

The Challenge of Education for Global Citizenship in California

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Does Content Count?

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.¹

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration are fully realized.²

Today California teachers face enormous pressures to prepare our youth to perform well on federal and state mandated achievement tests. The tests are based on the California education frameworks and content standards. The Phillip and Sala Burton Center for Human Rights at the Presidio National Park (Burton Center) has identified significant gaps in these frameworks and contends that they hinder the ability of future and practicing teachers to prepare our youth for the global challenges they face: a global market place for jobs, a rapidly degrading environment, complex international trade issues, global security and cultural awareness.

The Burton Center is concerned that the California education frameworks and content standards do not adequately address these issues. As the frameworks and content standards set the standards for our teacher training programs, it is apparent that our children are not being prepared adequately for the global challenges they face. The Burton Center contends that this is an urgent matter of public policy and fairness to our youth, and a contributing factor to the high dropout rate from our public schools reported in the recently released *Losing Our Futures*.³ The authors of the report consider their findings to be a “civil rights as well as an educational crisis”.

Today we live in a global society, our youth compete for jobs a global market place, the cumulative effects of our individual action’s on the earth’s ecosystem impacts the well being of all people all over the world and that of future generations, and we live together with a set of shared values expressed by the international norms adopted by the nations of the world during the past century and the institutions established to promote and defend them.

Following the second definition of citizenship in the *Random House Unabridged Dictionary, Second Edition*, “the character of an individual viewed as a member of society, behavior in terms of the duties, obligations and functions of a citizen”; the Burton Center contends that as we now train our youth to be contributing citizens of their communities, states and nations we need to train our children to be active citizens of our global society. To do less consigns them to the margins of our rapidly changing world. In recognition of the reality of globalization, the Burton Center proposes to raise awareness of the need to work with the schools of our state to ensure that every one of our children has access to the opportunities that are emerging from the global marketplace.

Harvard College recognized this necessity in its recent curricular review to “create a curriculum appropriate to Harvard College in the first part of the twenty-first century”. It found that “a central mission of Harvard College must be to educate its undergraduates to be intellectually acute citizens of the world. This is a moral responsibility, in the same way that educating students as citizens of a free society was in 1945. Of course, a focus on ‘global citizenship’ must be, by necessity, rooted in an understanding of one’s own national traditions.”⁴

The *California History – Social Science Framework and Content Standards* also recognizes this reality in the first paragraph of its Foreword:

*As we begin the twenty-first century, our world is becoming more and more complex, just as our state is becoming increasingly diverse. While economic innovation, demographic shifts, and cultural diversity have brought change, they have also created a need for understanding the foundation ideas and philosophy of our country and a desire to participate in local, state, national and global institutions. If students are to understand and participate successfully in this changing world, it is vital that they possess solid grounding in history, the social sciences and the humanities.*⁵

We have listed below several examples of the gaps that we have identified between the stated goal of educating students “to understand and participate successfully in this changing world” and the content standards. We contend that these gaps frustrates their desire to “participate in local, state, national and global institutions”, and suggest that this frustration could contribute to the high drop out rate in California.

To address these concerns the Burton Center is proposing that education for global citizenship become a central mission of California’s education frameworks and teaching training programs, and proposes that education for global citizenship has four basic elements:

- Developing tolerance through an understanding of other peoples cultures and customs
- Advancing awareness of sustainable development defined as development which meets the needs of the present, without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs⁶
- Understanding of the international human rights, labor and environmental norms adopted by the nations of the world in the past century and the institutions established to promote and defend them
- Learning to be an active global citizen by working with a community-based non governmental organization

As a result of a focused approach in global knowledge our youth will be prepared to compete in the global market place for jobs, on which our state’s prosperity depends; will be knowledgeable about the issues that make protection of the earth’s ecosystem on which all life depends so pressing; will learn how to participate in global institutions and will be prepared to promote “a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in” the Universal Declaration of Human Rights “are fully realized”

The need to prepare our youth for global citizenship is particularly acute in California, where

over thirty-percent of our economy, now the sixth largest in the world, is involved in international trade. Over twenty-five percent of California's residents were born in foreign countries, many of them seeking refuge from the scourge of war and human rights abuses. More than two million California households have union members, many of them unaware of the power of the conventions of the International Labor Organization to improve their lives and those of their fellow workers. More than 13% of our state's population lives in poverty, and only 69% of California's students are graduating on time.

California-based global corporations such as Hewlett-Packard have also recognized the necessity to act as good global citizens. Each year it now produces a Global Citizenship Report. Its 2004 Report states: "As our operations and customers have expanded to over 170 countries worldwide, we recognize that with global reach comes global responsibility. We are deeply aware that we live in a world where half the population lives on \$2 a day, where 1 billion people cannot read or write, where less than 10% of the world has access to information technology and where 52 of the largest 100 economies in the world are corporations. As a global corporation, we have the responsibility to use our economic power and reach to have a net positive impact on the world."⁷

The following are examples of the significant gaps in the California History - Social Science Framework and Content Standards⁸ and the California Science Framework⁹ that hinder education for global citizenship:

1. *The California History-Social Science Framework* recognizes the need for teaching tolerance through understanding of other people's cultures and customs. "This framework increases the place of world history in the curriculum to three years (at grades six, seven and ten) organized chronology. While emphasizing the centrality of Western civilizations as the source of American political institutions, laws, and ideology, the world history sequence stresses the concept of global interdependence. Special attention is paid to the study of non-Western societies in recognition of the need for understanding the history and cultures of Asian, African and other non-Western peoples."¹⁰

The Burton Center is concerned that the concept of global interdependence is not well integrated into the Content Standards. For instance, Standard 11.9 "Students analyze U.S. foreign policy since World War II" states: 1. Discuss the establishment of the United Nations and International Declaration of Human Rights, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and their importance in shaping modern Europe and maintaining peace and international order.¹¹

The misnaming of the Universal Declaration of Human Right gives an erroneous impression. By calling it an International Declaration rather than its true name, the Universal Declaration, the standard gives the impression that the Declaration applies only between nation and not within nations as envisioned and proclaimed by the Declaration.

We note how outdated these standards are: the World Trade Organization superseded GATT in 1995 - six years before the Framework was adopted - with greatly expanded powers over our lives. It is essential that students understand these expanded powers and what they mean to their

own freedoms and to our democracy.

The selective naming of international financial institutions as examples of important international organizations for “maintaining peace and international order” gives the students a warped view of the world. By not listing the International Labor Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, etc. this standard gives students the impression that international financial institutions are more important than other international organizations, and the shared values they represent, in “maintaining peace and international order”.

The phrase “their importance in shaping modern Europe” contradicts the Framework’s stated goal of “stressing international interdependence”.

2. Neither the *California History-Social Science Framework and Content Standards* nor the *California Science Framework and Content Standards* mentions the concept of sustainable development.

3. The *California History -Social Science Framework* acknowledges the need for understanding global institutions, but the Content Standards selectively emphasizes those created by the Cold War and again gives students a warped view of history that leaves them unprepared for global citizenship.

Standard 10.6 “Students analyze the effects of the First World War” does not mention the leadership of the United States in creating the International Labor Organization, nor its role in establishing international labor norms. Standard 10.9.8. states “Discuss the establishment and work of the United Nations and the purposes and functions of the Warsaw Pact, SEATO, NATO, and the Organization of American States”¹². By contextually equating the United Nations with the security apparatus of the Cold War, the Content Standards creates a gap in understanding the role of the United Nations system in developing international human rights, labor and environmental norms and establishing the institutions to promote and defend them.

A more thorough consideration of the United Nations is included in the Appendix,¹³ that discusses “several options for teachers of world history to consider when planning coverage and articulation of world history across the three grade levels”. This “option” was included in the Appendix as a result of an extraordinary effort by the California chapters of the United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA).

The Burton Center contents that these gaps can be narrowed within the existing frameworks and content standards by refocusing their present emphasis on the Cold War to the global challenges our youth face, and by utilizing existing resources. To address this urgent need the Burton Center wishes to collaborate with the institutions responsible for training future and practicing teachers in California, the schools of education and the California Subject Matter Projects, to develop a plan to narrow these gaps as rapidly as possible.

1. Article 26 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
2. Article 29 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
3. *Losing our Futures* as reported in the *Irvine Quarterly*, Volume 4, Issue 3, Winter 2005

4. *A Report on the Harvard College Curricular Review*, April 2004
5. page v, *History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten through Grade Twelve, 2001 Updated Edition with Content Standards*
6. *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*, 1986
7. *2004 Global Citizenship Report*, Hewlett-Packard
8. *History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten through Grade Twelve, 2001 Updated Edition with Content Standards*
9. *Science Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten through Grade Twelve, 1998*
10. page 6 *History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten through Grade Twelve, 2001 Updated Edition with Content Standards*
11. *ibid.* page 155
12. *ibid.* page 139
13. *Ibid.* page 197