



Education for Global Citizenship: Global Literacies

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Introduction

Two years ago, I was given the opportunity to design an elective course for my department which caters to students with dual majors in English and one of four 'regional languages:' Portuguese, Thai, Indonesian or Vietnamese. The course needed to support the ethos of a multicultural department, to encourage plurilingualism, intercultural understanding and acceptance of World Englishes.

Personally, I was becoming interested in Global Education (GE) and action-orientated Global Citizenship (GC). Therefore, the course was a great opportunity for me to learn more about GC, to develop my teaching practice and to share issues that were important to me and relevant to learners. At the same time, my university wanted to adopt a multimodal, multiliteracies pedagogy of the New London Group (Cazden et al, 1996.) As I read more about GE, GC and multiliteracies, it seemed clear that the teaching community was revisiting ideas outlined by Pike and Selby in their 1988 book, *Global Teacher, Global Learner*, and approaches that Birch describes in *The English Language Teacher in Global Civil Society* (2009).

In this article, I'll describe how I've applied Multiliteracies to Global Citizenship in the course I designed. I'll show how a multimodal multi-literacies framework provides scaffolding to an EFL *Global Citizenship* course and how the 'heart' and 'hand/action' aspects of GC/GE provide inspiration for learners to act in personally meaningful ways to counter injustices in the world.

Global Education

I have personally struggled to process the often overwhelming negative nature and complexity of the global issues we face everyday. Therefore, finding paths to present these issues and tackle them with learners presented a professional challenge. One of the first books I picked up when beginning my research into GE is perhaps well-known, *Global Teacher, Global Learner* (Pike & Selby, 1988). In it, the authors outline a "rhythm of courses" comprising 4 stages: *Climate*, *Enquiry*, *Principles* and *Action* (pg. 91) (Figure 1).

In this way, learners encounter global issues in manageable and relatable ways. First, they build on what they know, adding information through research and instruction (*climate*). They then investigate the issues more deeply, with self created questions or guided *enquiry*. Next, they begin forming and

testing ideas and beliefs, establishing *principles* that give structure to their understanding that, in turn, inform the *action* they choose to take to address the perceived problems.

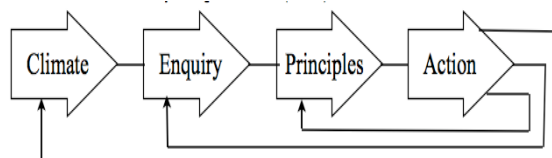


Figure 1 *The Rhythm of Courses*

New Learning

The pedagogy of *New Learning*, a continuation of Kalantzis and Cope's Multiliteracies work with The New London Group (Cazden et.al 1996), also suggests four "Knowledge Processes":

- *Experiencing* the known and unknown, in which learners reflect on and observe new knowledge inputs;
- *Conceptualizing* through defining, classifying and forming theory and concepts about input;
- *Analyzing* in a logical way, connecting ideas and concepts critically. In this step, learners unpack their own and others' feeling or biases.
- When *applying*, learners take this informed perspective and knowledge and apply it to real-world situations, and "creatively" where learners apply their knowledge and meaning-making skills to new situations or topics.

Multimodality asks educators to consider and incorporate into their course design all the means by which we communicate, interpret, and understand the world. The 'modes:' written, aural, oral, gestural, visual, tactical, and spatial, are all used to help present and process content.

Of course, these are not mutually exclusive and interact with each other. A video of a fair trade farm (visual, aural, gestural) presents one aspect of the topic. Promotional leaflets put out by *Fair-trade International*, the *Fairtrade Foundation* and *Fair Trade USA* (written, tactical) add further dimensions and perspectives on the principles and goals of these NPOs and the fair-trade movement.

Multimodality: An Example with Fair Trade

Multimodality is a framework for educators to build courses that expose learners to multiple medias. It is also a way for learners to build their understanding of complex issues and to share their

opinions. It was a welcome surprise to see students using a variety of media in their presentations and to have students bring realia to class. One student brewed fair-trade coffee for us to enjoy while she spoke about the product. Another brought handmade bracelets, from an online cooperative that gives women access to education and therapy after experiencing domestic abuse.

On the surface, these acts might feel gimmicky but they added another *mode* to the class's understanding of the topics being explored and directly addressed criticisms about fair-trade products being 'not delicious' or 'substandard.' Again these were spontaneous and self-directed. They link directly to the *Principles* and *Action* steps in the class rhythm, in which learners share their opinions and are challenged by others in a nonjudgmental, non-confrontational way.

Course design

It's easy to see similarities between the stages of becoming a global learner and a multiliterate learner. The course was thus designed to provide an overview or 'Climate/Experience' of each topic covered at the beginning of each unit. This stage involved learners reflecting on what they already knew and then gradually adding new information. This was done through "situated practice" - homework observation, interview tasks or role-plays - and "overt instruction" (Cazden et al 1996: 88) of complex concepts (such as *free trade* and *complete advantage*) and key vocabulary.

In these early lessons, learners were exposed to many perspectives and often contradictory aspects of each topic. This was initially a challenge for learners who were used to having one "right" explanation given to them. We then moved to an *Enquiry/Conceptualising* stage. Here students were either given guiding questions or definitions in early units or helped to formulate their own investigatory questions and projects.

To test our new *Principles* and *Analyse* what we and our classmates thought, the next step was usually a sharing activity. This took the form of debates, role-played discussions, followed by personal opinions and presentations, followed by class or small group discussion. The final stage was more personal and private. At the end of each unit, learners were asked to write a reflection, usually guided by a question but sometimes open to holistic reflection on the topic. In this task, the question of what action could be taken was posed. Initially, I hoped to make the *Written Reflections* public or shared, but class after class requested not to make this a mandatory, public activity.

The importance of student voice and the personal choice to take or not take action was central to the course and something of a personal crusade of mine. While it's true that good work is done by well-intentioned educators and change can be affected through directed action, I feel it's not appropriate, nor in line with GE pedagogy, for anyone to be cajoled into an action they don't choose to take. Students are highly susceptible to even the slightest bias or suggestion their teacher shares. To make an action meaningful, personal and sustainable, the course only asks students to reflect on what action *could* be taken, and therefore what they're going to do. I stress that the action component makes the course one of global citizenship, and we work together to highlight how our actions have an impact and are meaningful.

This has been the most challenging dynamic of the course. There were (and will continue to be) moments when I wanted to tell learners more "meaningful, impactful" things they could, *should*, be doing, but this would deny them their voice. Ultimately this would be hollow because learners would be taking my action, not determining and following through on their own beliefs. The actions taken, by some not all, have been amazing, moving and far more varied than I could ever have designed for the course. I've also been inspired to take action by my students, but more on that later.

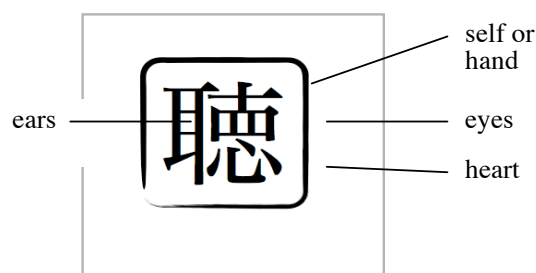


Figure 2 *Kiku: The Active Listener*

The Kiku Symbol

The only requirement for the *Written Reflection* (WR) was that learners address each aspect of global citizenship as outlined by our class symbol, *kiku*. This kanji for "listen" was an early adopted tool in the design of the course for learners to unpack their reactions and beliefs about topics (Figure 2). We used this in the *Climate* stage to evaluate where our knowledge and feelings about issues came from. In the WR tasks, learners had to reflect on what they initially knew or felt and compare this with what they had learnt (ear and eyes) and still felt (heart) about the topic, with the understanding that this was now an

informed opinion or a deeply held moral judgment that was their own (and not necessarily in line with others’).

The final part was to explain what action could be taken and what students would (or wouldn’t) do on a local level (*self/hand*). This action shifts the class from global education to global citizenship, and learners were explicitly taught this. However, the human potential dimension that “encourages speculation as to how the world system might be transformed should enough people awaken to and draw upon the fullness of their potential” (Pike, Selby 1988: 31-32) was not explicitly discussed nor used as leverage to encourage action.

This was a conscious decision to support learner voices and not force classmate (or teacher) crusades on them. If the purpose for acting is rooted in an informed understanding and belief, a choice to act because it’s felt to be the right thing will be more sustainable and meaningful. I wanted learners to realise that their wants and actions were meaningful in and of themselves, and that they didn’t require the consent of others to be valid.

An important pedagogic principle that I encountered early in my teacher-learning journey was that issues had to be presented in an unbiased way - of course - but that the course should also show positive practices or actions that I sometimes personally felt had no positives. For example, mass farming of fruits such as bananas, that employ numerous chemicals, utilise unethical working conditions, gallons of fuel and resources in transportation, and waste result in cheap, year-round access to a nutritious fruit that most of us wouldn’t enjoy otherwise. Who among us has not avoided brown-spotted fruit in favour of a more aesthetic, cheaper option?

Similarly, when confronting the Rwandan Genocide, within our UN Peacekeeping Unit, we had to explore all angles and think about why so many felt *they were justified* in their actions. This was a difficult unit and required huge leaps in my teaching practice to honestly and unbiasedly present all of the factors that led to those dark days.

The Development Compass Rose

The other tool we heavily utilise in the course that is hopefully useful to learners in *creatively applying* knowledge beyond the course is the *Development Compass Rose* (Figure 4). We use this to break down the complex nature of global issues and explore all perspectives on the topic or problem. In the beginning units we used this tool together. For example, when comparing the mass produced banana with its more ethical but expensive counterpart, we created 4 axis scatter plots with NSWE as our legends

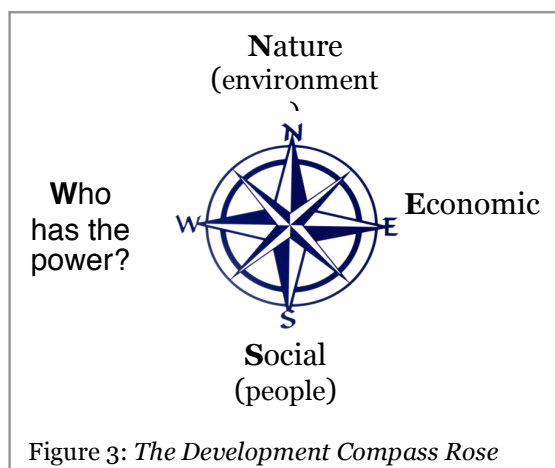


Figure 3: *The Development Compass Rose*

For other issues, we had a clear, simple set of questions for learners to begin with when confronting any issue:

- N What is the environment? How does this affect the issue?
- E What is the economic aspect? How does this affect the issue?
- S What is the society and social structure? How does this affect the issue?
- W Who has the power? How does this affect the issue?

GE pedagogy says we should present all sides of issues in a way that allows for a path through the problems to be determined and for learners not to be overwhelmed. The compass, which was displayed in class and frequently referred to, gives learners a way to engage with, process, and address seemingly insurmountable issues in a meaningful way. It helped learners to see the power they had as consumers (*economic*) when it came to resisting unethical business practices; or how they as society members (*social*) could resist sexist or other ingrained discriminatory behaviours by simply voicing their disagreement.

Hearts and hands: Reflection and acting

Through the design and teaching of this course I have grown personally and as an educator. My students have taught me and made me confront biases, such as when a learner suggested that my showing excerpts of *Shake Hands with the Devil*, with scenes of dead bodies, was an act of mental violence. This made me reflect on why I felt it was *necessary* and alter my approach, giving students warning of the content, the option to leave the room or telling the class when these images appear. When learners have introduced me to new charities or volunteer groups,

I've bought several of their products and began sponsoring learners abroad and business entrepreneurs, as have other classmates. Many of us have altered buying habits based on the research and insights of students.

By taking a more hands-off approach, I've been reminded of how limiting it is to view the teacher as the sole designer and deliverer of learning. From our realia, multimedia and presentations to students involving or discovering that their parents, family or friends are active in local movements, learners in this course are constantly impressing me and each other with what they discover and do. Here, I'd like to share some of the ways that we have all become global citizens. These include:

- leading a seminar on nuclear power and ways to protest opinions
- sponsoring girls to study in the Gambia
- promoting a fashion change to buy hand-made bracelets for classmates and friends
- campaigning to reduce prices of bottled water
- switching with her mother to fair-trade products
- asking all potential employers about how many women hold management positions and what positive discrimination each company practices
- joining companies that have active aid projects
- volunteering and donating to charities
- sharing knowledge on social networks

Conclusion

Often global problems are viewed separately, removing the complex, interconnected nature of global issues and local actions. At other times, the world is presented as a large tangled ball of issues and unsurmountable troubles. Sometimes, elective courses are content heavy, without support for improving and sustaining language skills. The tools we use in the class - *kiku*, the *Development Compass Rose* - the old and new approaches taken - Multiliteracies and the rhythm of courses - and the Multimodal meaning-building components, all scaffold and contribute to a course that tackles global problems and addresses students' language and cognitive needs. By helping learners make "the journey outward [and] journey inward...two journeys [which] are complementary and mutually illuminating..." (Pike. Selby. 1988: 31) through reflection and building *Knowledge Processes*, the learners have developed their critical thinking and language skills, and found personal, meaningful ways to be global citizens and affect global change from a local platform. Global Education and the practices of global citizenship pedagogy are hugely important in our ever globalising world for addressing the problems we face everyday.

Multimodalities provides a framework to introduce multiple medias and create a depth of understanding not fully possible in the past, before our almost limitless access to materials. It also gives learners more means to express their opinions, voice their beliefs and put these into practice. Multiliteracies gives a robustness to courses that sometimes end up content, not language, heavy. It also helps learners to develop learning and thought processes that can be applied to both study and real world problems. These schools of thought complement each other, but there will always be one dynamic, one advantage that GE has over other approaches, *heart* and that call to action to change the world. To paraphrase Archimedes, *give me a place to stand and I will move the earth*. Combining all these things, giving learners a place to stand and a way to understand the world and their feelings, empowers them to move the earth and affect change in their worlds.

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- www.weebly.eisoglobalcitizenship.com

or view my JALT 2013 Kobe presentation at www.slideshare.net/carolbegg/jalt2013-27614970

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