

Transformative Curriculum: An Inquiry into the Implementation of Manitoba's Global
Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability Curriculum

by

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Dedication

To my daughter, Kennedy Mona Bradshaw Lopuck:

I hope that one day you'll be able to look back at this research that your papa did and be encouraged to know that learning is lifelong and also be inspired to engage in meaningful dialogue, reflection, and action to help change the world.

To all my former and current Global Issues students:

Thank you. You are the inspiration behind my teaching and behind my desire to go back to school to complete my master's program. The enthusiasm you display inside my classroom is contagious. I am incredibly grateful that our paths have crossed and, for at least a little while, that we got to talk about making the world a better place. This work is in honour of you.

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I am very fortunate to have so many people who have supported me in this endeavor over the last six years, and for that, I will be forever grateful.

The first day I encountered the new Global Issues curriculum was also the day I would meet, the man who would come to have so much influence on the next six years of my life. Since that day, as an advisor and friend, Gary Babiuk has walked with me on my educational and pedagogical journey of self-reflection. For challenging, encouraging, and supporting me on each step in the journey, I could not be more grateful. I am also very fortunate to be able to compliment Gary's supports by having Lloyd Kornelsen and John Wiens on my committee. Their philosophical and supportive nature is something to which I aspire.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

My Educational Journey

In 2001, I graduated from the University of Manitoba with a Bachelor of Education degree and was fortunate enough to get a full-time, permanent contract teaching social studies at Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive Secondary School in Selkirk, Manitoba. My assignment was mostly teaching Canadian history classes, but I would also be responsible for teaching the World Issues course, a curriculum about which I had limited knowledge. Helped immensely by materials left to me by the retiring teacher I was replacing, I quickly went about reading about the topics contained in the decades old curriculum. Included were units on political and economic ideologies, North vs. South, and the quality of life in Soviet Union. Being that the Soviet Union had collapsed at the beginning of the 1990's, I sought to find my own way at presenting material surrounding "world issues", a way in which I could engage students in what issues they wanted to talk about.

Then, in only my second week teaching, the September 11th terrorist attacks in New York, Washington and Virginia happened, and much of my planning seemed less important. This was before teachers were able to use live-streaming and high-definition projectors, and so I remember quite vividly standing in front of that class with 30 sets of eyes on me all looking for answers. Who did this? Why did they do it? What's going to happen next? At that moment I knew that I would need to forge my own way, tossing out many things contained in the aging curriculum. I realized that many students had a desire to know what was happening in the world around them and so, for the next decade, I

would use current affairs as a gateway to world issues, encouraging dialogue and questioning.

Although, at the same time, I held on to the belief that it was important to conduct rigorous study of ideologies and history and test for student knowledge of the same. Looking back on this now, I can see how, as a beginning teacher, it was a bit like a crutch. How could I spend all my time discussing current affairs when I needed to get marks for these students, and knew that the quickest and easiest way for me to do that was through giving notes and testing them? Endless notes on the development of democracy, the rise of dictatorships, and comparing and contrasting capitalism to centrally planned economies made for a plethora of test questions. I made sure there was also time for projects, although I had no idea what made for a well-designed project at this point. To be honest, by giving students choice in what format they wanted to complete their projects, I thought I was fulfilling the requirements of being a student-centred teacher¹. The problem for me was the fact that I realized that most of the student engagement and passion surfaced when discussing current affairs. At the time, I saw this as something above and beyond the curriculum, but the place where the most important learning was happening.

Quickly though, the World Issues course became a favourite for me to teach and I looked forward to bringing in articles to make my students think about the world around them and develop their own opinions. So, it was when I received an email indicating that

¹ I see student-centred learning as directly related to constructivist thinking. A student should be able to decide how they best learn and the teacher must be able to determine this and make accommodations for it. Constructivist thinking is discussed further in chapter 2.

the province was looking to update the World Issues course that I immediately wanted to get involved in the process. Although my application to become part of the curriculum design team was not accepted, a related opportunity would soon present itself; an opportunity that would help reinvigorate my career and directly lead to major changes in my professional and academic life.

The Advent of “Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability”

In August 2011, the Department of Education and Advanced Learning² of the Province of Manitoba put together a team of teachers, which this time included myself, to pilot the new grade twelve social studies curriculum. This new curriculum, entitled “Global Issues³: Citizenship and Sustainability”, was to replace the older “World Issues” curriculum. The new curriculum, its content, and the method with which it was to be delivered, would be a radical departure from the old one. The new curriculum focused on student-driven, inquiry-based learning, critical pedagogy and praxis. By using inquiry and praxis as methodology, students were to engage with the core concepts of citizenship and sustainability to think critically about the world around them while developing a strong sense of empathy. In doing so, the curriculum sought to help “students develop competencies as citizens who are mindful of their place in nature and in society and who

² At the time of the development and piloting of the curriculum, the department of the provincial government of Manitoba responsible for curriculum design and implementation was entitled “Department of Education and Advanced Learning”. Since that time, the department changed its name to “Manitoba Education” before becoming “Manitoba Education and Training”. The pilot documents are now labeled as such and I will use “Manitoba Education and Training” throughout this document.

³ Throughout the thesis, “Global Issues” (capitalized) refers to the curriculum itself while “global issues” (not capitalized) refers to issues happening around the world.

are willing to work together toward a sustainable future” (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017, p.4).

However, if the goal of the curriculum was to “help students develop competencies as citizens who are mindful of their place in nature and in society and who are willing to work together toward a sustainable future” (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017, p.4), what role did the teacher play in this empowerment? The advice that I remember most vividly from the first meeting of the Global Issues Pilot Team in August 2011 was that, in this course, teachers would no longer be the ‘sage on the stage’, but more of the ‘guide on the side’. The implication was that when teachers use traditional, direct, front-of-the-class teaching methods, students might not be as engaged or empowered in their learning as we might wish.

Brazilian educational theorist, Paulo Freire (1970/2012), has offered that education has in fact been suffering from “narration sickness” (p. 71). This is to say that the teacher-student relationship is expressed in a narrative form, where the teacher is the narrator, and the students are the listening objects. The traditional teacher’s role is to fill or deposit information into the students who quickly become receptacles or containers of information (Freire, 1970/2012, p. 72). He termed this the “banking concept of education”, a concept that limits students to “receive, memorize, and repeat” (Freire, 1970/2012, p. 72). He contends that in this system it is in fact the students themselves “who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge” (Freire, 1970/2012, p. 72). The practice of knowledge being conferred onto those considered to be lacking knowledge by those who believe they are knowledgeable,

projects “an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression [that] negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry” (Freire, 1970/2012, p. 72).

Influenced by Freire, my venture into teaching the new Global Issues curriculum has meant that my personal educational philosophy has undergone a transformation. While I believe that since beginning my teaching career some 15 years ago, I have always considered myself a student-centred educator, I don’t think it was until I started piloting the Global Issues course that I truly began to see what this looked like in practice.

When I started my teaching career, I took a great interest in the principles of Howard Gardiner’s *Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, which stresses that teachers should use various methods to assess student learning. I would make sure students had choice in how they wanted to display their comprehension by allowing them to create songs, raps, or videos to complete their projects. While this certainly gave them choice, and allowed for multiple intelligences to come through, it was all contained rigidly in curricular outcomes. Students may have had a choice in how they demonstrated their learning, but they were not being given a say in what they were learning.

At the beginning of my career, my craft was also often guided by the Province of Manitoba’s *Success for All Learners* document, which contained many teaching strategies to engage different learners. A favourite of mine was the “Jig Saw” strategy where students would become experts on a certain part of the curriculum and would then teach their portion to the rest of the class. However, as I progressed in my career and faced new challenges and commitments including copious amounts of extra-curricular

coaching and supervision, I found that even my idea of student-centred teaching began to wane. By this I mean that I fell back into a style of teaching consistent with the scholar-academic ideology, or Paulo Friere's "banking concept" of education. It was easier, and safer, for me to be up in front of the class, Power Point Presentation up on the screen, using lecture or storytelling to deposit content into the minds of my students. This direct teaching is passive in its nature, as opposed to the active learning associated with inquiry-based learning or praxis. I want to be clear that I am not necessarily saying that these methods should be completely avoided, but the problem was that I became reliant on them. The piloting of the Global Issues curriculum would lead to a transformation⁴ of my teaching and philosophy. The design of the Global Issues course challenged me to begin to reassess the way I was doing things in my classroom.

At the same time, the new design of the Global Issues curriculum would also challenge my students to change their approach to their learning. Instead of relying on "what's going to be on the test?" students would now be guided into using inquiry, a concept that many of them, along with myself, were unfamiliar with and unsure about. Instead of an exam, they would now have to look at developing action projects to affect positive change in their communities. Students would also have to engage with a great deal more independence in their learning process. Without significant day-to-day work

⁴ I use the term "transformation" here, as well as in the title of this thesis, deliberately. It is reflective of Jack Mezirow's (2009), definition of transformative learning as "...the process by which we transform problematic frames of reference (mindsets, habits of mind, meaning perspectives) – sets of assumption and expectation – to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective and emotionally able to change" (p.91).

(ex. worksheets), students found themselves with several larger projects but with plenty of time and resources to complete them.

The Grade Twelve Inquiry Project

Shortly after piloting the new Global Issues curriculum, and during the time I was experiencing a transformation in my teaching, I was approached by Linda Connor, Social Studies Consultant with the Department of Education for the province of Manitoba, to participate in a new initiative targeted at teachers of Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability. The Grade Twelve Inquiry Project (GTIP) was designed with two goals in mind. Firstly, it would allow Global Issues teachers to come together and share their experiences and resources associated with the teaching the course; and secondly, it required the same teachers to conduct inquiry into their own practice. This was my first exposure to action research. GTIP teachers were encouraged to develop essential questions surrounding their teaching of the course and were given time and access to consultation with two university professors, one from the University of Manitoba and one from the University of Winnipeg, to help guide and complete their research. As an added benefit, GTIP teachers would be able to share their research at a Manitoba Educational Research Network (MERN) Spring Forum, and have their papers published in the MERN Journal⁵. To date, my participation in GTIP has presented me the opportunity to conduct research on my own practice including exploring the following research questions:

⁵ In the spring of 2018, MERN's funding was cut by the provincial government, but their work is preserved and continues in the form of the Manitoba Teacher Research Collective.

- How has the Global Issues course transformed students into dialogical and empathetic global citizens?
- What kinds of citizenship are developed in the Global Issues classroom?
- How do we assess students in the Global Issues classroom?

Participation in GTIP, with its emphasis on inquiry and praxis, would eventually influence the direction I decided to take with my studies in my Master's program.

My Global Issues Classroom

My Global Issues course is divided into three main components. First, because the province has provided ten areas⁶ of suggested inquiry for the course, I use current affairs⁷ to access these areas of inquiry. In order for the students to have some idea of each of the areas, I make sure that I use a broad spectrum of current affairs, spanning all inquiry areas and obtaining them from diverse sources. The great advantage to this is that most students can identify an interest in at least one, if not many, of the areas. Group dialogue on these current affairs can range from 5 minutes up to an entire hour-long class, depending on how many issues we look at and the level of interest shown by students. I make it a priority to engage the students in these discussions, and I finally felt I had the justification for doing something I had been doing for years. Physically I do this by sitting down with the students, instead of standing at the head of the class. I believe that this visually makes me appear less like Freire's depositor of information and more like a partner in the learning process. My classroom itself is normally divided into table groups,

⁶ See appendix 1

⁷ Parallel to bringing in current affairs into my classroom are discussions around the news media in general and, more specifically, objectivity, bias, who owns the news media, and who makes the decisions as to what we see or hear.

though I have tried other configurations, and I make sure to make my way around the room to further distance myself from Freire's depositor image.

Secondly, I have the students complete 2 to 3 inquiry projects. Each project follows, on average, a 3 to 4 week process. Their first task is to submit a proposal for their project. This proposal includes the area of inquiry they are pursuing, why they chose that area, how they plan on presenting their inquiry to the class and whether or not they plan on working in a group or on their own. Additionally, and most importantly, students decide upon an essential or guiding question for their inquiry. In my experience, students have not had much exposure to developing essential questions, and for that reason I have most recently designed a process that involves some direct teaching as to what an essential question encompasses. I have also designed lessons that involve gallery walks and group sharing to help students develop these essential questions. Students also receive a guide to inquiry⁸ created by the designers of the Global Issues curriculum. Examples of some of the completed inquiry projects have tackled such essential questions as:

- “How do we create more sustainable societies?”
- “In what ways was the Arab Spring a success? In what ways was it a failure?”
- “How does the quality of life differ between Canada and Syria?”
- “What is the connection between social media and bullying?”

The planning and execution of their inquiry projects helps prepare the students for the third and final part of the course, their Take Action Project (TAP). Although the students

⁸ See appendix 2

may decide to use one of the topics they have conducted inquiry on to formulate their TAP, this is not necessary, and I find that many students decide to explore a different area for their take action project.

The TAP allows students, after careful inquiry, to take action to conduct important social change through various means including raising awareness, raising funds, and immersing themselves into their community to take action by using their time and talents. Based on the fact that the TAP is worth 25% of a student's final mark in the course, I give them ample opportunity to work on it. I try to dedicate Wednesdays as "Take Action Days", and the students have that hour to accomplish whatever they need to when it comes to their projects. That is not to say that the time is completely unstructured; students must progress through a series of initial proposals, action plans, and development of inquiry questions to guide or inspire their action. Also, as their projects begin to take shape, students are granted the time to secure resources, contact people and organizations to help in their action, create video, or conduct surveys. This may lead to students' needing to leave the classroom. During this time, I make sure that they are checking in at the beginning and end, and that I have a sense of what they are doing and where they are going.

One example of a TAP was a campaign started by a student in the first year of my piloting the new curriculum entitled "Ping-Pong Positive". The student had been struggling with mental health issues, and someone with whom he had had no prior relationship had helped him during this very dark time. As a result of the selfless act by this person, the student believed that it was up to him to pay this upstanding behavior

forward. Essentially, the question he was asking was, “How can I make a difference in the lives of others, while helping create a culture of positivity?” He seized upon the idea of creating a website called “Ping-Pong Positive” and applied and received grant money from the Canadian Teacher’s Federation to purchase ping-pong balls with his website logo printed on them. His idea was simple; pass out the 500 hundred ping-pong balls along with a compliment to 500 people who would then pass them on to 500 more and so on and so forth. Each time the ping-pong ball was passed on, the receiver of the ball was asked to visit the website to share the story of how they had received it, thus promoting a culture of positivity. The website also contained links to information on mental health issues and organizations that provide support for those dealing with them. This student received high praise for his initiative and was featured in several local media including the local Selkirk paper and CBC radio. He has gone on to talk about his project at several youth conferences and the national Canadian Teachers’ Federation conference.

A second example of a student TAP was one where a student asked how he could make a difference in his community using his pre-existing skill and passion. This particular student was very talented at photography, and thus decided to use his skill for the betterment of the community. He organized his project under the international banner of “Help-Portrait”, photographers around the world who find people in need, take their pictures and provide them with a portrait print. The student organized a Help-Portrait event for our community just before Christmas. He gathered student and staff volunteers to help organized two photo shoots, one for family portraits and one for kids with Santa Claus, and partnered with local businesses to print the photos. Pictures were delivered to

those community members who had participated in the photo-shoot just days before Christmas. The project has now become a legacy project⁹ with the former student coming back to the school to lead current students in organizing the event.

In general, over the past 7 years of teaching the new Global Issues curriculum, I have seen my teaching career rejuvenated. I was able to do what I thought was right from the beginning, engage kids in learning about world or global issues through discussion about what is happening in the world around them currently. If and when I have a semester where I do not teach the course, I miss it dearly. I don't believe this is as a result of the change in curriculum alone; however, I believe that it is the result of how the curriculum challenged me to reevaluate the role of the teacher and student and the student's learning process. They continue to inspire me with their engagement in the core concepts of citizenship and sustainability, their desire to think critically about the world around them, and their desire to be/make a difference in the world.

Purpose of Study

My new-found rejuvenation in my teaching, coupled with encouragement from Dr. Gary Babiuk, the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Education representative on the Global Issues Pilot Team, and a high level of interest in the impact of the Global Issues curriculum, would convince me to return to university to pursue my Master's degree. With guidance, I decided that my guiding question for this study should be, "What impact did the participation in my Global Issues class have on my former students while enrolled in the class, as well as after they finished the class?" More specifically, I'd like to know

⁹ I define a legacy project as a TAP that continues to take place even though the student who came up with the original idea has graduated from the school.

what challenges they had with the course, how did they feel about the inquiry and praxis components and what, if anything, has impacted the way they think now?

It is easy enough for me to reflect on and consider the impact this new curriculum has had on my teaching. However, how can I know the wider and lasting impact it's had on my students? Am I correct in my impression that there has been an increased student engagement in citizenship and sustainability? Is this engagement limited to only a few? Does the impact on the students end with the end of semester, or does the students' participation in the course affect them as they move past high school and into the world of higher education and/or work? Specifically, has the course helped developed their sense of citizenship and sustainability? Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative, narrative, and phenomenological study is to explore the impact of the new Global Issues curriculum on former students who have completed the course with me. As a result of this study, there may be some impact on my own practice; therefore, the study is also grounded in action research.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

In order to better understand how the Global Issues curriculum has influenced my former students, it is necessary to become familiar with the key concepts and pedagogical approaches to the curriculum. In that regard, an in-depth review of citizenship and sustainability, as well as inquiry-based learning and praxis, is required.

Core Concept: Citizenship

As a core concept of the Global Issues curriculum, the developers of the curriculum have acknowledged that defining citizenship is problematic calling it “a fluid concept that is subject to continuing change over time” and whose meaning is “... often contested, and ... is subject to interpretation and debate” (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017, p.11). Ken Osborne (2003), a former teacher and professor in the province of Manitoba wrote, somewhat tongue-in-cheek that, “one might reasonably claim that the essence of citizenship is to be found in the continuing debate over what it means to be a citizen” (p. 13). Even Aristotle (1995) spoke to the difficulty of defining citizenship saying that, “The definition of citizen is a question which is often disputed: there is no general agreement on who is a citizen” (p. 85). However, Martha Nussbaum (1997) makes it clear that, as we [campuses] are producing citizens, there is a need to define what a good citizen is and what they should know (p.8).

In its most basic sense, citizenship can be construed as the belonging of a person to some form of nation-state or territory; one may be a citizen of Canada, Manitoba or the city of Winnipeg, for example. However, even the Merriam-Webster Dictionary seems to

imply that the term citizenship has a more complex meaning when it indicates that citizenship can refer to “the qualities that a person is expected to have as a responsible member of a community” (Merriam-Webster Online Access January 6, 2015). This complexity is echoed by Heater (1999) who stated that “Citizenship in our complex times reflects this complexity. Its elements derive from manifold sources, influences and needs. To analyze them is, inevitably, to oversimplify and to exaggerate the separateness of the component parts” (p. 3).

In attempting to define citizenship, Heater (1999) distinguished between two different traditions, liberal and civic republican (p. 4). The liberal tradition, which Heater saw as more prevalent in the last 200 years, is one that “involves a loosely committed relationship to the state, a relationship held in place in the main by a set of civic rights, honoured by the state, which otherwise interferes as little as possible in the citizen’s life” (p. 4). On the other hand, the civic republican tradition has been around much longer and has, through history, had many significant thinkers who have written on the subject including Aristotle, Cicero, and Rousseau (Heater, 1999, p. 44-50). In this tradition, citizenship is based on ties to a republic that contains a constitutional system of sharing power, as well as a society in which citizens are involved in civic affairs to the benefit of both the individual and the community (Heater, 1999, p. 44). John Cogan (1998) would appear to concur with this view of citizenship when he wrote on the 5 attributes of citizenship that included: a sense of identity, the enjoyment of certain rights, the fulfillment of corresponding obligations, a degree of interest and involvement in public affairs and, an acceptance of basic societal values (p. 2-3).

A traditional approach to citizenship, found throughout many social science programs, is often used to help prepare children to be citizens of a particular nation-state.

As Cogan (1998) writes,

Citizenship education has typically been an important goal in courses of study in history and civics in most nations and has, for the most part, focused upon developing knowledge of how government and other institutions in any given state work, of the rights and duties of citizens with respect to the state and to the society as a whole and has been oriented largely towards the development of a sense of national identity. (p. 1)

The Global Issues curriculum documents stay away from this traditional definition of citizenship stating that “Education for citizenship is not restricted to learning facts about Canadian society and the world. It involves more than conforming to the dominant worldview about the meaning and implications of citizenship” (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017, p.11). Cogan (1998) would seem to agree stating, “At one point, when the world was a simpler place, this conceptualization of citizenship may have served us well; but this is no longer the case. The complexity, scale and interconnectedness of the challenges facing us at the close of this century and the dawn of the next simply cannot be met through conventional means” (p. 1).

In stating the goals of the Global Issues curriculum, the authors have made it clear that their definition of citizenship follows in the civic republican tradition and not the traditional liberal definition. In their introductory documents to the new course, the developers stated that the goals of the course include to “help students understand that

human societies and institutions can and should be renewed, beginning with matters of personal lifestyle, and extending through to collective, large-scale social change” and that “the role of education in this change is vital, hence the importance of this course both as an instrument of critical understanding – seeking the truth – and as an instrument of hope – seeking to create a better future” (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017, p.4). More generally speaking, the aims of the Global Issues course are not to leave students with an overwhelming feeling of helplessness about the state of our society and planet; rather, they are to empower students to feel that, through critical understanding and their own actions, they should feel hopeful about change for the betterment of society and our planet. This detailed concept of citizenship the developers labeled *active democratic citizenship*.

Active Democratic Citizenship - Global Citizenship

According to the curriculum developers, the term active democratic citizenship “involves developing a widening circle of empathy so as to come to a sense of solidarity with all humanity ... a recognition and acceptance of a collective responsibility for the continued economic and social well-being of humans while preserving the environmental integrity of the planet” (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017, p.12). They make note that active democratic citizenship is often referred contemporarily as *global citizenship* because “it is based not on nationhood or ethno-cultural exclusivity, but on a fundamental acceptance of the inherent, equal, universal and inalienable rights of all human beings” (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017, p.11). The term global citizenship itself has seen more frequent use since the end of the Cold War and the advent of globalization

(Kornelsen, 2014), but has also become more prevalent as a result of increasing pressure of global problems requiring common solutions, a revived interest in citizenship and cosmopolitanism (Dower, 2003).

Defining the term global citizenship is as problematic and complex as defining citizenship itself. In fact, in October 2016, British Prime Minister Theresa May took issue with term stating, “if you believe you are a citizen of the world, you are a citizen of nowhere. You don't understand what citizenship means” (Bearak, 2016). However, this can be seen as taking a very narrow-minded and perhaps even ignorant view of the concept. The insinuation here is that citizenship can only be defined in its strictest sense of being a member of a nation-state. May’s comments may be construed to be ignorant to the globalized world of today.

Nussbaum (1997) believed that global citizenship could be understood in two ways:

The sterner, more exigent version is the ideal of a citizen whose primary loyalty is to human beings the world over and whose national, local, and varied group loyalties are considered distinctly secondary. Its more relaxed version allows a variety of different views about what our priorities should be but says that, however we order our varied loyalties, we should still be sure that we recognize the worth of human life wherever it occurs and see ourselves as bound by common human abilities and problems to people who lie at a great distance from us. (p. 9)

Although Nussbaum sympathized with the sterner version, it was the more relaxed conception that she believed could help lead us to cultivating humanity. Confirming the Global Issues curriculum documents' concept of "active democratic citizenship", Nussbaum (1997) discussed how the relationship between liberal education and citizenship draws upon a long history in the Western philosophical tradition,

We are drawing on Socrates' concept of the "examined life," on Aristotle's notions of reflective citizenship, and above all on the Greek and Roman Stoic notions of an education that is "liberal" in that it liberates the mind from the bondage of habit and custom, producing people who can function with sensitivity and alertness as citizens of the whole world. This is what Seneca¹⁰ means by the cultivation of humanity. (p. 8)

To Nussbaum, the goal of teaching citizenship is quite different than the classic liberal notion. She (1997) argued that to cultivate humanity we require 3 capacities: critical examination of oneself and one's traditions, seeing ourselves not just as citizens of a nation-state or region or group, but as human beings bound to all other human beings, and the capacity for narrative imagination; to think what life may be like for someone different than oneself (p. 8-10).

¹⁰ Seneca is often quoted in regard to citizenship stating, "Let us grasp the fact that there are two republics, one vast and truly 'public,' which contains alike gods and men, in which we do not take account of this or that nook of land, but make the boundaries of our state reach as far as the rays of the sun: and another to which we have been assigned by the accident of birth." (Seneca, 1889, p. 243)

That being said, the term global citizen, or world citizen, may date back centuries. Most commonly it is associated with the ancient Greek philosopher and Cynic, Diogenes, who rejected the narrow idea of being a citizen (*politēs*) of a single city-state (*polis*) in favour of a broader view of a citizen of the cosmos or universe (*kosmopolitēs*) (Appiah, 2008, Heater, 2002, Dower, 2003, Kornelsen, 2015). However, though it was Diogenes who is credited with first using the term “citizen of the world” (Appiah, 2008), it is the Ancient Greek Stoic philosophers who first advanced the thinking about world citizenship. Nussbaum (1997) contends that the Greek Stoics, although they did not propose any abolition of local or national governments or affiliations, worried about partisanship, factions, and local allegiances sabotaging politics (pp. 59-60). In fact, Nussbaum (1997) notes that the Stoics saw themselves as being at the centre of concentric circles:

The first one is drawn around the self; the next takes in one’s immediate family; then follows the extended family; then, in order, one’s neighbors or local group, one’s fellow city-dwellers, one’s fellow country-men – and we can easily add to this list groups formed on the basis of ethnic, religious, linguistic, historical, professional, and gender identities. Beyond all these circles is the largest one, that of humanity as a whole. Our task as citizens of the world, and as educators who prepare people to be citizens of the world, will be to “draw the circles somehow toward the center,” making all human beings like our fellow city-dwellers. (p. 60)

Heater (2002) identified six components of this Stoic cosmopolitanism. These included a sense of global unity of humans all being one species, the notion of *logos* (speech and

rational thought), a divinely delivered natural law, that only the wise could be regarded as citizens, and that only the wise would be able to live in harmony (p. 30).

Dower (2003) also offers a definition of global citizenship for the 21st century. His description of the status of being a global citizen is divided into three components, ... a normative claim about how humans should act, an existential claim about what is the case in the world and an aspirational claim about the future ... the normative claim is that, as global citizens, we have certain duties that in principle extend to all human beings ... the existential claim is that, in being citizens of the world, we are members of some kind of global community, usually but not always understood as institutional or quasi-political in character. The aspirational claim builds on the normative and existential claim in stating that the world can and should become one in which basic values are realized more fully. (pp. 6-7)

Dower (2003) does acknowledge, however, that his thesis is limited in that it is both ambitious (not all people's definitions will contain his three elements) and vague (his three elements allow for a wide range of interpretation) (p. 7).

As previously noted, the term global citizen is complex and problematic, and it must be mentioned that there is much debate about the use of the term. The curriculum authors acknowledged this fact stating,

The concept of global citizenship ... is subject to interpretation and debate. While some thinkers embrace global citizenship as a vision for a sustainable future for all, others argue that citizenship can only truly exist within the bounds of a nation state; hence, the idea of global citizenship is either pure idealism or an imposition

of Western liberal democratic ideology. (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017, p.12)

This is part of the complexity of global citizenship. Is the term simply an ideal we aspire to, or are we (specifically citizens of western, liberal democracies) imposing this on our fellow human beings with disregard to their own views of citizenship? In further examining the debate surrounding the use of the term, Kornelsen (2014) identified two challenges,

The first challenge has to do with whether the term, global citizen, has global appeal or cache; in other words, is global citizenship an idea to which all peoples of the world can lay claim and to which they might aspire ... A second challenge comes from a group of scholars known as communitarians, who question the veracity of citizenship within a global milieu. They argue that any functioning democracies or civil societies – where citizenship has a real legal bearing and political meaning – are found within bounded political spaces (i.e., nation states) (pp. 32-37).

Kornelsen (2014), elaborating on the first challenge he identified, states that global citizenship is problematic in two ways. Firstly, because the term is “rooted in Western liberal-democratic notions of a universal morality, the term global cannot be said to be universal by any means; it is oxymoronic” (p.33). Secondly, “by not including the perspectives and values of the whole of the world, yet making universal claims and calling for global compliance, this can be seen as simply another form of Western

[hegemony]” (p.33). These complexities and challenges must be considered while in pursuit of the desired active democratic citizenship proposed by the curriculum.

Citizenship Education

The history of citizenship education in Canada is almost as old as the nation itself. Citing Ken Osborne, Hébert and Wilkinson (2002) distinguish four periods of civic education in Canada. The first, from 1890 to the early 1920’s emphasized “Canadianization” of students as a vehicle of nation building. The second, from the 1920’s through the 1950’s, still nationalistic, prepared students for democratic life. The third period, from the 1950’s through to the 1980’s emphasized what it meant to be Canadian with an emphasis on Canadian studies and multiculturalism. The fourth period, which starts in the early 1990’s saw a retreat, or even complete abandonment of citizenship education, in favour of an economic agenda to remain competitive in a globalized world (pp. 25-26). At the turn of the 21st century, Hébert and Wilkinson’s view of citizenship education reflects the trend toward global citizenship. They saw citizenship education as “less restrictive, more ethical, more active, and more oriented to the planet than civic education was in the past” (Hébert and Wilkinson, 2002, p. 30).

However, just as the conceptions of citizenship are debated, so are the aims of citizenship education. Clark and Case (2008) elaborated on this,

If our model of citizen is someone who is well-informed about social matters, we will devote much of our time to helping students acquire a breadth of knowledge. If our focus is the ability to make ethically sound decisions about complex issues, then we will likely engage students in investigating and discussing social issues.

Perhaps our ideal citizen is someone who is committed to acting on his or her beliefs. In this case, students might undertake community enhancement projects or explore ways of living and acting in personally responsible ways. (p. 25)

Clark and Case also identify what they see as the four competing purposes of social studies education, and thus citizenship education, over the last century. They are:

- Social initiation: primary purpose is to initiate students into society by transmitting knowledge, abilities and values required to fit into and be productive members of society.
- Social reform: primary purpose is to empower students with understandings, abilities, and values to improve or transform society.
- Personal development: primary purpose is to help students develop fully as individuals and as social beings.
- Intellectual development: primary purpose is to develop students' capacity for understanding the complex world they face by introducing them to the bodies of knowledge and forms of inquiry represented in history and the other social sciences. (Clark & Case, 2008, pp. 26-27)

Clark and Case (2008) do note that it is likely, and even desirable, that teachers endorse aspects of each of the four purposes identified (p. 27).

In general, the trend in citizenship education seems to trend towards a more activist or participatory model (civic republican, not liberal), a model that displays a commitment to a pedagogy of active learning (Sears, 2004, p. 100). In discussing the pedagogical demands placed on the teaching of democratic citizenship and this active

learning, Ken Osborne, referencing A.B. Hodgetts, emphasized an approach that “exemplifies the skills and values of critical awareness, participation, involvement, and community that are central to its practice” (Osborne, 2008, p. 11). Specifically, Osborne referenced five key elements uncovered in Hodgetts national study of teaching history:

- Students used a variety of readings containing contradictory or controversial viewpoints.
 - Students, with the help of their teachers became proficient in discussion techniques.
 - Teachers played an important role, not as transmitters of information, but as guides.
 - Classes studied a smaller amount of issues in more depth rather than many issues superficially.
 - Teachers, while not neglecting subject matter, emphasized intellectual skills.
- (Osborne, 2008, pp. 11-12)

I found it somewhat reassuring that, not having read Osborne previously, much of the approach I take to the teaching of the Global Issues course reflects these elements.

What kind of citizen?

One of the biggest influences on the design of the new Global Issues curriculum is Westheimer and Kahne’s work on citizenship education. Originally found in the American Educational Research Journal in May of 2004, Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne’s article on citizenship education, *What Kind of Citizen? The Politics of Educating for Democracy*, laid out the results of their two-year study of ten programs that sought to

advance democratic education. What emerged from their interpretation of data were three conceptions of citizenship: personally responsible, participatory, and justice oriented (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 1). Table 1 best outlines the three conceptions.

According to Westheimer and Kahne, it is not enough to simply argue that democratic values are just as important as other values in the education system; but there is a need to identify what those values are (i.e. personally responsible, participatory, or justice-oriented) and realize that they each carry different levels of implications for pedagogy, curriculum evaluation and educational policy (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 21). In identifying Westheimer and Kahne's work in the curriculum documents for the Global Issues Course, Manitoba Education and Training stated that the work could "been seen as a sort of continuum of citizenship engagement" and that,

As students learn about global issues and have opportunities to engage in meaningful action, they develop a critical consciousness of the world and the status quo. They come to see where there is a need for change and to understand that, as citizens, they can make a real difference in their communities and in the world ... The more opportunities students have to reflect and act upon issues that concern them, the greater the likelihood they will move along the citizenship continuum towards a social justice orientation, and the more likely they will become agents of systemic change. (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017, p.31)

Westheimer argued however, that the visions of citizenship their research produced are each distinct and are not cumulative (p. 38).

Westheimer and Kahne's work is not without its critique. Toukan (2017) argues that by labelling types of citizens, there is a question as to the exclusivity of the three and that there is a lack of discussion surrounding the potential interrelationships between the three, as well as other dimensions of democratic citizenship (p. 196). Toukan (2017) also question whether an over-emphasis on thinking (Social Justice-Oriented) may lead to a lack of individual agency (p. 196). Toukan (2017) stated,

Because Westheimer does not explicitly define what his notions of "democracy" or "democratic values" are, we are left to infer that his conception of democratic citizenship is informed by those characteristics and actions of the "social justice-oriented citizen" described in his schema. A democratic citizen in this sense is thus identified primarily through political and structural channels rather than individual or communal agency, on critical social and policy analysis rather than collective organization and personal ethics. (p. 196)

Davies (2017) displays many of the same concerns as Toukan,

At times labels are used in a broad-brush manner. There are difficult philosophical challenges about the nature of the citizen models he offers. There are many other ways of thinking about things in general and within each strand of citizenship there are complex debates that are not really pursued here in any depth. (p. 81)

To add to the critique, I believe that it is also important to understand, while thinking critically about Westheimer and Kahne's work, that their work on citizenship is exclusively based in a western, democratic tradition with an emphasis on civic

republicanism. Missing from this work are many other ways of thinking about democratic citizenship that are not based in a Western-based academic tradition. One notable example that would be important to Canadian educators would be Indigenous perspectives on democracy and citizenship.

Table 1. Kinds of Citizens

Kinds of Citizens			
	<i>Personally Responsible Citizen</i>	<i>Participatory Citizen</i>	<i>Social Justice Oriented Citizen</i>
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts responsibly in the community • Works and pays taxes • Picks up litter, recycles, and gives blood • Helps those in need, lends a hand during times of crisis • Obeys laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active member of community organizations and/or improvement efforts • Organizes community efforts to care for those in need, promote economic development, or to clean up environment • Knows how government agencies work • Knows strategies for accomplishing collective tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically assesses social, political, and economic structures • Explores strategies for change that address root causes problems • Knows about social movements and how to effect systemic change • Seeks out and addresses areas of injustice
Sample Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes food to a food drive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps organize a food drive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explores why people are hungry and acts to solve root causes.
Core Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must have good character; they must be honest, responsible, and law-abiding members of the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must actively participate and take leadership positions within established systems and community structures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must question and change established systems and structures when they reproduce patterns of injustice over time.

Source: Westheimer, J., & Kahne, J. (2004). What kind of citizen? The politics of educating for democracy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 41 (2), 237-269.

Core Concept: Sustainability

Credited as helping launch the environmental movement, Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" brought to the forefront the impact humans were having on the planet. Carson (1962) wrote,

The most alarming of all man's assaults upon the environment is the contamination of air, earth, rivers, and sea with dangerous and even lethal materials. This pollution is for the most part irrecoverable; the chain of evil it initiates not only in the world that must support life but in living tissues is for the most part irreversible. (p. 6)

Since then, issues surrounding the use, and abuse, of the environment have become more and more commonplace in the public sphere. Terms such as acid rain, ozone layer depletion, climate change, and global warming have all become a part of a new vocabulary of both concern and derision. Unfortunately, not much seems to have changed since Carson's warning in 1962. Over thirty years later, Fritjof Capra, Director of the Center for Ecoliteracy and a Ph.D. in theoretical physics, issued another warning, almost *verbatim*, "As the century draws to a close, environmental concerns have become of paramount importance. We are faced with a whole series of global problems that are harming the biosphere and human life in alarming ways that may soon become irreversible" (Capra, 1996, p. 3).

As concern for the state of our planet increased, government leaders around the world began to take notice. In particular, the United Nations (UN) has been used as a vehicle through which environmental degradation has been brought to the attention of the

international community. Numerous UN conferences have addressed the environment including, the UN Conference on the Human Environment (1972), the UN Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) – the “Earth Summit” (1992), the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002), and the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (2012). These negotiations have led to the signing of various international agreements promising to help address environmental degradation such as the Kyoto Protocol (1992), the Copenhagen Agreement (2009), and the Paris Agreement (2016).

Sustainable Development

Most notably, however, in 1987 the UN released the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) entitled “Our Common Future”, also known as the Brundtland Report. In the report, commission president, Gro Harlem Brundtland, identified that the environment and development are inseparable. Relatedly, the report went on to introduce the concept of “sustainable development”. This affirmed that development was meant “to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p.43). This definition is reflected in the Government of Manitoba’s 2000 document “Education for a Sustainable Future: A Resource for Curriculum Developers, Teachers, and Administrators” in which the province defines sustainable development as

A guiding precept, (in which) one considers simultaneously the positive and negative impacts of any decision on human health and well-being, the environment, and the economy. The purpose of this is to integrate and balance our needs, so that an equitable quality of life for all can be achieved and sustained in

the future, for seven generations to come. (Manitoba Education and Training, 2000, p. 5)

Sustainability

Though the term “sustainable development” may not have come into common use until the Brundtland report, the term sustainability, used in the context of responding to environmental challenges, first appeared in the early 1980’s. Its use is credited to Lester Brown (Capra, 2002, p. 229) who, in 1981, wrote about civilization being unsustainable - threatened as a result of soil erosion, deterioration of biological systems, and rapid depletion of oil reserves (Brown, p.6). Brown (1981) believed that,

Creating a sustainable society [would] require fundamental economic and social changes, a wholesale alteration of economic priorities and population policies.

The magnitude of these changes is scarcely in question. Every facet of human existence – diet, employment, leisure, values, politics, and habits – will be touched. (p. 8)

The Brundtland report also referenced sustainability many times in regards to resource development, in particular when it addressed high-quality living standards that, “are sustainable only if consumption standards everywhere have regard for long-term sustainability” (WCED, 1987, p.44). Similarly, Manitoba Education’s 2000 document, “Education for a Sustainable Future: A Resource for Curriculum Developers, Teachers, and Administrators” outlined sustainability as referring to “the conservation, protection, and regeneration of resources over an indefinite period of time. Central to sustainability is

the idea that today's decisions affect the future of human health and well-being, the environment, and the economy" (Manitoba Education and Training, 2000, p. 5).

Though the relationship between the terms "sustainable development" and "sustainability" appears to be quite close, there is a difference that is addressed by McKeown (2013),

Sustainability is both an idealistic end point of the sustainable development process as well as a paradigm for thinking about the future in which environmental, social, and economic interests and concerns are balanced. The sustainability paradigm is a large shift from the previous economic paradigm in which economic growth was accompanied by casualties in the environment (e.g., pollution) and social realms (e.g., damage to human health), and these casualties were both expected and accepted. (p. 6)

More simply put, sustainability can be thought of as a long-term goal of a world we would like to see, whereas sustainable development can be seen as a way of getting there (UNESCO, n.d. par. 3).

Although interpretations of "sustainable development" or "sustainability" may differ slightly, a common thread through all interpretations is that they do not solely apply to the physical environment. The WCED (1987) emphasized that,

Development involves a progressive transformation of economy and society. A development path that is sustainable in a physical sense could theoretically be pursued even in a rigid social and political setting. But physical sustainability cannot be secured unless development policies pay attention to such

considerations as changes in access to resources and in the distribution of costs and benefits. Even the narrow notion of physical sustainability implies a concern for social equity between generations, a concern that must logically be extended to equity within each generation. (p. 43)

Similarly, McKeown and Nolet (2013) identified that,

Sustainability is far more than being green; it carries with it the concept of equity between individuals and groups as well as between generations. Sustainability is based on a host of values associated with human dignity and human rights. It also incorporates economic justice and poverty reduction. (p. 6)

This view is also held by the United Nations Educational Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), who defined four intertwined dimensions of sustainable development: society, the environment, culture and the economy (n.d. par. 2).

As a result of these common threads, it appears that the terms “sustainability” and “sustainable development” have become often interchangeable. Babiuk, Falkenberg et al. (2010) and the curriculum documents of the Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability Course (2017) appear to use the two terms to describe essentially the same thing. Babiuk, Falkenberg et al. often followed up the use of one of the terms with the other in parenthesis, and the Global Issues documents use the two terms simultaneously:

There are a variety of models and approaches to sustainable development, many of which are linked to political beliefs or ideologies. However, the generally accepted international view of sustainability is based upon the explicit recognition of the global interdependence of three fundamental components: environmental

protection, economic well-being, and social justice. Education for a sustainable future, then, is education that empowers citizens to make actions and decisions that support continued quality of life for all human beings, now and in the future. (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017, p. 14)

Babiuk, Falkenberg, et al. (2010), do make note that the term sustainable development is problematic in developed countries because, “the connotation of the phrase links it for us to the kind of economic and social development that we see as being in conflict with core principles of living sustainably” (p. 4). Whereas they see the term sustainable development being appropriate to developing countries, because of the need of those countries to develop, they offer that the term sustainable re-development or sustainable un-development might be more appropriate for developed countries as “even current economic and social living practices in developed countries cannot be sustained considering (a) the current over-size ecological footprint of developed countries and (b) the moral imperative of sharing wealth with our fellow humans in developing countries” (Babiuk, Falkenberg, et al., 2010, p. 4).

Ecological Literacy

Although it is clear that any approach to sustainability or sustainable development must incorporate more than just the environment, scholars such as Capra and Goleman suggest that in order to build more sustainable communities, we must become ecologically literate or develop an ecological intelligence. Capra (2002) defined this literacy as,

... to understand the principles of organization, common to all living systems, that ecosystems have evolved to sustain the web of life ... this systemic understanding of life allows us to formulate a set of principles of organization that may be identified as the basic principles of ecology and used as guidelines for building sustainable human communities. (p. 230)

Capra's definition of ecological literacy is reflected in Goleman's concept of ecological literacy. Goleman (2009) stated that ecological literacy is

... our ability to adapt to our ecological niche. Ecological refers to an understanding of organisms and their ecosystems, and intelligence connotes the capacity to learn from experience and deal effectively with our environment. Ecological intelligence lets us apply what we learn about how human activity impinges on ecosystems so as to do less harm and once again to live sustainably in our nice – these days the entire planet. (p. 43)

Goleman et al. (2012) identified five practices that teachers should use to nurture students to become ecoliterate:

Developing empathy for all forms of life – shifting students' mindsets from being the dominant species to being part of a web of life

Embracing sustainability as a community practice – having students learn about how other living things are interdependent and inspiring them to engage in that type of interconnectedness in their communities

- Making the invisible visible – revealing to students the far-reaching impacts of human behavior

- Anticipating unintended consequences – by engaging in systems thinking students can begin to predict potential consequences of human behavior while accepting that we cannot foresee all cause-and-effect associations
- Understanding how nature sustains life – having students examine the Earth’s processes to learn strategies applicable to designing human endeavors. (pp. 10-11)

In the development of resources for the Global Issues course, the curriculum developers referenced the work by Capra (2002) and Goleman (2009). The curriculum developers define eco-literacy as “a way of thinking about the world in terms of its interdependent natural and human systems, including a consideration of the consequences of human actions and interactions within the natural context” (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017, p.15). They go on to list 5 core aspects of ecological literacy that include:

- Principles of living systems
- Design inspired by nature
- Systems thinking
- Ecological literacy and the transition to sustainability
- Collaboration, community building, and citizenship.

(Manitoba Education and Training, 2017, p.15)

Developing this literacy or intelligence is perhaps more difficult than it seems.

The UNCED’s 1987 plan of action from the Rio Earth Summit, entitled Agenda 21 noted that,

There is still a considerable lack of awareness of the interrelated nature of all human activities and the environment, due to inaccurate or insufficient

information...there is a need to increase public sensitivity to environment and development problems and involvement in their solutions and foster a sense of personal environmental responsibility and greater motivation and commitment towards sustainable development. (p. 267)

Although environmental issues may be more consistently at the forefront, the problem remains that many of us have little to no understanding of how our everyday actions threaten the well-being of our planet (Goleman, Bennett, & Barlow, 2012, p. 4).

Thus, we come to the need for sustainability education. In Agenda 21, the UNCED spoke passionately for the need of education that prioritized sustainability stating,

Education, including formal education, public awareness and training, should be recognized as a process by which human beings and societies can reach their fullest potential. Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environment and development issues...To be effective, environment and development education should deal with the dynamics of both the physical/biological and socio-economic environment and human (which may include spiritual) development, should be integrated in all disciplines, and should employ formal and non-formal methods and effective means of communication. (UNCED, 1992, p. 264)

Throughout the past 2 decades, the province of Manitoba's ministry responsible for education has seen a significant impetus placed on developing eco-literacy by engraining education for sustainable development (ESD) into its vision and mandates. In 2004, in

correspondence with the United Nation's declaration of the decade of education for sustainable development (2005-2014), the Department declared ESD as a top priority and laid out a 4-year action plan. In 2009, it embedded ESD into its mandate which, to this day is still,

to ensure that all Manitoba's children and youth have access to an array of educational opportunities such that every learner experiences success through relevant, engaging and high quality education that prepares them for lifelong learning and citizenship in a democratic, socially just and sustainable society.

(Manitoba Education and Training, n.d.)

In 2017 Manitoba Education and Training lists sustainability as a priority area alongside citizenship and wellbeing:

Citizenship, Sustainability and Wellbeing – are essential to ensure that all students are prepared in their role as global citizens who are sensitive to and have respect for other cultures, and are prepared for active involvement in addressing issues of economic, social-cultural, and environmental sustainability. The cognitive, emotional, social and physical (and for some, spiritual) domains of wellbeing must be supported to meet the conditions needed in order for students to learn, grow and develop a positive sense of self. (Manitoba Education and Training, n.d.)

This seems to reflect Babiuk, Falkenberg et al. (2010) who saw sustainability not as an earth problem, but as a human values problem as “sustainability is about sustaining

something, and what that ‘something’ is (at least in its major part) a matter of human choice based on values” (p. 9). They elaborate that,

The problem of sustainability, then, is the problem of creating and sustaining the conditions for a particular way of human living for the current generation and future generations. Thus, the problem of sustainability is a human, value, and responsibility problem (responsibility toward future generations). (p. 9)

By defining sustainability as a value, we may look at both core concepts of the Global Issues course, citizenship and sustainability, as congruent and needing to be approached hand in hand. In order to become better citizens, we must understand that learning to live more sustainably figures as a crucial component to achieving that goal.

Pedagogical Approach to the Course

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (1970/2012) wrote, “... apart from inquiry, apart from praxis individuals cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world and with each other” (p. 72). Freire’s thinking succinctly reflects the approach taken by the designers of the Global Issues curriculum who chose both inquiry and praxis as key components of its pedagogical approach.

Inquiry Based Learning

The Global Issues curriculum documents describe inquiry as,
... a complex process that grows out of constructivist pedagogy. It begins with the selection of a topic and the design of powerful questions that guide students as

they select resources, gather and interpret information, build relevant knowledge and understanding, and share their findings and conclusions. Inquiry relies upon critical and divergent thinking. During the inquiry process, the role of a teacher shifts from covering content to becoming a guide and facilitator. Students are given the opportunity to generate their own questions, to set learning goals, to acquire and share enduring understandings, and to develop the decision-making skills that are part of active citizenship. (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017, p. 21)

Other provinces offer definitions of inquiry learning similar to that of Manitoba Education and Training. In each case, there are several consistent characteristics. These characteristics include learning that is student-centred, investigation, building understandings/problem solving, and, most importantly, the student development of powerful questions to guide the inquiry (Alberta Education, 2004, Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011).

Similarly, and of special note to the Global Issues curriculum, is also the definition of inquiry learning provided by Learning for Sustainable Futures (LSF), whose goal of integrating the concepts and principles of sustainable development into school curricula sees itself in the Global Issues curriculum. In fact, the Manitoba Education and Training definition of inquiry is very similar to the one provided by LSF:

Inquiry is an approach to learning that is directed by questions, problems, a hypothesis or a challenge that individuals and groups of learners work together to address. At its best the learning is driven by student-generated questions.

Students, assisted by the teacher, clarify the questions being asked and determine how to answer them. As knowledge is pursued, unplanned but important learning territory is often uncovered. (Kozak & Elliott, 2014)

The role played by the development of significant questions in inquiry-based learning cannot be overstated. As Neil Postman (1979) said, “all our knowledge results from questions, which is another way of saying that question-asking is our most important intellectual tool” (p. 154). Morgan and Saxton (2006) also underlined this importance:

...to see the issues clearly; to cut away the rhetoric and seductions of short-term advantages and to understand the implications; to give expression to concern through constructive action; and to be able to mediate individual concerns within the collective vision. These responsibilities depend upon the skill of every member of society to ask questions...the ability and the courage to ask such questions lie at the core of the democratic process. (p. 9)

Westheimer (2015) went so far to say that one of the characteristics most essential in distinguishing schools in a democracy, compared to those in totalitarian regimes, is that schools must teach students how to ask challenging questions that may, at times, question tradition (p. 12).

The significance placed on question making has been explored more frequently in the last two decades. In particular, Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe’s educational framework, Understanding by Design (UBD), has discussed at length the incorporation of *essential questions* into curriculum design and instruction. The UBD framework is “an

approach to curriculum and instruction designed to engage students in inquiry, promote transfer of learning, provide a conceptual framework for helping students make sense of discrete facts and skills, and uncover the big ideas of content” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 4). In UBD, developing essential questions is an important way of staying focused on the big ideas and making it clear to students that “passive learning is a no-no in the classroom; that thinking is required, not optional” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2013, p. 17). Morgan and Saxton (2006) concur that “effective learning takes place when the students are vigorous participants in what’s going on” and that the students,

... are not only taking in, absorbing, and being acted upon, but working energetically, acting upon their initiatives, acting upon others (peers and teacher), asking questions, and understanding that they have the right (and the responsibility) to contribute their ideas, experiences, and feelings about the content and procedures of the lesson. (p. 17)

In order for teaching and learning to be successful, teachers must invite and sustain this active participation (Morgan & Saxton, 2006, p. 17).

Although there are various interpretations for what makes a good question, Wiggins and McTighe (2005) list six aspects. They are:

- Cause genuine and relevant inquiry into the big ideas and core content.
- Provoke deep thought, lively discussion, sustained inquiry, and new understanding as well as more questions.
- Require students to consider alternatives, weigh evidence, support their ideas, and justify their answers.

- Stimulate vital, ongoing rethinking of big ideas, assumptions, prior lessons.
- Spark meaningful connections with prior learning and personal experiences.
- Naturally recur, creating opportunities for transfer to other situations and subjects.

(p. 110)

Further, Wiggins and McTighe (2013) explained the connection that exists between inquiry learning and essential questions,

Successful inquiry leads us to “see” and “grasp” and “make sense” of things that were initially puzzling, murky, or garmented; thus questioning is meant to culminate in new and more revealing meaning. However, these new meanings are rarely final. Indeed, our goal is for students to become active, probing, and determined inquirers, continually considering important questions and possible meanings. (p. 17)

In the literature surrounding inquiry-based pedagogy, several other pedagogical approaches reflect many of the same characteristics. These methods may include, problem-based learning, project-based learning, resource-based learning or simply research (Babiuk, Falkenberg, & al., 2010, p. 58). There are, however, subtle differences such as those expressed by Woolfolk (2014) where as inquiry learning involves testing conclusions and problem-based learning might not necessarily have correct answers (p. 406). Interestingly, given the scope of many of the areas of inquiry confronted in the Global Issues course, students may find it difficult to test their specific conclusions, but perhaps this highlights how subtle the differences in pedagogy can be.

Though formal inquiry-based learning has become more commonplace throughout education in the late twentieth century, one may argue that its roots date back as far as Ancient Greece and the great philosopher Socrates whose aggressive means of questioning still finds a place in today's classrooms. However, as noted by the curriculum authors, it is largely through constructivist thinkers like Piaget, Vigotsky, and Dewey that this pedagogical approach came to the fore. Freire's social reconstructionist views are also reflected in the inquiry-based approach.

Much of what is intended through the use of inquiry-based learning in the Global Issues curriculum can be traced back to John Dewey's early 20th century work on thinking, which is also considered being in the constructivist vein (Howe & Berve, 2000, p. 30). Dewey advocated for a *reflective thinking*, "the kind of thinking that consists in turning a subject over in the mind and giving it serious and consecutive consideration" (Dewey, 1933, p. 3). This thinking, Dewey argued, becomes a chain of ideas that direct the thinker to a conclusion (Dewey, 1933, pp. 4-5). In fact, Dewey would later go on to write that thinking is in itself "a process of inquiry" and that "thinking is the method of an educative experience" (Dewey, 1916/2009, p. 116). Dewey described the essentials of this method, a method that has become synonymous with scientific methodology, as such:

They are first that the pupil have a genuine situation of experience – that there be a continuous activity in which he is interested for its own sake; secondly, that a genuine problem develop within this situation as a stimulus to thought; third, that he possess the information and make the observations needed to deal with it;

fourth, that suggested solutions occur to him which he shall be responsible for developing in an orderly way; fifth, that he have opportunity and occasion to test his ideas by application, to make their meaning clear and to discover for himself their validity. (Dewey, 1916/2009, p. 128)

In many ways, the manner in which Dewey describes this method parallels the approach taken towards inquiry in the Global Issues classroom.¹¹

Dewey's methods are in line with other constructivist thinkers such as Piaget and Vygotsky. In general, constructivists are "concerned with how individuals learn [and] treat the individual as actively involved in the process of thinking and learning" (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2013, p. 110). This approach differs from a more traditionalist view of teaching and learning in that "the learner is the key player; learners participate in generating meaning or understanding. The learner cannot passively accept information by mimicking others' wording or conclusions. Rather, the learner must internalize and reshape or transform the information" (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2013, p. 110).

Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky's work on cognitive development can help explain the importance and potential benefits of an inquiry-based pedagogical approach. Though both shared some common beliefs about cognitive development, there were also areas in which they disagreed. Piaget believed that all human species inherit two basic tendencies, organization and adaptation (Woolfolk, 2014). According to Piaget, human beings are born with a tendency to want to organize their thinking processes into psychological

¹¹ Dewey's beliefs, and relatedly the inquiry component of the Global Issues curriculum, also reflect pragmatist philosophy. Pragmatists believe that teaching is more exploratory than explanatory and should focus on critical thinking – teaching the learner how to think, not what to think (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2013, p. 32).

structures that he labeled schemes. These schemes come from adapting to our environments. In the process of adaptation, humans assimilate and accommodate new information into their schemes. Assimilation occurs when we take new information and incorporate it into our pre-existing schemas, or use our existing schemas to make sense of the new information, while accommodation happens when we receive new information and must adjust those pre-existing schemas (Santrock, 2011, Woolfolk, 2014).

Piaget also believed that changes in thinking take place through a process of equilibration, that is through finding a balance through organizing, assimilating, and accommodating (Santrock, 2011, Woolfolk, 2014). When we are presented with new information and we don't find equilibration, disequilibrium exists and we are motivated to keep working towards an understanding through this disequilibrium (Santrock, 2011, Woolfolk, 2014). Piaget saw this disequilibrium taking place through interactions between peers of the same level.

In contrast, Vygotsky argued that cognitive development took place through interactions with people more advanced in their thinking such as teachers or parents (Woolfolk, 2014, p. 64). This is what Vygotsky termed the *zone of proximal development*. In this zone, students are challenged by tasks that may prove to be too difficult to accomplish on their own, but may be attainable with guidance and assistance from older, and more experienced, children and adults (Santrock, 2011, Woolfolk, 2014). Teachers can often accomplish this through process of scaffolding. In other words, teachers will adjust their level of support for a student to push the student's learning.

Both Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories should be considered while using an inquiry-based approach in the Global Issues classroom. With Piaget, teachers should allow opportunity for dialogue and collaboration between peers while at the same time, as a nod to Vygotsky, the teacher should play a role in helping guide the student in their learning.

It must also be recognized that Piaget's identification of four stages of cognitive development should be acknowledged in the use of an inquiry-based approach to the Global Issues course. As a grade 12 course, most students would generally find themselves in Piaget's fourth and final stage of development, the *formal operational stage*. In this stage, students are able to learn in a more abstract and idealistic manner and are able to propose hypotheses and systematically reach conclusions (Santrock, 2011, p. 47).

In general, Piaget believed that "individuals construct their own understanding; [that] learning is a constructive process" (Woolfolk, 2014, p. 71). Specifically, while discussing the definition of knowledge, Piaget (1964) stated,

Knowledge is not a copy of reality. To know an object, to know an event, is not simply to look at it and make a mental copy, or image, of it. To know an object is to act on it. To know is to modify, to transform the object, and to understand the process of this transformation, and as a consequence to understand the way the object is constructed (p. 8).

Piaget (1970) described this approach as an active method "which leads to placing an essential share of importance upon the activities of the student himself" (p. 67). Piaget's

views are similar to those expressed by Dewey (1938/1997) when describing the difference between traditional and new educational practices,

To imposition from above is opposed expression and cultivation of individuality; to external discipline is opposed free activity; to learning from texts and teachers, learning through experience; to acquisition of isolated skills and techniques by drill, is opposed acquisition of them as means of attaining ends which make direct vital appeal; to preparation for a more or less remote future is opposed making the most of the opportunities of present life; to static aims and materials is opposed acquaintance with a changing world. (pp. 19-20)

Dewey's description of this "new" approach exemplifies what is meant by a constructivist approach to teaching. Fosnot (2005) strikingly contrasted the constructivist approach to the more traditional academic approach to instruction,

Teachers who base their practice on constructivism reject the notions that meaning can be passed on to learners via symbols and transmission, that learners can incorporate exact copies of teachers' understanding for their own use, that whole concepts can be broken into discrete subskills, and that concepts can be taught out of context. In contrast, a constructivist view of learning suggests an approach to teaching that gives learners the opportunity for concrete, contextually meaningful experience through which they can search for patterns; raise questions; and model, interpret, and defend their strategies and ideas. The classroom in this model is seen as a mini-society, a community of learners engaged in activity, discourse, interpretation, justification and reflection. The

traditional hierarchy of teacher as the autocratic knower, and learners as the unknowing, controlled subject studying and practicing what the teacher knows begins to dissipate as teachers assume more of a facilitator's role and learners take on more ownership of the ideas. Indeed, autonomy, mutual reciprocity of social relations, and empowerment become the goals. (p. ix)

I find that Fosnot's description remarkably parallels the design of the Global Issues curriculum, as well as my own approach to the way I have been running my course. Gradually, over the course of the semester, students are given more and more responsibility and ownership over their education.

Fosnot's description, and thus the way much of my class is structured, allies itself directly with Freire's criticism of the "banking concept" of education and Piaget's (1970) critique, "... if the aim of intellectual training is to form the intelligence rather than to stock the memory, and to produce intellectual explorers rather than mere erudition, then traditional education is manifestly guilty of a grave deficiency" (p. 51). More specifically, Fosnot's views on the dissolution of the traditional hierarchy found between teacher and student in many classrooms is in itself a reflection of Freire who stated that, "Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students (Freire, 1970/2012, p. 72). Morgan and Saxton (2006) also agreed that limiting the teacher to a transmitter of ideas and the students to receivers of those ideas limits the power of learning (p. 17). The curriculum authors also reflect this point of view when

they state that, “the role of a teacher shifts from covering content to becoming a guide and facilitator” (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017, p. 21).

Taking Action – Praxis

The capstone moment for the Global Issues course is the completion of a student Take Action Project (TAP). While incorporating inquiry learning, students then must take action to create change in the world around them; in other words, students are expected to undertake *praxis*. As previously mentioned, the term *praxis* is most recently most associated with Paulo Freire’s work, and was defined by him as thoughtful reflection and action to transform the world (Freire, 1970/2012, p. 87). However, the idea of praxis dates back to the ancient Greeks, and to Aristotle in particular. Aristotle, in differentiating between different types of knowledge, classified them into theoretical, productive, and practical. Carr and Kemis (1986) described these classifications as such,

...the purpose of a theoretical discipline is the pursuit of truth through contemplation; its *telos* [purpose] is the obtainment of knowledge for its own sake. The purpose of the productive sciences is to make something; their *telos* is the production of some artifact. The practical disciplines are those sciences that deal with the ethical and political life; their *telos* is practical wisdom and knowledge. (p. 32)

Praxis, as a practical discipline, “remakes the conditions of informed action and constantly reviews action and the knowledge which informs it. *Praxis* is always guided by a moral disposition to act truly and justly, called by the Greeks *phronesis*” (Carr &

Kemmis, 1986, p. 33). While speaking about practical wisdom, Aristotle (2009) emphasized this connection to moral action,

Now it is thought to be a mark of a man of practical wisdom to be able to deliberate well about what is good and expedient for himself, not in some particular respect, e.g. about what sorts of thing conduce to health or to strength, but about what sorts of thing conduce to the good life in general...Practical wisdom, then, must be a reasoned and true state of capacity to act with regards to human good. (pp.105-106)

The curriculum designers of the Global Issues course elaborated on what this meant,

In the context of this Grade 12 Global Issues course, *praxis* engages students in work with their peers in order to apply their learning and contribute to a more equitable and sustainable planet in which quality of life is improved for all.

Moving from critical consciousness to *praxis* ... Take Action shifts learning from the theoretical to the experiential by providing an opportunity for students to engage in practical, community-based projects. The goal is to move students from awareness through questioning, inquiry, and dialogue to critical consciousness and, ultimately, to praxis – engagement in informed reflective action for positive change. (Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, 2017, p. 30)

It is worth noting Freire's words of caution surrounding the completion of *praxis*. Freire (1970/2012) believed that in order to have true transformation, *praxis* must include both reflection and action. Reflection without action would simply result in verbalism, while action without reflection would result in activism (pp. 87-88). This caution is found in

Westheimer's (2015) research into school programs that fostered citizenship that found that those programs that emphasized justice-oriented citizenship did not necessarily foster participation, while those that promoted action and participation did not necessarily foster critical analysis of the issues (p. 67).

Others have analyzed Freire's conception of *praxis* including Grundy (1987) who synthesized Freire's praxis into 5 key points:

- The constitutive elements of praxis are action and reflection.
- Praxis takes place in the real, not an imaginary or hypothetical world.
- The reality in which praxis takes place is the world of interaction: the social or the cultural world.
- The world of praxis is the constructed, not the natural world.
- Praxis assumes a process of meaning-making, but it is recognized that meaning is socially constructed, not absolute. (pp. 104-105)

The definition of *praxis* by Carr and Kemmis (1986) further details the expectations of the process,

In *praxis*, thought and action (or theory and practice), are dialectically related.

They are to be understood as mutually constitutive, as in a process of interaction which is a continual reconstruction of thought and action in the living historical process which evidences itself in every real social situation. Neither thought nor action is pre-eminent...In *praxis*, the ideas which guide action are just as just as subject to change as action is; the only fixed element is *phronesis*, the disposition to act truly and rightly. (p. 34)

In this way, I have found it to be critical that students in the Global Issues course must have been at least introduced to inquiry learning before undertaking their TAP. I can think of many projects in which the action may have been successful, but not as a result of the lack of thoughtful reflection. This is what Freire would define as activism. For that matter, there have also been projects where the thoughtful reflection is present, but a lack of action on that reflection lead to a project that Freire would term verbalism.

The review of literature on the key concepts and pedagogical approaches to the course were essential in helping me come to a better understanding of the stories of experiences of former students of mine in the Global Issues classroom. However, there is also an implication for my own practice, as a better, more thorough understanding of those concepts and approaches has already lead to changes in my approach to instruction.

Chapter 3 - Study Design

Introduction

As outlined in Chapter One, the implementation of the new Global Issues curriculum was transformative to my practice. To me, the new curriculum was invigorating; I no longer had to worry about a curriculum over twenty years old. The new curriculum allowed me to concentrate on topics that were current, topics that lead the news and seemed much more consequential than being required to teach the quality of life in the USSR, as was outlined in the old curriculum. Specific learning outcomes found in the old curriculum were replaced by enduring understandings that allowed my students choice in their learning. The new course also allowed students to bring in their prior knowledge and to build on those previous understandings.

As they forged this new path with me, I found myself having the most significant experiences of my career. I looked forward to the class each day, and I found myself disappointed that 60 minutes had passed so quickly. I therefore began to wonder if my students were experiencing the same feelings. Were they as engaged as I was in this new curriculum? Were they experiencing the same awakening in their learning that I was feeling in my teaching? Were we both engaged in thoughtful reflection?

Although I had many questions about my students' experiences with my teaching of Global Issues, these questions also influenced me to reflect on my own practice. Due in part to my participation in the GTIP, I decided to enroll in an action research methodology course for the required second research course in my Master's program. There I was exposed to the many benefits of action research, but also many of the

difficulties that teachers face when completing formal action research for academia. Coupled with exposure to traditional quantitative and qualitative methods of research in the other required research course, I then realized I had some challenging decisions to make about which approach I was to take to my own research and how to best explore my questions about the impact of my teaching of the new curriculum.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research, defined by John Creswell (2014), is “... an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.” (p. 4) Denzin & Lincoln (2005) echoed this offering that qualitative research,

... is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 3)

In fact, Lichtman (2006) and McMillan (2004) have stressed the strong relationship that exists between qualitative research and the study of human experience. My own interest in conducting research with my former students on their experience is an example of how many qualitative researchers think. According to Marshall & Rossman (2006) qualitative

researchers “... are intrigued by the complexity of social interactions expressed in daily life and by the meanings that the participants themselves attribute to these interactions” (p. 2). This was exactly my goal – to study how my interaction with these former students through the Global Issues curriculum influenced them as citizens in their world.

Scholars have identified innumerable different methods of qualitative research (Jacob, 1987, Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, Creswell, 2007), however, after analyzing these different approaches, and in order to best achieve the goals of my research study – the study of students’ experiences and how I can improve my own practice, I decided to take a hybrid approach, which included phenomenological research, narrative inquiry and action research.

A Hybrid Approach

In reflecting on the research methodology for my study, it occurred to me that the research question I was trying to answer does not fall into just one way of addressing the question. Inspired by my time in GTIP and the action research course, I understood that this research will surely have an effect on my own practice. However, I was also most interested in the impact my teaching had on my former students’ experience in the course and how it continues to affect them presently. Therefore, my research resides in the qualitative research area, including elements of phenomenology, narrative inquiry, and action research.

In fact, the link between qualitative research and action research is identified by Litchman (2006) who defined action research as “A type of qualitative research that focuses on a solution to a specific local problem” (p. 217). In this case I take issue with

the use of the word “problem” and suggest that instead I am focusing on my teaching and its impact. This would echo McMillan’s (2004) definition of action research that states that the goal of action research is not necessarily only to solve a problem but also to improve practice.

Given this, it is important to emphasize that qualitative research can be viewed as an umbrella term that encompasses many different methodologies (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, Marshall & Rossman, 2006). In fact, Creswell (2007) spoke metaphorically of qualitative research as “... an intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colors, different textures, and various blends of material” (p. 35) and stated that qualitative researchers have a “baffling number of choices of approaches” (p.7).

This mixing of methodology, and the resulting use of the term *bricoleur*, is explored by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) who stated that a qualitative researcher “...may be seen as a *bricoleur*, as a maker of quilts, or, as in filmmaking, a person who assembles images into montages” (p.4). Their concept of *bricoleur* was influenced by Lévi-Strauss (1966) who identified a *bricoleur* as someone who is “... a Jack of all trades” and as someone who is “... capable of performing a large number of diverse tasks” (p.17). Lévi-Strauss’ concept was elaborated on by Howard Becker, who defined the *bricoleur* as someone who will use “... the aesthetic and material tools of his or her craft, deploying whatever strategies, methods, and empirical materials are at hand” (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 4). Succinctly, Kincheloe, (2001) summarized that at the core of *bricolage* is interdisciplinarity, a belief in the limitation of a single method of study and the “... necessity of new forms of rigor in the research process” (p. 681). He also

perceived that, not only was *bricolage* concerned about the need for multiple methods of inquiry, but also the “diverse theoretical and philosophical notions of the various elements encountered in the research act” (p. 681). By utilizing multiple methodologies and becoming a *bricoleur*, I hoped to produce research that genuinely reflected the impact of my teaching on student learning and also challenged me to improve professionally.

With this goal in mind, it became evident why choosing a qualitative approach over a quantitative method is critical. While a quantitative study could be used to track the marks of students in my class to determine how well they did, and the use of pre-test/post-tests in regards to attitudes towards citizenship and sustainability may provide a more numerical interpretation of their learning and change of attitude in Global Issues, it would not permit me to engage former students in their lived experiences in the course and about changes that it has made in their lives. Attempting to use numbers to determine the impact of issues of citizenship and sustainability would be problematic. As already discussed, citizenship and sustainability are complex ideas with varied interpretations and qualifications. Qualitative research, and in particular research using narrative inquiry, allowed students to share their lived experience during and after participation in my Global Issues class, and provided me with the richest data to formulate my conclusions. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe this narrative approach as “... more of a sense of continual reformulation of an inquiry than it does a sense of problem definition and solution” (p. 124).

Phenomenology

The study of human experience is a foundation of phenomenology; a methodology defined by van Manen (1990) as the study of lived experience or the lifeworld. van Manen stated that “Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences” (1990, p. 9) and defined this lived experience as “... experience-as-we-live-through-it in our actions, our relations, and situations” (van Manen, 2007, p. 16). He illustrates this poetically:

... phenomenology is also a project that is driven by fascination: being swept up in a spell of wonder, a fascination with meaning ... the phenomenologist directs the gaze toward the regions where meaning originates, wells up, percolates through the porous membranes of past sedimentations—and then infuses us, permeates us, infects us, touches us, stirs us, exercises a formative affect. (van Manen, 2007, p. 12)

Therefore, the goal of phenomenological research should be to “... construct an animating, evocative description (text) of human actions, behaviors, intentions, and experiences as we meet them in the lifeworld” (van Manen, 1990, p. 19) or more simply ask the question, “what is it like to have a certain experience” (van Manen, 1990, p. 45). These views are echoed by Lichtman (2006) who stated that phenomenology “... looks at the lived experiences of those who have experienced a certain phenomenon.” (p. 70)

It is generally accepted that the roots of phenomenology can be traced to Edmund Husserl (Lichtman, 2006, p. 69). Husserl (1931) saw phenomenology as being “... established not as a science of facts, but as a science of essential Being; a science which

aims exclusively at establishing ‘knowledge of essences’” (p. 44). Merleau-Ponty (1962) expanded on this stating that, “It [phenomenology] tries to give a direct description of our experience as it is, without taking account of its psychological origin and the causal explanations which the scientist, the historian or the sociologist may be able to provide” (p. vii).

Considering the above, a phenomenological approach to this qualitative study appeared to align best with my goal of researching the experiences of former students in my Global Issues classroom. What was their experience? How did their participation in my class make them feel, think, act? How had these experiences changed their current lives?

Narrative Inquiry

Just as my own story best tells my experience with the Global Issues course, the experience of my former students in my class was best obtained by hearing their stories. Commenting on the power of stories, Witherell and Noddings (1991) state,

Stories and narrative, whether personal or fictional, provide meaning and belonging in our lives. They attach us to others and to our own histories by providing a tapestry rich with threads of time, place, character, and even advice on what we might do with our lives. The story fabric offers us images, myths, and metaphors that are morally resonant and contribute both to our knowing and our being known. (p. 1)

As such, though my research was partially grounded in phenomenology, parallel to this is a narrative approach. This approach is defined by Chase (2005) as “... a subtype

of qualitative inquiry ... characterized as an amalgam of interdisciplinary analytic lenses, diverse disciplinary approaches, and both traditional and innovative methods – all revolving around an interest in biographical particulars as narrated by the one who lives them” (p. 651). More simply, it is defined by Clandinin & Connelly (2000) as “the best way ... to think about experience” (p. 80), and by Polkinghorne (1988) as “the primary form by which human experience is made meaningful” (p. 1). In fact, Clandinin (2007) stated that narrative researchers “... usually embrace the assumption that the story is one if not the fundamental unit that accounts for human experience” (p. 4). More specifically, Clandinin and Connelly (1990) directly align narrative inquiry with phenomenology when they stated that, “The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world” (p. 2). Kramp (2004) echoed this stating, “... narrative inquiry serves the researcher who wishes to understand a phenomenon or an experience rather than to formulate a logical or scientific explanation. The object of narrative inquiry is understanding – the outcome of interpretation—rather than explanation” (p. 104).

Using a narrative approach allowed my former students to provide stories of their experiences and interactions in my classroom with the Global Issues curriculum, their classmates, and me, their teacher. Educational theorist John Dewey has spoken specifically about student experiences. For Dewey, these experiences must be considered as both individual and social. Therefore, a student’s experience in a classroom is not just his or her own, but an experience shared with other students and teachers in a community. Equally important to consider with this experience is its continuity; that one experience will lead to other experiences (as cited in Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 2).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000), reflecting on John Dewey's work, emphasize the creation of a "three-dimensional narrative inquiry space" (p. 50), one that includes interaction (social and personal), continuity (past, present and future) and situation (place). As such, it is important that my study investigated how the experience of my students in my class not only impacted them at the time, but how it continued to have an effect on them presently.

Action Research

While much of the research in this study was phenomenological and experienced and accessed narratively, as previously noted, the results of this study have the potential to greatly affect my teaching and, therefore, I must also consider that this study finds itself in the realm of action research. While traditional social science research can be seen as looking from the outside in, action researchers are already on the inside and are part of the context being investigated (McNiff and Whitehead, 2011). The sense of being on the inside is also reflected by Clandinin & Connelly (2000) who suggest that narrative researcher's role is a dual one; that they experience the participants experience but also become part of an experience themselves. McNiff and Whitehead (2011) define action research formally as "... a form of enquiry that enables practitioners in every job and walk of life to investigate and evaluate their work" (p. 7).

More specific to the educational field, Stringer (2008) and McNiff and Whitehead (2005) believe the goals of action research are twofold: to improve practice and generate new theory. Stringer also insisted that, "Teachers therefore must engage in systematic processes of inquiry as an ongoing feature of their classroom life in order to enable their

students to attain effective learning outcomes” (p. 15). Mertler’s (2009) views echoed Stringer in that he saw action research in education as research that is done by teachers for themselves that gathers information on how they teach and how their students learn. My hope is that I can take the lessons I learned from my former students’ stories and apply them to my teaching to improve my practice and thus improve my students’ experiences and understandings.

The Researcher’s Role

Placing myself in the role of researcher, it was important to be aware of where I was coming from and how this may influence my work. There are essentially 2 roles that I played in this research project. Firstly, I was a collector of stories, including my own. By using narrative inquiry, I hoped to obtain and document the stories of study participants; how they experienced the Global Issues course as taught by me. Secondly, as an action researcher, I intended to gather information that I believe will be useful for me to improve my instruction of the Global Issues course. As such, I needed to maintain an open mind about the stories that I hear. The goal was not necessarily to validate my teaching of the course, but to better understand my teaching of the course and to take action to improve my own *praxis*.

Data Collection Procedures

Recruitment

Prior to engaging in recruitment, I sent a letter to the Superintendent of Lord Selkirk School Division asking permission to use the name of my school, Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive Secondary School in my research. The Superintendent agreed

and signed a letter of consent¹² to that effect. In order to recruit participants to the study, postings were made using social media outlets Facebook and Twitter. The reason for using social media in the recruitment process was because I believed it to be the most effective way of contacting former students. Many of the students have moved from the city of Selkirk because of school, work, or other opportunities, I believe that contacting them using traditional methods such as mail or phone would have proven to be quite challenging. However, by using social media, I used media in which the former students are constantly engaged, and which did not require a fixed address or phone number.

In using Facebook, recruitment occurred in 2 specific ways. Firstly, I created a closed (private) event¹³. By creating an event on Facebook, I was able to send invitations directly to former Global Issues students who were currently my “friends” on Facebook. Secondly, a posting¹⁴ was made on my personal page referencing the study and calling for former Global Issues students interested to contact me through my University of Manitoba email address. In that posting, I also indicated that those Facebook friends of mine who saw the post could share it with those former Global Issues students that were not friends of mine on Facebook.

Research conducted on the use of Facebook as a general recruitment tool for academic research mostly lauds the potential it provides for large sample sizes by using snowball sampling (Kosinski, Matz, Gosling, Popov, & Stillwell, 2015, Baltar & Brunet, 2012). There does not appear to be specific research on the use of Facebook for targeted

¹² See appendix 3.

¹³ See appendix 4.

¹⁴ See appendix 5.

recruiting of small, very specific groups of research participants, in the manner I used it. However, I believe that the ability to “share” information on Facebook did permit a snowball effect, allowing my invitation to reach a wider audience.

Twitter, as a recruitment tool, was far more limiting. “Tweets” on Twitter have a character limit of 140; therefore, providing all relevant information can be problematic. I decided that the best way to use Twitter in recruitment was to “tweet”¹⁵ a link to my Facebook status, which contained all necessary information. An advantage to using Twitter was that my tweet was “liked” and “re-tweeted” by my followers, which also contributed to a snowball effect.

In all social media posts, interested participants were asked to contact me using my University of Manitoba email address. Within a week, I confirmed the first 10 participants that answered my request and I informed several others that I would put them on a wait list in the event that any of the first 10 respondents could not participate. After the initial contact was made, I sent the participant a letter of consent¹⁶, which was completed and returned to me via email. I then counter-signed the letter of consent and sent a copy back to the participant. Interviews were then scheduled at different times and locations over the next two months.

Interviews

Qualitative, phenomenological interviews with a narrative approach were used to collect data for this study. deMarrais (2014) describes qualitative interviews “... as an umbrella term for those methods in which researchers learn from participants through

¹⁵ See appendix 6.

¹⁶ See appendix 7.

long, focused conversations ... used when researchers want to gain in-depth knowledge from participants about particular phenomena, experiences, or sets of experiences.” (p. 52) Similarly, Lichtman (2006) states that the purpose of interviewing is to gather information “from your participant about the topic you are studying” (p. 117). Both deMarrais and Lichtman reflect van Manen’s purposes for interviewing. van Manen (1990) suggests that there are two specific purposes for using an interview in phenomenological studies:

... it may be used as a means for exploring and gathering experiential narrative material that may serve as a resource for developing a richer and deeper understanding of a human phenomenon, and the interview may be used as a vehicle to develop a conversational relation with a partner (interviewee) about the meaning of and experience. (p.66)

Through the use of these thoughtful interviews I was able to have participants tell their own stories that formed a tapestry of time, place, and character.

Questions

For the purpose of this study, and to gain a better understanding of the participants lived experiences, it was important that a general set of questions was used for all participants. However, it was equally important that time and spaces were allowed for the interviewer to modify the questions and be allowed the freedom to pursue certain answers in more detail. Litchman (2006) terms this type of interview a guided interview (p. 118). van Manen (1990) also echoes the importance of disciplined questioning that stays closed to the person’s lived experience (p. 66-68). While the essential question of

this study asked about the participants' experiences with the Global Issues course, more specific topical questions were needed to provide the rich description of lived experiences that were the focus of my research. As suggested by van Manen, these questions direct the interviewee to reflect on their personal experience and, in my research, did include many of the following:

Context questions:

1. What grade were you in when you took the course?
2. How long had you been at the high school?
3. What other classes were you taking at the time?
4. What were your favourite subjects? Why?
5. What types of extracurricular activities were you involved in?
6. Why did you first sign up for the course?
7. What was your level of interest in global issues when you first entered the course?

Questions about their experiences in the course:

1. In general, describe your experience with the course.
2. How did you feel about the approach used in the course? (I.e. discussion and reflection on current affairs, inquiry-based learning and praxis)
3. Had you ever experienced inquiry-based learning or taking action in other courses? If so, how was it the same or different than in the Global Issues course?
4. How did you feel about the Take Action Project component of the course?
5. How did the course compare to your previous experiences with teaching and learning?
6. What were your favourite parts of your time in Global Issues?
7. Can you remember a particularly exciting or upsetting classroom discussion?
8. Did your work in Global Issues influence your other thinking, your discussion with other peers, or with your parents or family?
9. Did you have discussion outside the classroom about Global Issues?

Questions about the impact of the course:

1. Did the course change your level of interest in global issues? To what extent?
2. Since finishing the course, has your level of interest in global issues changed? To what extent?
3. After completing the course, did you feel like you were more informed on issues of global importance?
4. Do you feel the course made you a better citizen? If yes, how so? If no, why not?

5. Do you feel the course has made you more aware of issues concerning sustainability? If yes, how so? If no, why not?
6. Did completion of the Take Action Project inspire you to further take action after completion of the course?
7. Did the course influence your future studies or work?
8. Do you pay attention to current events? Do you discuss them with friends and family?¹⁷

Data Recording Procedures

After interview times and locations were set via email communication, a digital recorder was used to record the interviews. These recordings were immediately downloaded onto the researcher's password protected personal computer and deleted from the recording device. The interviews were then transcribed and the transcriptions were also stored on the researcher's password protected computer.

Protecting Participants

It was essential that strict attention was paid to best maintaining anonymity throughout the collection and presentation of data. Given the nature of the course, many of the participants' experiences had the potential to threaten their anonymity. Many study participants have engaged in Take Action Projects that were very visible in the community and may still have an online presence. To deal with this possibility, participants in the study were asked if they were willing to sign a letter of consent asking whether they would agree to forgo the guarantee of anonymity or prefer that pseudonyms were used. All participants agreed to waive their guarantee of anonymity.

¹⁷ These questions are intended to be a guide. Not all questions were used in every interview.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

As the goal of this research was threefold – to listen and document students’ experiences in the Global Issues course, discuss its impact, and to improve my teaching – the approach to data analysis and interpretation reflected the *bricolage* approach used. Using a phenomenological approach, data was drawn from student experiences relived through their own narratives provided during the interview process. As noted by Clandinin & Connelly (2000), narrative inquiry differs in its approach to other qualitative measures as there is no hypothesis to be tested in order to analyze and interpret data; the purpose of the study will present itself and change as research progresses (p.73). As such, interpretation and analysis of the data (narratives) resulted in the formulation of their own narratives. These stories weaved a tapestry of the experience of my former students and myself in the Global Issues classroom, but also provided me with an evaluation of my professional practice and a direction for improvement in the future.

Reflecting on the use of interviews and the development of narratives, Polkinghorne (1988) stated, “The premise the researcher works from is that people strive to organize their temporal experience into meaningful wholes and to use the narrative form as a pattern for uniting the events of their lives into unfolding themes” (p. 163). This approach appears to lie in contrast to the more traditional approach to qualitative data analysis that relies heavily on codifying themes and concepts that arise from data collection. As Lichtman (2006) states,

... some researchers believe that the analysis process involves identifying salient stories that either emerge from the data or are constructed as composites from bits

and pieces of several data sources. For them, the meaning is in the story and in the interpretation of the story by the researcher ... those who adopt this stance take the position that coding raw data into concepts is a reductionistic practice and detracts from the meaning of what is said. (p.165)

However, in homage to the *bricolage* approach to this research study, and specifically to the action research component, there was a need to be able to organize the narratives so that conclusions could be drawn to modify and better my own practice. Therefore, after all participants' narratives were documented, they were analyzed using predetermined categories, specifically categories associated with the previously identified interview questions. This approach is often the easiest to use with an interview guide, and the categories can come from topics imbedded in the interview itself (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). These categories included prior experience with global issues, experiences while in the course, and experience with global issues after participation in the course. Sub-categories also used included citizenship, sustainability, taking action (*praxis*), current affairs, and inquiry-based learning, outlined in the previous chapter.

After conducting the research, I was able to discern four impressions from the data obtained from interviewing that I will discuss at length in the following chapter: how the former students saw the course as different, the importance placed by the students on dialogue, how students appreciated conducting inquiry into serious global issues and being given the chance to do something about them, and, finally, how the course affected them.

Establishing Academic Rigor

Traditional approaches to rigor in academic writing often insist on long-standing principles of validity, reliability, and triangulation. As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) stated, “If a piece of research is invalid then it is worthless” (p. 133). However, conceptions of academic rigor have changed over time and vary depending on research method. van Manen (1990) elaborated on this,

In the quantitative sciences precision and exactness are usually seen to be indications of refinement of measurement and perfection of research design. In contrast, human science strives for precision and exactness by aiming for interpretive descriptions that exact fullness and completeness of detail, and that explore to a degree of perfection the fundamental nature of the notion being addressed in the text. The term “rigor” originally meant “stiffness,” “hardness.” Rigorous scientific research is often seen to be methodologically hard-nosed, strict, and uncompromised by “subjective” and qualitative distinctions. “Hard data” refers to knowledge that is captured best in quantitative units or observable measures. In contrast, human science research is rigorous when it is “strong” or “hard” in a moral and spirited sense. A strong and rigorous human science text distinguishes itself by its courage and resolve to stand up for the uniqueness and significance of the notion to which it has dedicated itself. And what does it mean to stand up for something if one is not prepared to stand out? This means also that a rigorous human science is prepared to be “soft,” “soulful,” “subtle,” and

“sensitive” in its effort to bring the range of meanings of life’s phenomena to our reflective awareness. (p. 17-18)

I was most interested in my research question exploring these “soft” issues. In fact, I believe that looking for “hard data” would have detracted from the richness of the data I collected from the participants.

Given that the research method used in this project was based in narrative inquiry, it is perhaps best that its rigor is better addressed by using what Donald Blumenfeld-Jones (1995) termed “fidelity”. Blumenfeld-Jones (1995) proposed that truth (in its positivistic scientific sense) is difficult in narrative inquiry because a narrative is much more like a piece of art and thus more subjective. He contrasts this truth, which he sees as what happened, with fidelity, which he sees as how what happened influenced the teller of the tale (p. 26). To Blumenfeld-Jones (1995), fidelity encompasses a morality of faithfulness to the narrator while also an exactness of reproduction. In this way, a triangular relationship is developed “through interactions between (a) the teller of the narrative, (b) the narrative and its objects, and (c) the receiver of the narrative” (p. 27).

Babiuk (2000) wrote that Blumenfeld-Jones’ concept of fidelity can be used to address the issue of academic rigor because it is made up of 2 key components; believability or trustworthiness, which he views as akin to validity, and betweenness or dependability, which he views as akin to reliability.

Once narrowly defined in a more scientific manner of instrument of measurement, validity may now, in qualitative research, be addressed through “the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 133) or,

as Packer and Addison (1989) go so far to say, “In interpretive inquiry we must drop this ideal of universal certitude” (p. 290). In fact, Ellis (1998), paraphrasing Packer and Addison, discussed how, in evaluating an interpretive account, validity is not an issue of true or false, rather “... whether the interpretive account can be clarified or made more comprehensive or comprehensible” (p. 29). In more expressive terms, Ellis believed that, “... the concerned engagement researchers bring to the question and the human solidarity they seek through the inquiry give direction and guidance to their interpretations” (p. 29). I believe that this “concerned engagement” flowed naturally through the interviews, as both the former students and myself were subject to the same phenomenon, my teaching of the Global Issues course.

Ultimately, in addressing issues of validity, I align myself with Kornelsen (2014) who emphasizes the importance of understanding or *verstehen* in dealing with the gathering and interpreting of data. My hope was that by the end of this process, I would be able to recount the stories of my former students, while weaving them into a tapestry, full of many different strands of rich experiences. In doing so, I was able to reflect on my own story and, in the end, I believe my finished product is reflective of all those different narratives, which have all experienced similar times and place.

Chapter 4 – Data and Analysis

The goal of this study was to investigate the impact of the new Manitoba provincial curriculum entitled, *Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability*. Specifically, by conducting qualitative interviews, I hoped to discover the impact of my teaching of the curriculum on my former students. The first three chapters of this dissertation were dedicated to an introduction to my teaching story, a review of related literature, and outlining the methodology of the study. In this chapter I will present the stories of my former students, all of whom waived their right to anonymity, allowing me to use their real names. In the following pages I will present those stories through a series of four impressions: how the former students saw the course as different, the importance placed by the students on dialogue, how students appreciated conducting inquiry into serious global issues and being given the chance to do something about them, and, finally, how the course affected them.

Setting the Stage: The Former Students and Initial Impressions

By using social media (Facebook and Twitter), I was able to advertise and connect with 10 former students of mine to enlist their participation in this study. Through the months of September and October 2017, I conducted qualitative interviews with these former students, ranging from 25 minutes to one hour, in Selkirk, Winnipeg, and Brandon, Manitoba. All of these former students attended Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive Secondary School, and all students were enrolled in my *Global Issues*

course in their Grade 12 year between 2011-2016.¹⁸ These former students were also enrolled in a wide variety of other courses at the time of their participation in the Global Issues course.

When asked what their level of interest in global issues was prior to enrolling in the Global Issues course, seven out of the ten responded that they were highly interested. As a result, it is not surprising that eight of ten former students were actively involved in a wide range of extra-curricular activities during the time that they were enrolled in the Global Issues course. Westheimer and Kahne would classify most of these activities as falling under the category of “participatory citizen”, meaning they were actively engaged in community efforts to help those in need. Examples of these extra-curricular activities included: participation in the school’s human rights group, Special Olympics, and other volunteer positions in seniors’ homes and elementary schools.

As to why the former students had originally signed up for the course, four indicated that a previous relationship with me was their justification for enrolling in the course. Commenting on this previous relationship, Emily stated that, “... you were so engaging and you could really tell how much you loved the content and that was so engaging for me that I wanted to be a part of that.” Other former students listed hearing from their peers about the course and liking “the thought of making a difference” as significant reasons for signing up for the course.

Notably, I personally had felt from day one that the Global Issues course was going to be different. Gone were the chains that bound me to specific learning outcomes

¹⁸ The Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability curriculum was piloted for the first time in the school year 2011-2012.

in the old World Issues curriculum. In their place was a new curriculum with the freedom to not only allow me and my students to pursue genuine and current global issues, but also to allow the students significant say in what they wanted to learn. So, it was with great interest that I noted many of the students, commenting on what attracted them to the course, suggested that it appeared to be “different”. Marissa elaborated on this point asserting,

I liked the thought of doing something in a different manner from how everything is normally run in a curriculum and I liked how it felt like it had, it seemed to serve almost an immediate purpose, it’s not just for grades, it was actually like, I want to make a difference, the grades didn’t matter anymore.

Paolo also emphasized what he saw as a potential difference, “... at the same time I could learn, not necessarily just numbers or the periodical table, but learning outside the box.”

Shaelyn, referring to the course containing a Take Action Project, commented that she “... thought that was really an interesting change to lots of other classes that you don’t really get to do.” Austin offered, in perhaps the most straight-forward manner, how the difference of the course appealed to him, when he said, “I think it sounded like a cool elective ... a bit different than your typical course. It didn’t sound boring, like a boring Social Studies class.”

Throughout most of the interviews, this seemed to be the recurring theme, the moral, so to speak, of this story is that the Global Issues course was something different. It was an approach to learning that former students had never experienced and an approach that they appreciated, having felt that it had a significant lasting impact on who

they are today. It is my goal, in the following pages, to tell their story of how this course achieved that influence.

Impression 1 – “It was something I’d never experienced before”

My exposure to the new Global Issues curriculum reaffirmed my conviction that a Social Studies course should concentrate on events that are current, significant, and relevant to my students. In this way, I structured the course in a manner that discussion surrounding current affairs, occupied a significant amount of time and was used as a gateway from which students could choose their areas of inquiry. In doing so, my hope was to lay a foundation for students to conduct more formal inquiry on the issues that interested them the most. From those discussions and inquiries, students could then engage in their Take Action Project. This structure seemed to be of significant importance to my former students, as they emphasized the difference between it and more traditional approaches. Paolo, delineating the difference between the approach to Global Issues and other courses, which used what he called a “cookie-cutter” method – “you have a final exam, you have a paper and that was it,” shared how this change was impactful,

So, it was definitely different. I think ... going back to what I was saying, you know, the whole cookie-cutter method and I’m just so used to that, so to shift gears that way and to shift gears so late in your high school life, it was definitely eye-opening, but I think it was good and I think that’s something that is needed because, when somebody goes into either college or post-secondary education, things start to get different. So, I think it’s definitely a step in the right direction.

Ben also echoed Paolo's sentiments about the rigidity of other classes and "being told what to do", he stated,

Well, it was something I'd never experienced before. Not once have I been in a math class and had my teacher say, "let's look at something locally, an issue that is really concerning you and let's, you know, try and fix that, try and help it", like there just isn't that in our school system. You know, it's very structured, it's very, you know, A-B-C, you can't break that line ... Opposed to us being told what to do, now it's, we can take these projects and we can decide what we want to see.

Ben expanded on the difference of this course to others stating,

What I did in other classes was write tests and study for tests and the next day, when we finished the test, well, we're going to start prepping for the next test. In a sense, in Global Issues there is no exam, you're not prepping for the next test, you're working towards a new goal; you're working towards a new impact.

Significantly, Ben's choice of words in that he was working towards a "new goal" or "new impact" instead of preparing for the next test seemed to reflect the course's design to push away from Freire's (1970/2012) "banking concept" of teaching. Carly's reflection seemed to concur with Ben's assessment,

Global Issues was the first time that I did an inquiry project, formally ... I think tests in the school really make people shut down and get stressed ... and as soon as you put this pressure on that people have to do something then it makes them lose interest a little bit and this course was more geared towards igniting people's passion for global issues and, by not putting that extra stress on the students, I

think that really helps engage them more rather than them taking notes and thinking like, what might be on the exam?

Carly's comments reflected the thinking of many of the constructivist educational philosophers including Dewey (1997/1938), Piaget (1970), and Fosnot (2005), as did Elly's who shared that this difference really resonated with her,

I really think that the format of the class was what made it stand out from the other classes. It wasn't about listening to the teacher and listening to a lecture and then doing an assignment then going home. Global Issues extended into my personal life, I took it home with me. It wasn't like I just left it at school. The project didn't end when I left class. I took some of the things that I learned and took them into my own life later on, even to this day there are things I still remember that I learned in that class.

Mckenna implied an emotional connection to the course format, which reflected Fosnot's (2005) belief that the goals of constructivist education become "autonomy, mutual reciprocity of social relations, and empowerment" (p. ix),

One of the things I liked the most about this course is how personal it was. I really didn't feel like a textbook course at all because, even when we were looking at current affairs and things like that, we were always given the opportunity to share personal opinions and personal stories ... so it was a really humanistic approach ... So, that was a really cool approach that I didn't get in a lot of other classes ... I like it a lot because that's what sticks with me the most is when I feel a certain

type of emotion surrounding something ... as compared to other classes where you're kind of learning information from a book and regurgitating it.

In fact, Mckenna later elaborated that the only time her interest in the course waned was "maybe when we were just working on the inquiry projects because then it felt a little more familiar to my other classes."

Specifically, much of the notable difference to other courses was found in the academic freedom offered by the course. Elly elaborated on this,

I think that it (Global Issues) made the whole learning, really learning, stick in my head. I remember it to this day, like, so much better ... Just because I did care about what I was talking about in that sense because I got to choose it myself and then you start looking stuff up and you find a whole bunch of stuff behind the subject ... I could never really push myself to care about school and, even to this day, I still struggle with that, but I really, really cared about Global Issues and what I was learning.

Austin also felt the same way,

I guess what stands out was that it (Global Issues class) was more self-directed and fun and something I could get into and actually get behind versus there are classes where you're just doing the homework or you're doing the assignment or whatever, like it was something that you could take and make your own and shape and get excited about and handle it that way ... (other classes were) more teacher directed and more, there's an outline that has to be followed, right? Like, today

we're doing this, tomorrow we're doing that ... (in Global Issues) there was still a framework but you kind of do what you want to do.

Elly and Ausin's comments emphasized Dewey's (1916/2009) sentiment that "there be a continuous activity in which he (the learner) is interested for its own sake" (p. 128).

For Emily, another important aspect of the design of my teaching of the course was the emphasis placed on the role of the teacher,

I think, in a classroom setting, a traditional classroom setting, where you just have a teacher at the front that's just kind of in charge of everything and is really, like, lecturing, you don't have the academic freedom to be able to give your opinion or to disagree, whereas Global Issues was one of those places where all of our projects really allowed us to have the freedom to disagree and that was okay, that was academically accepted.

Her comments directly concur with Freire's thoughts on the student-teacher relationship and the need to "begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students" (Freire, 1970/2012, p. 72). Emily's thoughts also reflect Fosnot (2005) who believed that, "The traditional hierarchy of teacher as the autocratic knower, and learners as the unknowing ... begins to dissipate as teachers assume more of a facilitator's role and learners take on more ownership of the ideas" (p. ix) as well as the curriculum designers' ideas on the teacher as a facilitator (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017, p. 21).

Marissa, in elaborating about her derived sense of motivation from academic freedom, presented me with a segue to the second impression I was left with from the experience of my former students,

I felt a lot more motivated to go into class and work on it (projects) everyday too because we had so much freedom. Really, it was just this one basic, like, this is your goal to do this and accomplish it however, in whatever means possible. So, it wasn't necessarily brought to a strict curriculum ... a lot of it was just discussion.

The discussion made a big difference to me.

By not following a strict, traditional curriculum, students were provided with the opportunity to discuss a wide variety of global issues, and these discussions were incredibly thought-provoking.

Impression 2 – “Just talking about things”

Marissa was not alone in highlighting the discussion component of the course. In fact, seven of the ten former students stated that the discussion that happened during the class was one of their favourite parts of the course, though for differing reasons. For some, the environment surrounding the discussion was important. Elly reflected that,

I never really had the drive to really try for school, like it was always a task for me, and I think the class being based on discussion, it made me much more comfortable, it wasn't a task, talking isn't a task for me.

Emily shared this sense of comfort stating that, "... being able to read articles and hear about current issues then talk about that amongst peers in a safe environment was something that was totally unique to me." Elly and Emily's comments again reflect

Fosnot's (2005) views on a constructivist classroom as "a mini-society, a community of learners engaged in activity, discourse, interpretation, justification and reflection" (p. ix).

Other former students highlighted the importance of those discussions and the related benefits of developing of certain skills including learning to think critically, being able to listen and develop and share their opinions, and collaboration. Each of these skills has been identified in the curriculum documents. Elly underlined how discussion helped her learn how to think critically, elaborating that she "really enjoyed the aspect of just talking about things and just having a conversation ... letting us really just sit down and think about it, which is the critical thinking that I think was really important about the course." Former students also noted that the ability to work with and share opinions with peers, whether it was during group discussions or through the sharing of the inquiry or Take Action projects, was an important skill development. As Shaelyn stated,

I really like that style of learning. It was good to be able to go and find the research and then kind of present to it because it really built a lot of skills, like, for me going forward in my education, going into university, having the ability to work in groups, and then having the ability to now talk to my peers, that was never a problem because we present our inquiry projects to our class, we presented our Take Action (projects) to our class.

In fact, Mckenna went so far as to say that perhaps there was not enough collaboration in the inquiry projects, "I kind of wished the discussion part of the course ran more into the inquiry project side, because it did feel like we kind of stopped collaborating after a while."

For others, the time for discussion allowed them the time to learn to appreciate other's opinions and passions. Mckenna shared,

I think my favourite part was the beginning where we would just discuss and debate and it would get pretty heated sometimes because it made me realize how passionate everyone is. Like, even when I'm super sure my opinion was right on something, everyone else was equally sure that their opinion was right, so that was my favourite part.

Mckenna went on to give a specific example of a discussion that emphasized her point,

One of the toughest days was when we talked about mental health in the school system because people have such different experiences in high school and have such different opinions about how it should be run and I think that was one of the biggest discussions we had where I was just so sure I was correct about some of these things, but other people were like, you know, it was just a very emotional day for all of us because there were actually people in the class that suffered from mental health issues and, you know, had their opinion coming based out of that.

Similarly, Carly also conveyed,

... it gave me different views on things ... when you have one view on something, unless you talk to people about it, you're not really going to know what other people think so, it got me to see different views and opinions on certain issues and gave me a broader, holistic scope of peoples' views and what's out there because, if you look at something one way and I look at something the other way and we don't talk about it, we're going to have very narrow views of what's going on.

Graeme was very inspired and actually surprised by others' perspectives,

I think that was very uplifting because, again, I was a very cynical kid ... I remember there was a few of the, what I would say is the popular girls talking about women's image in media and I'm thinking, why are you thinking about this, like, you're a popular girl, good looking girl ... to me it's like, how could that ever bother you ... why would you think of that ... but they did all the time, and they were passionate about it and they wanted to change it, wanted to do something about it and it's like, I guess it made me think, you know you can't judge a book by its cover, right? You know, and that was with everybody, with everyone in that room there was something going on in their head that you would never be able to guess by just seeing them. I think that was really inspiring was to see, like, these people be passionate about something that I never thought they'd be passionate about.

Passion was a word also used by Emily to describe the people in her Global Issues class, We had a lot of passionate people in my class so, while I can't remember specific instances that were incredibly heated, I know that there were instances that were incredibly heated ... but I also don't remember people fighting, it was a really respectful debate, it was never anything that got out of hand, it was never anything that was hurtful ... I've never experienced anything like it, even now in university, I've never been a part of a group of people who could talk about things that are so sensitive and so important to so many people without it getting huffy and out of hand.

For Graeme, the discussions helped him learn how to develop his opinions,

... the discussion part was awesome because, not only do you learn about topics, but you also get to, instead of just reading something and kind of think(ing) to yourself, you now get to think it out loud to the class and you kind of get to share your opinion and figure out how to, this sounds weird, but how to argue your opinion a bit ...

Paolo viewed the discussions as an example of just how different the course was compared to more traditional ones,

I think the discussion, having that level of discussion in class I think that was probably one of my favourite parts because it lets you experience a whole different level of what a classroom should be. It's not necessarily just, okay, raise your hand if you know this answer, it's like, okay, tell me why. You're asking why, you're not just giving it's an "A" or it's "B" or it's "10" or whatever. It's okay this is this, but why, tell me why and your opinion isn't necessarily wrong ... It lets you explore different opinions and kind of tells you that different opinions also have political meaning to it.

On the same note, Carly commented that,

It was definitely one of the courses that I looked forward to the most, just because it was largely discussion-based and I get a lot more out of those kinds of courses rather than the ones where you sit and listen and then you write tests ...

Another impact of the discussions seemed to be an increased impact in political awareness. Elly stated that discussion "definitely opened my eyes to the world of politics

even more. I didn't realize how interested I was in politics." Austin appreciated "being able to talk politics and knowing that there are some young people that care, that you're not the only one. It was great because so many people, even today ... they have no idea, they don't care and it's really upsetting." Paolo, who is now actively involved in partisan politics, explained how the discussion led to a greater interest in politics,

I remember we touched upon the former government and, there's another article we talked about and you kind of started asking, well, what do you stand for? You didn't necessarily say are you partisan politics, like what card do you hold, it's what are your values? What do you think you want to see in Canada within the next how many years ... and I started to think to myself, you know, I actually believe in some of those things and I align with a certain party that believe in that and I think that's what really struck me, that's what really made me interested in getting more involved with, I wouldn't say within the community but also, within partisan politics and learning about what the democratic process was.

Paolo's words reflect the importance of the thoughtful and moral nature of *praxis* noted by Freire (2012/1970), Carr & Kemmis (1986) and Aristotle (2009) as well as the curriculum designers. For Paolo, this realization would have a fairly significant impact on where his life would take him, and he would seek to ask tough questions and find ways of taking action.

Impression 3 – “This course gave you the opportunity to take these serious topics ... and do something about it”

As has been referenced, former students in the study had not previously experienced a course similar to the Global Issues course. When the conversation with former students switched focus to the inquiry and Take Action components of the course, this trend continued. For the most part, former students had not done any formal inquiry in other classes. The only exceptions to this were students who referenced second credit English courses and an acting course as having individual and group projects where they were able to choose what they wanted to study. However, none of my former students indicated that the inquiry approach used in the Global Issues classroom was something they had already done. In fact, when asked about the inquiry approach and the Take Action, most students spent the majority of their time discussing the Take Action Project (TAP).

Much of the discussion around the TAP centered on the openness of the project, but also of the encouragement and tools the students received to complete the project¹⁹. Austin “thought it was a really great idea because it gave you the freedom to do something” and he remembers “not wanting to do something boring, like a bake-sale, like wanting to go out of the box.” Paolo observed that,

... it’s cool because it let you shoot for the stars ... I think it was a good learning experience for the sense that it’s great for you to blue sky dream, but at the same time you need to build up to that and I think that’s what the Take Action Project

¹⁹ A copy of the handouts, which contain tools and tips for how to complete the Take Action Project, has been included in appendix 8.

taught me. Something that I can take away from the course after I took it was, you know, building up to that goal. Like, it's not just necessarily you're going to get here and you're going to get there, like, there's steps for you to get to point 'B'. Mckenna referred to these steps as well stating, "It was really great. I loved it because ... it not only forced us to pick something we were passionate about, but also seeing kind of the businessy-side of trying to make change was something that really surprised me." For Graeme, the TAP was important because it meant applying his learning, a reflection of Freire's (2012/1970) concept of *praxis*, that there must be reflection and action,

... it's very easy for you to sit in a classroom and have someone tell you some awful things going on in the world, like, there's history courses and you hear about war and you hear about famine and you hear about these things, right? And, they're still going on today ... but you don't really do anything about them, right? This course gave you the opportunity to take these serious topics or these things that bother you or these things that you felt you wanted to do something about and it gave you the tools to do something about them which is very, very different ... this course, I felt, gave you a place to start and gave you a place to find your own way to help the world in some way or help solve an issue or open a discussion about an issue that you don't get the opportunity to in life.

In Marissa's interview, she referred specifically to the encouragement she received as being instrumental,

It was a great experience, actually. I'll never forget my Take Action Project because it was so hard ... the difference between that, doing that in that course

versus other courses, was that I felt encouraged to go the extra mile ... I didn't have to do something that big, I could have done something much easier and probably have had the same or better marks for it but I felt encouraged, I felt supported, I felt like we had all these wild ideas but you guys were going to help us out ... nothing was out of context, just because we were high school students, which was a big thing too.

Marissa's last comment about "just being high school students" was also a theme picked up on by Emily and Ben. Emily reflected that,

I think that I have come to find that people will have a very interesting perspective on the new generation and our capability, and our laziness, and it was kind of nice to be in charge of a project that really showed that we are taking initiative and we are trying to make change and there was no other class that really allowed us to prove that.

Ben's comments were similar,

I mean, it definitely invokes responsibility with us, we also felt like we were being trusted, which is very tough. I mean, how often do you just say, okay, it's up to you to go into the community and be active? That doesn't happen. Like, it's just, we've never had that trust before. So, for 16, 17, 18-year olds, that's a big step, not once have we ever had a teacher give us that power and control and that's huge for someone who's developing, someone who wants to move on to bigger and better things ... [it] made me feel like I was being treated like an adult.

Marissa, Emily, and Ben's comments about being treated like an adult are interesting, given that it is a goal of the course to develop active citizenship, not just within the time in the course, but well past graduation. This leads us to the final impression.

Impression 4 – “To say the course affected me would be a bit of an understatement”

Level of interest.

While all former students in the study responded that they felt they felt more knowledgeable about global issues after taking the course, their responses differed when asked about how the course changed their level of interest in global issues and how, after a period of time outside of the course and away from high school, that interest has also changed.

For many of my former students, their interest in global issues after participating in the course remained unchanged, because they had already entered the course with an identified high level of interest. As Austin put it, “I don't know if I'd say it (level of interest) changed as it just reaffirmed that, yeah, I'm interested in this kind of stuff and ... this is probably what I should continue to pursue in life.” However, even if their level of interest hadn't changed, their awareness of issues and where to find information about global issues increased. Paolo reflected that,

... the immediate impact was (that I was) starting to look things up more ... I started listening to AM radio driving to school ... I would listen to that just to get a glimpse of what's happening, not only in Manitoba, but what's happening in Canada and what's happening in the world ... and I started reading a little bit more...

Shaelyn also found herself being more aware as she “knew where to look for things and where to get my information from.” Emily felt that her awareness increased, specifically internationally,

I remember feeling like I was in a bubble in Canada, that I just had this really warm sense about the world when there were lots of things that were happening that I wasn't aware of ... so I would say that, if anything, my worldview probably just widened a lot ... I found myself starting to look into those things in my personal life, like, just outside of class would go and check CBC in the morning to see what was going on internationally, not just in Canada but, looking at issues overseas and looking at kind of taking a different perspective and also challenging myself in, okay, this is what I think automatically is my view but then what's the alternative view to that and why is it that I jump to this view?

For those who indicated their level of interest went up after the course, it was generally focused on specific issues. For example, Marissa stated that her interest in human rights increased. For Carly, it was her interest in issues that were previously important to her that increased. Ironically, given the title of the course, Elly identified that her interest in local issues and “being empathetic and ... going out of your comfort zone and learning about your surroundings,” increased as a result of the course. There was only one participant who wholeheartedly believed his total level of interest increased as a result of the course, and that was Ben who stated, “Oh, absolutely, it took it from probably being above average to, okay, this isn't now just a hobby, this is you need to have this be incorporated into part of your life.”

There was a subtle difference when former students began to discuss their level of interest in global issues since finishing the course. For some, there was an indication of a drop off in their level of interest. This was as a result of other priorities, as well as a feeling of negativity surrounding some issues. As Emily put it,

I think I've probably receded into my bubble again, a little bit. University kind of makes you put your head in the sand a little bit ... I think I've probably just narrowed my scope a little bit more ... school is so much of my life that that's kind of the issues I focus on now.

Graeme also found he had other priorities, but commented about the negativity surrounding some issues,

I think it's (interest level) waned down. I think that's probably because I'm kind of caught up in my own life with other things going on that I kind of realized too, especially what going on in the world right now, I found that it's really easy to get negative, it's really easy to get into fights about things and I kind of just, like, squelched all of that to get rid of the potential arguments that come out of it or the negativity to come out of it.

Even though Carly indicated her level of interest was about the same now as it was after the course, she too reflected on some of the pessimism,

I think I'm just a cynical person now, or sorry, realistic, I'm a very realistic person now because, when you think about a certain issue and you think about the ways that could be solved, but then, really, there is no right way to solve it or maybe there is no good solution.

Counter to that sense of negativity Mckenna, who identified that her level of interest has increased since taking the course, stated that it was the course itself that taught her to get around the pessimism,

I'm definitely more invested in the news than I was before I took the course. I was very ignorant to news stories because it can be very depressing to watch the news and everything comes from such a negative place, but I think in the Global Issues class we learned how to look at everything with a critical eye instead of just taking it all in and letting it make us depressed. Instead it taught us to fight back and think about.

Of the other three former students who stated their level of interest in global issues had increased since completing the course, two of them, Paolo and Austin, indicated that it was because of their careers. As Austin put it, "I mean, just being a journalist, right, you have to care about this kind of stuff and community and the world you live in and people and policy."

Impact on thinking.

The majority my former students responded that the course had an impact on their thinking, though in different ways. Three of the former students indicated that as a result of the course, they became more mindful of perspective. For Shaelyn, this was evident in the way she used media to look at issues,

It definitely made me more mindful of what was going on and kind of to look at things differently, to kind of see the background, not just the headline, because you need to know who that news channel is ... which way they are, are they more

biased to one political party ... those things are important to be aware of and I wouldn't have known that prior to taking any sort of human rights course, the first one being Global Issues.

Carly discussed how her perspective had changed on how to develop solutions to these issues,

... it did make me think of ways that might solve different issues and, looking at things logically versus, you know, I used to be a bit of a dreamer, like, one person can change the whole world ... but now I look at things quite logically and can understand why things are being done the way they're being done or how they should be done differently and can think quite critically about the way issues are trying to be solved or are being solved.

For Graeme and Emily, respecting other perspectives was an important take-away.

Graeme reflected,

I think the biggest thing it taught me was that issues that matter to me don't always matter to others and issues that matter to others don't always matter to me ... it made me consider that people have different priorities ... I think that just being able to understand other perspectives was the biggest thing I learned.

Similarly, Emily shared,

Global Issues taught me a lot about researching my opinions first. When I actually started doing the research into certain things, I really saw a different perspective and I think that that really changed the way that I had arguments with other

people, really changed the way I had conversations with people that didn't agree with me ... it's okay to have different opinions, you can still like each other. If and how these conversations about global issues happened outside of class was also a theme the former students reflected on.

All ten former students indicated that after the course, they had discussions about global issues outside of class time. Furthermore, those discussions took place with both friends and families. For three of the former students, discussion with friends took place so frequently that it appeared that their interest in discussion became part of their identity. Shaelyn shared,

My friends probably laugh at me because whenever something is going on, I don't shut up about it and I tell them, this is happening and this is how I feel about it ... when I feel passionate about something, my friends are going to know and whether they like it or not, I'm going to talk about it, so usually they'll tell me their opinion of it and, if they agree with me then we don't have to debate anything. If they don't agree with me, then we're probably going to debate it. Ben also had a similar experience about sharing his opinions on global issues, "I get bugged for it still by my friends. You know, 'Ben, why are you always talking about you know, politics or whatever?' because it's an issue that bothers me." Mckenna's enthusiasm was also noted by her friends, "Oh yeah, everybody in the choir room could tell you that. After I would leave the class, I would have a lot of thoughts in my brain, so we would often carry the conversation over in to lunchtime."

Elly shared a mixed experience with her engagement in conversations outside of the classroom. In one instance, it affected her personal relationships quite drastically,

I would say that the relationship I was in at the beginning of grade 12 ended because of Global Issues ... it opened me up to a part of myself that I didn't know was so important. I found new values in Global Issues that I didn't know I had.

In another comment, however, Elly felt that she had a positive experience sharing that she remembered, "sitting down in Tim Horton's and explaining to two friends the importance of the entire Canadian political system the day before the election." Elly also shared that she has now surrounded herself with "people who like to have conversations about that (global issues) because I like to have conversations about that ... it's like I said, it's a value, something I value now."

Former students also felt that the Global Issues course helped prepare them for these conversations. Emily stated that, "I think the course also taught me how to bring up issues in a way that doesn't set people off but opens up a respectful conversation." Ben, while commenting on butting heads over different views shared that,

...it's not a bad thing at all, it's a conversation that's happening, it's a conversation that needs to be had ... that didn't happen prior to Global Issues.

Maybe because I wasn't so aware of what was going on, or maybe just because I was too timid or too scared to actually speak up for, or wanted to. Global Issues activated both of that in me. It made me more aware and it also made me feel more comfortable displaying my anger at issues that were pressing.

Carly also talked about this engagement stating,

I like provoking thought in other people too. I like having those conversations and hearing what they have to say about it or just letting them know that this is what's happening out there because I think that's something we should all be aware of.

All former students also shared that they had discussions at home with their parents. While some former students said sometimes those conversations were difficult because of differing views than their parents, others stated that they had the conversations because they valued their parents' opinions.

In general, the course appears to have encouraged students to think critically (or, in many cases more critically) about the world around them. They were prepared tackle the difficult questions about issues of global concern around them. Added to that was that, not only was their thinking more critical, but they also became more open to sharing their opinions and beliefs and, at the same time, engaging others in empathetic dialogue. I would conclude that this impact on thinking demonstrates that, for the most part, the participating former students had progressed to what Westheimer and Kahne (2004) labelled "social justice-oriented" citizens. I would also argue the change in the students' thinking reflects, whether implicit or not, the three-point approach to Nussbaum's (1997) "Cultivation of Humanity".

Impact on further studies or work.

Every participant in the study indicated that their current course of study or work was influenced to a degree by their time in the Global Issues course. For some of the former students it was an incredible influence. Elly stated that she wouldn't "know what my path would have been otherwise" and Paolo, who is currently actively involved in

partisan politics, stated emphatically that, “Absolutely. The course really pushed me into pursuing the career I have now.” For Emily, the course “just helped to solidify that (career choice) for me” and Ben shared, “Right now, I’m on the path to teach a course very similar to this, so to say the course affected it would be a bit of an understatement.” Though the course did not push him in the direction of a career related to global issues, Graeme reflected on how the course still had an impact on his post-high school life, but in a different way, “I think that it did influence my decision in that I became more aware of my happiness and more aware of my goals in life than I would have before (the course) ... So, in that sense, I think it did.” Finally, Mckenna felt that the course allowed her to “dive deeper” into the issue of working with kids with disabilities, which is her chosen field of post-secondary study, and that the time in the course cemented the fact that “it’s something I’m passionate about.”

Taking action after the course.

Career choices aside, the course did lead to all former students taking further action after the course to varying degrees. For Austin and Graeme, who had fairly large and public projects, their action continued through their projects. Graeme went on to speak about mental health at local and national conferences. Austin’s project to provide less privileged residents of Selkirk with family portraits around Christmas is into its sixth year, with Austin usually coming back to help. Emily highlighted that because of her Take Action Project, which focused on random acts of kindness, she finds herself still doing the same today,

I regularly, probably once a month, go out of my way to buy coffee for the person behind me when I go through the drive-thru ... I hold open doors for people a lot more than I probably used to before. I thank people for doing things for me probably more so than I did before, I am in the community. I volunteer for Special Olympics once a week ...

Emily was one of three former students that noted that volunteering with non-profits was a way that they continue to Take Action in the community. For other former students, however, it was a more personal commitment to action in varying forms. Elly found herself involved in student body governance, campus protests, and petitioning while at university. Paolo is currently working with his parents to build little libraries on public streets in low-income neighbourhoods of Selkirk. Carly has used her artistic creativity to paint paintings based on political issues, like climate change and poverty, and donates the money she earns from their sale to smaller organizations that she supports. Finally, Ben feels that he is more consciously taking action in terms of his own personal decision-making around clothing purchases and choice of food.

Impact on citizenship and sustainability.

All former students indicated that they felt the course had made them better citizens though, once again, their explanations of how varied. Shaelyn, Mckenna, and Marissa all talked about how they felt they have become better citizens because of the awareness and knowledge they gained in the course. Mckenna and Marissa both went on to say that this awareness and knowledge led to them becoming more active citizens and highlighted the importance they placed on being informed and voting as a civic duty.

This appears to be a reflection of what Clark and Case (2008) emphasized in terms of citizenship education; that there is importance to developing a breadth of knowledge of social issues while consequently learning how to take action on the same.

Emily and Graeme both talked more about how they felt the course contributed to them being better citizens in the sense that they were more open to differences of opinions and being less judgemental. Emily spoke about being more compassionate, and accepting of all people. Paolo's answer reflected the importance of this diversity and of the concept of global citizenship stating,

I think it made me think on the ways I can impact the world. I think this course definitely has made me feel like, we're not necessarily just, you know, a Canadian citizen or a resident of Selkirk, we're global citizens of this world and I think this course is what made me think that.

Ben and Carly believed that the ability they gained in the course to have difficult discussions with people of varying opinions, helped make them a better citizen today because they continue to press to have those discussion outside the class.

Eight of the ten former students indicated that they believed that, after the course, they felt more informed on issues of sustainability. Notably, for many of them, this came through the sharing of the knowledge of other students through inquiry and Take Action Projects, who had a passion for sustainability issues. Though most seemed to place this knowledge of sustainability issues firmly in terms of environmental sustainability, Ben, reflecting the work of Babiuk and Falkenberg et al. (2010), opined that what he became more aware of was more of human sustainability,

Well, before I entered the course the whole idea of sustainability to me was, you know, hybrid cars and it was ... a solid environment and ... less fossil fuels, which we did talk about in the course, but that was my idea of sustainability in the sense of protecting the environment. I didn't know that it could be sustainability in terms of protecting humanity and sustaining a society that could function as one. That idea of sustainability didn't really click with me before the course, I never really thought about that in that sense, because we can sustain many things, we can sustain our planet, we can sustain, you know, businesses, but we can also sustain humanity, society as a whole, but that never occurred to me before the course.

Ben's comment about not knowing that sustainability can be about "sustaining a society that could function as one" is striking for two separate reasons. Firstly, to me, it encapsulates just how important the Global Issues course can be. Throughout the interviews, it became abundantly clear that this course, and my teaching of it, had a major influence on my students. To be fair, as I addressed previously, the former students who participated in this study are all students whom I was able to contact via social media, and who all had good experiences in my class. However, for these ten individuals, the course was influential. Secondly, Ben's comment has left me with a significant inquiry of my own: where do I go from here? How do I take what I have learned, in terms of the influence of this course, and shape my current pedagogical practices? What are the challenges that will be presented by this change, and is this change transferable to other

social studies teachers and other social studies courses? These are the questions I will tackle in my final chapter.

In conclusion, the individual narratives provided by each of my former students allowed me to formulate a narrative of my own while assessing my teaching of the Global Issues course. The genuine nature of the interviews allowed me to identify four main impressions that the course had on these former students. Firstly, the Global Issues course, and my teaching of it, was different than any other course they had previously experienced. Secondly, the former students placed a high value on the dialogical nature of the course as well as, thirdly, on the fact that they were entrusted to inquire about issues of global importance and act on them to the betterment of humanity. Finally, the teaching of the course had a significant influence on their level of interest in global issues, their thinking, and what they are doing in their lives post high school. The impact of these impressions on my practice will underpin my final chapter.

Chapter 5 – Where to go from here?

From the moment I participated in the first meeting of the Manitoba Department of Education’s Global Issues curriculum pilot team in August of 2011, I knew something was profoundly different between what was being piloted and the other social studies curricula I spent the first decade of my career teaching. I believe that the past seven years of teaching the new curriculum has confirmed that original assessment, that this course is different; however, what I didn’t know was whether or not my students felt the same way. Conducting this qualitative study to determine how my former students felt about the course and my teaching it, has proved to be an incredibly enriching experience for me professionally. The messages delivered to me by my former students throughout their phenomenological interviews was abundantly clear; not only is the course different, but it has had a major influence on who they are and what they believe about their education.

Return to the Research Question

The essential question that drove my research for this study was, “What impact did the participation in my Global Issues class have on my former students while enrolled in the class, as well as after they finished the class?” The results of this study conclude that the impact on my former students, both during the course and after, was generally positive.

Study participants highlighted that the contrast of the approach to the Global Issues curriculum, compared to the more traditional “cookie-cutter” approach, was glaring. Overwhelmingly, the study participants indicated that a course in which they were able to explore issues that were meaningful to them, engage in respectful and

“adult-like” dialogue, and push towards becoming what Westheimer and Kahne identified as “social justice-oriented citizens” (2004, p.1) was exceedingly more appealing than classes where all they would worry about was the next test. As a result, their time in my Global Issues classroom had a meaningful and lasting influence on their thinking, their educational and careers paths, and how they see themselves interacting with the world around them.

Limitations of Study

As a result of this being a study of my own personal practice, a significant limitation was in the scope of the study. The experiences described by former students are theirs from within the four walls of my classroom and their own lives and may not be reflective of their peers in other schools with other teachers of this curriculum. To my knowledge, this is also among the very first research projects to be conducted on this new curriculum and, as such, there is a lack of data with which to compare my findings.

Personal bias must also be considered. I came at this research from my own point of view; it is in fact my interest in the very subject that is the reason I have conducted this inquiry. Students were asked questions related to their experience in my classroom and the answers to these questions were not always what I expected and, in some cases, such as Mckenna who wanted to see more collaboration during the inquiry, former students were critical of my practice. Although I am cognizant of that this personal bias, Lichman (2006) states that, as a researcher, “... there is no single objective reality that you strive for. Accept that you, as the researcher, serve as the filter through which information is gathered, processed, and organized” (p.117). Having outlined my story of teaching the

Global Issues course, and clarified my views of teaching, I can assist the reader in understanding my filter.

Although the initial respondents to my invitation to participate in my study were students who, in my opinion, had good experiences during their time in my Global Issues class²⁰, an effort was made to contact participants who did not have good experiences. This I deemed important, as I wanted to be able to reflect on what I have done well, and on what I need to improve in my practice. Unfortunately, I would have to conclude that, of the 10 participants that I did interview, none had had a bad experience. Further, another limitation to the study was the fact that not all participants had been in the same class, or even the same year and, as a result, this may have limited my conclusions as each participant has a unique point of view.

It must also be noted that, as a result of a use of personal interviews with participants, the data acquired is also subject to some limitations. These include selective memory – remembering or not remembering certain experiences, telescoping – recalling experiences but at the wrong times, attribution – an emphasis on positive or negative experience based on internal or external forces, or exaggeration – the embellishment of experiences (University of Southern California Libraries, 2015).

Finally, another limitation of this study was the ability to contact former students to participate in the study. Although the use of social media to contact former students and invite them to participate in the study connected me with many possible participants, it was impossible to reconnect with all of my former students.

²⁰ All participating former students passed my course with high marks and I had good relationships, with no significant conflict, with all 10 former students.

Influence on Professional Practice

It is hard not to take what the former students shared throughout their interviews as validation of my approach to the teaching of Global Issues. However, that being said, there are a few insights from the interviews that have caused me to pause and self-reflect. The first of these insights occurred when, after having listened to Mckenna discuss how much she appreciated the open dialogue and debate about global issues, she shared that her level of interest fell when the class moved away from that dialogue and debate, and into the inquiry process. Specifically, she mentioned that, when the class was just given time work on their inquiry projects, it “felt a little more familiar to my other classes.” She went on to share that, “I kind of wish the discussion part of the course ran more into the inquiry project side because it did feel like we kind of stopped collaborating after a while.” Her concern, though not directly echoed by other participants, has made me think of how, throughout the interviews, these former students spent a great deal of time extolling the virtues of the dialogue and debate, while not spending any significant amount of time on the impact of their inquiry projects. On occasion, former students were unable to recall what they completed their inquiry projects on, but were able to remember specific discussions surrounding current affairs. As implication for my practice, I believe it is important to, therefore, look at ways of keeping students engaged in the dialogue and debate surrounding current affairs, in all my social studies courses – not just Global Issues, while at the same time engaging them in the inquiry process and having them become experts on their chosen areas of inquiry.

As a result of the preliminary data I had received from this study, I have already made adaptations to my pedagogy in the grade 11 Canadian History course. There, I have switched from teaching the course in a chronological manner, to an approach based on teaching units based on the major themes of the curriculum. In doing so, I start each unit by introducing the theme and why it is important to today's Canadian society. To further immerse students in the theme, I provide them with current affairs articles from Canadian media. At the end of most units, I assist students to find even more articles related to current affairs and the specific themes. In this way, I hope my students will be more engaged in these broad historical themes by seeing their relevance to today.

The second insight that made me self-reflect was Marissa's comment that the Global Issues class "seemed to serve almost an immediate purpose, it's not just for grades, it was actually like, I want to make a difference, the grades didn't matter anymore." If, in Marissa's opinion, this course was so influential that "grades didn't matter anymore," what implication does that have on my assessment practice? Ben also reflected on this point when he stated that, as opposed to test taking and preparation in other classes, in Global Issues "you're working towards a new goal, you're working towards a new impact." Carly's comment contributed to this reflective pause as well when she stated that,

...tests in the school really make people shut down and get stressed ... and as soon as you put this pressure on that people have to do something then it makes them lose interest a little bit and this course was more geared towards igniting people's passion for global issues.

While my assessment practices were not a component of this study, I believe that given the nature of these comments, some reflection on how I assess the course is necessary. Specifically, I have, and will continue to reflect on the roles of qualitative and quantitative assessment of student learning in the course. How do I assess students, based on the enduring understandings of the course, while also having to come up with an ordinal grade for report cards and transcripts?

Lastly, another insight about my pedagogy that came up a few times during the interviews was the student-teacher relationships I had developed with some of the students. While I haven't drawn attention to it in Chapter Four as one of my four major impressions, I believe that it will have implications on my teaching, and will cause me to continue to conduct personal action research. Emily, for example, stated,

I did a lot of really cool things in high school and I had some really awesome opportunities but some of the best opportunities, some of the opportunities that were the most impactful, the things that stayed with me the longest, I got out of Global Issues and I don't think I can ever thank you enough for that, Kevin ... I don't know where my life would be if you hadn't been able to convince me to take that course and it's probably the best decision I made in high school.

Paolo also commented on our previous relationship being an important reason for why he took the Global Issues course (I had the opportunity to coach and teach him previously).

Elly also alluded to this relationship, but less on a one-to-one basis, when she talked about our classroom community saying,

I mean ... you made the class like it was its own community in itself, it was like, such a family environment, I guess, and I would definitely say that's because of how you taught it and just the person you are in general ... I think that was an important aspect of the course and it was why everyone was probably so comfortable in discussing the views that they did.

While these comments were not evident throughout all the interviews, and I did not anticipate them, I do believe that it does serve to validate parts of my teaching philosophy; that building good relationships with students, inside and outside of class can reciprocally develop interested, caring, and engaged citizens.

Recommendations

I believe that this study should have implications for future Social Studies curriculum development in the province of Manitoba. Further research studies may be able to give a larger perspective, but the success that I have had with the approach to this course is evident in the qualitative data collected. Engaging students with issues that are current, issues surrounding citizenship and sustainability, while allowing students to take control of their education through the posing of essential questions, conducting inquiry and taking action, as outlined by Freire (2012/1970), Postman (1979), Carr & Kemmis, (1986), Wiggins & McTighe (2005), Morgan & Sexton (2006), and Kozak & Elliott (2014), has proven to be a story for success for my former students and may prove to be a story of success for other students. Therefore, I would encourage the Manitoba Department of Education and Training to consider including the opportunity for meaningful dialogue surrounding issues that are current and significant, inquiry learning,

and the opportunity to take action based on that inquiry in future curricular development in, but not limited to, social studies. I would also suggest to my colleagues in social studies to attempt to include the same in their own pedagogical approach. I would also recommend to my colleagues the value of self-reflection and action research as a means of improving their own practice. My time spent reflecting on the questions I posed in this study have led me to develop other questions upon which I believe I will continue to conduct reflective action research, long after this study is complete.

Suggestions for Further Research

Though the results of this study are overwhelmingly positive, they do leave room for further inquiry. Most glaringly, the participants in the research were all former students of mine with whom I had good relationships and who, generally speaking, succeeded in my class. If I was to further this research, my first step would be to attempt to reach out to those who may not have had a positive experience. How would their story differ from that of the ten former students I interviewed? Nevertheless, given the incredibly positive nature of the feedback surrounding the structure of my Global Issues class, I believe that not only will it be important for me personally and professionally to consider how I can apply these insights to other social studies curricula, but for other teachers to consider the same. Furthermore, a significant matter for future study would be to engage with other Global Issues teachers from across the province. Given that the curriculum is fairly flexible, every other teacher's experience, and the experience of their students would be unique, and a comparison between those experiences and those of my students and myself, could prove to be beneficial.

Conclusion

My initial hypotheses surrounding my essential question to this study have proven to be correct. This course, and my teaching of it, has had a lasting positive impact on the students I have taught. With an approach that is unlike any other course they can remember, their experience during the course was memorable and influential. This influence did not stop the moment they left the class; it would continue to affect them in their post-secondary educational choices, their careers, and in their personal lives. Through the course, the students' thoughtful reflection and dialogue on issues of global concern coupled with a desire to take action, in other words Freire's (2012/1970) concept of *praxis*, has led to the students becoming Westheimer and Kahne's "social justice oriented" (2004, p. 1) students. This also reflects the desire of the curriculum developers who saw "the importance of this course both as an instrument of critical understanding (seeking the truth) and as an instrument of hope (seeking to create a better future)" (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017, p. 4).

Equally important to me personally and professionally, however, will be the fact that this study has provided me with the opportunity to reflect on my practice, an opportunity that I value much more than I did at the outset of the study. This self-reflection, resulting from my data analyses, has led to a validation of many of my approaches to teaching Global Issues; however, it has also led to further questions and further self-reflection that I look forward to contemplating in the future. I hope that this research will influence me, as well as other teachers and educators, to be able to continue to conduct our own *praxis* in our own teaching and learning.

Appendix 1 – Ten Areas of Inquiry

Ten Areas of Inquiry in Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability

- Media
- Consumerism
- Environment
- Poverty, Wealth and Power
- Indigenous Peoples
- Peace and Conflict
- Oppression and Genocide
- Health and Biotechnology
- Gender and Identity
- Social Justice and Human Rights

Appendix 2 – Suggested Guiding Questions for Exploring an Issue

SUGGESTED GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR EXPLORING AN ISSUE

SIGNIFICANCE and SCOPE

- Why does this issue matter? To whom?
- Who/what is affected by the issue? Who benefits? Who is harmed?
- When/where/how did this issue begin?

EVIDENCE

- Have I used a variety of sources, including primary sources?
- How reliable are my sources?
- How do the media treat this issue?

PERSPECTIVE

- How do perspectives differ on this issue? (e.g., environmental, economic, political, social...)
- Which perspectives are most defensible and why? Whose voices are not heard?
- What role do media play creating/perpetuating this issue?

IMPACT- ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC

- What is happening at the local, national, and global level?
- What actions are being taken by citizens, governments, businesses, and other groups?
- What might be some of the short and long term consequences of these actions?

CONNECTIONS

- How has this issue changed over time? What might be future concerns?
- How is this issue connected to other environmental, social or economic concerns?
- Is this issue part of a larger trend or problem?
- How does this issue effect the environment? Economy? Society? Quality of life?
- Why does this issue continue to be a problem and for whom?

REFLECTION

- How do you feel about the issue now that you know more about it?
- How might this issue have been prevented? What could have been done differently?
- What questions do you still have?

ACTION/PRACTICE

- Who needs to do what? What can and should we do?
- What are the challenges/ barriers/risks to action?
- What do I have to offer? How can I take action?
- How can I get others involved?

A rigorous inquiry should address questions in each of these areas. Students may select some or all of the suggested guiding questions in each category, or they may generate new questions as appropriate for their topic.

Appendix 3 – Divisional Letter of Consent



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Faculty of Education

227 Education Building
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-
9014
Fax (204) 474-7550



Michele Polinuk
Superintendent – Lord Selkirk School Division
205 Mercy St.
Selkirk, MB
R1A 2C8

Dear Mrs. Polinuk,

As you are aware, I am currently a Faculty of Education graduate student at the University of Manitoba. At this time, I am in the process of completing my thesis study that focusses on the implementation of the grade 12 Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability curriculum. I am writing you today to ask for your consent to publicly use the name of Lord Selkirk School Division and the Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive Secondary School in my research.

My thesis examines the implementation and my teaching of the Manitoba Department of Education's Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability curriculum. My research involves conducting interviews with former students who took the Global Issues course with me to determine how they felt about the course prior to taking it, how they felt about the course itself, and how the course may have affected them after taking it. I will then compile this information with my own recollections of teaching the course with the study participants to complete a narrative that analyzes all the above.

Interviews for this research project will be scheduled for a mutually agreed upon time and convenient location. The individual interviews will range from 45 minutes to 1 hour and guiding questions will be used to stimulate conversation. The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed.

If so desired, participants may choose to have their name remain confidential throughout the research process. However, it is important to note that, given the nature of the course (some completed projects were very public and may have lasting online media presence) and because I am asking to be publicly identified as the Global Issues teacher at Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive Secondary School, it may be difficult to absolutely guarantee full confidentiality. Therefore, participants will have 2 options in regards to participation in the research:

1. They may waive any guarantee of confidentiality in the research study. Transcriptions of their interview will be sent, via email, to them. They will then have the opportunity to read and revise their commentary in the interview transcript for accuracy and to edit out any information that you feel is too sensitive.
2. They may be granted confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms and the avoidance of publishing identifying details of specific projects. Transcriptions will also be sent, via email, to them. They will have the opportunity to read and revise your commentary in the interview transcript for accuracy and to edit out any information that they feel is too sensitive or may serve to identify them.

Subsequently, the amended transcriptions will be coded and analyzed. I must emphasize that, while they may choose to waive any guarantee of confidentiality, other study participants may choose to protect theirs. Those who do choose to forgo their confidentiality should note that their name and commentary will be public and cannot be brought back, while other participants, though their commentary will be public, will not have their name made public.

In accordance with University of Manitoba Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB) ethical policies, participants who wish will be given a pseudonym and all distinguishing characteristics of their work in the class will be edited. Their consent form, and their pseudonym identity will be kept in separate locked filing cabinets in my home. Raw interview data will be recorded on a voice recording device and will be immediately downloaded onto a password protected computer. The audio will subsequently be deleted from the recording device, and the audio stored on the computer destroyed as soon as it has been transcribed. When not in use, it will be kept in a locked file cabinet; separate from both the pseudonym and consent form information.

Participants may choose to withdraw from the study at any time up to the point that they view and accept the written transcript of the interview. They may do so by simply contacting me at any of the contact information supplied above. All information gathered up to the point of withdrawal will be shredded and/or deleted. An electronic copy of the thesis will be available through the University of Manitoba libraries website at <http://umanitoba.ca/libraries/>. Findings of this study may be published or presented at future conferences or journals.

This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba Education and Nursing Research Ethics Research Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about

this project you may contact any of the below-mentioned persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca.

Based on this information, would you consent to me using the Lord Selkirk School Division and Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive Secondary School names in my research?

Yes, I do consent to allow Kevin Lopuck to use the names of Lord Selkirk School Division and Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive Secondary School.

No, I do not consent to allow Kevin Lopuck to use the names of Lord Selkirk School Division and Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive Secondary School.

Name (Printed)

Signature

Sincerely,
Kevin Lopuck

Faculty of Education graduate student

Research Project Title: Transformative Curriculum: An Inquiry into the

Implementation of Manitoba's Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability Curriculum

Researcher: Kevin Lopuck

Contact: [REDACTED]
lopuckk@myumanitoba.ca

Advisor: Dr. Gary Babiuk

Contact: [REDACTED]
gary.babiuk@ad.umanitoba.ca

Appendix 4 – Facebook Private Group Page

The image shows two screenshots of a Facebook event page. The top screenshot displays the event header and a short introductory message. The bottom screenshot shows the full text of the invitation, including details about the research process and confidentiality options.

Event Details:
Event Name: Kevin Lopuck's Global Issues Thesis Research
Date: Tuesday, August 8 at 2 PM (5 days ago)
Location: No location (Add Location)
Status: 1 Went · 0 Maybe · 0 Invited

Message 1 (Top Screenshot):
Dear Former Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability Student,
I am currently a Faculty of Education graduate student at the University of Manitoba. Please consider this an invitation to participate in my thesis study that focusses on the implementation of the Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability curriculum. If you are interested in participating in this study please respond directly to my university email address.
Should you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference. This is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you a basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here; feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully.

Message 2 (Bottom Screenshot):
My thesis examines the implementation and my teaching of the Manitoba Department of Education's Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability curriculum. My research involves conducting interviews with former students who took the Global Issues course with me to determine how they felt about the course prior to taking it, how they felt about the course itself, and how the course may have affected them after taking it. I will then compile this information with my own recollections of teaching the course with the study participants to complete a narrative that analyzes all the above.
Interviews for this research project will be scheduled for a mutually agreed upon time and convenient location. The individual interviews will range from 45 minutes to 1 hour and guiding questions will be used to stimulate conversation. The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed.
If so desired, you may choose to have your name remain confidential throughout the research process. However, it is important to note that, given the nature of the course (some completed projects were very public and may have lasting online media presence) and because I am publicly identified as the Global Issues teacher at Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive Secondary School, it may be difficult to absolutely guarantee full confidentiality. Therefore, you have 2 options in regards to your participation in the research:
1. You may waive any guarantee of confidentiality in the research study. Transcriptions of your interview will be sent, via email, to you. You will then have the opportunity to read and revise your commentary in the interview transcript for accuracy and to edit out any information that you feel is too sensitive.
2. You may be granted confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms and the avoidance of publishing identifying details of specific projects. Transcriptions will also be sent, via email, to you. You will have the opportunity to read and revise your commentary in the interview transcript for accuracy and to edit out any information that you feel is too sensitive or may serve to identify you.

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Past

Kevin Lopuck's Global Issues Thesis Research

+ Create Event

Subsequently, the amended transcriptions will be coded and analyzed. I must emphasize that, while you may choose to waive any guarantee of confidentiality, other study participants may choose to protect theirs. Those who do choose to forgo their confidentiality should note that their name and commentary will be public and cannot be brought back, while other participants, though their commentary will be public, will not have their name made public.

In accordance with University of Manitoba Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB) ethical policies, if you wish you will be given a pseudonym and all distinguishing characteristics of your work in the class will be edited. Your consent form, and your pseudonym identity will be kept in separate locked filing cabinets in my home. Raw interview data will be recorded on a voice recording device and will be immediately downloaded onto a password protected computer. The audio will subsequently be deleted from the recording device, and the audio stored on the computer destroyed as soon as it has been transcribed. When not in use, it will be kept in a locked file cabinet; separate from both the pseudonym and consent form information.

You may choose to withdraw from the study at any time up to the point that you view and accept the written transcript of the interview. You may do so by simply contacting me at any of the contact information supplied above. All information gathered up to the point of withdrawal will be shredded and/or deleted. An electronic copy of the thesis will be available through the University of Manitoba libraries website at <http://umanitoba.ca/libraries/>. Findings of this study may be published or presented at future conferences or journals.

This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba Education and Nursing Research Ethics Research Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-mentioned persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca.

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+ Create Event

If you are interested in participating in this study or would like more details, please respond directly to my university email address listed below. Should you agree to participate in this study, I will email you a consent form to sign before we begin the interview process.

Sincerely,
Kevin Lopuck
Faculty of Education graduate student

Research Project Title: Transformative Curriculum: An Inquiry into the Implementation of Manitoba's Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability Curriculum

Researcher: Kevin Lopuck
Contact:
lopuckk@myumanitoba.ca

Advisor: Dr. Gary Babiuk
Contact:
gary.babiuk@ad.umanitoba.ca

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Facebook © 2017

Appendix 5 – Personal Facebook Page Recruitment Post

Create a Post | Photo/Video Album



Attention former Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability students! (Please feel free to share with other Facebook friends who took my class)

I am currently a Faculty of Education graduate student at the University of Manitoba. Please consider this an invitation to participate in my thesis study that focusses on the implementation of the Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability curriculum. If you are interested in participating in this study please respond directly to my university email address.

Should you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, This is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you a basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here; feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully.

My thesis examines the implementation and my teaching of the Manitoba Department of Education's Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability curriculum. My research involves conducting interviews with former students who took the Global Issues course with me to determine how they felt about the course prior to taking it, how they felt about the course itself, and how the course may have affected them after taking it. I will then compile this information with my own recollections of teaching the course with the study participants to complete a narrative that analyzes all the above.

Interviews for this research project will be scheduled for a mutually agreed upon time and convenient location. The individual interviews will range from 45 minutes to 1 hour and guiding questions will be used to stimulate conversation. The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed.

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2. You may be granted confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms and the avoidance of publishing identifying details of specific projects. Transcriptions will also be sent, via email, to you. You will have the opportunity to read and revise your commentary in the interview transcript for accuracy and to edit out any information that you feel is too sensitive or may serve to identify you.

Subsequently, the amended transcriptions will be coded and analyzed. I must emphasize that, while you may choose to waive any guarantee of confidentiality, other study participants may choose to protect theirs. Those who do choose to forgo their confidentiality should note that their name and commentary will be public and cannot be brought back, while other participants, though their commentary will be public, will not have their name made public.

In accordance with University of Manitoba Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB) ethical policies, if you wish you will be given a pseudonym and all distinguishing characteristics of your work in the class will be edited. Your consent form, and your pseudonym identity will be kept in separate locked filing cabinets in my home. Raw interview data will be recorded on a voice recording device and will be immediately downloaded onto a password protected computer. The audio will subsequently be deleted from the recording device, and the audio stored on the computer destroyed as soon as it has been transcribed. When not in use, it will be kept in a locked file cabinet; separate from both the pseudonym and consent form information.

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This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba Education and Nursing Research Ethics Research Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-mentioned persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca.

If you are interested in participating in this study or would like more details, please respond directly to my university email address listed below. Should you agree to participate in this study, I will email you a consent form to sign before we begin the interview process.

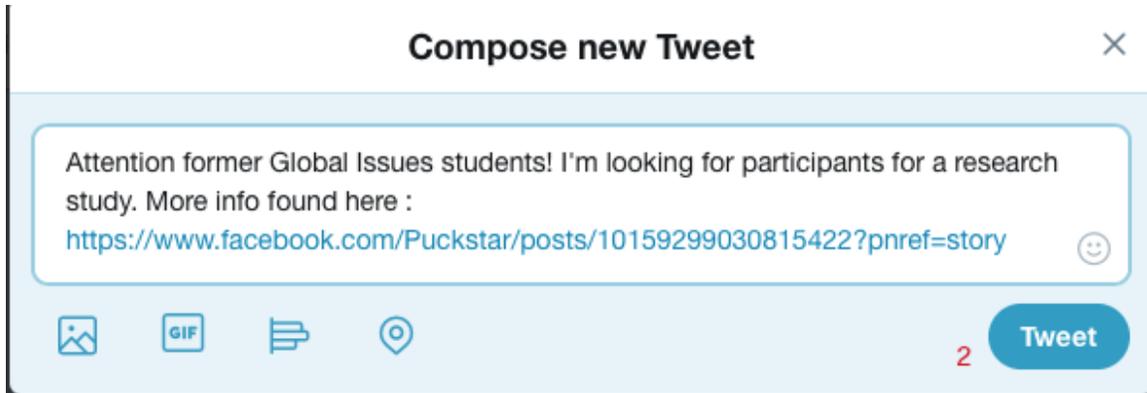
Sincerely,
Kevin Lopuck
Faculty of Education graduate student

Research Project Title: Transformative Curriculum: An Inquiry into the Implementation of Manitoba's Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability Curriculum

Researcher: Kevin Lopuck
Contact:
lopuckk@myumanitoba.ca

Advisor: Dr. Gary Babiuk
Contact:
gary.babiuk@ad.umanitoba.ca

Appendix 6 – Personal Twitter Page Recruitment “tweet”



Appendix 7 – Participant Letter of Consent



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Faculty of Education

Research Project Title: Transformative Curriculum: An Inquiry into the Implementation of Manitoba's Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability Curriculum

Researcher: Kevin Lopuck

Contact: [REDACTED]
lopuckk@myumanitoba.ca

Advisor: Dr. Gary Babiuk

Contact: [REDACTED]
gary.babiuk@ad.umanitoba.ca

Dear Former Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability Student,

I am currently a Faculty of Education graduate student at the University of Manitoba. Please consider this an invitation to participate in my thesis study that focusses on the implementation of the Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability curriculum. If you are interested in participating in this study please respond **directly** to my university email address.

Should you agree to participate in this study, this consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you a basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here; feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully.

My thesis examines the implementation and my teaching of the Manitoba Department of Education's Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability curriculum. My research involves conducting interviews with former students who took the Global Issues course with me to determine how they felt about the course prior to taking it, how they felt about the course itself, and how the course may have affected them after taking it. I will then compile this information with my own recollections of teaching the course with the study participants to complete a narrative that analyzes all the above.

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2. You may be granted confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms and the avoidance of publishing identifying details of specific projects. Transcriptions will also be sent, via email, to you. You will have the opportunity to read and revise your commentary in the interview transcript for accuracy and to edit out any information that you feel is too sensitive or may serve to identify you.

Subsequently, the amended transcriptions will be coded and analyzed. I must emphasize that, while you may choose to waive any guarantee of confidentiality, other study participants may choose to protect theirs. Those who do choose to forgo their confidentiality should note that their name and commentary will be public and cannot be brought back, while other participants, though their commentary will be public, will not have their name made public.

In accordance with University of Manitoba Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB) ethical policies, if you wish you will be given a pseudonym and all distinguishing characteristics of your work in the class will be edited. This consent form, and your pseudonym identity will be kept in separate locked filing cabinets in my home. Raw interview data will be recorded on a voice recording device and will be immediately downloaded onto a password protected computer. The audio will subsequently be deleted from the recording device, and the audio stored on the computer destroyed as soon as it has been transcribed. When not in use, it will be kept in a locked file cabinet; separate from both the pseudonym and consent form information.

You may choose to withdraw from the study at any time up to the point that you view and accept the written transcript of the interview. You may do so by simply contacting me at any of the contact information supplied above. All information gathered up to the point of withdrawal will be shredded and/or deleted. An electronic copy of the thesis will be available through the University of Manitoba libraries website at

<http://umanitoba.ca/libraries/>. Findings of this study may be published or presented at future conferences or journals.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time up to the point that you view and accept the written transcript of the interview, and/or refrain from answering any questions as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. The University of Manitoba may look at my research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way at any time.

This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba Education and Nursing Research Ethics Research Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-mentioned persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you for your records and reference.

Sincerely,

Kevin Lopuck
Faculty of Education graduate student

Consent Form

I, _____, agree to take part in the research study, *Transformative Curriculum: An Inquiry into the Implementation of Manitoba's Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability Curriculum*

I understand that my participation will involve: (1) Being interviewed for 45-60 minutes (2) Reviewing and providing feedback on the interview transcripts.

I understand that to help protect my confidentiality, I will be asked to read and revise my commentary in the interview transcript. This process will allow me to edit out any information that I feel is too sensitive or that I feel would serve to identify me. I understand that only the research investigator will have access to the information collected during the study. I understand that the findings of this study may be presented at conferences and included in a range of publications. I understand that direct quotes from the data I provide may be used, and that there is no financial benefit for participation. I understand that the data for this project will be destroyed after the completion of the project.

I understand that the interview transcript, as well as a summary of the findings of the study, will be sent to me, via e-mail or in hard copy as I prefer.

I understand that I have the choice to waive my confidentiality, however, I also understand that I will be asked to read and revise my commentary in the interview transcript. This process will allow me to edit out any information that I feel is too sensitive.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In addition, it signals your consent to be digitally audio-recorded. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study up to the point that you view and accept the written transcript of the interview, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

I wish to waive my right to confidentiality (please select one) Yes No

Please indicate in which format you would like to receive your summary:

Electronic Copy: Paper Copy:

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 8 – Take Action Project Student Guide

Grade 12 Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability

Take Action Project

Synopsis:

In the context of the Global Issues course, the Take Action Project seeks to engage you to work with your peers in order to apply your learning and contribute to a more equitable and sustainable planet in which quality of life is improved for all. The goal of the project is to move you from awareness through questioning, inquiry and dialogue, to critical consciousness and, ultimately, to engagement in informed reflective action for positive change. Successful projects will make a difference in your lives and your communities.

Praxis:

Paulo Friere, Pedagogy of the Oppressed:

As we attempt to analyze dialogue as a human phenomenon, we discover something which is the essence of dialogue itself: the word. But the word is more than just an instrument which makes dialogue possible; accordingly, we must seek its constitutive elements. Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed—even in part—the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world.

An unauthentic word, one which is unable to transform reality, results when dichotomy is imposed upon its constitutive elements. When a word is deprived of its dimension of action, reflection automatically suffers as well; and the word is changed into idle chatter, into verbalism, into an alienated and alienating "blah." It becomes an empty word, one which cannot denounce the world, for denunciation is impossible without a commitment to transform, and there is no transformation without action.

On the other hand, if action is emphasized exclusively, to the detriment of reflection, the word is converted into activism. The latter—action for action's sake—negates the true praxis and makes dialogue impossible. Either dichotomy, by creating unauthentic forms of existence, creates also unauthentic forms of thought, which reinforce the original dichotomy.

Human existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but only by true words, with which men and women transform the world. To exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming. Human beings are not built in silence,³ but in word, in work, in action-reflection.

But while to say the true word—which is work, which is praxis—is to transform the world, saying that word is not the privilege of some few persons, but the right of everyone. Consequently, no one can say a true word alone—nor can she say it for another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words.

Guidelines:

Projects should be student-initiated, collaborative and goal-oriented. Projects also need to be meaningful to you and related to issues you think are important, relevant and personally significant. The focus and scale of projects should be flexible, accommodating your concerns, needs and abilities. You are free to plan small or large scale projects, with a local, national or global scope. You may choose to work in a small group focusing on personal projects that focus on making sustainable lifestyle choices. Some of you may decide to undertake larger scale, long term projects that involve community members. Whatever the nature and scope of your project, you will have opportunities to become a mindful, hopeful citizen who can appreciate the power of collaboration and who can contribute to a more equitable and sustainable world. There will be a wide range of approaches to citizen action and engagement. You are encouraged to determine your own level of social action, by challenging yourself to explore areas where you can be most effective in making personal, community and societal change. You will need to:

- Reflect deeply upon issues you study
- Consider diverse perspectives
- Make connections between global issues and personal decisions and actions
- Engage in proactive decision-making
- Take a stand on important issues
- Engage in personal and collective action to effect change and contribute to improved quality of life

Kinds of Citizens			
	<i>Personally Responsible Citizen</i>	<i>Participatory Citizen</i>	<i>Social Justice Oriented Citizen</i>
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts responsibly in the community • Works and pays taxes • Picks up litter, recycles, and gives blood • Helps those in need, lends a hand during times of crisis • Obeyes laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active member of community organizations and/or improvement efforts • Organizes community efforts to care for those in need, promote economic development, or to clean up environment • Knows how government agencies work • Knows strategies for accomplishing collective tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically assesses social, political, and economic structures • Explores strategies for change that address root causes problems • Knows about social movements and how to effect systemic change • Seeks out and addresses areas of injustice
Sample Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes food to a food drive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps organize a food drive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explores why people are hungry and acts to solve root causes.
Core Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must have good character; they must be honest, responsible, and law-abiding members of the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must actively participate and take leadership positions within established systems and community structures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must question and change established systems and structures when they reproduce patterns of injustice over time.

General Characteristics of Take Action Projects

Projects may be:

- Ongoing over the term or year, or a culminating activity
- New projects, or build upon existing initiatives in the school community

Projects must:

- Reflect your interests, abilities and talents
- Be collaborative
- Make links between local and global issues
- Involve student inquiry and be supported by research
- Allow for diversity
- Be anchored in at least two components of sustainable development (i.e., a sustainable environment, a just economy, and a healthy society)
- Include a dimension of personal lifestyle and decision-making, so as to include more sustainable practices in your daily lives
- Include a learning log for reflection and self-evaluation

Where possible you should:

- Network with local experts and community resource persons for advice and direction
- Help raise community awareness through promotional campaigns and/or community meetings
- Approach local politicians and community leaders for assistance in their cause and petition them for change
- Organize actions and activities that involve other students in the school and community members
- Provide regular progress updates to the class
- Find alternative and creative means of sharing information with peers and community members

Time Allotment:

As the Take Action Project accounts for 25% of your final mark, you will receive ample time to dedicate to the project. Wednesday classes will be devoted to work on your projects. However, I reserve the right to use Wednesday classes for other opportunities when they arise.

Existing Projects:

Many of you are already engaged in existing projects that you may wish to 'piggy-back' on. These existing projects may be good spring boards to help launch your project, but I do not want you simply writing up something you have already been in the process of doing. Please see me individually if you feel the need to further consult on this issue.

Take Action Project – Examples

Sustainable Environment

- Reducing Your Carbon Footprint
- Water Conservation: Wetlands or River Bank Study and Cleanup
- Community Garden

Just Economy

- Poverty
- Workers' Rights
- Rights of the Child

Community and Society

- Anti-Consumerism
- Connecting with Seniors
- Be a Mentor or Role Model

Assessment:

Assessment of the Take Action Project should be developed in collaboration between the teacher and the student and should include opportunities for self-reflection, self-evaluation, and peer evaluation.

Main Areas of Assessment Should Include:

Initial Proposal Including Project Goals and Outlines

An Action Plan

Research and Inquiry Questions

Evidence of Community Involvement or partnerships

Ongoing Progress Reports

Execution/Results of the Project

Communication of Learning to Peers, School, and Community (as appropriate) and Final Presentation and/or Summative Report

Take Action Project Planning Booklet

Step 1: Picking an Issue

Pick a topic that you want to learn more about. You will most likely be successful if you chose a topic that is related to one of your current interests. What do you want to learn? List the “big picture” questions you want to be able to answer at the end of your project. Feel free to add more questions as your research progresses.

Names : _____

Issue : _____

Action : _____

Big Questions/Knowledge Required for Success :

Create inquiry questions which will direct your research : what do we need to know and plan to do in order to carry through with our project? Your research should help you plan your project and should be connected to the final goal.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What other actions have been undertaken regarding this issue? Have they been successful?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Step 2 - Communicating results

Throughout the planning, research and implementation phases of the Take Action project, students should have frequent opportunities to learn from each other through dialogue, and by having opportunities to make formal or informal presentations to the class. They should also be encouraged to use various mediums to communicate their learning with others, (e.g., blogs, wikis and online journals; video documentaries; information booths; presentations and updates at school assemblies; student-written plays and other artistic productions; workshops, forums and webcasts; team or community consultations, etc.). Sharing sessions on the progress of your Take Action Project will take place throughout the semester.

You are also expected to reflect on the process of creating and implementing your Take Action Project. This will be done in written personal reflections that will be completed at designated times throughout the duration of this project. It may be useful to use the questions listed below as a guide for your reflections, but they are only suggestions. Please keep your Take Action Project reflections in the journal I provided you for your current affairs entries. You may also find it useful to consult your reflections when doing our sharing sessions throughout the semester.

1. What were the challenges in planning my project?
2. What's going well so far with my planning?
3. Who have I collaborated with this week? How has this collaborative experience impacted me? Or, helped my project?
4. What new information or ideas have I found?
5. What do I still have to do?
6. What have I learned so far?
7. How am I feeling about this experience?
8. What do I want to share with my peers?

By using the above questions as a guide, each journal entry should provide evidence of the following enduring understandings:

1. Learning to know:
 - Does your journal entry demonstrate how you are learning how to acquire knowledge and understanding, and think critically about our complex and changing world?
2. Learning to do:
 - Does your journal entry demonstrate how you are learning to participate effectively in local, national, and global communities?
3. Learning to be:
 - Does your journal entry demonstrate how you are learning how to build self-knowledge and be conscious of connections to nature and society?
4. Learning to live together:
 - Does your journal entry demonstrate how you are learning to live peacefully with others and to care for our common homeland?

Each journal entry will be worth 5 marks.

Step 3: General Research

Do some preliminary research. Find some useful resources (articles, websites, documentaries, etc). Then, read or view them. Make some notes based on what you find.

Thinking of your issue, what has already been accomplished to address this problem? What lessons can you draw from these experiences?

Are there any specialists in the community who would be useful in doing your research? Don't re-invent the wheel.

NOTE: If you're working in groups it's important to save your work where it will be accessible to other group members (e.g Google Drive.)

Resource A : _____

NOTES :

Resource B : _____

NOTES :

Resource C : _____

NOTES :

Resource D : _____

NOTES :

STEP 4: How will you get people engaged in the issue?

-Why will people take this issue to heart?

-Why would people get behind this cause?

-How will the public respond (emotionally, logically)?

Step 5 : What is your plan?

Create a plan of inquiry and action that specifies goals and intended results, required resources, necessary partnerships, tasks for each group member, a schedule to manage time, an assessment of how workable your plan is and a communication plan for sharing research. Produce documents for sharing with your peers or with members of the community, if necessary. (See attached)

Name of Project		Goal:		
Objective : (What do I want to achieve?)	Activity : (How will I achieve this goal?)	Indicator : (What does success look like?)	Risk : (What might stop me from achieving my goal?)	Risk Management : (How will I deal with the risks?)

Activity :	Deadline :	Milestone 1 :	Milestone 2 :	Milestone 3 :
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

TAKE ACTION PROJECT – ACTION PLAN

What is an action plan?

In some ways, an action plan is a "heroic" act: it helps us turn our dreams into a reality. An action plan is a way to make sure your organization's vision is made concrete. It describes the way your group will use its strategies to meet its objectives. An action plan consists of a number of action steps or changes to be brought about in your community.

Each action step or change to be sought should include the following information:

- What actions or changes will occur
- Who will carry out these changes
- By when they will take place, and for how long
- What resources (i.e., money, staff) are needed to carry out these changes
- Communication (who should know what?)

What are the criteria for a good action plan?

The action plan for your initiative should meet several criteria. Is the action plan:

- Complete? Does it list all the action steps or changes to be sought in all relevant parts of the community (e.g., schools, business, government, faith community)?
- Clear? Is it apparent who will do what by when?
- Current? Does the action plan reflect the current work? Does it anticipate newly emerging opportunities and barriers?

Why should you develop an action plan?

There is an inspirational adage that says, "People don't plan to fail. Instead they fail to plan." Because you certainly don't want to fail, it makes sense to take all of the steps necessary to ensure success, including developing an action plan.

There are lots of good reasons to work out the details of your organization's work in an action plan. They include:

- To lend credibility to your organization. An action plan shows members of the community (including grantmakers) that your organization is well ordered and dedicated to getting things done.
- To be sure you don't overlook any of the details
- To understand what is and isn't possible for your organization to do
- For efficiency: to save time, energy, and resources in the long run
- For accountability: To increase the chances that people will do what needs to be done

Taken from: the Community Tool Box: <http://ctb.ku.edu>

YOUR ACTION PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE AND WILL BE ASSESSED ON:

- 1) Vision/Mission Statement
 - Why did you pick this project? What attracted you to the subject? Is there a personal connection?
- 2) Objectives
 - Clearly identify your objectives, both short terms and long term. This may include goals for the project past this semester. What are the essential questions guiding this project?
- 3) Strategies and timelines to achieve your objectives
 - Clearly describe what strategies you plan on using to achieve your objectives and give a rough idea of what the timelines will be.
- 4) Resources Needed
 - Identify all the resources you will need to complete this project.
- 5) Community Involvement
 - Identify all aspects of the community that you might need to call on. (School, city, province, etc.)
- 6) In what manner you will communicate your progress with the class
 - Remember that you will need to share with the class your progress on your project 3 times this semester. Identify how you plan on doing that. (Power Point, Website, Video, etc.)
- 7) In what manner you will present your final findings at the end of term
 - How will you present your findings to me and the class at the end of the semester? (Power Point, Website, Video, Paper, etc.)

Step 6: Complete the Action!

Step 7: Summative Report and Presentation

Background:

Effective citizens work toward solving problems and addressing issues. As individuals, they may or may not achieve their long term goals. However, their efforts often pay off by making other aware of the situation, by building constituencies who will move the cause further, or by inspiring others to be more engaged.

You have worked to address an issue that you consider to be important and now you have the opportunity to REFLECT on how well you planned and executed what you set out to do. Please respond to the following questions THOUGHTFULLY as this reflection is an important part of your assessment grade and will be helpful in completing your final PowerPoint presentation about your Action Project to the class.

Report Instructions:

Compose a typed report in which you address the following points. You may then include this information in your presentation to the class. Please divide your report into sections as follows:

Part I: Inquiry/Demonstration of Learning (5)

What did you learn about the ISSUE you were trying to address with your Action Project. Please include any pertinent fact, statistics, laws or policies that you learned about your issue. (You should list a minimum of 5 things).

Part II: Summary of Action (5)

How did you try and impact this issue? What parts of the community did you engage? Summarize the actions that you took. Include the timeline that you followed to implement your project.

Part III: Project Impact/Documentation (5)

What impact did your Action Project make? (If you raised money include final totals of what you raised and who you donated it to, if you volunteered and raised awareness include specific information about what you did, if you made a video or organized a presentation include data on who the audience was that viewed what you put together/how many people viewed it, if you collected items include an itemized list of what you collected). Provide any documentation as necessary (receipts of monies/items donated, copies of videos, copies of posters, volunteer logs, pictures of you taking action).

Part IV: Knowledge/Skills Gained (5)

What knowledge or skills did you gain through this experience? Do you feel that you developed a different attitude about being an effective, engaged citizen? Do you see yourself working on this issue, or other issues, even after this course is finished? Explain.

Part V: Final Reflection (5)

Did you feel like you succeeded in what you set out to do? Did you reach the goals that you set in the planning process? What challenges did you face with this project? What would you change if you were to do this project over again? What are your overall thoughts on this project? What did you like/dislike about it?

Final Assessment Composition:

Initial Proposal Including Project Goals and Outlines	/5
An Action Plan	/10
Take Action Plan Update Presentations	/10
Update Journals (2)	/10
Evidence of Community Involvement or partnerships	/10
Execution/Results of the Project	/10
<u>Final Presentation of Project</u>	<u>/20</u>
Total:	/75

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