Chapter 10
Fighting Hunger the Rights Way:
Using Videogames and Children's Human Rights Education as a Means of Promoting Global Citizenship

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ABSTRACT

This chapter will describe a recent novel approach to teaching children about world hunger from a child rights perspective. We will then analyze the success of this approach as a means of promoting effective global citizenship in the context of existing literature on citizenship education and children's rights education.

The question of how best to teach global citizenship values and behaviors is one that has received significant attention over the past few decades. Particular concerns have been expressed about the difficulties inherent in teaching ethics and values while maintaining cultural sensitivity. In addition, many approaches to global citizenship education have been criticized for their inability to engage students, and for their lack of significant outcomes. One approach that has been showing successes over the past few years is the teaching of citizenship through the teaching of children's rights. There are three primary advantages of a children's rights approach to global citizenship education.

The chapter will be grounded in theory and research with the WFP game and resource described as an example of how to make global citizenship education from a rights perspective engaging to students and non-threatening to teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Issues of globalization, ethics, and sustainability, have taken on increased importance over the past few decades. Perceived threats to established and embryonic democracies through the 1990s, unparalleled acts of terrorism through the 2000s, and frequent natural disasters in recent decades, have highlighted the urgency of effective global citizenship education in schools. Such education, however, has been lacking. In this chapter we describe one attempt to address this deficit through the development of a human rights-based thematic approach to teaching children about world hunger by capitalizing on their inherent interest in playing video games. We do so first through an examination of the goals of citizenship education and a model rights-based approach to teaching global citizenship. We then examine the potential of video games to engage students in learning about global issues, and the challenges faced by teacher resistance to change. Our chapter ends with a description of one approach that brings together children's human rights education and the use of video games. Our focus is on *Food Force*, a game developed by the World Food Programme to educate children about global hunger and humanitarian aid. In particular we examine the integration into regular curricula of *Food Force* within the context of children's human rights education. It is an approach that promises to be a successful form of global citizenship education; one which has the potential to generalize from what is learned in the classroom to community action and to greater global understanding.

TEACHING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

The essential aims of global citizenship education are to develop intercultural empathy, concern for global challenges, and the motivation to act for human rights, justice and peace, and against discrimination and inequities (LeRoux, 2001). The core teachings of global citizenship then should evoke an appreciation for human rights and for global ecological and economic interdependence. There is no debate on the imperative of such education (Bourke, 2009; Brown & Morgan, 2008; Ennals et al, 2009; Gaudelli & Fernekes, 2004; Howe & Covell, 2007). However, with the exception of some individual curricula (e.g., Bourke, 2009; Pike & Selby, 2000), there is little evidence of its existence. First, for the most part, citizenship education is narrowly focused on history, structures and processes of government, and adult national, rather than contemporaneous and international, citizenship rights and responsibilities (Howe & Covell, 2007). And human rights education most often focuses on historic rights violations such as the Holocaust and other genocides (Gaudelli & Fernekes, 2004) with little generalization to contemporary concerns. Second, the pedagogy generally has not modelled the democratic processes the students are told are important. Rote learning, a facts-based approach, with little opportunity for participatory learning or application to daily life, not only contradicts what is being taught (i.e. the importance of democratic processes), but also evokes boredom and disengagement in the student (Belton & Priyadharshini, 2007). Third, neither citizenship nor human rights education has been accorded much status, typically being seen as less important than education for global economic competitiveness and technological expertise (Anour, 2002; Majhanovich, 2002; Priestly, 2002). In consequence, as shown in the extensive international studies by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, (e.g., Torney-Purta, 2002, Schwille & Amadeo, 2002) much citizenship education has failed to achieve its goals.

More promising has been the comprehensive program of children's rights–based education, *Rights, Respect and Responsibility* (RRR), launched in Hampshire Education Authority in England in 2004. Schools in Hampshire have been restructured to be consistent with the principles

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