

TEACHING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP SKILLS AND DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY: AN APPLIED EDUCATIONAL FORMAT

ENSEÑANZA DE HABILIDADES DE CIUDADANÍA GLOBAL Y ALFABETIZACIÓN EN MEDIOS DIGITALES: UN FORMATO EDUCATIVO APLICADO

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ABSTRACT: **Introduction:** In academic communities and across different educational approaches, the aim is to promote global citizenship education through digital literacy. This framework uses critical pedagogy to advance students' mindsets, change their views, and promote democratic behaviour. This paper explores understanding and attitudes towards global citizenship and the need for digital competence, outlining the challenges to achieve it. **Method:** This study is based on data collected as part of a research project to assess and monitor the global perspective in Italian business schools. Qualitative data were gathered from focus groups and interviews with master's students. Nine focus groups, consisting of educators without specialised expertise in global issues, were contacted in writing, and subsequent informed consent was obtained from academic students aged 22 to 26. The sessions were held in July 2023. The focus group and master student interviews explored training, support, resources, understanding of global aspects like digital media education and global citizenship, challenges in implementation, and their uniqueness considering past conflicts. Qualitative data underwent transcription and thematic analysis. **Results:** Employing a soft skill teaching tool used with students in a business school, the study claims that the role of higher and lifelong learning is crucial in promoting the development of citizenship in democratic societies and demands a focus on moral learning, temperament, and digital literacy teaching. Debate and guided thinking are especially effective in developing critical thinking skills and encouraging active participation in the learning process. **Conclusion and Discussions:** Teaching global citizenship education is crucial for building a more sustainable world. The choice of teaching methods, particularly those fostering active participation, plays a significant role in the learning process. There is a need for more research to be conducted on the effectiveness of different approaches to global citizenship education, as well as the impact of such education on students and society as a whole.

KEYWORDS: global citizenship; education; adult training; teaching; soft skills.

RIASSUNTO: Introduzione: Nelle comunità accademiche e nei diversi approcci educativi, l'obiettivo è promuovere l'educazione alla cittadinanza globale attraverso l'alfabetizzazione digitale. Questo quadro utilizza la pedagogia critica per far progredire la mentalità degli studenti, cambiare le loro opinioni e promuovere un comportamento democratico. Questo documento esplora la comprensione e gli atteggiamenti verso la cittadinanza globale e la necessità di una competenza digitale, delineando le sfide per raggiungerla. **Metodo:** Questo studio si basa sui dati raccolti nell'ambito di un progetto di ricerca volto a valutare e monitorare la prospettiva globale nelle business school italiane. I dati qualitativi sono stati raccolti da focus group e interviste a studenti di master. Nove focus group, composti da educatori non specializzati in questioni globali, sono stati contattati per iscritto e il consenso informato è stato ottenuto da studenti universitari di età compresa tra 22 e 26 anni. Le sessioni si sono svolte nel luglio 2023. Le interviste ai focus group e agli studenti universitari hanno esplorato la formazione, il supporto, le risorse, la comprensione di aspetti globali come l'educazione ai media digitali e la cittadinanza globale, le sfide nell'implementazione e la loro unicità considerando i conflitti passati. I dati qualitativi sono stati sottoposti a trascrizione e analisi tematica. **Risultati:** Utilizzando uno strumento di insegnamento delle soft skill utilizzato con gli studenti di una scuola di economia, lo studio sostiene che il ruolo dell'apprendimento superiore e permanente è cruciale nel promuovere lo sviluppo della cittadinanza nelle società democratiche e richiede un focus sull'apprendimento morale.

PAROLE CHIAVE: cittadinanza globale; educazione; formazione degli adulti; insegnamento; soft skills.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the fast globalising society of today, it is gaining significance for citizens to have the skills and connections to be effective global citizens. Global citizenship relates to the idea of being able to discern one's sense of one's place in the world and to gain an awareness of the interplay of people, cultures, economies and ecosystems on a global scale (Pathak-Shelat, 2018, p. 541). By educating for global citizenship and digital media literacy, people can develop the skills and knowledge necessary to engaging the world in a significant way, to communicating effectively across cultural divides, and to contributing to positive social change. An equally important aspect of global citizenship education is the development of both effective digital media literacy and communication skills. Effective communications are essential for relationship building, resolution of conflicts and fostering social up-cycle for positive social change (Thomas *et al.*, 2020, p. 290).

Debate creates a well-structured platform for individual to engage in respectful dialogue, develop critical thinking skills and learn to communicate effectively with people who have different perspectives. By involving themselves in debate, individuals can learn to express their views clearly and persuasively, actively listen to others and develop a deeper understanding of complex issues. Leadership thinking, is yet another important component of global citizenship education. Thought leadership refers to the ability to think critically, make ethical choices and act to advocate for successful social change. By leadership thinking, individuals

can develop the skills and knowledge needed to be effective agents of difference in their communities and the world. Additionally, there is a need for more research to be conducted on the effectiveness of different approaches to global citizenship education, as well as the impact of such education on students and society as a whole. Despite these challenges, there are also positive trends emerging in the implementation of global citizenship education. More and more schools and educational institutions are recognizing the importance of global citizenship education and are incorporating it into their curricula.

Global citizenship education is a field of study that is comparatively new and seeks to develop students' skills in thinking critically about the world and their own place in it. The academic framework for teaching global citizenship education draws on several disciplines, including sociology, political science, anthropology, economics and education. This subject matter invokes the school performance standards of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the rankings published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2021, 2016), which are akin to university rankings such as those published by the Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) and others (Billing, 2004; Goren & Yemini, 2017, p. 170). Finally, as Yemini (2016) explained, globalization pertains to «fundamental societal issues and definitions». It is to teach learners about the global dynamics of contemporary questions, such as climate change, disparities and conflicts, and to inspire them to think critically about these topics from multiple perspectives. A key theoretical framework for teaching global citizenship education is critical pedagogy. A critical pedagogy is an educational approach that emphasizes the importance of calling the dominant power structures into question and promoting social equity. According to critical pedagogy, education is supposed to be a tool for social change and students should be encouraged to think critically about the world around them to develop a more profound understanding of the social and the political forces that shape our lives.

Global citizenship education is a pedagogical framework that seeks to encourage the emergence of committed and socially responsible global citizens. It is grounded in the tenets of interconnectedness, of critical thought and investigation, action and engagement, of social justice, human rights and sustainability. Through Global Citizenship Education, students develop a global perspective, a feeling of responsibility and power, and a belief in and commitment to positive change in the world. By giving students the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to engage in global problem solving, global citizenship education has the potential to contribute significantly to the creation of a fairer, more balanced and more sustainable world.

Expanding the focus on the topic of diversity and humanizing approaches, it is crucial to consider the role of empathy in fostering a more inclusive and compassionate society. Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others and is a fundamental aspect of humanization. By developing empathy toward those who are different from us, we can start to break down barriers and promote greater understanding and acceptance. This may be especially important in the context of diversity, where individuals may come from different cultural, ethical or religious backgrounds. To create a truly inclusive society, we must foster an attitude of empathy and seek to understand the perspective of others.

Implementing global citizenship education has its challenges. A significant challenge is more resources and time for critical reflection and dialogue. Most teachers adopt an instrument-based approach to Global Citizenship Education, which does not allow critical reflection. Such a lack of critical reflection can lead to a failure to understand the root causes of problems such as poverty, social inequality and injustice. Another challenge is the lack of relevant teacher training, which can lead to a lack of confidence in imparting global citizenship education.

Global citizenship education is a pedagogical framework that seeks to promote the development of students as responsible and engaged global citizens. This framework recognizes that we live in an interconnected and interdependent world, where global challenges such as poverty, inequality, and climate change require collective action and cooperation. Global citizenship education emphasizes the importance of understanding global issues and systems, as well as the skills and dispositions needed to engage in global problem-solving. It is based on the principles of social justice, human rights, and sustainable development, and seeks to foster a sense of empathy, respect, and responsibility towards others and the planet.

At the heart of the global citizenship education framework is the idea of interconnect- edness. This means recognizing that our actions have consequences that extend beyond our local community and affect people and places around the world. It also means recognizing the interdependence of different systems, such as the economy, politics, and the environment, and how they are all connected. Global citizenship education seeks to help students develop a global perspective, which means understanding the diversity of cultures, histories, and experiences that make up our world. It also means recognizing the structural inequalities and power imbalances within and between societies and how these affect «people's lives» (Truong-White & McLean, 2015, p. 31).

Another key aspect of global citizenship education is the emphasis on critical thinking and inquiry. This means encouraging students to question assumptions, challenge stereotypes and biases, and engage in a deeper understanding of global issues. It also means equipping students with the skills to access and evaluate information from a variety of sources, including media, technology, and personal experiences. Critical thinking and inquiry are essential for developing a nuanced and informed understanding of global issues and for developing effective strategies for addressing them. In addition to critical thinking and inquiry, global citizenship education also emphasizes the importance of action and engagement. This means encouraging students to use their knowledge and skills to make positive change in the world, whether at the local, national, or global level. Action can take many forms, from volunteering and community service to advocacy and activism. It can also mean engaging in sustainable practices, such as reducing waste and conserving energy, to minimize our impact on the environment. Through action and engagement, students develop a sense of agency and empowerment, and learn that their actions can make a difference.

A study conducted by Blackmore (2016) presents a comprehensive pedagogical framework consisted of four dimensions: critical thinking, dialogue, reflection, and responsible being and action. The study illustrates how this framework can analyze global citizenship education initiatives, using examples from an English secondary school to emphasize the

integration of critical global citizenship education into curriculum subjects. While critical thinking, dialogue, and reflection were evident, responsible being/action had less data, possibly due to its personal and internal nature. The paper outlines strategies that teachers across various subject areas might employ to encourage this framework. Examples involve stimuli such as: books, films, or talks to explore issues of difference, environment, and action. Teacher strategies include asking questions, creating a safe space for discussion without 'right' or 'wrong' answers, prompting students to share their assumptions, encouraging dialogue, expressing personal opinions, and demonstrating how individual choices impact outcomes.

Finally, global citizenship education acknowledges the role of education in promoting social justice, human rights, and sustainable development. Education is not neutral, but rather plays a crucial role in shaping the values, beliefs, and attitudes of individuals and societies. Global citizenship education seeks to promote a more inclusive and equitable society by challenging the dominant narratives and power structures that perpetuate inequality and discrimination. It also seeks to promote a more sustainable future by encouraging students to think critically about the impacts of their actions on the environment and future generations. Education (Ragusa *et al.*, 2023, p. 432). In conclusion, global citizenship education is a pedagogical framework that seeks to promote the development of responsible and engaged global citizens. It is based on the principles of interconnectedness, critical thinking and inquiry, action and engagement, and social justice, human rights, and sustainable Development. Through global citizenship education, students develop a global perspective, a sense of agency and empowerment, and a commitment to positive change in the world. By equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to engage in global problem-solving, global citizenship education can significantly contribute to creating a more just, equitable, and sustainable world.

2. METHODOLOGY

The aim of global citizenship education is to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to become active and engaged citizens of the world, including fostering digital media literacy. This includes developing an understanding of global issues, such as climate change, poverty, and inequality, and the ability to critically analyze and evaluate information from a range of sources. In addition, global citizenship education aims to foster a sense of empathy and respect for different cultures and perspectives, as well as promoting tolerance, inclusivity, and social justice. Through this type of education, learners can develop a sense of responsibility and agency, empowering them to take informed and meaningful action to address global challenges. Ultimately, the aim of global citizenship education is to create a more just and sustainable world for all (Broccoli, 2020, p. 34).

This study is based from data collected as part of a research project to assess and monitor the global perspective in the Italian business schools. We draw on both qualitative data from focus groups and from interviews with master's students. A total of nine focus groups with lecturers (not necessarily specialized in teaching global issues) were first contacted in

Writing and, once the consent of the dean had been obtained, informed consent was received from the 22 to 26 year old academic students. The sessions were held during the month of July 2023. Focus group and master student interviews, the questions investigated training, supports and resources, as well as their understanding of key aspects of the global dimension, including digital media education and global citizenship, the current challenges faced in implementing them, and if they considered them particular or not given the context of past conflict. The qualitative data were transcribed and thematically analysed: the issues were initially independently elaborated by each of the two investigators and then summarised in an iterative process of discussing, theoretical reflection, and searching for counter-examples and rewriting, until a consensus was achieved.

3. RESULTS

Employing a soft skill teaching tool used with students in a business school, the study claims that the role of higher and lifelong learning is crucial in promoting the development of citizenship in democratic societies and demands a focus on moral learning, temperament, and digital literacy teaching. The use of debate and guided thinking is especially effective in developing critical thinking skills and encourage active participation in the learning process.

It is also important to note that teaching global citizenship education is not without its challenges. In post-conflict and divided societies, there may be a lack of time and resources for critical reflection and dialogue. Moreover, there can be resistance from those who see global citizenship education as a threat to local identities and traditions. However, given the right approach and support, these challenges can be overcome.

One means of addressing these challenges is to provide teachers with the training and resources they need to effectively teach global citizenship education. This may include professional development opportunities, access to quality curricula and teaching materials, and support from school administrators and policymakers. It is also important to involve parents and members of the community in the learning process so that they understand the relevance of global citizenship education and can support their children's own learning at home.

4. CONCLUSION

Finally, teaching global citizenship education is crucial for building a world that is more just and sustainable. By teaching learners to appreciate their place in the world and the networking of people and systems, we can promote empathy, compassion and a sense of accountability for the well-being of all others.

Global citizenship education prepares students for the future and empowers them to be active and involved members of today's society. By promoting a global sense of responsibility and encouraging critical thinking and leadership skills, we can help to create a more socially just and environmentally sustainable world for everyone.

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