



Global Citizenship and Student Volunteering

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Overview of Presentation

- Global Citizenship popular term within universities
- Is it more than rhetoric?
- Volunteering popular activity at universities
- Do students themselves perceive a connection between volunteering and global citizenship?
- What does the evidence from UCL tell us about how universities should consider and promote the concept of global citizenship?

Global Citizenship and Higher Education

- Neo-liberal discourse- acceptance of and working within dominant economic agenda of international world
- Cosmopolitan- Universalist- broadening horizons
- Critical Pedagogical- recognising and understanding different perspectives and nature of power relations in the world and how to take action to secure change

UCL and Global Citizenship

- Citizenship describes our responsibilities towards our community and those around us; global citizenship extends that responsibility in the context of a shrinking and ever more closely connected world.
- UCL believes the education we provide must take into account – and promote – the increasing importance of global citizenship and educate our students not just as experts their disciplinary fields, but students who are global citizens, those who:
 - Look beyond their individual and local interests and see the complexity of an interconnected world
 - Understand the nature of the challenges that face that world
 - Are aware of their social, ethical and political responsibilities
 - Are ready to display leadership and work together to change the world for the better
 - Are able to solve problems through innovation and entrepreneurship
 - Prosper in a global jobs market that values the skills UCL provides
- <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/global-citizenship>

Students as Global Citizens

- Term could be perceived as 'elitist' and relevant to only small minority of students
- Socially, economically and culturally mobile
- Speak several languages
- Concern for the wider world and want to make a difference
- Connection to future career and profession that may well be global, e.g. health, engineering.

Volunteering in Higher Education Institutions

- Common feature of most universities
- Usually related to supporting local community activities
- Broaden students horizons
- Improve skills and help cv

Forms of Volunteering

- Helping local Charities
- Working in local museums, galleries
- Working with community organisations
- Running help lines
- Giving talks in schools

Research at UCL

- To identify the extent to which UCL students who engage in volunteering activities through UCL see a connection between this and UCL's mission of equipping 'graduates to be global citizens'
- 2,000 UCL students a year volunteer in some form or other. 50 students were identified and who were prepared to take part in the research
- Interviewed twice during the year
- Asked to reflect on their volunteering what they had learnt and gained
- Also how they perceive the term global citizenship and whether they see a connection.

Motivations for Volunteering

- Develop new skills such as communication skills
- Making a positive contribution to local community
- Something different from studies
- Help get better job

Types of Volunteering

- Alzheimer's Society
- Asian Womens Centre
- Arts Projects
- Save the Children
- Working with young people in Hackney
- Jewish Museum
- Language Clubs
- Mentoring students at school
- Law Centres
- Specialist health telephone support lines.

Skills Gained from Volunteering

- Communication skills- language skills particularly important for international students
- Inter-cultural understanding
- Organisational skills, use of time etc.
- Teamwork
- Skills that can help with specific career in say medicine related to working with different groups of people, learning to listen and understand peoples' concerns.

Student Perceptions of Global Citizenship

Wide variations in both level of, and understanding of the term:

- Being aware of your ethical and social responsibilities
- Being a student at UCL means you become a global citizen
- Being an active member of a community wherever you find yourself
- I come from hybrid culture background, speak several languages and have lived in 4 different countries so I suppose I am a global citizen

Linkages between volunteering and global Citizenship

- For majority not seen as that closely linked but on probing following themes did emerge:
- If see global citizenship in terms of social and community responsibility, then yes a link
- Trying to help others
- Volunteering is more about working with people whereas global citizenship is more of a personal journey

Evidence and the discourse around global citizenship

- Relationship between citizenship and global citizenship bring out more role of personal social engagement
- If volunteering seen in terms of social action, then clear linkages.
- Neo-liberal perspective relates to increasing global skills and competencies
- Cosmopolitan views of global citizenship relate to sense of concern for others,
- Critical perspective more related to forms of social action

Implications for Teacher Education

- Many teachers take part in forms of volunteering
- Having some volunteering experience can enable future teachers connect with the 'real world'
- Examples in UK and beyond of training teacher initiatives that connect to volunteering (Scoffham, 2014, Liddy ,2015)
- However training to be a teacher all-consuming leaving little space for volunteering.
- Very few IOE students engage in UCL volunteering

Reflections

- Many universities around the world using 'global citizenship' as a marketing tool.
- Few are making it real by bringing into the daily lives, learning and experiences of students.
- Examples where this has happened result of committed individuals and senior leadership support (Abdi and Shultz, 2014)
- Some universities including global citizenship modules for students.
- Need to encourage greater linkage between learning, personal experience and taking action

Thanks

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