**From the weekly discussion forum**

**Topic 2: Global Citizenship**

**What do you think are the essential ideas or concepts to be included in a definition of 'global citizenship'?**

The definition of global citizenship encompasses a wide range of ideas and concepts. Nonetheless, there are some vital and outstanding elements among these. Elements such as diversity, equality, sustainability and critical thinking are vital when defining global citizenship. Diversity is the focal point in global citizenship. The acknowledgment of the diversity that characterizes the contemporary society is significant in promoting global understanding. In order to develop global citizenship, people from varying background must live and interact harmoniously in their everyday life. As a matter of fact, the understanding of this fact has promoted various scholars to recommend the re-socialization of children in learning institutions from a nationalistic to a global approach. This recommendation is aimed at depicting the dynamism of global citizenship (Rapoport, 2015).

The appreciation of diversity yields Equity and sustainability. The distribution of social resources should be done fairly. In the same manner, the utilization of such resources must be objectively restricted, so that they may benefit the future generations. According to Oxley and Morris (2013), this restricted utilization is known as the economic conception of global citizenship. Nonetheless, the attainment of the abovementioned requires critical thinking from all the people who promote the development of global citizenship. Indeed, the outlook of global citizenship is nurtured by learning to dismiss stereotypes and prejudiced myths.

**Topic 3 - Intercultural communication**

**a) In what ways can 'cultural stereotypes' be problematic for intercultural communication?**

**b) Have you experienced this yourself? If so, did you find it difficult to deal with?**

a) A stereotype is an individual whose perspective is limited by his/her belief system. On the other hand, a cultural stereotype is an individual who hold misinformed and false opinions regarding other cultures which differ from one’s own. Cultural stereotypes yield communication barriers, not only at a personal level but also at the emotional and intellectual levels. The rejection of other people’s point of view and the detestation of their beliefs yield fear, restricted perception and dominance. In the same vein, stereotyping lacks rational evaluation of facts and knowledge. As a result, while stereotypes, may communicate when compelled, they are not able to break barriers unless they learn and adopt the methodical breakdown of the facts.

I have definitely experienced stereotyping. People who originate from a different country or cultural background, such as Russia or Saudi Arabia, are always prone to stereotyping by the people from the mainstream society. Personally I have seen people questioning my integrity, or offering me their opinions about me as a way of despising me. Various stereotyping that I have witnessed are racial profiling, and discrimination. As a victim of stereotyping, I felt lonely and despised. In worst cases emotions generated by being a victim of stereotyping could build up and generate emotional instability. As a result, ways of removing the ignorance that yields stereotyping should be encouraged in order to promote harmonious co-existence of people from various backgrounds.

## Topic 4 - Intercultural communication and global citizenship at ( my uni name ).

Q5/ Regarding the problem of students’ feelings of isolation,

**a) Do you feel that a campus-based university, such as** (my uni name ) **University, is like a 'bubble': a place for living, studying, socialising and perhaps working, convenient but potentially isolating (Schweisfurth & Gu, 2009)?**

/(( my uni name )) is an institution that offers various opportunities to attain one’s potential. As such, personal responsibility is vital in achievement. On the other hand, when living in a new place and experiencing a different culture it becomes hard to socialize with people of different cultural backgrounds. However, given that my university has a multicultural environment; it acts as a platform for learning about other cultures, and developing cultural sensitivity. Furthermore, I have to work extra hard in order to familiarize myself with the new syllabuses and programs, thus most of the time I am busy. This notwithstanding, I still feel isolated sometimes, but I know that hard work will bring achievement, and subsequently the desire to socialize more and feel at home.

**b) How important is the Internet for you as a tool of communication? Would you say it ultimately causes you to feel, or be, more/less isolated?**

The internet is among the greatest achievements of technological advancement. The discovery of the internet has facilitated international communication and socializing platforms, and bridged the geographical gap between people. Nonetheless, the internet has compromised the human physical interactions, and promoted virtual interactions. As a result, being glued to the screens makes me feel withdrawn from the real world. As a result, I restrict my internet usage, and always endeavor not to let online interactions compromise my physical social interactions. This way, I am able to derive the benefits of the internet, while avoiding its negative effects; associated with its misusage and/or over usage.

**Reflective assignment**

**Introduction**

I found that interviewing the students was such an interesting and insightful experience. I conducted the interviews with two students. One of the students is pursing Bachelors in Information Technology in (my uni name). The other interviewee is pursuing a Bachelors degree in Commerce at RMIT. The interviews were very interactive, and as a result, I was able to generate precise discussion topics. Although both interviewees had differing educational and ethnic backgrounds, they depicted shared values regarding intercultural communication. Coincidentally, both interviewees had previously attended seminars on global citizenship and culture. As a result, the information they volunteered was insightful for me. In the same vein, the interview questions were related to both topics. My reflection will be based on four areas that pertain to the interview as discussed below.

**The Atmosphere of the Interview**

The idea of conducting an interview made me both excited and apprehensive. On the one side, being an extroverted person who is always endeavoring to widen my point of view in subjects of interest, I was excited about the process. On the other hand, I had never conducted an interview before, and I was asking myself many questions regarding the same. Nonetheless, I realized that the best way to overcome my fear was to try. I therefore started by interviewing some individuals outside the compass. However, the people I interviewed were hesitant to volunteer information, and I later learnt this was because I employed a very formal approach.

I searched the internet on how to conduct an interview, and I realized I was not utilizing the nonverbal communication. According to Stanton (2009), maintaining eye contact and putting on a smile is core when dealing with strangers. In my next interviews, I employed this approach, and it aided in creating a friendlier atmosphere, and thus the interviewees felt at ease and were ready to volunteer information. Being a good listener, I was able to get a lot of useful information. I also managed to probe in order to get deeper information, while at the same time maintaining boundaries and sensitivity. According to Busch (2006), interacting with strangers stimulates a response that enhances confidence. I experienced this effect by talking to strangers during the interviews. Besides, my conversancy in the subject I was interviewing generated an objective discussion, through which I was able to gather useful information. I also attributed the interviewee’s responsiveness to their keen interest on the subject of inquiry.

**Global Citizenship**

Even before the interview, I was appealed by the subject of global citizenship. As a result, I embarked on an online research in order to get a better impression of the subject. My research revealed that global citizenship in simple terms is a lifestyle that appreciates the diversities and interdependencies that shape the contemporary world. I also realized individual choices and actions contributed to the outcomes not only in the local, but also in this global community. This understanding was important in helping establish the way I would frame the topic. What is more, it was to my advantage that both the interviewees were conversant with the subject, and thus they offered insightful contribution. The interviewee from RMIT had participated in a seminar about global citizenship in his university.

I started by sharing my learned definition of the subject, by defining a global citizen as an individual who recognizes that he/she is living in an emerging global community, and who can actively contribute to nurturing the values on which such a community is founded (Dower & Williams, 2016). My definition was insightful because he testified that he previously had a problem when trying to express global citizenship to other people. He pointed out that many people think that global citizenship would replace the original culture of an individual.

The subsequent interview involved a student from ( my uni name ) University. Likewise, the interviewee was conversant with global citizenship. Nonetheless, he had a varying point of veiw on the subject. He viewed global citizenship as a core element of the utopian society; which was visualized by the Greek thinkers, and which has not yet been achieved. I came to learn that his perception might have been influenced by other people, whom he had tried to teach about the idea of global citizenship. I tried to explain to him that fostering global citizenship would allow people to perform their social responsibility towards the creation of better communities that would be governed by equality, justice and sustainability values.

**English as a Global Language**

English language is commonly used language around the world. The interviewee from RMIT pointed out that language is a platform for emotional connection. As such, he opined that native languages are vital in generating a special feeling about one’s roots. As a result, he felt that the English language should not be allowed to take the place of the local languages lest the diversity yielded by language would result in monotony. On the contrary, the interviewee from ((my uni name )) felt that the English language should be upheld above the local languages, citing that most resources are in English. Also, he indicated that English can help one to explore numerous resources on the internet, in the quest for knowledge.

**Intercultural Communication**

The Australian context is typified by diversity, uniqueness and tolerance. As a result, I found the topic on intercultural communication relevant to this context. As a matter of fact, when I enrolled at an Australian university, I was excited about the experience of studying in a multicultural environment. Dervin (2011) recognized Intercultural communication as an essential element of the human society development.Based on the globalization of the contemporary world, the role of intercultural communication has turned out to be a vital element in the life of each and every person.

Both interviewees were familiar with the topic of intercultural communication. Their opinions about this topic were also unanimous. They both expressed the significance of having an open mind when perceiving other cultures. Their opinions also made me realize that some obsolete beliefs which are founded on superstitions may yield abhorrence of other cultures, especially for people who hold a progressive outlook. Nevertheless meaningful cultural norms should be accepted, while the outdated beliefs should be tolerated (Cushner & Brislin, 2012). Before the interview, a person I was talking to about intercultural communication gave a negative response, and insisted that it led to the dilution of one’s culture. This reaction would have been yielded by the failure to understand culture evolution.

Every culture is ushered in by the demise or the evolution of the preceding culture. Evolution of these cultures has played a major role in social advancement. What is more, the new culture adopts the useful elements of the previous culture. Just like humans have always endeavoured to improve their abilities, the evolution of cultures is basically the enhancement of the previous cultures. It follows that, communication is significant in looking at alien cultures from a rational approach. I was relieved that the two interviewees had a positive perception of intercultural communication. Besides, the information they offered about this subject was insightful, and it widened my point of view on the subject. I realized that hindrance to intercultural communication holds back social and human progress.

**Recommendations**

The research I conducted during this interview, as well as the insightful information I obtained from the interview helped me develop several ideas which may be useful:

1. Learning institutions holds an important role in fostering cultural cooperation and tolerance. Therefore, learning institutions should organize events and programs where students from various cultural backgrounds can come together and offer their opinions on this issue. Such events should be geared towards building cultural awareness, sensitivity, and tolerance, as well as promoting the harmonious co-existence in a multi-cultural community.

2. Local, national and international administrations should politically encourage peaceful co-existence instead of promoting far-right ideas. Also, a balance should be struck between globalized and local cultural perspectives. Measures to create awareness of diversity should be enacted.

3. The corporate sector should not be left behind in promoting unity in diverity. Organizations should organize events such as sports aimed at promoting unity in diversity, and creating cultural diversity.

The above recommendations would play a major role in creating awareness about diversity and the importance of peaceful and harmonious co-existence

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**(interview questions)** (specimen 1)

* If you have a chance to learn a language, what language would like to learn rather than English? Why?
* Have you heard of the term “global citizenship”? What do think it means?
* In your opinion: do see most people are eligible being (global citizen)? Why?
* Do you see or think of yourself as a global citizen? How? Why?
* In what ways can 'cultural stereotypes' be problematic for intercultural communication?    b) Have you experienced this yourself? If so, did you find it difficult to deal with?
* Do you think through the use of technology, a person can become a global citizen? How?
* Do you have any desire/curiosity to experience or learn a culture rather than yours? What culture? Why? Do you think successful communication with people in that culture is challenging you?
* In your view, can campus life in Australia help you develop your English language skills and/ or intercultural competence? In what ways?

**Interview questions** (specimen 2)

* If you have a chance to learn a language, what language would like to learn rather than English? Why?
* If there was a vote on which language to include as a third 'working' language, after English and French, at the UN, which would you vote for and why?
* Have you heard of the term “global citizenship”? What do think it means?
* In your opinion: do see most people are eligible being (global citizen)? Why?
* Do you see or think of yourself as a global citizen? How? Why?
* In what ways can 'cultural stereotypes' be problematic for intercultural communication?    b) Have you experienced this yourself? If so, did you find it difficult to deal with?
* Do you have any desire/curiosity to experience or learn a culture rather than yours? What culture? Why? Do you think successful communication with people in that culture is challenging you?
* In RMIT: which group of people you think you most likely to make friendship with? Which group you can’t make it?