Global Learning and the Making of Citizen Diplomats

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Abstract:
This chapter addresses the need for study abroad programs that prepare students for moral responsibility and democratic civic engagement in an increasingly globalized world. We examine how notions of citizenship, democratic education, and civic engagement can be expanded to a global knowledge community beyond the borders of home campuses and countries. This entails recognition of a global ecology of learning based on reciprocity, recognition of civic identities, and responsibility for one’s actions and representations abroad. We explore the literature on global citizenship associated with study abroad and global civil society in order to understand how the norms, affiliations and markers of citizenship are being redefined. We conclude with a proposal that responsible, high road study abroad entails preparing students as global citizen diplomats, representing their own culture while developing the intercultural awareness to comprehend, respect, and represent the perspectives of another culture.

Introduction

We begin with two paradoxical observations about American higher education. First, American higher education has deep civic roots, although the full promise of these roots remains unrealized. From the early congregational colleges to Thomas Jefferson’s founding of the University of Virginia, American higher education was founded with an expressed public purpose (Sullivan, 2000; Snyder, 2008). For 200 years there have been debates over what this means and should mean for undergraduate education, faculty research, and community-campus partnerships. Most recently, this conversation has resurfaced around movements to create “engaged campuses.” This work has called for everything from much more fluidity between the college campuses and surrounding communities to a refocus of faculty research and teaching around community-based research and service-learning (Mathews, 2008; Ehrlich, 2000). At the forefront of these efforts has been a more purposeful and intentional movement among educators and administrators for campus-wide civic education efforts.

Second, American higher education is clearly internationalizing, but we do not really know what that means. Open many websites or strategic plans, and you will find text on how that university is trying to internationalize. Yet, talk to most Presidents and Provosts and they will admit that they are not really sure what that means or how to actually do it. There is a lot of work going on. Most of it is very well intentioned. But too much of it feels like the proverbial “spinning of the wheels.”
We seek to connect the growing body of literature on civic education to this process of internationalization, particularly in the growth of study abroad. The fundamental starting place for our analysis is that study abroad shares many aspects with civic education as both are often incorporated as part of a campus community engagement agenda, service learning initiative, or set of courses designed to instill democratic education. Both frequently involve practical, problem-solving action with disenfranchised communities or grassroots organizations. These two fields, study abroad and civic education, emphasize learning beyond the confines of the classroom to include the knowledge gained by working directly with local communities.

As importantly, civic education and study abroad need each other if both are to flourish in the next decade. Despite the tremendous amount of civic education work on college campuses, it is not clear that most thinking about civic education will actually produce the types of citizens we need in the 21st century. Too much civic education focuses narrowly on traditional approaches where students are presented information about American history and democratic theory. Educational, psychological and sociological research suggests that there is little correlation between knowledge about democracy and active civic engagement (Gibson, 2001; Colby et al, 2003). Knowledge is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for active citizenship.

Likewise, study abroad needs civic education. While the growth of study abroad is impressive, it is not clear that, as currently practiced, it will sufficiently benefit either students or communities. Study abroad in the United States can either be an extractive enterprise that takes advantage of international partners for our benefit, or it can be a reciprocal enterprise that benefits local communities as well as our students and institutions. It all depends on the models we use, the goals we make explicit, and the learning outcomes that are achieved. The civic education literature can help guide and shape our thinking about appropriate concepts, models and aspirations.

In the rest of this chapter, we take up the following two questions: What does it mean to prepare students to be citizens in the 21st century? And what role should study abroad play in this process? We build our analysis by exploring and then weaving together three concepts: civic education in study abroad, responsible citizen diplomacy, and what we call a global ecology of learning.

Exploring Civic Education: Preparing students for civic agency and public work

Any definition of civic education must start with a notion of what it is we are hoping to instill within our students and for what purposes we hope to instill it. We want to propose that civic education is fundamentally about preparing students with the capacities and commitments to do public work. Embedded in this statement are some simple assumptions. First, education should prepare people to do the ongoing work of creating and re-creating the places where they live and the communities that anchor their lives. A healthy society is fundamentally dependent upon a citizenry that possesses the capacity and interest to work together as problem solvers and co-producers of public goods (Boye and Kari, 2000). Second, civic education is a call for an educational system that generates and sustains the capacity for people and institutions to work with others to produce the public goods of our shared community and everyday lives.
At the core of this conception is what Harry Boyte and others have called public work (Boyte, 2008, 2004; Boyte and Kari, 2000; Weinberg, 2005). This conception emphasizes the need for ordinary citizens to come together to produce things or create processes with lasting civic value. Public work is what occurs when ordinary citizens come together, often across differences, to take the actions required to build and sustain our basic public goods and resources. They solve common problems and create common things with lasting value (Boyte, 2004). This work may be paid or voluntary. It may be as part of one’s job or as part of one’s neighborhood involvements. In perhaps the clearest statement, Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, and Stephens state, civic education is about developing young people who

…recognize himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric and therefore consider social problems to be at least partially his or her own; such an individual is willing to see the moral and civic dimensions of issues, to make and justify informed moral and civic judgments, and to take action where appropriate. (Colby et al, 2003, p.17).

This framing shifts the question of civic education in two ways that are particularly relevant to study abroad.

The first is a shift from civic education as merely a sound understanding of American history and the constitution, or even democratic theory. It reframes the question of civic education as: how do we create situations through education for students to acquire the skills, values, knowledge base, and interest to do public work that can anchor healthy democratic communities in the 21st century?

The second is a shift in theories of social change. Too much theorizing, and hence teaching, is embedded with guilt, nihilism and critique without solutions. Students are presented with case studies and theories about social problems and all the failed attempts to solve them. Or they learn of the historic dimensions of social issues such as racism or colonialism, and the need to “own” these problems, without fully understanding the subjective realities of these issues as lived by diverse communities. Likewise, they are immersed in their own campus communities where they are surrounded by professionals who solve problems for students who receive this help passively. Unwittingly, we send the message to students that there is not much they can do to make the world a better place, because the problems are too large and their skill sets are much too weak. We are then confounded when students appear disengaged.

Much of the recent theorizing around civic education has used concepts of civic agency to articulate a different way of thinking about education for civic engagement. Civic education instead creates enabling learning environments where students develop hope that they can work with others across difference to solve problems. Citizens replace professionals as the drivers of change, and hope replaces nihilism as the prevailing view about the prospects for change. In a recent article, Boyte captures this as follows:

At the center of civic learning is what can be called civic politics. Civic politics builds people’s capacities for open-ended citizen-centered work …. In this sense politics is not partisan warfare but close to the opposite, a method that humans have developed to
negotiate different, sometimes conflicting interests and views in order to get things done. The aim is not to do away with conflict -- politics sometimes surfaces submerged clashes of interest. Civic politics aims rather to avoid violence, to contain conflicts, to generate common work on common challenges, and to achieve beneficial public outcomes. (Boyte, 2008).

One implication of connecting civic education to study abroad is a powerful proposition for the future of higher education: that learning intercultural awareness and understanding of the global community is critical for the mission of higher education to prepare capable and engaged citizens.

Study abroad proponents argue that international learning can be a cornerstone for an undergraduate education that prepares students to be engaged and informed citizens in an increasingly globalized world. This is part of how we have justified the expense of programs on our campuses. In our view, study abroad is the ideal place to develop the type of agency-driven civic education we have described. We have an enormous opportunity today to build a strong network of supporters: the numbers of students going abroad has increased by almost ten percent a year for several years as student seek to gain the skills needed to be successful in today’s world. A recent poll of college-bound students found that interest in international learning experiences is strong and more than fifty-five percent expect to study abroad as part of their college experience (American Council on Education, 2008).

As study abroad becomes increasingly integrated into U.S. undergraduate curricula, we have a moment to broaden the base of supporters on campuses, while also ensuring that study abroad, when combined with the goals of civic education, can lead the revitalization of higher education in a manner consistent with its original mission. We propose that successful efforts to seize this moment will require us to find the high road of study abroad by identifying the best practices, ethical norms and quality learning experiences that support this effort.

**Exploring Study Abroad: Finding the high road**

A growing body of empirical research suggests that students who have traveled and studied overseas in carefully developed international education programs have greater capacity to develop communicative capacities in languages, interact appropriately in other cultures and acquire problem-solving strategies for international living (Engle and Engle, 2004; Segalowitz et al., 2004). Many of the capacities needed to compete in what Thomas Friedman (2005) describes as today’s “flat” world are acquired through international experiences. We would do well to remember that the desirable outcomes associated with studying abroad are neither automatic nor guaranteed under current conditions, nor can we measure success only by the number of students sent abroad. We need to be intentional and purposeful.

We can think about the practices, norms, experiences and outcomes of study abroad by distinguishing between what we call low road and high road programs. This distinction of high and low road models is more commonly used to define community economic development initiatives. Low road often refers to efforts by communities and firms to generate more economic activity by enhancing efficiencies, often by squeezing costs while making as few investments in
people or production techniques as possible. High road refers to efforts to generate more activity by utilizing the best workers and latest technology to produce products with a high value (Harrison, 1997, 2004). High road organizations emphasize quality control and product innovations over efficiencies. They also rely on high quality labor that can identify, analyze and solve problems around product design, production, distribution, marketing, and finance. Most often, high road efforts are based on participatory, sustainable and community-focused principles (Swinney, 1998).

In many ways the high road/low road distinction could be used as a concept to explore larger changes in higher education, although that is well beyond the scope of this paper. Here, we want to use the distinction to tease out what we believe are fundamentally different principles for different types of study abroad programs.

Under low road models, universities and programs send college students into the world, with little preparation, for culturally thin experiences. Students make minimal effort to learn local languages or customs, travel in large groups, and are taught in American-only classrooms. They live and go to bars with other Americans, often drinking too much and getting into trouble. They see local sights through the windows of traveling buses. Far from experiencing another culture deeply and on its own terms, these students (at best) simply get the American college experience in a different time zone. It is worth noting as well that many of the study abroad destinations known as “fun” don’t even require language study and offer relatively minimal challenges to students’ sense of place and culture. These also happen to be the places with the highest percentage of students.

High road study abroad programs are developed to ensure deep cultural and linguistic immersion. Students are oriented to understand and respect local customs and encouraged to take responsibility for projecting a positive image of Americans. High road programs ensure that students become part of the culture by staying with local families and giving back to local communities. These types of programs are working to create programs where students attend classes and participate in activities with local students and are taught by local staff who are paid fair wages and offer an inside view of the culture. Students learn that they return to the U.S. with an obligation to stay active, help others learn from their experiences, and push for better understanding from their academic institutions, future workplaces, and political representatives with regard to the world beyond our borders. These students become young intercultural emissaries, global citizens able to adapt and contribute to a complex world.

Without claiming that SIT programs accomplish the above model perfectly, we can offer an example of what a high road program looks like:

Naana Opoku-Agyemang, an African scholar and former dean of graduate studies at University of Cape Coast, led multiple groups of 10 to 18 American students studying in Ghana for a semester through World Learning’s SIT Study Abroad program. The students start the semester with an intense language seminar in Fanti, the local language. This leads into a series of classes and seminars on the African Diaspora taught by African scholars. During this period, students take a number of excursions, where they spend time immersed in cultural dialogues with Ghanaians—elders, chiefs, healers, scholars, students, families and townspeople—in settings
ranging from classrooms to remote villages. Throughout their visit, they live with Ghanaian families and work on community problems. They spend the last four weeks of their semester abroad doing an independent research project -- a deep, field-based exploration of one aspect of their experience.

“The program is designed with the hope that students will remember that a story is never complete until all sides have been told and heard,” says Opoku-Agyemang. Students should leave Ghana understanding how people are shaped by their historical and current realities, and how to bridge those differences in daily life. A student who went on the program a few years ago wrote, “At the end of the program, I finally began to view myself as a citizen of the world. I learned how to adapt to another culture without making it change for me.”

The distinction between high road and low road is not about length of the program, where the program takes place, or to some extent cost. For example, we both can name semester long and one week programs that fall into both categories. Rather, the distinction rests on the fundamental principles that guide a program. We want to claim that a high road approach to study abroad starts with a focus on deep cultural and linguistic immersion and should be mindful of four principles:

1. Commitment to scale and access. Study Abroad programs face the challenge of being large enough to accommodate student demand, small enough not to overwhelm the host community, diverse enough to represent U.S. demographics and flexible enough in funding and curricula to provide access to underrepresented populations. Currently, less than eight percent of full-time enrolled American college students study abroad, despite polling data that suggest most have an interest in doing so. Of that small percentage, less than nine percent are black or Hispanic, even though these students constitute twenty-five percent of all college students. Stated differently, about fifty percent of the students who study abroad come from just one hundred universities and colleges. We need to do better. As we seek to enroll an even larger share of U.S. university students, we need to design programs and financial opportunities that ensure wide diversity in manageably-sized programs.

2. Emphasis on exposing students to less-traveled, less-understood destinations and themes. Two-thirds of students who study abroad go to Europe. Only fifteen percent go to Latin America, seven percent to Asia, three percent to Africa, and only one half of one percent to the Middle East. As geopolitical and economic power shifts, study abroad needs to keep up by including emerging regions of importance. It is critical that students understand how the majority of the world’s population is sustained. Of 6.5 billion inhabitants, approximately 1.4 billion, or about 20% of the world’s population, live on less than US$ 1.25 per day. In developing regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, this percent often reaches levels of 50% or higher (World Bank, 2008). How our world will address the resource needs, geopolitical conflicts, health and welfare dilemmas of our growing global population needs to be part of every college curriculum. Of course students should still study in Europe, but they should go on programs where they are challenged by important themes in contemporary European society, and learn the
necessary linguistic and cultural skills to comprehend these issues from local perspectives.

3. Plans for student “re-entry” and opportunities for lifelong engagement. Students return from abroad filled with energy and excitement, often transformed by their experiences, but struggle to find opportunities and outlets for channeling their newfound energies. We need to harness and direct this energy towards lifelong learning, growth, and engagement in communities back home. There has been a tremendous amount of chatter within higher education around civic engagement and undergraduate education. Harnessed correctly, study abroad may be as close to a solution as we will find. In a subsequent section, we will describe how learning the values of global citizenship are best practiced by example within one’s own home community.

4. Commitment to reciprocity. In this context, reciprocity might be defined as operating our programs in ways that strengthen the partners (e.g., community groups, individuals, and communities) we depend upon for the vitality of our programs. International education can either be perceived as an enterprise with little benefit to the rest of the world, or a reciprocal exchange that has economic and social benefits for host countries and communities. High road providers work in partnership with host communities. They contribute needed revenues, networks, and other resources to these communities, while also maintaining a small and respectful footprint.

Some study abroad providers address these principles by paying attention to how they run their operations. They purposefully use local companies, keep the footprint small, and compensate local staff with good wages, benefits and professional development opportunities. Other providers are using community-based research and service-learning projects to connect students to local development efforts. But reciprocity can and should mean much more. For example, we (SIT) recently signed an agreement with the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB). RUB is hosting SIT Study Abroad undergraduate students for one month in Bhutan. In return, we are offering our network of over 250 colleges and university to serve as a portal for RUB into American higher education. We arranged a tour for RUB administrators to visit their counterparts at a range of public and private universities. In this form, reciprocity connects partners in loops that benefit American universities, study abroad providers, and community partners with clear intentionality and purpose.

Exploring the Ecology of Learning: Building a global community of education
Thus far, we have described practices of the high road approach to study abroad which involve immersion in another culture in order to bridge perspectives through language learning, lived experiences and participation in collaborative work – all based on principles of reciprocity and respect. We have tried to situate these practices within efforts to reinvigorate the U.S. academy with its historical vision of civic engagement and education of citizens for an informed and responsible democracy. In this section, we argue that these educational principles can serve as a foundation for international education as the “campus” of academe extends beyond the national
and political borders of a country, requiring new conceptualizations of citizenship and community.

Dewey’s early work on experiential education and democracy has been a seminal influence for educators seeking to demonstrate how knowledge gained through civic engagement and community action enhances the more traditional academic learning of the classroom (Dewey, 1990/1899; Dewey, 1938). Within this education for democracy literature, Cremin (1976) proposed a model of open, community- or field-based learning referred to as the “ecology of learning”. Longo (2007) recently reintroduced this concept of an ecology of education in his assessment of how community leaders, neighborhoods and organizations focused on social change are essential for the revitalization of the public, democratic mission of the university.

Longo describes this ecology of education as the interconnected communities and dimensions of everyday life in which social learning and knowledge creation take place. He explores a set of case studies as examples of how knowledge and learning from outside the academy can be integral to the educational mission of higher education.

Education in the community represents a particular way of connecting the many places in which people learn and act collectively; it signifies a way of educating that calls on democratic community building practices, and it utilizes nonprofessional expertise. … (It) can also help leverage the diverse ways citizens act for positive change in communities. In short education in the community can serve as a foundation not only for meaningful learning, but also for a vibrant democracy. (Longo, 2007, pp.10-11)

The ecology of education can be used as a guiding concept to develop sound models for educational activities beyond the borders of our local communities and nation, through study abroad, internships, direct enrollment or employment in another country. Study abroad, as a component of the undergraduate curriculum that takes place outside the formal classroom domain of a student’s home campus shares much in common with other extracurricular learning activities such as service learning, civic life, public leadership, and community learning. It expands the borders and space of learning in higher education.

As we described earlier, while there is a call for the internationalization of higher education on most college campuses, the civic engagement literature is still almost entirely focused on the domestic, U.S. communities of students or the university neighborhood. Study abroad is rarely associated with this literature on campus civic engagement. Connections with international learning are increasingly found in the offices of service learning and internships, yet these are too often viewed as marginal or secondary to the mission of the university and its faculty. Yet, the study abroad experiences of high-quality, culturally embedded programs are similar to the civic education experiences described by Longo. As described in the example of SIT Study Abroad, students are open to learning from community practitioners, are able to connect lived experiences with more formal academic knowledge, and learn to build the human connections of trust and collaboration critical to innovative civic action.

Several models exist of how community-based ecologies of learning can provide the structure of educational programs both within the U.S. and in international communities. One of these,
HECUA, the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs, grew from an attempt by students and faculty of Augsburg College in 1968 to understand and address issues of U.S. urban unrest and inequality by creating a learning community, entitled the Crisis Colony, based in the inner-city neighborhoods of Minneapolis (HECUA, 2008a). Students were taught by community leaders and activists, and lived in the neighborhoods to learn directly from the community, with the goal of working toward social change. This is the kind of U.S.-based community learning model described by Longo in which experiential learning leads to civic engagement. The HECUA website describes this as: “HECUA learning is transformational. Our teaching philosophy takes students and faculty into the community to learn from practitioners of social change. The result is informed and engaged student citizens.” (HECUA, 2008a)

HECUA has taken this model and transferred it to international settings in ways that demonstrate how an ecology of learning approach can be extended to international education and learning. Like SIT Study Abroad, the students learn from a diverse range of local communities and leaders. They have opportunities to volunteer or undertake internships that aim to instill a greater understanding of the challenges of global inequities and cultural change. These programs are also based on carefully chosen partnerships in which a commitment to respect the learning that takes place in a local community is an important part of the pedagogical model. HECUA programs formalize this process through the international inclusion of experiential learning outcomes in which reflection on local practice is a core element of the program. While each of the four semester-long programs offered during 2007-2008 vary slightly in structure, they share a similarity in which reflection on individual learning is placed in context of how one learns to interact in an ethical manner within the local community. For example, as expressed in the curriculum of the HECUA Scandinavian Urban Studies Program, “… you are not simply encouraged to view issues from the neck up, but are encouraged to view yourself as an actor within society with values, decisions and choices which affect our communities, systems, processes and society.” (HECUA, 2008).

The HECUA model helps us understand how a community-based ecology of learning can be created outside the U.S. as easily as within a U.S.-based community. It is delivered in a way that places greater emphasis on the student learning and reflection from the experience. Other programs, many of which are short-term or informal faculty-led programs, emphasize a greater focus on actively contributing to community change through participant action. The student-based group Engineers without Borders (2008), for example, identifies communities which seek technical advice and support around sustainable engineering and appropriate technology needs, which student groups then organize around and support during short-term field visits overseen by faculty and local technical advisors.

Another example is an informal faculty-led effort by Professor Dan Baker, of the Community Development and Applied Economics Program at the University of Vermont (UVM). Professor Baker’s research in Honduras led him to identify rubber tire-burning techniques in sugar cane production as having serious detrimental impacts on the local community. He sought to share innovations in Vermont’s own maple sugar burning techniques with the rural Honduran sugar-cane farmers over the course of personal visits, short-term research stints, and the inclusion of a few student internships (Wakefield, 2004). The connection of UVM students eager to learn from the Honduran farmers, and the Honduran farmers’ own persistence in seeking ongoing support
from Baker and his team, led to a powerful mutual educational learning laboratory with real-life outcomes for the local community in terms of environmental sustainability and improved livelihoods. This project was sustained over several years through the passion, enthusiasm and commitment to shared goals that marks the best examples of education for civic engagement (Baker, 2007).

The organization Living Routes provides still another model of an ecology of learning through programs that instill values of sustainable development through inclusion of students in intentional communities referred to as “eco-villages”. These communities range from the long-standing Findhorn community of northern Scotland, which has practiced a spiritually informed environmental activism since the early 20th century, to indigenous villages welcoming of international student groups, to the educational community of Ecoversidade in Brazil committed to the dissemination and promotion of sustainable living practices in association with local universities, research institutes and local communities. The commitment of Living Routes to education for sustainability is through the recognition of the need for community itself as a precondition for social change.

“Ever more profound and rapid technological advances are outpacing our collective wisdom and maturity. In other words, we currently know more about computers than about compassion -- or community. Of course we need to train scientists. But also, and perhaps more importantly, we need to train community builders - social scientists - with the knowledge, skills, and commitment to create sustainable models of living and working together in peaceful and productive ways.” (Living Routes, 2008).

The most significant pedagogical contribution of the civic engagement literature is the notion that education cannot be limited to the formal institutions of schools in isolation from society. This is particularly so with democratic education, in which individuals learn to engage with diverse communities, to participate in discursive and deliberative democratic processes, and to assume the moral responsibility of making decisions for the common good and not just their own individual well-being. If international education and study abroad share one thing in common with the work in U.S. universities around civic engagement, it is this expansion of the learning community beyond the borders and classrooms of the host institution.

The principles connecting this ecology of learning to aspirations of democracy and civic engagement provide a pedagogical framework for study abroad. However, the engagement with communities, political systems, cultures and notions of democracy beyond our borders calls for a critical rethinking of the notions of citizenship and, in particular, what we mean by the notion of responsible global citizens in the interconnected yet intensely local world of the 21st century. This also requires critical reflection on what we mean by global citizenship.

**Linking the Ideals of Global Citizenship with Education for Responsible Citizen Diplomacy**

A returned SIT Study Abroad student recently published an essay in the Chronicle of Higher Education entitled “American Students Abroad Can’t Be ‘Global Citizens’” (Zemach-Bersin, 2008). Zemach-Bersin describes her experience of living with a local exile Tibetan family in cramped quarters with limited food and resources, yet being treated as an honored guest. She
realizes when offering them the cash envelope in exchange for their hospitality that this represents the privilege of western visitors to consume commodified culture. And, she rightfully asks, if study abroad is promoted as education for global citizenship,

“… such an education may inadvertently be a recipe for the perpetuation of global ignorance, misunderstanding, and prejudice.” … (T)here is a vast discrepancy between the rhetoric of international education and the reality of what many students like myself experience while abroad.” (Zemach-Bersin, 2008).

This student’s critique is an important warning to those of us in study abroad who promote abstract ideals of global citizenship without either a clear understanding of what we mean by the term, or what the expectations of education for global citizenship imply. Examining the power dynamics underlying global citizenship, as Zemach-Bersin implores, compels us to consider how we can create mutually beneficial, reciprocal and respectful relationships with local communities. We cannot begin to educate within a wider global ecology of education without such relationships as they are central to the ideals of democratic civic engagement.

We attempt to answer some of the questions posed by this critique: What do we mean by global citizenship? Is it limited to those who can study abroad? What about students who do not have the resources, time or preparation to study abroad? What about members of the local community? How do we achieve goals of citizenship through the public work of building global learning communities?

Hans Schattle (2008) begins to answer some of these questions with his exploration of the practices of global citizenship as expressed by individuals and institutions who identify with this ideal. Schattle’s examples include numerous case studies of individuals influenced directly by study abroad or citizen exchange experiences. As we look at how high road study abroad programming can address both the critiques and positive elements expressed in global citizenship, we can learn from his examples of educators and students reflecting on how international exchange sharpens one’s own sense of identity and belonging through an awareness of global responsibilities.

Schattle approaches the subject of global citizenship as everyday lived practices articulated and espoused by a range of social, corporate and institutional actors. He describes it as an emergent “way of living and thinking” with roots in classical ideals of cosmopolitanism that preceded national identities. His examples treat the concept of global citizenship almost as a verb, involving an ongoing commitment to and progression toward a vision of global citizenship. Along the way, the process includes resistance and reflective critique of the notion of global citizens as well. Through interviews, discourse analysis and empirical observations of a range of practices, he identifies three primary characteristics of global citizenship as a practice: 1) awareness that is both self-awareness and external awareness, 2) responsibility expressed as “principled decision-making” and “solidarity across humanity”, and 3) participation in public affairs focused on accountability and social change. (Schattle, 2008, pp.25-46).

Study abroad, at its best, is our strongest vehicle for creating an enabling environment for students to develop these characteristics. Schattle quotes two women whose study abroad in
Africa was influential, but they were reluctant to call themselves “global citizens”; if anything the powerful awareness of other cultures and values gained in Kenya and Senegal led them to emphasize “… how their respective African immersion experiences reinforced their American citizen identities.” (Schattle, 2008, p.15). SIT Study Abroad, HECUA and other like-minded providers often claim that study abroad can help students first and foremost understand themselves, the world around them, and their place in that world. As hope for our students, these two women returned home to the U.S. to reengage in their communities in new ways, informed by a broader moral responsibility that would continue to influence their personal and professional lives throughout a range of communities in which they were active.

Several of Schattle’s examples highlight the role of educational exchange experiences that provide clarity around an individual’s own national or civic identity. In many cases, for students or professionals working abroad, living with a family or host community can frequently provide contrasting moments in intercultural encounters when one is made even more acutely aware of one’s own identities and civic origins. These cannot be avoided or forgotten in cross-cultural interactions, especially when they represent relations of political or social power to the members of the other culture.

As students engage with communities abroad, notions of global citizenship provide powerful transformative opportunities to explore one’s own identity, lifelong commitments and allegiances. Schattle’s research confirms the views of many education abroad professionals -- that as students from the US leave the immediate communities of their home towns and college campuses, they build new allegiances that form part of their identity as global citizens. These observations are consistent with much of the current political theory of global citizenship which finds that through a host of global phenomena -- such as transnational social movements, migration, internet social networking, and ethnic identity formations -- the very notion of citizenship is being redefined. (Benhabib et al, 2007; Kabeer, 2005).

The literature on global citizenship speaks directly to this issue of whether citizenship is understood in terms of membership in a formal community. Traditionally, citizenship has been associated with full membership and rights of a nation. Yet, even within this definition, political scientists have found fault with the effectiveness of such citizenship when practices of discrimination, marginalization and cultural difference have acted to limit full access to citizenship (Kabeer, 2005). The research and literature in citizenship studies associated with globalization finds that as global networks of technology, corporate structures, social movements and multilateral cooperative agreements increase, the role and reach of the nation-state is also changing. The impact of this, along with historical shifts in post-colonial identities, migration and the role of communication technology in uniting diaspora communities, are among many of the influences leading to emergent understandings of citizenship de-linked from that of national identity. In some national territories, such as Canada, the view that individuals and communities can have multiple cultural and civic identities is gaining social and political acceptance (Kymlicka, 2007).

Where does this leave us? For the practices of study abroad, the learning of intercultural awareness and respect can and should lead to this reciprocity and commitment to action in re-entry that form a foundation for the high road programming discussed in the previous sections.
Much of the gain as global citizens may actually take place through the re-entry process. At SIT Study Abroad, our students often return with a powerful affective identification with global citizenship as well as the resistance and discomfort with privilege associated with it in some instances. Together, this tension can be the basis for education in global civic responsibility and engagement as students grapple with belonging across multiple communities. The global ecology of learning extends the learning environment to include community partners, but this is not the same of the construction of a new formal community.

In a sense, students come to see citizenship as the emergent meanings of participation in and belonging across communities. They are able to identify with the possibility of multiple and overlapping citizenships (Kymlicka, 1995; Taylor, 1992; Carens, 2000). Williams (2007) describes these as the “citizenships of globalization”, a term that provides a way to examine citizenship through differing theorizations of its transnational, cosmopolitan, flexible, diasporic or post-national meanings. Benhabib, Shapiro and Petranović (2007) assess this work with questions relevant to international education and the quest for the meaning of global citizenship. They seek to understand: “… why people identify and affiliate themselves with the political projects that they do, how and why they do, and why these allegiances change, and how and why they should change.” (Benhabib et al, 2007).

The student organization ENGAGE exemplifies this search on the part of returned study abroad students to maintain connections, multiple allegiances, and reciprocal work across communities from a base on their home campuses and/or hometowns. Formed in collaboration with their teacher-activists still living at their international program sites, former students convert their initial learning experiences into formal transnational change efforts, such as the Fair Trade Rice or Democracy in Burma initiatives. As expressed on their website, this organization models the kind of citizen action linking home communities to the communities abroad that are their global ecologies of learning:

“A growing number of US-based study abroad programs are offering students the opportunity to learn about issues of social justice, human rights, and environmental sustainability in a global context. Further, these programs are directly exposing their students to communities and social movements who are working to create another world. ENGAGE emerged from the energy of these study abroad students when they returned home, as they struggled to answer challenging questions: As students, how do we work in our home communities towards social justice and sustainability? How do we remain connected to, and work alongside, the communities and social movements that inspired us while abroad? How do we turn our education into action?” (ENGAGE, 2008).

It is these allegiances and affiliations that are at the heart of new understandings of citizenship and identity. At the same time, while shaped and informed by global phenomena, these allegiances have powerful connections to place – to locally grounded communities and locales - that respect both difference and mutual obligations (Maier, 2007; Sassen, 2006; Stoddard and Cornwell, 2003). This theoretical work informs and supports Schattle’s empirical accounts of the discursive practices and concepts articulated by individuals and institutions in the language of global citizenship.
We believe this approach to global citizenship, based in an awareness of one’s own community or site of affiliation, is critical for any pedagogical approach to global citizenship. We have started to think about this as preparing students for citizenship as citizen diplomacy. Students in this approach learn to value intercultural experiences, dialogue and understanding of the other, then are inspired by their interactions and educational experiences to share and communicate this knowledge of other cultures and human issues to those in their home community. Through educational leadership in the “re-entry” phase, this knowledge can lead to new forms of civic engagement around global issues. It is this engagement that is often referred to as “global citizenship”. It is not a membership claim or “belonging” to a non-territorial polity, but a statement of committed action.

We find that the discussion around education for global citizenship leads to the idea of education for responsible citizen diplomacy as we explore this meaning of citizen action across and with multiple communities. As with citizenship, within International Relations or foreign policy analysis, citizen diplomacy traditionally associates as the citizen identity with the nation. Citizen or public diplomacy, in this orientation, is frequently couched as part of a formal “soft” form of foreign policy, such as the promotion of Track II citizen diplomacy to Cuba or North Korea. (Davies and Kaufman, 2003; Nan and Strimling, 2004). The rethinking of global citizenship allows us to rethink the notion of citizen diplomats in a similar manner. As individuals expand their allegiances to wider, multiple and overlapping transnational communities, while retaining and “owning” the responsibility of their own primary citizenship identity, they may also be considered to enact roles of “citizen diplomats” as they cross borders, attempt to understand the viewpoints of other communities, and return to their own home community to represent these differences as they engage in new pursuits with a widened world view.

Many of the proponents of global or transnational activism reflect this view and websites such as idealist.org (2008) promote and support active involvement of citizens in resolving crucial human dilemmas. Schattle (2008) also documents the commitment of global activists to work toward common solutions, based on mutual understanding and commitment to peaceful resolution of problems that can be realized by the notion of citizen diplomacy. In a recent address at Georgetown University, Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights spoke to the power of an alternative conception of citizen diplomacy (Robinson, 2008a). At the highest level of former leaders-turned-citizens, she participates in such groups as the Club of Madrid and The Elders to engage in citizen peace-building interventions.

Fulbright and Eisenhower saw the potential of citizen diplomacy through education in their belief in people-to-people exchanges. Stated differently, within this potential is a belief that magical things happen when people come together across national boundaries to do things together, of common interest. People learn that their similarities far outweigh their differences, and that their differences are exciting and fun, not scary. In course of doing things together, people come to understand each other. They create friendships. They change and they get things done. In the process, the world becomes a better place. It is also a belief in the concept that individuals have the right to help shape foreign relations. Echoing the words of Boyte, who we quoted earlier in this paper, the Coalition for Citizen Diplomacy (2008) defines it as the work people do to connect across national differences. It can be paid or voluntary, but it is directed at
building the kinds of understandings, relationships and actions needed to build a more peaceful and prosperous world.

Through Robinson’s own organization, Realizing Rights, she emphasizes the value of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, drafted in 1948 and still far from realization, and the need for a wide and diverse range of advocates in a global civil society. This advocacy, while engaged in global efforts, needs to also be built on the responsibility of citizens to act on their global knowledge in their own communities and nations. She quotes from Eleanor Roosevelt, an important supporter of the Declaration: “Without concerted citizen action to uphold human rights close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.” (Roosevelt, in Robinson, 2008b).

One action that reflects this dual commitment to global human rights and responsibility for local community action is the initiative to develop a Global Health Worker Migration protocol, aimed at aggressive recruitment by advanced industrial societies of health care workers away from their communities in developing countries. Health care needs in high income countries are resulting in practices that recruit health care workers from lower income countries that already feel dire shortages of health care services and personnel. An awareness of the global needs and supply of health care around the world, and the power of wages and benefits to worsen existing inequities in health care provision, is a place to start in this kind of global citizen action and diplomacy. (Realizing Rights, 2007).

This is precisely the kind of global civic action high road study abroad programs aim to inspire. Students come back with the commitments and capacities to engage in public work across national and cultural differences in order to create a better world. They do so with an awareness and responsibility based on their own civic identity, while understanding the need to develop mutual understanding and reciprocal exchange and solidarity with other communities.

Conclusion
Global citizenship entails developing the awareness and knowledge to be a globally aware and responsible citizen within overlapping and interconnected communities. To do this involves learning to assume responsibility for one’s own citizen commitments while appreciating and developing the ability to respectfully represent differences of other nations, communities and worldviews. We do not want to reproduce a world of privilege in which a passport and study abroad semester on a CV are a sufficient claim to global citizenship. We want to build quality study abroad programs around the principles outlined in our high road approach – accessibility, understanding of less traditional societies, preparation for re-entry to one’s country with a renewed commitment to globally informed civic engagement, and an appreciation of the importance of reciprocity and respect for the host communities that are partners in the educational process.

In reconceptualizing principles of education for global citizenship within U.S. higher education, it is important to provide a theoretical framework that is fluid and inclusive enough to allow for intercultural collaboration with a range of communities, institutional partners and organizations that make up the global ecology of learning for education abroad. As we examine ways in which the principles of quality study abroad meet the core mission and purpose of higher education as it
emerges in the 21st century, we seek to ensure that they address existing commitments to civic engagement, moral judgment, and the open pursuit of knowledge needed to perceive and resolve real problems faced by society. Principled and high quality study abroad developed with an intentionality to educate global citizen diplomats will advance the highest ideals of knowledge that serve humanity and an engaged, globally informed democracy.

References


