

Chapter 27

THE COSMODERNITY: A TRANSCULTURAL APPROACH FOR THE GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION PROPOSED BY UNESCO

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ABSTRACT

This chapter reflect about the “Global Citizenship Education” (GCE) proposed by UNESCO: creating a framework which respect the historic-cultural characteristics of each community and developing a critical consciousness that addresses common responsibility with the global problems of the world-society. A world-society which must develop a new awareness-identity of “Earth-Homeland”, where the human being is seen as a same biological specie with the same evolution, because the future history of humanity requires knowledge evolution towards new transhumanists and transnational dialectics concepts in order to prevent future war conflicts. Thus, we need new education applications and developments to organize knowledge through a complex, creative, transversal, polysemous, transcultural and transpolitical epistemology that promotes GCE as the causal energy principle of the transformation process of the human being. Metaphorically, GCE has to represent the Big-Bang full of transformative energy in continuously expanding that interacts positively on the lives of people: generating a self-organizing cosmos of infinite potential for personal fulfillment and improving the quality of life in the communities. Then, we propose the Cosmodernity paradigm as transdisciplinary, transnational and transcultural approach to build a new horizon in the GCE proposed by UNESCO for the 21st Century: with the *Constellation of Twinned NGOs-schools* which develop altruistic educational projects of cooperation in all corners of the *Earth-Homeland*.

Keywords: transcultural, global citizenship education, UNESCO, cosmodernity paradigm, complex human condition, constellation of twinned NGOs-schools.

1. INTRODUCTION

The main subject of this chapter is to reflect about the point of no return achieved by the human species in its historical evolution. Since the mid-twentieth century, and for the first time in known human history, the human being has the technological and nuclear potentiality to destroy everything that surrounds itself. In this line of events, the emerging world-society of the twenty-first century need to create and build a meta point-of-view for favoring the meeting between different cultures and coexisting civilizations on the planet, in order to create possibilities for sustainability for all citizens. Therefore, we will focus the discussion on “Global Citizenship Education” (GCE) initiated by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], using a transdisciplinary methodology with the intentionality to think about the transnational and transcultural problem of safeguarding humanity from an intentional field centered. This field is a combination of a triple area of human condition: epistemological, political and educational. To this end, we will rely on the Complexity Theory to develop a multi-referential understanding of universal interdependence of life on planet Earth: proposing new

education applications and developments with the concept *Constellation of Twinned NGOs-schools*.

2. DISCUSSION: WHAT IS GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION (GCE)?

The notion of “global citizenship” has recently gained prominence in international development discourse with the recently-adopted United Nations Secretary’s Global Education First Initiative (UNESCO, 2012). Traditional conception of national citizenship is changing under the influence of the multiple processes associated with globalization, which is creating new economics, social and cultural arenas beyond national borders. UNESCO, in response to the increasing demand from its Members States for support in empowering learners to become responsible global citizens, has made GCE one of its key education objectives for the next eight years (2014-2021). To advance understanding and identify good practice in global citizenship education in support of GEFI, UNESCO and its partners organized two landmark meetings on GCE in 2013:

- a Technical Consultation on Global Citizenship Education in Seoul, Republic of Korea on 9-10 September 2013, convened by UNESCO and Republic of Korea’s Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Education, and the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU);
- a UNESCO Forum with the title “Global Citizenship Education: Preparing learners for the challenge of the 21st Century”, in Bangkok, Thailand on 2-4 December 2013, convened by UNESCO Headquarters’ Division of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development, UNESCO’s Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) and APCEIU. As a result of the debates and the technical discussions about GCE, UNESCO issued the document “Global Citizenship Education: An Emerging Perspective”, which elaborated upon common perspectives emerging from the consultation on the following questions:
 - 1) Why global citizenship and global citizenship education now?
 - 2) What is global citizenship education?
 - 3) What needs to be done at the global level to support and promote global citizenship education?

These questions have broadened the notion of global citizenship as a multiple-perspective concept, representing an open opportunity for a transnational and transcultural vision in a way that new generations can become “citizens of the world”: Citizens of the world who are partly linked to transnational social and political communities, civil society and activism, and emerging forms of global identification and mobilization. Therefore, the GCE encourages us to develop a *cosmodern consciousness*, a concept developed by Basarab Nicolescu (2014) which understands dignity and human freedom in its planetary and cosmic conjuncture. The appearing of humans beings on Earth is just another moment at the universe. We are eco-dependent beings with a dual identity: its own, which distinguishes us, and others of interdependence to the environment. An environment composed by all beings which live in, that can only build their existence, their autonomy, their creativity and their individual richness in ecological relationship. A *cosmodern consciousness* as we deem it is intended to compliment the point 2.1.2 of the UNESCO document aforementioned:

In all cases, global citizenship does not entail a legal status. It refers more to a sense of belonging to the global community and common humanity, with its presumed members experiencing solidarity and collective identity among themselves and collective responsibility at the global level. Global citizenship can be seen as an ethos/metaphor rather than a formal membership (UNESCO, 2013, p. 3).

New educational applications and developments are required to face GCE challenges. GCE is clearly a new paradigm that contributes to the clarification of global citizenship without losing sight of the different cultures of the planet, avoiding homogenization in any sense, especially when the concept of global citizenship is used for the profit of a minority. GCE is not and should not be a promotion of citizenship models of a particular country or region. GCE must consider life in its complexity as the focus for everyone in the construction of a sense of global citizenship that attend the principle of alterity, mutual respect, shared otherness by the principle of difference and not just identity, which contemplates dialogically the implicit contradiction of the phenomena. This new paradigm must promote the development of feelings of belonging and the understanding of the living beings as a whole. It must give people the understanding, skills and values to feel citizenship of the world in a *cosmical* perspective, that is, in a cyclical relationship between the conjectural whole and the human being/nature: learning to love, to value and to respect life itself in a multidimensional way.

3. THE TRANSDISCIPLINARY METHODOLOGY: TOWARDS THE PARADIGM OF COSMODERNITY

As a catalyst of the transformative process, global citizenship education promotes the use of a wide range of active and participatory learning methods that engage the learner in critical thinking about complex global issues, and in developing skills such as communication, cooperation and conflict resolution to resolve these issues. This can be a challenge for many formal education systems with hierarchical teaching models and learning environments (UNESCO, 2014, p. 20).

The establishment of the United Nations in 1945 announced the emergence of a global political community, where cultural, religious, societal and economic elements are opened to universal values. At the dawn of the third millennium, introducing pedagogy for transformative learning implies the understanding of the human condition in a pertinent contextualization. The atomic particles that compose life on our planet, and that compose us, are born in the first seconds of the *cosmos*. Our carbon atoms were created in a sun before of current one and our molecules were formed on Earth (Morin, 2011). The human species is a cosmo-bio-genetic entity coming from the same *post Big-Bang* galactic evolution whose becoming future is interconnected in the space-time. Thus, the co-evolution of human beings with the universe requires a new methodology outside of positivist thinking of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which reduces and separates the subject from the object. That new methodology is necessarily overarching, holistic, poly-logic and transdimensional, understanding human beings as an integral part of an autopoietic cosmic totality. In this sense, the pillars of transdisciplinary methodology formulated by Nicolescu (2010) represent a new multidimensional and multi-referential epistemological approach to create new educational applications and developments.

A *transdisciplinary ecology* which is cast in the indefinite and infinite adventure of complex and open knowledge:

1. **The ontological axiom:** There are, in Nature and society and in our knowledge of Nature and society, different levels of Reality of the Object and, correspondingly, different levels of Reality of the Subject.
2. **The logical axiom:** The passage from one level of Reality to another is ensured by the logic of the included middle.
3. **The complexity axiom:** The structure of the totality of levels of Reality or perception is a complex structure: every level is what it is because all the levels exist at the same time (Nicolescu, 2010, p. 24).

The complex challenge of building a global citizenship is an issue that goes beyond the essence of mankind and, therefore, it requires a triple reform: epistemological, political and educational. Reflect about the meaning of GCE in the globalized era of twenty-first century demands an approach of the global dynamics (economics, political, cultural, social, educational, etc.) with a holistic and transnational vision which propose creative alternatives for change. To make this “reading of the world”, it is necessary to start watching the complexity, multidimensionality and interdependence, understanding education as a process in continuous expansion, like the universe itself (Collado Ruano & Galeffi, 2012a). But how could we create a global education applications and developments which respect the historic and cultural characteristics of each community without homogenization and without alienation? How do we prepare for democracy and for a critical and responsible global citizenship in schools which are not teaching how to make transnational and transcultural decisions? Will it be possible to develop a planetary awareness of common responsibility to achieve a current and future sustainable development? Will we learn to live together in the human unity/diversity to avoid the self-destruction during the third millennium?

Answering these questions concerning GCE involves a profound change in the structural construct of thought and a new knowledge organization where Human Rights suppose an articulator meta-point of view of the human effort to become aware of the ethic sustainability of the world-society, which requires a complex, creative, transversal, polysemic, transcultural, and trans-political epistemology. Therefore, the present problem of reflecting about the harmonization of the Earth-Homeland, as a pacific and transhistorical common horizon, implies a complex challenge to develop transdisciplinary knowledge to provide new transnational and transcultural dialogical conceptions capable of preventing future conflicts and achieving a sustainable development.

In words of Nicolescu (2014, p. 14):

The present instant is, strictly speaking, a non-time, an experience of relation between Subject and Object; thus, it contains potentially within itself the past and the future, the total flow of information and the total flow of consciousness, which cross the levels of reality. The present time is truly the origin of the future and the origin of the past. Different cultures, present and future, develop in the time of history, which is the time of change in the state of being of peoples and of nations. The transcultural concerns the time present in *transhistory*, a notion introduced by Mircea Eliade, which concerns the unthinkable and epiphany.

The *transcultural* is the necessary condition for the existence of culture. The complex plurality of cultures and the open unity of the transcultural coexist in the cosmodern vision. The transcultural is the spearhead of cosmodern culture.

Different cultures are the different facets of the human being. [...] The multicultural allows the interpretation of one culture by another culture, the intercultural permits the fertilization of one culture by another, and the transcultural ensures the translation of one culture into various other cultures, by deciphering meaning that links them and simultaneously goes beyond them.

Without doubts, the quantum, biological, and information revolutions of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries changed our view of reality. Effectively, in this cosmopolitan vision of transcultural resides the complexity to build and model human development through GCE proposed by UNESCO. The whole humanity is facing a real leap of nature in a political order of the current globalized world. But it is a leap of nature that implies a profound tri-ethical transformation of the individual-society-species: mental-spiritual, social-planetary and cosmic-environmental. A tri-ethical emergency (Galeffi, 2012) that elapse from the accelerated techno-scientific and global telematics progress, and which requires a new kind of epistemological, political and educational self-eco-organization to create *cosmopolitan consciousness* in the current and future global citizenship. In this sense, our proposal of *Constellations of Twinned NGOs-Schools* promotes new applications and developments between cultural diversity, in accordance with the cosmopolitan paradigm proposed by Nicolescu (2014), which is founded on the interaction between science, culture, spirituality, religion and society.

4. THE CONSTELLATION OF TWINNED NGOs-SCHOOLS: LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY

There is a clear opportunity to include reference to global citizenship education in the post-2015 development agenda as part of the knowledge, skills and competencies that learners require in the twenty-first Century and beyond (UNESCO, 2013, p.2).

In our opinion, GCE not only have to be included in the post-2015 Development Agenda, but it has to be a phenomenon of the own human condition that transversely goes beyond to the future Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. GCE cannot be regarded as a concept or fashion expression between academia, civil society and governments, because that would result in the introduction of small alterations in the schools curricula, without contributing to the paradigm shift that the world-society of the third millennium is complaining about. A good example would be the present decade baptized by UNESCO as “Education for Sustainable Development” (2005-2014). If it is certain that his intention has mobilized millions of people around the world to walk in this direction, the unsuccessful became evident in the inability to determine and achieve common agreement on the part of government officials who participated in the Sustainable Development Conferences of the United Nations, known as Rio+20, in 2012.

In our worldview, GCE does not have to find solutions for the increasingly complex problems that arise in the current economic system of reference of the world-society during the third millennium. GCE should promote the change of the capitalist system of reference itself, introducing new education applications and developments that comprises the interlinks between the micro-local-simple and macro-global-complex phenomena. Therefore, we have to observe GCE through creative stimulus arising from the current planetary and complex context, and which serve to restructure transversely the future of humanity as a common species. And this transnational and transcultural conception of

education implies a radical rupture with the political-economic and socio-educational structures of the past, because there is no doubt that technocratic education, still in vigor, is the consequence of alienating the social organization model that capitalism has imposed, after the Industrial Revolution, in order to reduce students to submissive consumers and passive citizens (Collado Ruano & Galeffi, 2012b).

What we pretend with the proposition of the *Constellation of Twinned NGOs-Schools* is to establish an alternative education application that can contribute in the creation of an awareness virtual network for global citizenship. A process that UNESCO highlights in sections 1.2.1. and 3.1.3. of aforementioned document:

1.2.1. Phenomenal advances in information and communication technologies (ICTs) have enabled people to connect and interact with others around the globe anywhere, anytime. This has contributed to an intensified perception and reality of being inter-connected and living beyond local perimeters, albeit virtually.

3.1.3. There is a need to support youth-led initiatives. Partnerships with civil society are also needed. Utilisation of new ICTs is critical. New approaches may meet with reservation and/or resistance. An emerging perspective on global citizenship education, however, maintains the need for stakeholders and actors to be open to different, but effective venues and solutions (UNESCO, 2013, pp. 2-5).

But, how could we create virtual spaces that can support youth leadership and can constitute effective solutions for the formulation of a truly transformative GCE of the current economical, epistemological, political, educational, and human crisis? How could we formulate proposals that entail new transnational and transcultural symbioses within the diversity of the current planetary civilization? How could we develop a transhumanist attitude which allows us to understand the tri-identitary poly-logic of the different levels of gnoseological Reality that constituting the individual-society-species? How could we create new educational applications and developments to face global problems from our own locality?

Evidently, answering these questions represents an anthro-socio-political challenge that will be addressed from a new philosophical and geopolitical worldview that makes a special emphasis on the inseparable interdependence of local-global and global-local dimensions. A new worldview which understands that all dogma, political ideology and materialist theory (such as capitalism, Marxism, Nazism, Stalinism, etc.), devastated the twenty century because they were based in a linear structure of thinking founded in just one level of the Reality -derived from classical physics-, because they thought they were in possession of the whole, and, therefore, of absolute truth. For this reason, our proposal of *Constellation of Twinned NGOs-Schools*, based in Complexity Theory, seeks to deepen in the advances of quantum physics, quantum cosmology and molecular biology to develop a *cosmodern consciousness* which allows identifying the plurality of cultural diversity as a source of wealth of the unique “nation-state” legitimate of human beings: the planet Earth.

To this end, we have to remember the birth of the United Nations in its historical context with the problem of safeguarding the world-society from a nuclear self-destruction. Since the second half of the twenty century, humanity began to enter into a new stage of civilization which demands of us the meta-cognitive effort to understand the difference of the *other*, *learning to know*, *learning to do*, *learning to live together*, and *learning to be* (Delors, 1998, pp. 89-102). Thereby, GCE proposed by UNESCO would have to envision the United Nations as the whole of a *complex system*: Earth-Homeland. A complex system

composed by a web of interconnections between 193 member states (with Palestine and the Holy See as non-Member Observer State status): economic, cultural, political, religious, etc. Interdependent Member States that are interconnected by the seven principles of complexity defined by Morin (2011): systemic or organizational, hologramatic, retroactive circle, recursive circle, self-eco-organization (autonomy and dependency), dialogical, and the reintroduction of knowledge in all knowledge.

In this perception of Complexity Theory defined by Morin, the concept of *Constellation of Twinned NGOs-Schools* is a new educational proposal with many applications and developments. It is based, by one side, in the reinterpretation of sister cities concept (Collado Ruano, 2013). A concept that aims to establish cooperation links, mainly in the economic and cultural relations, between two cities from different geographical areas, which often have similar characteristics (demographic, for example). Then, it concerns to extend the concept of sister cities to the educational field, creating new virtual networks among schools from all corners of the world. And by the other side, the proposal would also be based in the catalyst, philanthropic and humanistic character that nonprofits (whether NGOs, cultural associations, foundations, etc.) bring to the awareness process of the younger generations to endow them with criticality, sensitivity, autonomy, leadership, and social entrepreneurship.

Imagine now the parts of our complex system, that is, the Member States of the United Nations, did the effort to submit a list of their national schools to a neutral supranational institution like UNESCO. A list or database that, a priori, would already be ready in most countries highly bureaucratized. Imagine that before such step, the subparts which compose these parts of our complex system, that is, the particles that we would call as “schools”, did the effort to submit a detailed description of its own defining characteristics (number of students, which languages are learned, public or private status, and so on), where it was also included information related to their cities, neighborhood and/or community in which their students-citizens live (as for example the geographical situation, demography, weather, etc.).

Now, imagine that at the local level nonprofits organizations are being created within the neighbors of each community, where there will be place for people of all ages, as well as formal education (primary, secondary, and tertiary), and non-formal (with schools of music, sport, dance, and so on). Imagine also these communal organizations forming small political parties to develop an active citizen participation about local/regional/national/global problems that interact with the seven principles of complexity previously mentioned. Imagine each NGO-School has its own website to be consulted in the UNESCO common database, in order to facilitate the free interconnections between other NGOs-Schools. Would it be possible that own students explain festivities and traditions of their peoples to other students while they are still children? Could it help to understand better the cultural differences and real situations of each community, avoiding the “pollution” of the media controlled by the groups of economical power? Is it possible to imagine such process in a transdimensional level that goes beyond the macro-global and micro-local ambits at the same time? Without any doubts, this proposal comes with many education applications and developments to interconnect the whole humanity to face global challenges.

Let's change now the *microscopium* to use the *telescopium*, and let's take an astronomical look to the world-society, as it was done by the old civilizations (eg.: Chinese, Hindu, Incas, Pre-Colombian, and so on). Let's us observe the world-society as a galaxy composed of a set of planets, with their satellites; with comets and meteoroids; stars and interstellar matter; dark matter; gas clouds; and cosmic dust. All of them are celestial bodies

united by the same gravitational force, which we will call UNESCO in our complex system. Imagine also that local communities were solar systems, where schools are the stars and around them are turning planets of diverse nature as cultural organizations, political parties, religious associations, etc. Imagine, then, that GCE proposed by UNESCO group together the millions of stars (NGOs-Schools) in constellations (twinning), creating a large database in the Cyber-Space-Time (CST). Responsible constellations for performing projects of cooperation and development in the micro-situations of local-global emergency, with the goal to send a feedback in the emerging structures of macro-global problematics. In other words, the sum of political-educational actions at local-global level would finish modifying entropically the global-local tendencies of homogenization process derived from techno-economics structures of globalization. And like all processes governed by the second law of thermodynamics, the degradation of the homogeneity caused by globalization would lead a mestizo, hybrid and cosmopolitan world without nationalist frontiers.

There are no doubt it would be a real backbone program of heterogeneity and pluralism in full compliance with the item 3.2.2. of the aforementioned UNESCO document:

3.2.2. Global citizenship education must reflect the voices of diverse stakeholders from different regions, sectors and populations. A network of stakeholders, who could meet for periodic discussions, can help continually renew interests and reconstruct the objectives of global citizenship education. A strong network and expertise must be made available at all levels – global, regional, national and community levels, via all means of communication and interaction (UNESCO, 2013, p. 5).

In essence, *Constellation of Twinned NGOs-Schools* would not only represent a transcultural and transnational CST, addressing global issues such as poverty eradication, sustainable development or human brotherhood; but also transdisciplinary applications and developments for GCE. This is because when it is about music, art, literature, philosophy and thought, cultural globalization does not tend to homogeneity, but the opposite: cultures from all the world fertilize themselves engendering planetary sons and daughters. In this sense, reflect about GCE supposes look to the transcendental unity of the individual-society-species (*unitas multiplex*), through the tree transdisciplinary axis proposed during the Second World Congress of Transdisciplinarity: *transdisciplinary attitude*, *transdisciplinary research* and *transdisciplinary action*. That is, *transdisciplinary curricula and research* whose epistemological plurality introduce the *transdisciplinary attitude* to build a large human family – founded in the principles of justice and solidarity – and which derives ultimately in *transdisciplinary action* of human beings: proposing the articulation of a new training in relations with the world (eco-training), with other people (hetero-, and co-training), with himself/herself (auto-training), as being (onto-training), as well as formal and non-formal knowledge. In words of Nicolescu:

The Cyber-Space-Time is neither deterministic nor indeterministic. It is the space of human *choice*. To the extent that CST allows bringing into play the notion of levels of Reality and the logic of the included middle, it is potentially a transcultural, transnational, and transpolitical space (Nicolescu, 2008, p. 92).

For us, this would be the true “Treasure Within” by learning, that French political Jacques Delors (1998) reflects at the end of the twenty century: the creation of GCE

through transnational, transcultural, transpolitical, transreligious, and transhumanist CST which engendering planetary sons and daughters. A CST which identifies poly-logically the different levels of Reality that composing the individual-society-species tri-identity: as individual of a local and specific community, as citizen of a determinate society; belonging to a particular Nation/State, and as same cosmo-bio-genetic species in constant process of evolution. An identity opened to the infinite diversity of global citizenship. In other words, a transcultural and transnational tri-identity acting to achieve a peaceful and transdemocratic coexistence during the third millennium: building an authentic and revolutionary *global citizens movement*.

5. CONCLUSIONS

There are no doubts the world-society must develop new *multidimensional* synergies of *global* nature to achieve the future millennium goals performance of the post-2015 Development Agenda of the United Nations, because they are systemic, interconnected and interdependent targets: just like our own neural connections in our brains. Consequently, we must contextualize the goals through a *cosmodern consciousness*, based on the poly-logical tri-identity of the individual-society-species, to identify the world-society as an integrated whole, and not as the sum of their parts dissociated from each other. An epistemological, political, educational, and spiritual change, which transdisciplinary, transpolitical, transcultural and transreligious approach is simultaneously based on plurality and unity of current's planetary setting emergency of knowledge society, which corresponds to the *common-responsibility* of everyone with everything. Therefore, humanity must promote new educational applications and developments in order to create networks of altruistic cooperation in the CST, symbolizing a symphonic orchestra that disseminator of world peace. The Internet is not just another variable of the famous Human Development Index, but it is an emerging element which allows people to restructure and reformulate the complexity of global problems presents in the dawn of the third millennium.

It is necessary, then, that GCE proposed by UNESCO creates right now a global education strategy in the CSP which acts as a transcultural and transnational tri-identity pattern. Drawing a parallel with the past, GCE has to use CST with the same potentiality that Protestant community used the printer to restructure the sacral ideas in the sixteenth century, because the CST symbolizes an authentic *transcultural* universe to propose creative reflections that suppose effective solutions in this historic conjuncture that Edgar Morin (Edgar Morin, Ciurana, & Motta, 2003) called as "the stone age of planetary civilization". Therefore, the concept of *Constellation of Twinned NGOs-Schools* will have to be interpreted as a prehistoric tool for the planetary civilization can begin to write in conjunction their transhistory during this new millennium. History is made by all of us, and for that reason we all have to write it together and without cultural hierarchies in space-time. Cyber-Space-Time represents, effectively, the propitious level of Reality to develop the *cosmodern paradigm* based in the acceptance, understanding and superposition of cultural diversity where different educational applications and developments take place at the same time.

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