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Imaginery of global citizenship in Greek schools

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Model United Nations

A brief role play **simulation** of the principal UN committees' work.

Senior High School students take on the roles of delegates and

- represent a specific member state or an NGO,
- debate current issues,
- draft and vote on common resolutions.



Role play simulations

- Simulations of international organizations as effective teaching instruments
- Simulations of the UN or the League of Nations, date back to **1927** in Harvard University
- **400,000** delegates in 35 countries, in 400 MUN conferences per year.



Experiential and active learning methodologies



Experiential education

a pedagogical interplay of experience, reflection and development of skills, knowledge and values, in stages

Active learning

debates, group work, role-playing and simulations in a collective context, where students interact, negotiate, articulate and co-construct meaning



The Greek context

Education context

- Greek educational state-controlled and state-dictated curricula
- Exam-oriented curriculum of the senior high school
- Rote learning

Social, political economic context

- Public deficit problems, debt crisis, austerity measures
- Reduction of public spending on education
- Rising unemployment
- Xenophobia and racism
- Lack of institutional trust



Global citizenship education

Education for global citizenship entails addressing various issues, from different perspectives with the ultimate goal of preparing the student for a viable, multivocal future, where informed citizens will analyse and reflect, acquire skills and act and convert apathy to agency (Davies, 2006).



Research questions

- (a) How did students in MUN school conferences conceptualise global citizenship, in terms of knowledge and understanding?
- (b) What skills, abilities, values and attitudes the students saw themselves as developing, especially in light of their prolonged engagement in MUN?
- (c) What factors facilitated the development of these global citizenship perspectives, skills and values, according to the students?



The research project identity

- **What:** a longitudinal, interpretive qualitative study
- **Who:** 26 senior high school MUN delegates from a private school
- **When:** December 2011 to March 2013 (3 phases)
- **Where:** 3 MUN Conferences, in Athens, Greece

A variety of research methods were used:

- semi-structured interviews (with photo-elicitation),
- observational field notes,
- a researcher's journal.



Research phases

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Preparation	December 2011 – March 2012	June 2012- October 2012	December 2012 – March 2013
Conference	14-16 March 2012	18 – 20 October 2012	29-31 March 2013
Debriefing	18 March 2012	22 October 2012	2 April 2013



Themes and stages

Stage A: discovering and learning

Theme 1: acquisition of knowledge about current global affairs

Stage B: understanding and reflecting

Theme 2: awareness of global interconnectedness and interdependence

Theme 3: associations between one's personal microcosm and the wider world

Theme 4: sense of growing concern and responsibility for the suffering of others

Stage C: visualising and planning

Theme 5: willingness to take action towards a more sustainable future



...a part of the world...

The fact that you are here and the other is out there doesn't mean anything, if you are a global citizen. If you don't see consider yourself the centre of the world, then you will start seeing yourself as a part of the world. And you get involved with issues that influence the whole world, we are all global citizens.

(Eleftheria, MUN 3)

...act like a global citizen...

‘One cannot be a global citizen...because there is no transcendent global political community...one can, however, act like a global citizen’ (Cabrera, 2007, p. 1)

I don't know what the definition of global citizen is, but for me it means that I don't get enclosed in my personal sphere. I mean, I am not concerned only about my private issues, but that I am responsible for the problem, which I may not have caused but it is my job to fix. (Nefeli, MUN 2)



Global citizen in an evolving world

...not merely aware of her rights
but able and desirous to act
upon them;

of an autonomous and inquiring
critical disposition;

but her decisions and actions
tempered by an ethical concern
for social justice and the dignity
of humankind... (Griffith, 1998,
p.8)





Allegiance to the worldwide community of human beings



‘...think of ourselves not as devoid of local affiliations, but as surrounded by a series of **concentric circles**.

- the self,
- the immediate family,
- the extended family,
- neighbors or local groups,
- fellow-city dwellers,
- fellow countrymen
- (also add groupings based on ethnic, linguistic, historical, professional gender, or sexual identities)



The largest one, **humanity as a whole**
(Nussbaum and Cohen, 1996, p.9)

And they added...

*We will live in **one** world. If we don't know what happens, it is as if we lived in our own microcosm and our own depression. When we learn what happens out there, then we realise that our problems don't mean anything, we begin to have **more sense of reality**. (Anna, MUN 3)*

I think that I haven't learnt the most important things in my life through books, I've learnt them from the places I've been to, the things I've seen, and the experiential element is the strongest one. Because when you read a book, it simply remains a page, a piece of information, a reading text for you, but when you see it in front of you, when you live it, it can't remain the same. (Nefeli, MUN 2)



and went on to say...

*When you participate in MUN, you realise that you can do small things which may eventually help you ‘get into the shoes’ of others and you feel as if you had some kind of impact on the world. But I have started to believe that in order to change things drastically, it’s not enough for you to be alone amidst the crowd. You have to inform and sensitise the people around you, this is it, **information, sensitisation and action**, I guess I’m at the second stage. (Isabella, MUN 3)*



Imaginery of global citizenship

- adolescents in adult roles
- students as UN diplomats in decision-making context
- citizens of another country

- imagination to visualise global citizenship practices and responsibilities and participation in MUN conferences as a rehearsal for prospective global citizenship engagement.



References

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Thank you

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