GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

In a Canadian Context

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Global citizenship is frequently identified by industry, government, and universities in Canada as an important outcome of education. However, there is significant debate about the meaning of this term. The goals of this report are: to explain the roots of this debate, identify some of the key terms frequently used by universities as proxies for global citizenship, uncover discrepancies among universities in their understanding and approach to global citizenship, propose a unifying framework for global citizenship, and offer some methods through which institutions can evaluate their efforts. A shared understanding of how our education system discusses global citizenship is necessary to help better shape the experiences students have, to ensure the evaluation of university programs is possible and effective, and to create alliances among industry, government, and universities to enhance their development of individuals as global citizens.

Methodology

1. SURVEYING

Secondary research using the keywords internationalization, global understanding, global mindset, global learning, global citizenship, and cultur* (to capture variations on this word such as culture, cultural, or intercultural).

2. RESEARCH

Consulted documents from the Canadian educational system to determine how global citizenship is approached and promoted. This included: elementary and high-school curricula in each province, and the strategic, academic, and integrated plans at 30 different Canadian universities.

3. ANALYSIS

Analyzed the terms used to represent global citizenship, the frequency of their usage, and the different strategies to foster global citizenship in the Canadian educational system. Looked for patterns and trends among datasets.

Findings

From the research executed, the following patterns emerged:

1. There is no consistent definition of what characterizes a global citizen among universities.

2. An analysis of the literature is consistent with our perception of an increasing use of global citizenship terminology by universities over the past decade.

3. Most Canadian universities have incorporated global citizenship into their strategic, academic or integrated plans.

4. Canadian universities often use a variety of other words as proxies for the broader term, global citizenship (e.g. global, student, community, citizen, international, culture, and world).

5. Words used to describe the mechanisms for how students develop as global citizens included learning, research, knowledge, education, academic, skills and understanding or descriptors of attributes of global citizens, such as, engage, develop, contribute, commit, awareness, experience, create, and value.

6. In the provincial primary and secondary educational system (K-12), the curricular focus is on the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a global community and encouraging active participation; however, there is no consistent curricular policy on when and where students engage with this concept.

7. Universities describe global citizenship as:
- A mechanism to raise the institutional reputation and status
- Enacted only at the individual unit level
- A component of a liberal education
- Synonymous with internationalization
- An integral part of the curriculum for all students; these universities can serve as models for post-secondary institutions across Canada.

8. In the last decade, 68 per cent of scholarly articles were published using the terms related to the theme
- "global education" was the most frequently used
- The increasing use of the term "global citizenship" by universities is paralleled in the academic literature; 83% of all articles using this term are from the last decade.

The use of global citizenship terminology used in the academic literature in the past 10 years compared to all records within the *Educational Research Complete* and *Education Resource Information Center* databases. There was no consistency reported across the provinces in terms of grade or subject in which global citizenship is addressed; there is uneven introduction to the concept of global citizenship.

Implications

We propose a new framework for understanding global citizenship, which encourages universities to consider the complex and interconnected attributes of a global citizen as well as the process through which students will become global citizens. We identify mechanisms through which universities can encourage students to become global citizens.

The graphic places Global Citizenship at the center of four interconnected quadrants: Culture; Environmental Integrity; Human Rights; and Roles, Rights and Responsibility of Individuals. To be considered a global citizen, students must engage with all four of these areas, which can also be described more broadly as social, cultural, political, historical, economic, and scientific context which don't guide specific content but can help to identify areas of concern for global citizenship within Canada.

CULTURE

- diversity
- multiple Perspectives
- communication (including language)
- beliefs, values, behaviours
- systems of knowledge

ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY

- ecology
- connections with society
- sustainability
- inherent value
- threats and opportunities

HUMAN RIGHTS

- inalienable rights
- common universal humanity
- respect
- social justice
- locations, operations of power and interest

RIGHTS, ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- moral obligations to humans and environment
- engagement
- empowerment
- accountability
- reciprocity

We also identify mechanisms through which universities can encourage students to become global citizens including: institutional commitments, curricular development, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and support for faculty members.

Where from here?

Universities must take an active role in encouraging a new generation of Canadians to become global citizens, and most have identified this as a goal for their institutions. However, if this goal is to be achieved, universities must be intentional in their efforts; rather than using proxies for the term and only vaguely identifying the methods by which it could be achieved, institutions must explicitly define what they mean by global citizenship and overtly distinguish the mechanisms they will use to assist students in becoming global citizens. It is not sufficient to simply claim that global citizenship is a priority for the university. Although there are many ways to understand global citizenship, and each university must adopt a conceptualization relevant to its own particular needs and context, the framework provided in this report will assist in this project. ■

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