Chapter 14

Creativity and Global Citizenship Education

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Abstract This chapter explores the conceptual connections between two increasingly popular concepts nowadays, creativity and global citizenship. It starts by distinguishing between mainstream and critical approaches to both and argues for a sociocultural framework that places open-mindedness, dialogue, ethics and participation at the heart of educating for creativity and global citizenship. Five guiding principles for such an education are outlined and discussed in turn: (1) seeking differences; (2) valuing multiplicity; (3) promoting dialogue; (4) increasing participation; and (5) acting ethically. In the end, the challenges and opportunities associated with fostering creativity and global citizenship from a critical, sociocultural perspective are reflected upon.

Keywords Creativity · Global citizenship · Global citizenship education · Sociocultural perspective · Critical perspective

Introduction

Creativity and global citizenship have more than a few elements in common. From the start, one can appreciate the fact that they both designate highly complex phenomena, involving a system of personal and social attributes and processes. Secondly, they are relatively modern concepts or, at least, concepts that have become highly popular over recent decades as key markers of our globalized, interconnected, and fast-changing world. Thirdly, the two notions have largely positive associations and are considered as something to be cultivated, particularly in education.

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At the same time, there are also notable differences between the two, key among them being the fact that creativity is often studied as an individual, intrapsychological attribute leading to novel and useful outcomes, while global citizenship is widely regarded as a social, political, and educational construct understood both as a set of skills and as a process. In this chapter, I will move from surface associations and advance the argument that creativity and global citizenship are equally grounded in a similar set of processes having to do with alterity and difference, open-mindedness, flexibility, and responsibility. As a consequence, critical forms of education focused on creativity and global citizenship need to engage with these issues first and foremost.

There are very few studies, to date, investigating the relationship between creativity and global citizenship, and the ones that do tend to find a significant association between these constructs (see Tidikis and Dunbar 2017; Divsalar and Soleymanpour 2014). Other lines of research examine how creative forms of expression can be used to implement global citizenship education (GCE) (see Lengelle et al. 2018). However, these initial explorations leave open the theoretical question of what creativity and global citizenship have in common and why the former necessarily has to contribute to GCE. In this chapter, I start by distinguishing between mainstream and critical approaches to this topic and argue for a sociocultural framework that places open-mindedness, dialogue, ethics and participation at the heart of educating for creativity and global citizenship. In order to identify commonalities, I will outline and discuss five principles that are, in my view, foundational for both phenomena: (1) seeking differences; (2) valuing multiplicity; (3) promoting dialogue; (4) increasing participation; and (5) acting ethically. Finally, I will briefly reflect on the challenges and opportunities associated with applying these principles to education.

Creativity and Global Citizenship: The Good, the Bad, and the Promising

The literature on both creativity and global citizenship is extraordinarily diverse, partially due to the fact that they designate phenomena sometimes referred to by other names. In the case of GCE, there are a series of similar (yet not identical) constructs that received sustained attention in the past such as “citizenship education”, “education for democracy”, “education for world education”, “international education”, as well as a number of related skills, e.g., “global competence”, “intercultural competence”. Creativity, in turn, is part of a diverse literature including the notions of “genius”, “innovation”, “imagination”, “discovery”, and “improvisation”, as well as a focus on “creative giftedness” in education. This chapter concentrates on work done on creativity, global citizenship, and GCE. Moreover, it is not my aim here to do an extensive review of the existing literature but a selective one (those interested to read comprehensive reviews of global citizenship should consult Goren and Yemini 2017).

This selection aims to address the issue of the shared conceptual basis between creativity and global citizenship. To this end, it is interesting to note from the start that these two concepts have a great number of supporters but, equally, groups of vocal critics. This is largely because their broader promise of personal and societal growth finds itself easily hijacked by neoliberal and capitalist discourses that turn creativity into the engine of production and consumption and global citizenship into the poster concept for all forms of globalization, some of them carrying extremely negative consequences for minorities and marginalized communities. What is required is an account of creativity and global citizenship that neither romanticizes nor turns them into normative standards to be applied without any consideration for context. At the same time, it is important to reflect on how and when people are creative as well as what is fundamental for global citizenship. As we will see by the end of this section, the “promise” embedded in the two notions is a shared one.

But, before unpacking this level, let us first focus on what is considered “good” about being creative and being a global citizen, in other words, why there is considerable optimism from both academics and practitioners about the power of these phenomena to change the world for the better. If we take the notion of global citizenship first, typical definitions of it in the literature include qualities such as: “awareness, caring, and embracing of cultural diversity, while promoting social justice and sustainability, coupled with a sense of responsibility to act” (Reysen and Katzarska-Miller 2013, p. 858). In short, global citizenship becomes something close to a panacea for today’s problems. The connections with diversity and responsibility further demonstrate its assumed ethical and societal underpinnings. These associations are also reflected in the way GCE is conceived. UNESCO, for example, offered the following formulation:

Global Citizenship Education aims to empower learners to engage and 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 (UNESCO 2014, p. 15).

Once more, the strong belief in the positive contribution GCE has to make in the current context of heightened globalization is obvious. In fact, this type of education is not only seen as responding to the needs of this historical context, but as a clear sign of it. Hence the association it has, among educators, to cosmopolitanism, global consciousness, and world citizenship – values associated nowadays with living in many societies. And yet, it is precisely these kinds of associations that have exposed the entire project to criticism. Beside its inherent ambiguity (indeed, the UNESCO statement seems less like a definition and more like a wish list), GCE has been accused of promoting Western assumptions and views (Roman 2003) and, ultimately, upholding the West’s hegemony. One of the major dangers associated with turning global citizenship into a normative and prescriptive notion within education is the fact that it could lead to the creation of different citizens: global, on the one hand, and non- or even anti-global, on the other. The former are more likely to represent elite groups within society and, as such, global citizenship risks increasing inequality and fomenting societal divisions.

In this context, it becomes important to distinguish between different levels or forms of global citizenship. Veugelers (2011), for example, explored the difference between three categories of global citizenship education: open, moral, and political. The first one merely recognizes that nation states are becoming more and more interdependent and promotes surface level cultural diversity. The second one focuses our attention on equality and human rights, while the third form deals with an open contestation of hegemonic political power. As Veugelers notes, the former is a shallow form of global citizenship and, for Andreotti (2006), it is also an uncritical one. She proposed two main approaches to this topic: a “soft” and a “critical” stand. The soft version provides knowledge without a deeper engagement as it mainly pays lip service to the notion of tolerance and the value of diversity. This is because it lacks a transformative ethos, one in which global challenges are not only noted, but addressed. In many ways, Veugelers and Andreotti are attempting to re-claim global citizenship for social change and prevent it from becoming a new form of colonialism on a worldwide scale.

A similar project is underway concerning creativity. Despite the fact that humans have always dealt with each other and their environment in a creative manner, the word “creativity” is a recent historical invention and its popularity is mainly the legacy of the second half of the twentieth century (Mason 2003). What has made creativity famous up to now is the more or less implicit assumption that it is a process that generates economic value as evidenced by the emergence and growth of creative industries. While creating can have a number of far-reaching consequences, among others for mental health, what makes it one of the main “buzzwords” of today, together with innovation, is the assumption that creativity is the engine behind consumerism and the market economy. And yet, just as in the case of global citizenship, this kind of appropriation is only one of the many narratives we tell about this phenomenon.

To recover more of its meanings, we need to consider its definition. According to Plucker et al. (2004), creativity concerns “the interaction among aptitude, process and environment by which an individual or group produces a perceptible product that is both novel and useful as defined within a social context” (p. 90). This formulation brings to our attention the fact that creativity is not only a personal attribute, but also the result of the dynamic interaction between person and context, including culture (Westwood and Low 2003). Secondly, that it leads to the production of perceptible products: a wide category of outcomes from expressed ideas to crafted objects. Last but not least, it mentions the classic binary criteria of originality and usefulness (or value) as key markers of creativity within a social context. Indeed, something is never original or valuable, in and of itself, but always in relation to a given task, situation, historical time, and group of reference (Glăveanu 2011).

The underlying dichotomy between global and local lies at the heart of discussions on global citizenship. For most of its history creativity has been riddled by a (false) opposition between the individual and social. One of the oldest representations of creative individuals is that of the genius: highly eminent, revolutionary and visionary, mostly alone, and almost always male (Montuori and Purser 1995). This essentialist, gendered and elitist conception runs the risk of creating a split between

creators and their society and culture, making creativity itself something remote and hard to achieve. In contrast, contemporary views of what it means to create tend to be much more “democratic”, as least where creative potential is concerned. In 1950, Guilford launched a call to fellow American psychologists to study and educate the creative personality of each and every individual (Guilford 1950). This democratization did not achieve, however, a socialization of creativity. It is only after the 1980s, when systemic and sociocultural models started to emerge, that a true recognition of the social, material and cultural dimensions of creativity became possible (see Glăveanu 2014). This also paved the way for a critical theory of creativity.

Such a theory is not only concerned with the social-psychological processes of creating, but the social impact of creativity as well. For example, Sierra and Fallon (2017), from a decolonial perspective, distinguished between oppressive creativity and the creativity of resistance and social transformation. The former designates all the innovative ways used by local, national, and international elites to exploit the labor and natural resources of marginalized communities across the world. The latter is often a response to such forms of oppression and exploitation. Another way of thinking about creativity critically is to question the ways in which its scientific definitions and practices can invite participation and empower all levels of society instead of glorifying the practices of a few (Glăveanu and Clapp 2018).

It is against this complex background that acknowledges both the bright and dark sides of global citizenship and creativity that we should consider their relationship. The few studies to date that examine this relationship have found, unsurprisingly, positive correlations between the two. For instance, Tidikis and Dunbar (2017) reported that global citizenship makes a unique contribution to five types of creative expression (self/everyday, scholarly, performance, mechanical/scientific and artistic) in addition to its role in openness to experience. Why might this be the case? According to the two authors, “similar to multicultural experiences, global citizenship values may foster a greater acceptance of diverse ideas from differing cultures and, thus, to different ways of perceiving the world” (p. 2). Not only can global citizenship values boost creativity, creativity is also deeply involved in the making of global citizens. Lilley et al. (2015) propose markers for global citizens, for example, that list features typically associated with creativity such as “leaves comfort zone” and “thinks differently”. Their research reveals the key characteristics of the global citizen “openness, tolerance, respect, and responsibility (self/others/planet)” (p. 231).

These preliminary conclusions lead us to question what might be at the root of both creativity and global citizenship and a recent theory of creativity – the perspectival model (Glăveanu 2015) – can offer us a hint. This model postulates that creativity emerges out of difference, in particular differences of perspective between self and other. What is meant by perspective here is not merely an idea or point of view, but an action orientation towards the world. We all have various such orientations arising from the multiple positions and roles we adopt in our physical and social environment. In essence, the creative process is harnessed when these different perspectives or orientations are placed in a reflective dialogue with each other. In other words, we become capable of taking other perspectives – the

perspective of the other – and engaging with them in ways that transform our own understanding of the world. This dynamic can be applied to all sorts of creative activity, from art and business to education. And in particular GCE seems to resonate most with the perspectival model briefly described here. Indeed, GCE also requires the existence of multiple positions (e.g. local, national, global) from which to understand and act on the world. It is premised as well by the dialogue between the perspectives emerging from these positions, and it is concerned with how dialogues can be infused by critical forms of reflexivity and lead to positive social transformation.

From this theoretical basis, I have identified five principles that are shared by creativity and GCE, at least in view of the critical and sociocultural approaches proposed for both. They are: seeking differences, valuing multiplicity, promoting dialogue, increasing participation, and acting ethically. I will show how each one of these principles plays a fundamental role in being creative as a global citizen, which does not mean that they necessarily play this role in the practice of creativity or global citizenship at all times and in all contexts. As noted here, there are many ways to construct these two phenomena beside critical, sociocultural and political approaches.

Seeking Differences

Difference is at the heart of both creativity and global citizenship. In the case of creativity, there are a series of generative “gaps” that lead to the emergence of novelty: the difference between self and others; between the material and the symbolic; between past, present and future (see Glăveanu and Gillespie 2015). In the perspectival model referenced above, the difference of perspective between self and other takes priority. This is largely because a world in which people hold identical beliefs, types of knowledge and sets of skills would be one in which there is no possibility for novelty or emergent processes to define creativity. Differences present us with the possibility of tension, which leads to the prospect of learning new things through interaction and communication.

A similar argument can be made about global citizenship. In this case, the difference between “us” and “them” and the need for a broader, more encompassing category are indispensable and require creative thinking and solutions. It is by noticing and exploring the tensions between local, national, and global identities (O’Byrne 2004) that the promises of GCE can be accomplished. This education ensures awareness of differences and how they can be used as resources rather than barriers to communication and mutual understanding. Global citizens are intrinsically heterogeneous at an identity level, and it is precisely this heterogeneity that calls for reflexivity, ethical reasoning, and social responsibility.

According to this principle, creativity and global citizenship grow out of what Glăveanu and Beghetto (2017) called “openness to difference” – the active search for meaningful differences. Openness to difference is not an individual level trait,

like openness to experience, but the result of personal differences that interact with environmental conditions. GCE has an important role to play in this by creating opportunities for learners to experience and learn from difference.

Valuing Multiplicity

A direct consequence of fostering difference is the diversity of positions and perspectives creators and global citizens are forced to contemplate. Being open to difference leads to a multiplicity of understandings, practices, and identities. What remains essential is how this multiplicity is approached. Valuing difference encapsulates another essential characteristic of creativity and global citizenship: the appreciation of different points of view and different positions in the world. Without this appreciation, there can be no authentic dialogue (see the next sub-section) established between self and others. At the same time, valuing should not be mistaken for concurring (Matusov 1996). One can be open to the perspective of the other without accepting it in an uncritical manner.

More than this, one must maintain multiplicity and, in doing so, resist the ever-present temptation to appropriate the perspective of the other. This “domestication” of the other (Levinas 1996) not only undermines the very premise behind creativity and global citizenship (when theorized from a critical standpoint), but amounts to a new form of colonialism and oppression. It is therefore not only every view that needs to be appreciated, first in its own right and then in relation to those of others, but the idea of multiplicity itself should be valued and reflected upon.

One of the main outcomes of dealing with multiple positions and perspectives is the possibility of becoming flexible in one’s thinking and action. This is of paramount importance for creativity which, as a process, requires taking distance from the here and now of one’s own position to include experiencing the position of others. Moving between positions and exchanging perspectives leads to self-awareness as well as new (and potentially creative) meanings about the world (Gillespie and Martin 2014). This movement is central to GCE inasmuch as it tries to make students aware of other ways of experiencing the world. Research into creativity and global citizenship often advocates processes such as empathy and perspective taking requiring multiplicity as a starting point but also helping to value and to maintain it.

Promoting Dialogue

The benefits of engaging with difference and multiplicity can only be brought about through constructive dialogue. In the case of creativity, these dialogues involve considering a problem from different positions as well as putting the resulting perspectives in relation to each other. Take as an example relevant to global citizenship the

notion of “democracy” along with the multiple perspectives that can be applied to it, from social and political to economic and ethical, including various national perspectives from cultures as different as India and the United States. New and creative understandings of democracy emerge when these perspectives are considered together, when they “meet” and “clash” in ways that both reveal and amplify the complexity of democracy itself.

This dynamic has been discussed at length by the father of dialogism, Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), who considered the tension between different voices in dialogue as something to be cherished rather than ignored. His views have a lot to contribute to a sociocultural theory of creativity, in particular to our view of the creative process as relational, continuous, and emergent. Dialogism also adds to GCE due to the fact that it requires reflexivity and critical thinking. Promoting dialogue, in this context, can maintain the open-mindedness and tolerance that are commonly seen as the hallmarks of global citizens.

More than this, dialogism can also stimulate social and political activism (as the following sub-section will also argue). This is illustrated by the legacy of critical pedagogy, in particular the dialogism promoted by Paulo Freire (1970). He considered dialogues to be an essential part of the processes of “conscientization” or achieving a deeper understanding of the world in and through action. The same premise applies here as it does in the case of creativity: that promoting dialogue between distinct voices or perspectives makes us aware, individually and collectively, of what is possible and empowers us to explore it further. The critical consciousness associated with such dialogues is particularly useful in fighting oppressive creativity and the negative effects of globalization.

Increasing Participation

Another important consequence of dialogue is increased participation. In a Bakhtinian sense, authentic dialogues take place between equals and this prevents power relations from turning them into monologues. We know however that, in the real world, such equality rarely exists. Nevertheless, both sociocultural accounts of creativity and critical forms of GCE strive towards this ideal by paying attention to and trying to learn from diverse positions and perspectives that are neglected or marginalized.

In creative work, it is the participation of marginal positions (people and ideas) that gives creators a better chance to go beyond the conventional and towards the construction of unique perspectives. Distributed and participatory models of creativity (see Glăveanu 2014; Hanchett Hanson 2015; Clapp 2016) are particularly focused on developing open, dynamic and inclusive systems for creativity in education and other applied settings. Of special concern here are the scientific constructions of creativity that turn it into an exclusive attribute of elites (e.g., geniuses or highly gifted individuals) and, in doing so, restrict the participation of others (e.g., women, children, Indigenous, rural, poor).

GCE should share the same premise. Increased participation means, in this context, allowing a variety of positions and perspectives to address the concept of

“global” (as well as “citizenship”, for that matter) instead of relying on hegemonic and singular understandings. This ethos is at the heart of efforts trying to link GCE and education for democracy through a focus on social justice (see Carr et al. 2014). Social justice cannot be conceived outside a framework of equal participation, which, as I argued here, can lead not only to a more democratic decision-making process, but also to an increased level of creativity. Conversely, reducing participation in the context of GCE not only eliminates its critical edge – it misses important opportunities for creative expression.

Acting Ethically

In the end, the four principles above, taken together, substantiate the fifth one: acting ethically. There are surprisingly few discussions in the literature on creativity and global citizenship that refer explicitly to the topic of ethics (for a few exceptions see Moran et al. 2014; Dower 2002). And yet, ethical issues and concerns are implicitly referenced in both types of literature given the fact that, ultimately, both to create and be a global citizen are social phenomena embedded within self-other relations.

In the case of creativity, its scientific definition often includes the notions of value, utility or appropriateness. Creativity is one of the few phenomena dealt with by science that supposedly has positive consequences, in terms of morality and values, included in its definition. Indeed, this positive bias makes researchers and practitioners enthusiastic about cultivating creative expression and think that the more we have of it, the better. However, in recent decades, studies have increasingly been dedicated to “malevolent creativity” (Cropley et al. 2008) or the creativity engaged in with the intention of harming others. Whether this is done “for the greater good”, in the creator’s imagination, is irrelevant – the consequences of such creativity speak for themselves.

In the case of global citizenship, acting ethically is reflected in the responsibility of global citizens towards themselves, other people, and the environment (UNESCO 2014). Assuming or not this kind of responsibility makes the difference between open and moral forms of global citizenship in Veugelers’ (2011) typology. Still, this does not mean adhering to particular ethics, for example Western ones, at the expense of all others, but requires a substantial reflection on what is ethical and why, in any given situation.

Conclusion: Opportunities and Challenges for Education

In this chapter, I argued that creativity and GCE share much more than being two “buzzwords” often combined in education. A sociocultural reading of creativity and a critical account of global citizenship are both rooted in issues that have to do with alterity and difference, dialogue and participation, ethics and responsibility. In order

to unpack these further, I discussed five common principles for educating, at once, creativity and global citizenship. There is, indeed, some preliminary evidence that stimulating one can lead to advances in the other. For example, Dziedziewicz et al. (2014) found that a program meant to foster intercultural competences led to a considerable increase in creativity. As already mentioned, Tidikis and Dunbar (2017) brought evidence that global citizenship helps explain variance in creativity beyond one of its main predictors, openness to experience.

These studies, and others like them, are certainly important but they should also invite a critical reflection on how we conceive of and measure creativity as well as the more recent construct of global citizenship. The former tends to be assessed with the help of divergent thinking measures, even if divergent thinking itself is not the same as creativity (Runco 2008). The latter is evaluated using specific instruments like the Global Citizenship Scale (see Morais and Ogden 2011), which includes three dimensions: social responsibility, global competence, and global civic engagement. Interestingly, the authors of this instrument qualify global competence as being “understood as having an open mind while actively seeking to understand others’ cultural norms and expectations and leveraging this knowledge to interact, communicate, and work effectively outside one’s environment” (p. 4). Open-mindedness, another strong link with creativity, can be explained with the help of the perspectival model.

Cultivating open-mindedness, however, is certainly easier said than done. The five principles outlined in this paper aim to offer a practical map for educators interested in developing creative and global citizens within and outside the classroom. Seeking differences, valuing multiplicity, promoting dialogue, increasing participation, and acting ethically sound like relatively straightforward aims. Both creativity and global citizenship can be fostered in education by engaging students in activities that require listening to one another, becoming curious about the experience of others, having to collaborate in order to achieve common goals, being asked to reflect on how diversity can be used as a resource and to consider the consequences of their actions on others, on the environment, and within society. And yet, one of the main risks here is turning these five principles into a normative list that invites box-ticking exercises without any deeper reflection as to how they work together in particular settings. Creativity and GCE resist simple formulas and invite multiplicity in an effort to keep the dialogue going and to extend participation in it.

When it comes to opportunities, there is a lot of room for hope regarding the relationship between creativity and global citizenship. As Tidikis and Dunbar (2017) note:

The implications of this research are important, because as never before, people must overcome social, political and cultural fragmentation in order to work together on creatively solving both everyday challenges and issues such as global warming, pollution and resource scarcity, among others. Developing global citizenship prosocial values may help us find creative solutions for these problems (pp. 4–5).

Indeed, reflecting on these two notions together is not a luxury or empty intellectual exercise, but a necessity in a world full of challenges that require both. Neither creativity nor global citizenship can solve the planet’s pressing problems without adequate forms of education, personal motivation, and institutional resources and

support. But they do hold the key to transforming education, people, and institutions in the right direction. Considering and cultivating them together rather than separately increases their benefits exponentially. Today, this can help us develop engaged citizens capable of the complex and creative thinking, two indispensable qualities for the world of tomorrow.

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