

# From internationalization to global citizenship: Dialogues in international higher education

*Monika Kraska, Douglas Bourn and Nicole Blum<sup>1</sup>*

As we consider assessment and, by implication, graduation, the question of what sort of graduate we are sending out into the world arises. A university education is not simply more stuff than A-level: it is, we hope, part of the transformation of a student into the adult they were always capable of being, realizing their potential. But as our opening chapter argued, there has to be a selection process for what is going to be emphasized: just being knowledgeable is a recipe for narrowness, and for our new graduate to be wrong-footed by a world that is far more complex than their university life prepared them for. Universities were ‘global’ long before almost any other ventures, with international collaboration on research going back centuries; our students come from all over the world, and our graduates go just about everywhere. We would be irresponsible not to consider how best to prepare them for that fact, but it is not straightforward – there are competing versions of what it is to be a ‘global citizen’, as this chapter explores.

## Introduction

The term ‘global citizenship’ has become part of the vocabulary and policies of many higher education institutions (HEIs) around the world in the past decade. There are a number of reasons for this, including the pressure to ‘internationalize’, the need for universities to position themselves effectively within the global higher education marketplace, the need to look at what attributes graduates need to engage in societies and economies in the

twenty-first century effectively, and a growing sense that universities have an increasingly broad, and global, social remit.

This chapter will review how the concept of global citizenship has evolved within higher education internationally, looking at both the debates around the terminology within the research literature, as well as its application within universities. It will also look specifically at examples of debates and practice within the training of professionals in health and engineering in the UK.

### **Linking internationalization and global citizenship**

The relationships between globalization, internationalization and higher education have been a major topic of academic debate over the past decade. In response to both the economic and social pressures of globalization, universities now engage in a wide range of activities that aim to ‘internationalize’ their institutions, including recruitment of international students, internationalizing the curriculum and fostering cross-border research collaborations (Bourn, 2011: 568; see also Rumbley *et al.*, 2012).

Perhaps the most widely quoted and referred to definition of internationalization is by Knight (2012: 29) who calls for ‘a process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension in the purpose, function or delivery of postsecondary education’. This broad definition provides space for a diverse range of activities related to teaching and learning, student recruitment and research, and there has been significant debate about the most relevant forms that these initiatives should take.

For many academics and researchers, the focus of internationalization is most strongly linked to marketization, international competition and the recruitment and exchange of students (see Robson, 2011; Huisman and van der Wende, 2005; Takagi, 2012). However, there have also been attempts to conceptualize it alongside topics such as human rights, ethics and values, which can together form the ‘foundation for a balanced and integrated university experience at the interface of global and local exposure’ (Cross *et al.*, 2009, cited in Robson, 2011: 621). These debates pose significant questions about the broader purpose and role of higher education in an era of globalization.

The concept of global citizenship has emerged alongside these discussions of internationalization, and is often proposed as a way of equipping graduates to cope with the rapid change and uncertainty that characterizes globalization. As a result, the two concepts are often seen to overlap. Yemini (2015: 21), for instance, views internationalization as

‘a process of encouraging integration of multicultural, multilingual, and global dimensions within the education system, with the aim of instilling in learners a sense of global citizenship’.

Similarly to the literature on internationalization, academic discussions of global citizenship have also raised key questions about both the core meaning of the concept, as well as its implementation in educational practice. The conceptual confusion sometimes found around the term is succinctly presented by Peters *et al.* (2008: 11) who notice that ‘one thing is sure ... there can be no one dominant notion of global citizenship ... as notions of “global”, [and] “citizenship” ... are all contested and open to further argument and revision’.

Some theorists, for instance, have seen the concept as ‘not so much a static identity ... [but] an ability, disposition or commitment’ (Rhoads and Szélényi, 2011: 267). This understanding emphasizes attributes such as awareness, responsibility, participation and cross-cultural empathy, achievement and international mobility (Schattle, 2008). In other words, global citizenship is demonstrated in an awareness of self, the world and one’s position within it. This in turn triggers a sense of responsibility for the world at large and results in calls for both individual and collective action.

While these theoretical understandings of global citizenship have emerged from academic research, within higher education practice global citizenship has often tended instead to be seen as a route to increase graduate employment. This includes, for instance, initiatives and programmes that aim to provide students with skills that will make them more appealing to international employers (e.g. foreign languages, cultural awareness, intercultural communication).

These two approaches to global citizenship are, of course, based on radically different philosophical, epistemological and ideological perceptions, and interpretations of the world and its processes. The first sees a global citizen as someone who is comfortable enacting their rights and responsibilities anywhere in the world and therefore tends to fall within a liberal-humanistic discourse. The second focuses on equipping graduates with the skills that enable them to be competitive within the global marketplace. This approach situates global citizenship within more neoliberal agendas for economic growth and international competition.

In the following sections, we explore in more depth the ways in which understandings of internationalization and global citizenship are interpreted from both the neoliberal and liberal-humanistic perspectives. In line with emerging academic research and writing, we also suggest a

third – critical – interpretation of the two concepts and how they might be meaningfully applied in practice within higher education.

### **Neoliberal perspectives**

The neoliberal economic discourse has a strong influence on definitions, conceptualizations and applications of both internationalization and global citizenship within higher education around the world. In particular, higher education is often conceptualized as a commodity in line with the General Agreement on Trade in Services (Humfrey, 2011: 650) – a trend that is visible in the commercialization of HEIs and the drive for accountability in higher education. From this perspective, the university is viewed as having a mandate to manage knowledge and plays a vital role in securing national competitiveness on a global scale.

This objective is reinforced by curricula and pedagogical approaches that overwhelmingly focus on preparing graduates to secure employment in the international marketplace. Research suggests that there is a shift towards performativity wherein ‘what counts is less what individuals know and more what individuals can do (as represented in their demonstrable “skills”)’ (Barnett, 2000: 255). A focus on disciplinary knowledge and the creation of degree programmes in non-traditional areas (for example, business management) reinforce this rationale for the role HEIs play in promoting graduate employability.

Given the current pressures on universities – including the need to diversify sources of funding as access to public funds becomes more restricted, as well as increasing international competition for both students and resources – it is perhaps no surprise that there is evidence of a movement towards such entrepreneurialism and managerialism within higher education. The management of complex organizations, like universities, with mandates for research and teaching, extensive budgets, human capital, physical and intellectual property requires universities to find a balance between economic imperatives and their perceived responsibilities to society.

### **Liberal-humanistic perspectives**

A key critique of neoliberal perspectives on higher education is that they do not tend to account for the array of challenges that the modern world presents to students and graduates. This is because the reality in which modern universities are operating is in fact supercomplex. As Barnett notes:

... the very frameworks by which we orient ourselves to the world are themselves contested. Supercomplexity denotes a fragile

world but it is a fragility brought on not merely by social and technological change; it is fragility in the way that we understand the world, in the way in which we understand ourselves and in the ways in which we feel secure about acting in the world. (Barnett, 2000: 257)

According to liberal-humanistic perspectives, this demands that universities' purpose should be to educate individuals who are able to comprehend the complex world around them (epistemology), understand their identity within it (ontology) and have the ability to prosper (praxis). In other words, it is to prepare individuals to participate in a society. Universities are therefore seen as responsible for creating public spaces to foster and lead debate on a range of issues, and for developing in graduates a sense of the wider world. These aims are linked to teaching and learning approaches that encourage critical thinking and active debate, rather than emphasizing mastery of particular areas of knowledge or skills for employment.

Furthermore, in the neoliberally entangled university the characteristics of a graduate are in line with the liberal idea of a citizen who is individualistic, passive and private, de-solidarized (Balarin, 2011), de-politicized and complacent to the status quo, treats political participation as a right to exercise depending on an individual inclination (Caruana, 2010), and is equipped with skills and knowledge necessary to secure employment. From a liberal-humanistic perspective, what is missing in this image of a graduate are the skills and dispositions to nurture civic values (see McCowan, 2012; Balarin, 2011). This means equipping graduates with skills for life, to be able to engage as citizens in society.

## **Critical perspectives on internationalization and global citizenship**

While the two perspectives presented above provide useful lenses for analysis of approaches to both internationalization and global citizenship, we suggest that a third approach provides even greater conceptual clarity. This critical approach actively questions both the neoliberal and liberal interpretations and encourages learners not only to develop greater awareness of global issues, but also to review existing systems and structures critically.

The critical approach is rooted in an understanding that students need to be equipped with knowledge, skills and dispositions to be able to cope with a world that is uncertain and complex. Shultz (2010), for instance, suggests that global citizenship discourse can provide a space for 'dealing' with difficult knowledge and difficult justice, and for managing diversity,

all of which are inherent in today's world. The multiplicity and diversity of all humanity, with its languages, visions, knowledges and interpretations of the world, is not only present but also essential for existence (Davis quoted in Shultz, 2010: 11) and can be 'dealt with' through the lens of global citizenship. In this view, diversity is seen as a natural characteristic of the world, rather than a problem or a challenge to be managed (Osler, 2010: 220).

Similarly, Western-centric interpretations of citizenship, values or identities can be questioned and alternative conceptualizations given equal status, such as in Spivak's 'planetary subjectship', where the world is not seen as 'a globe that can be mastered and controlled' but as 'a planet, which we inhabit "on loan"' (de Oliveira Andreotti, 2011: 307). Global citizenship, in this understanding, is therefore not contradictory to national citizenship, but is a framework for managing multiple and diverse citizenships in 'the heterogeneity of today's globalized world' (Tully cited in Balarin, 2011: 357).

This view of global citizenship stands in opposition to the individualized and fragmented vision of citizenship forged by the neoliberal forces influencing education. By fostering the idea of belonging to a global community, it creates a sense of unity above partitions and opens doors for identifications for all people living on our globe. It also moves away from the idea of cosmopolitan citizenship, which has often come to be associated with a transnational capitalist elite with the power to exercise the benefits of citizenship when inclined to do so.

### **Global citizenship within teaching and learning in health and engineering degree courses**

Having set out the three theoretical perspectives above, the chapter now moves to exploring how these are expressed within practice in higher education. In particular, it looks at undergraduate health and engineering programmes in the UK and is based on ongoing research by two of the chapter's authors (see Blum and Bourn, 2013).

Health and engineering are excellent examples to use to explore the relevance and influence of global citizenship within higher education. This is because not only do these professions have a clear global context – in that their key skills and knowledge bases are arguably relevant throughout the world – but professionals in these areas also have a high degree of economic and social mobility. In addition, they are areas of work that are key to global social and economic change.

The tendency in both areas within higher education, however, has been to treat global themes as ‘optional’ extras or areas of specialization that students can choose to explore alongside developing ‘core’ skills and knowledge (see Bourn and Neal, 2008; Bateman *et al.*, 2001). For example, within health-related courses in the UK, students are most likely to have opportunities to learn about global issues as part of optional sessions (e.g. one-off lectures or workshops), specialist programmes (e.g. intercalated global health degree programmes are offered in several UK medical schools), extracurricular activities (e.g. through involvement in student societies) or self-organized (usually short-term) overseas voluntary placements (Bourn *et al.*, 2006; Willott *et al.*, 2012). By their very nature, these tend to lead to students with an existing interest in global and development issues being the most likely to pursue these kinds of activities. It has also meant that global issues have largely remained marginalized from mainstream learning for health professionals.

In response to these challenges, a range of initiatives emanated from the Institute of Education<sup>2</sup> between 2007 and 2013. In partnership with other universities and a range of civil society organizations, these projects aimed both to understand better and encourage the promotion of terms like ‘the global doctor’, ‘the global vet’, ‘the global pharmacist’ and the ‘global engineer’. The results of these initiatives were a series of reports and papers aimed at policymakers and practitioners.

*The Global Engineer* (Bourn and Neal, 2008), for example, calls on HEIs to include global themes within engineering degree courses and to show the relevance of themes such as global poverty, sustainable development and climate change to future engineers. Above all it suggests that ‘higher education needs to prepare engineers of the future with the skills and knowledge they will need to manage rapid change, uncertainty and complexity’ (*ibid.*: 2).

Similarly, *The Global Doctor* references a proposed list of learning outcomes for medical students that refer both to knowledge of specific themes, such as understanding of global diseases, health systems and the global determinants of health, and the importance of understanding of human rights and cultural diversity (Willott *et al.*, 2012: 24–5). Similar themes can be seen in the publications on Global Pharmacy (Murdan *et al.*, 2014) and Veterinary Medicine (Maud *et al.*, 2012).

These publications have resonated strongly with recent academic debates within the disciplines. For example, there has been a growing understanding that all health professionals require not only an understanding of global health concerns, but also that health research and practice can

make a significant contribution to global economic and social change (see Johnson *et al.*, 2012; Frenk *et al.*, 2010). Within engineering over the past decade there has also been an increased recognition of the need to respond to the challenges of globalization and questions of ethical social responsibility (Dodds and Venables, 2005; Jesiek *et al.*, 2014; Passow, 2012; Ragusa, 2014).

These discussions have focused not only on the need for increased knowledge of global issues within the professions, but also on the need to prioritize forms of teaching and learning that can encourage skills such as critical thinking, the ability to recognize different perspectives, to work with diverse groups of people, and to understand the links between local and global events and circumstances. This links clearly to debates around the meaning of global citizenship within higher education: is the core aim to make graduates employable (a *neoliberal* agenda), to prepare them to live and work in an era of complexity and globalization (a *liberal* agenda) or understand, critique and perhaps even work to change the world (a *critical* agenda)?

These diverse approaches to global citizenship within higher education can clearly be seen in the debates and practices around both health and engineering professions. For example, most academic responses to the challenge of globalization within engineering have tended to focus on the competencies required to compete in an international market for engineering know-how. This has included, for instance, knowledge of other languages, developing intercultural skills and working more effectively in teams (Fenner *et al.*, 2005). A more cosmopolitan view can also be seen from research at Northumbria University where there was a call for more practical and real-life experiences within the teaching and learning in engineering. The evidence from dialogue with students suggested that what was needed was for a 'global engineer' to be a multi-literate all-rounder, who may be multilingual, culturally diverse and aware of different applications (Montgomery *et al.*, 2011: 7).

There is also recognition within the health professions of the need for professionals who understand and are prepared to cope with global health concerns. This has been particularly noticeable in the growing popularity of the field of global health, which advocates argue is key to addressing the challenges that globalization poses for health, including through the increasingly rapid movement of both people and disease (see Kickbusch, 2002; Howson *et al.*, 1998).



The need to prepare graduates to deal with the impacts of globalization on health, however, has also fuelled significant debates about the nature of teaching and learning within medical education:

A key skill that is central to any global health course is the development of critical thinking and analysis. Much traditional medical education revolves around rote learning, though recent initiatives to introduce problem-based curricula have changed this. Global health, by contrast, asks students to become critical thinkers, in their appraisal of problems and their likely solutions, and the logic and evidence base underpinning them. (Willott *et al.*, 2012: 15–16)

This emphasis on critical thinking resonates strongly with the critical approach to global citizenship, which similarly calls for critique of existing power structures.

Tensions have also often emerged about the role and place of values within engineering education, and these are clearly related to the different discourses on global citizenship. For example, there are significant tensions between professional and societal values, as well as diverse value bases around the world. As Mitchell and Baillie (1998: 15) suggest, ‘our values are the lenses through which we view the world; they stem from our underlying beliefs and assumptions, which are generally neither articulated nor questioned’. As van der Steen notes:

For the bulk of the history of engineering, engineering practice has been seen as a neutral endeavour; but the more engineering becomes the major mode of human action to resolve human problems, the less it can get away with this value reference. (van der Steen, 2008: 54)

It is perhaps the recognition of values and criticality that could be key to a distinctive critical global citizenship approach to higher education. This approach is currently evident in the work of a number of NGOs related to both engineering and health, including Engineers Against Poverty and Students for Global Health (formerly called Medsin).

Engineers Against Poverty, for instance, advocates for engineering education that includes a critical understanding of power within the context of development, as well as a commitment to social justice, critical reflection, dialogue and diverse perspectives. Key elements of this include educational approaches that:

- imagine a range of global perspectives
- look critically at how engineers perceive other countries and what has influenced their perceptions
- look at the causes of inequality
- explore power relations, including questions such as who has power, who is voiceless and who benefits? (Bourn, 2014: 16).

There is evidence that aspects of these points are being taken up within the literature on formal engineering education. In looking at sustainable development, for example, Guerra (2012) refers to the need not only to understand how to resolve problems, but also to reflect on how decisions are made and their consequences. Pawley (2012) in her discussions on the role of an engineering academic, mentions the importance of critical self-reflection and questions who determines what engineering problems are and who benefits from their solutions.

The student-led organization Students for Global Health also plays an active role in advocating for the inclusion of global health within medical education. Students for Global Health's vision is of 'a fair and just world in which equity in health is a reality for all'.<sup>3</sup> Its mission is 'to create a network of students empowered to effect tangible social and political change at a local, national and global level through education, advocacy and community action'.<sup>4</sup> The organization was influential in getting global health added to the General Medical Council's guidelines for medical education in 2009 (see GMC, 2009). This addition requires all UK medical schools to provide core teaching in global health for all students for the first time.

One example of this is UCL Medical School which, working in conjunction with the UCL Institute for Global Health (IGH), has embraced recommendations to integrate global health into its curriculum. The UCL MBBS 2012 curriculum aims to instil students with 'an appreciation of the role of the future doctor within the healthcare environment in the UK and globally' (Willott *et al.*, 2012: 25). Global health is also part of a vertical spine on the social determinants of health that runs across all six years of the curriculum.

More generally, the inclusion of global issues within higher education will require the broadening of curricula and the inclusion of new approaches to teaching and learning. This will mean not only incorporating particular themes (e.g. the social determinants of health, sustainable development, global forces and processes, the role of the student as a global citizen) within existing curricula, but also attending carefully to the nature of the learning taking place in order to encourage critical assessment of global concerns and

processes. This critical approach may represent a real challenge to dominant notions of learning in some institutions, however, particularly where the pressures of globalization (and accompanying neoliberal agendas) are high.

## Conclusion

These examples and the review of the discourses around the practices of global citizenship within education suggest that while the concepts are often contested within both the literature and practice, they resonate with wider debates about the purpose and role of higher education in an era of globalization. The aim here is not to suggest that one of the three approaches cited is more important or relevant than the other, more that they all have a role within understanding the nature of contemporary universities and the challenges they face.

In a world where higher education is significantly affected by the impacts of globalization, the need to educate global citizens is increasingly seen as an important rationale for the contemporary university. However, what it means to be a 'global citizen' and to 'internationalize' a university can have a range of different interpretations and implementations depending on the epistemological, philosophical and ideological perspectives through which both ideas are viewed. We suggest that while neoliberal and liberal-humanistic approaches have historically been central to these discussions, the emerging idea of critical approaches to global citizenship and internationalization provide a useful conceptual lens for analysis of contemporary higher education around the world.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Addresses for correspondence: monika.kraska13@gmail.com; d.bourn@ucl.ac.uk; n.blum@ucl.ac.uk

<sup>2</sup> Part of the University of London until December 2014, when it merged with UCL.

<sup>3</sup> <https://studentsforglobalhealth.org/vision-mission/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://studentsforglobalhealth.org/vision-mission/>

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