformed to best serve the interests of the global corporate agenda, including education.

The primacy of profit maximization over all other values is the core of both social and environmental problems. Nations and nature are being restructured to meet this primary goal, not to meet the needs of ordinary people nor to ensure a sustainable environment. The problems created are global, with consequences for many different countries and communities. For example, when U. S. companies move plants and jobs to other countries to take advantage of cheaper labor, they leave economic devastation in local U.S. communities and undermine the existing economies in the new locations. At the same time, they take advantage of less stringent environmental policies in other countries that allow them to pollute more freely or to use chemicals banned in the United States. Sometimes, these chemicals return to consumers in the U.S. in the imported products. Global problems necessitate going beyond national borders to embracing the concept of global citizenship. By learning how global issues affect individual and community lives, how and why decisions are made which affect the planet and life on it and, most importantly, means by which the future can be influenced, education can prepare students to become socially responsible global citizens.

Why aren't educators teaching about these issues?

Issues of global justice, environment, survival, human rights and citizenship are, for the most part, not major components of the curriculum in PK-12 schools and are still given short shrift in higher education institutions. They are rarely addressed by administrators, school boards or trustees, teacher or faculty unions, state legislators, proposals for educational reform, nor even the Congress of the United States, at least in relation to education. Where global issues are addressed, they are often approached through the biased perspectives of ethnocentrism, national chauvinism, and global economic dominance.

There are several possible reasons for the absence of global citizenship in the curricula of our schools. First, because many educators and policymakers in the United States don't experience or see the immediate consequences of these problems, it is possible to distance ourselves from them. They are someone else's problems. In addition, many of these issues, like global warming or aquifer depletion, are trends, not catastrophic events (McMichael, 1993). They don't appear to require immediate action. The problems we do see seem to be local or individual. In addition, corporate public relations campaigns try to convince "…the American public that most

ecological problems are not serious, or do not exist at all, and that the cost of environmental regulation to American businesses, taxpayers, and workers is too expensive (Faber, 1998: 34)."

Second, global issues seem immensely depressing and insurmountable, leading people to believe we can have little or no influence on them. What action could one possibly take which would have the slightest impact on issues of such magnitude? We are often overwhelmed enough with the difficulties of our own lives, much less taking on problems at the global level.

Third, teachers have been taught to avoid "political" issues that differ from the conventionally accepted beliefs embedded in the traditional curriculum. The structure of schools encourages the fragmentation, mystification, simplification and omission of knowledge for efficiency and control (McNeil, 1991: 166-178). Teachers often learn how to teach defensively to reduce controversy, student resistance, parental objections and administrative sanctions. "School knowledge," like fast food, has been overcooked and pre-packaged for immediate consumption. Divorced from "real world" knowledge relevant to broad community life experiences, student disengagement should not be surprising to anyone.

Finally, as discussed earlier, educators have not usually been taught about issues of social and global responsibility in our own school experiences. If we don't feel we have the confidence, knowledge and skills necessary to make a positive contribution ourselves, how can we expect to encourage these attributes in our students? Furthermore, teachers will not learn to value and include issues of socially responsible global citizenship if teacher educators, administrators and policymakers do not. If teachers/faculty are not aware of global issues, if we are not active citizens ourselves, if we do not question, investigate and critically analyze the social and economic institutions in our lives, it will be difficult for us to foster these behaviors in others. Therefore, as we continue to re-educate ourselves about issues of race, class, gender and disability, we must face the challenge of global issues on the horizon.

What do we mean by global citizenship?

As should be clear by now, we are defining global citizenship as knowledge and skills for social and environmental justice (Andrzejewski, 1996: 3-9). More specifically, what does this mean? The following comprehensive learning objectives, developed by a broad-based faculty committee with representatives from many disciplines, could provide a working document for developing global citizenship skills over a student's entire educational experience.

Understanding of a citizen's responsibilities to others, to society and to the environment.

1. Students will be able to examine the meaning of democracy and citizenship from differing points of view including non-dominant, non-western perspectives.
2. The student will explore the various rights and obligations that citizens may be said to have in their communities, nations and in the world.
3. Students will understand and reflect upon their own lives, careers, and interests in relation to participatory democracy and the general welfare of the global society.
4. Students will explore the relationship of global citizenship and responsibility to the environment.

Understanding of ethical behavior in personal, professional and public life.

1. Students will be familiar with fundamental national and international laws, documents and legal issues pertaining citizenship, democracy and human rights.
2. Students will be able to identify the civic and ethical responsibilities of people in specific fields/careers.
3. Students will be able to compare and evaluate the policies of an institution, community, state or nation in the context of its stated philosophical and cultural values.
4. Students will be able to examine various social policies and institutions (educational, economic, political, legal, media, military, etc.) in relation to fostering citizenship, democracy, respect for diversity, human rights and the environmental impact.
5. Students will examine the interrelationship of personal and professional decisions/actions on society and the environment.

Knowledge and skills for involved responsible citizenship at the local, state, national and global level.

1. Students will have knowledge of an increasingly pluralistic society and world where the requirements of citizenship are open to important debates between citizens of different nationalities, races, colors, creeds, genders, religions, abilities and disabilities, and sexual orientations.
2. Students will be able to locate information from a variety of sources, identify underlying values and investigate the veracity of information.
3. Students will be able to identify and investigate problems, examine underlying assumptions, synthesize information, formulate solutions, identify constituencies, compose arguments and identify appropriate forums for taking actions.
4. Students will understand and practice various forms of citizenship skills: self-empowerment/ assertiveness, media analysis, letter writing, evaluation of candidates, lobbying, organizing, etc.
5. Students will be encouraged to demonstrate skill development in participatory democracy by the completion of a community service, citizen participation or social action project. (SCSU General Education Subcommittee on Citizenship and Democracy, 1997)*

While the ideal of developing citizenship skills is claimed in many educational documents, it is, for the most part, not operationalized, not reconceptualized based on new global events, not purposefully incorporated into curricula, not clearly identified in standards, and not assessed in any meaningful way. These clear objectives, developed by a group with widely diverse ideologies, provide a basis for making the ideal of citizenship a reality. Many of the topics covered by these objectives raise fundamental questions about survival of the earth and the interaction of humans with nature and with each other. How are the lives of people in the United States connected to the lives of people in other countries? Do human beings have the right to use plants and animal species for any purposes whatsoever? Should there be limits to the destruction of natural habitats? What different issues present themselves in urban, rural and suburban

environments? Do transnational corporations have ethical responsibilities? Does consumption create happiness? What is the impact of maximum productivity and overly busy lives on the health of individuals, relationships and communities? What is the impact of governmental policies and new global trade agreements on the lives of people and the environment? And most importantly, how can ordinary people become involved in answering these questions?

How might global citizenship be taught?

Following the advice of John Dewey, education for global citizenship should be grounded in the personal experiences of the student and her/his community. As an example of connecting global issues with life experiences, Ryan and Durning (1997) invite readers of their book, <u>Stuff: The Secret Lives of Everyday Things</u>, to consider the impact of their daily consumption (and garbage) on the lives of other people and places in the world. Written like a story, the consumption of coffee, newspapers, t-shirts, shoes, car, computer, hamburger, french fries and cola are traced from their origins through the inequities of the production process to the consequences of waste products. Each short chapter ends with practical suggestions about what people can do in their daily lives to support a more sustainable and humane world.

Some teachers are leading the way. For example, one eighth-grade Spanish teacher explores global and social issues through "…the context of the lives of the speakers of these languages (by focusing) on Central America." He introduces the issue of child labor by raising reflective questions: "Why do we rarely hear about these countries? Why are these countries so underdeveloped? What do the young people of these countries do? What is their future?" He uses the United Nations Rights of the Child document as the basis of discussions, stating,

Although some would suggest that such discussions do not belong in a language class, I maintain that language cannot be studied in a vacuum. The culture of the life of the child in the 1990's is just as important as the culture of the life of the child in the Mayan times. Too often our curricula focus on the past, often presented in Disney-like terms, and ignore the bleak realities of today. Such instruction is deceitful and inadequate. It does not prepare the students to look the status quo head on and ask: Why? (Buggs, 1998: 1)

Other teachers who see the need to prepare students with a global perspective have begun to develop curricula for teaching global citizenship. Amy Sanders, a high school teacher from Maine, has recently published a high school curriculum, <u>Child Labor is Not Cheap</u> (1997). The Resource Center of the Americas (www.americas.org) in Minneapolis specializes in teaching materials on Central and South America. Teaching for Change in Washington D.C. and United for a Fair Economy in Boston (www.stw.org) provide classroom resources and experiential exercises. <u>Rethinking Our Classrooms: Teaching for Equity and Justice</u> (1994), written primarily by teachers, combines cutting edge pedagogical theory with practical classroom applications. While many of the articles address issues within the United States, several, like "Poverty and World Resources" (Hersh & Peterson, 1994: 92-93), reach out to connect global injustices with the policies of industrial countries. Rethinking Schools (www.rethinkingschools.org) is currently writing a curriculum on global sweatshops.

Even though many schools avoid these issues, young people are very aware of them. When asked what concerns they have about the world today, students identify almost every significant issue. They are worried about the ozone layer, global warming, AIDS, racism, sexism, the rainforests, the treatment of animals, the extinction of species, violence in homes and communities, terrorism, genocide, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, poisons in the air, food and water and more. While they know very little about the global economy, they do know that it means increased competition for fewer and fewer livable wage jobs. The information they do receive, from a sound bite on television or abbreviated article in the mainstream media, is fragmented, incomplete and de-emphasized.

In spite of the barriers, some students have demonstrated that their actions can have powerful influence. For instance, Craig Kielburger initiated an international campaign against child labor when he was twelve. Danny Seo, who founded Earth 2000 for environmental and animal rights at age twelve, provides a guide for other children in his book, Generation React: Activism for Beginners (1997). To encourage young people to become active citizens, an organization called Do Something (www.dosomething.org) invites K-12 teachers and schools to foster active citizenship through its Kindness and Justice Challenge. Students are encouraged to help others (acts of kindness) and stand up for what's right (acts of justice) at schools all over the nation. Stories are collected to share with others through the website.

If schools and teachers began to take citizenship education seriously, students should have the right to explore and practice these skills as a normal part of their education. They should be able to investigate issues raised by contemporary social movements: social justice and equality movements, curriculum transformation, service learning initiatives, simple living, vegetarianism, organic and natural foods, sustainable communities, livable wages, democratizing science and technology, labor organizing, socially responsible businesses and investments, challenges to global sweatshops, etc. These questions and topics can inspire young people to reflect on and become actively involved in making a better world, not as incidental subject matter, but as the primary focus of their educational experience.

What is the connection between jobs and global citizenship?

In the context of global social responsibility, the issues of livelihood and work need to be examined. We, in the industrial world, associate survival with employment. This association is being forced on other cultures as the global economy establishes dominance. But we must not forget that employment for survival is a relatively recent concept. It has not always been this way, and there are still parts of the world where survival is not based on working for someone seeking a profit from the labor of others. The conflicting educational purposes of jobs vs. citizenship can be alleviated if we encourage students to consider the social and environmental impact of the work they do. Jobs need not be about extraction, devastation, pollution, over-consumption or exploitation. It is important to remember that for thousands of years humans lived with sustainable relationships to nature and only spent a few hours of every day for their own subsistence. One of the purposes of technology was to save labor. By doing so, technology has been used to eliminate people's livelihood, i.e. their jobs. Instead, it could be used to simply reduce the amount of time people have to work to support themselves and their families.

Science and technology could be used to preserve the earth instead of destroying it. Education should develop citizens who can critically evaluate the impact of human projects on other human beings, other species, and the environment. Education could teach active skills in influencing the direction of policies and practices. As one example, students at Humboldt State University initiated a graduation pledge in relation to jobs which has been adopted at colleges and universities across the nation. Stated simply, it says, "I pledge to explore and take into account the social and environmental consequences of any job I consider or any organization for which I work (www.manchester.edu/departmt/peace)." Student Pugwash USA encourages another pledge campaign:

I promise to work for a better world, where science and technology are used in socially responsible ways. I will not use my education for any purpose intended to harm human beings or the environment. Throughout my career, I will consider the ethical implications of my work before I take action. While the demands placed upon me may be great, I sign this declaration because I recognize that individual responsibility is the first step on the path to peace.

Since educational institutions are not adequately meeting student demands for global citizenship, hundreds of organizations are working to provide information and resources. Student Pugwash USA publishes a book complementary to its pledge, Jobs You Can Live With: Working at the Crossroads of Science, Technology and Society, for people wanting jobs which will "…make the world safe, sustainable, and peaceful (Higman, 1996, p. i)." The AFL/CIO, Steelworkers and other unions have initiated Union Summer internships to teach students about worker's rights in a global context. Second Nature, founded by an alliance of educators and policymakers, has the goal of helping "…higher education teach and practice how to achieve a sustainable relationship between humans and the environment so that the health, social, and economic needs of all current and future generations can be met (www.2nature.org)."

A recent article to teachers from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development on Global Education states,

...teachers can approach global education from different perspectives, says Merry Merryfield, associate professor of social studies and global education at The Ohio State University. For example, "some teachers have the rationale that, in order to compete in a global economy, students need a global perspective...but others want to make the world a better place in terms of the environment and social justice. Still others want to promote cross-cultural understanding." Each of these is a valid approach, says Merryfield, as long as teachers emphasize multiple perspectives and global interdependence. (Rasmussen, 1998: 2)

Given the fragile state of the world and the level of continued destruction, we would argue that the approach *does* make a difference. We believe that the primary purpose of education is *not* to enhance the profits of global corporations, nor even to get students jobs. We believe the primary purpose is to prepare students to become stewards of the earth and participants in democracy for global social justice. Jobs or other means of livelihood need to be explored in this context.

What are the benefits of teaching global citizenship?

There are many benefits to teaching about global citizenship which reflect the position of this paper. Who could deny the importance of a safer, healthier, more peaceful, more just and sustainable world in which to live? In addition to these obvious long-term benefits to the world, there are also immediate benefits. Studying global problems and the various strategies for addressing them can generate a renewed sense of hope and optimism. Practicing active citizenship whether through personal changes, service learning, grassroots organizing, or a myriad of other activities, can provide meaning to the curriculum. Students will feel comfortable interacting with diverse groups of people. Students and teachers alike can see that they can make an impact to make the world a better place, far beyond the individualistic goal of getting a job. Students will understand more clearly what citizenship means and feel ready to make significant contributions for humankind in a sustainable environment.

During this period of educational upheaval, educators and policymakers alike have an opportunity to dramatically change the nature of education--regardless of our discipline or position in the educational system. We can make a tremendous difference to the entire social world and the preservation of the earth for subsequent generations if we reprioritize education for global citizenship. In the words of John Dewey, "As a society becomes more enlightened, it realizes that it is responsible *not* to transmit and conserve the whole of its existing achievements, but only such as make for a better future society. The school is the chief agency for the accomplishment of this end (1916: 20)."

Notes
*The authors served on a broad-based multi-disciplinary faculty committee that met weekly for a year to develop a general education core course on Citizenship and Democracy at our university. Although this final description was overwhelmingly accepted by the vote of the entire faculty senate, a traditional course was put in its place. A few progressive departments have been able to integrate some of the original concepts into their courses.

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John Alessio is a professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at St. Cloud State University. He authored and directed a grant project on curriculum transformation entitled, Critical Thinking Through Critique and has initiated other projects for cultural diversity, institutional change and advocacy for excluded groups. He has written and presented articles on issues of social exchange theory, equity theory, sex discrimination and labor, a number of which have been published in journals such as: Social Psychology Quarterly, Journal of Marriage and

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