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Sommer Mitchell , Holly Swayne , Kara A. Fulton  and Jennifer Jones Lister 

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Infusing the UN Sustainable Development Goals into a global learning initiative

Sommer Mitchell* – *Pennsylvania State University, USA*

Holly Swayne and Jennifer Jones Lister – *University of South Florida, USA*

Kara A. Fulton – *University of North Texas, USA*

Abstract

The Global Citizens Project (GCP) is a university-wide global learning initiative at the University of South Florida, aimed at enhancing undergraduate students' global competencies through curricular and co-curricular experiences. The GCP uses the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework for these experiences. Understanding the SDGs allows students to expand their ideas on issues that exist in the world and how we might respond to the challenges. The purpose of this article is to provide a case study showing how the GCP has introduced students from all disciplines and undergraduate degree programmes to the SDGs through interdisciplinary workshops, with the aim of helping them to better understand the SDGs and connect global issues to their academic goals, professional objectives and everyday experiences. To determine whether the aims of the workshops were met, qualitative content analysis is employed to analyse the constructed responses of students who attended them. The results of the study suggest that the SDGs provide a relevant and sufficiently robust framework for guiding undergraduate students in their thinking about global issues as well as their relationship with these issues.

Keywords: global learning, global citizenship, global citizenship education, Sustainable Development Goals

Introduction

Each generation is tasked with building upon the foundations of the past. Contemporary global society must therefore navigate the physical, social and political spaces built by both time and intention. Within these spaces, challenges such as climate change, overconsumption, extreme poverty and continued population growth are at the forefront of international attention, where 'education for sustainable development has come to be seen as a process of learning how to make decisions that consider the long-term future' (UNESCO, 2003: 4). The complex nature of such global issues requires an informed and empowered citizenry that is ready and able to identify global challenges, think innovatively and collaboratively for new solutions and take action that will contribute to a sustainable future for all.

Higher education provides an avenue for students to explore both themselves and the world around them through a wide array of academic and social opportunities guided by their particular interests and goals (Kuh, 2008). Therefore, creative and deliberate programmes designed within this context to build holistic global competencies can cultivate a citizenry better equipped to address the complexities of their social, political and physical environment (AAC&U, 2007; Braskamp et al., 2009;

Musil, 2006). This is the goal of the University of South Florida's Global Citizens Project (GCP), which aims to enhance undergraduate students' global competencies through both curricular and co-curricular experiences. The GCP uses the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework to discuss global issues with students. The purpose of this article is to provide a case study of the ways in which GCP programmes, developed and implemented by the authors, have introduced students from all disciplines and undergraduate degree programmes to the SDGs. This was done through regular interdisciplinary workshops, with the objective of helping students to better understand global issues through the lens of the SDGs, and to connect these issues to their everyday experiences as well as their academic and professional goals.

Global learning in higher education

Transnational and transcultural interactions facilitated by technological innovation, free enterprise and human curiosity have irrevocably changed the world. A thriving economy in the twenty-first century is driven by creativity, adaptability and innovative thinking, all of which may be enhanced through diverse collaborations. The evolving landscape of global capital flows and systems of global governance have contributed to our understanding of the term 'globalization' itself, and has informed the internationalization of higher education according to four articulations (Stein *et al.*, 2016). In the first articulation – the internationalization of the global knowledge economy – educational institutions aim to 'improve individual and national economic advantage within [a] global "knowledge society"' through the development of 'human capital and competencies for innovation, leadership and entrepreneurship in the global markets' (Stein *et al.*, 2016: 13). In its second articulation, Stein *et al.* (2016) posit that internationalization for the global public good drives educational institutions to focus on a collaborative, inclusive and democratic approach to social progress, while its third articulation is concerned with anti-oppressive internationalization. The educational aims of this articulation utilize critical pedagogy to further social and global justice, as expressed through the transformation of 'oppressive structures and politics of knowledge through empowerment, voice, [and] activism' (Stein *et al.*, 2016: 13). Finally, the fourth articulation of internationalization, as presented by Stein *et al.* (2016), focuses on relational translocalism, wherein established assumptions and presumptions about modernity and its existential contingencies are challenged. Thus, higher education institutions around the world are recognizing the growing need to cultivate globally competent students capable of understanding these articulations, which encompass complex relationships and the demands of an increasingly global context, so that they are prepared to lead meaningful and productive lives in a global society.

While the meaning of the term 'global' in higher education has been framed in a variety of ways, it includes – though is not limited to – the ideas of global citizenship education and global learning (Goren and Yemini, 2017; Hovland, 2014; Olson *et al.*, 2006; Oxley and Morris, 2013; UNESCO, 2015). To date, scholars do not agree on definitions for either of these frameworks and there is considerable variability in the ways in which these concepts are presented in the literature. Additionally, many other terms comprising the word 'global' are named and used by authors and across journals. Rather than exhaustively addressing the full debate here, we will briefly discuss a selection of global citizenship education and global learning literature that is relevant to the context and purpose of this article.

Goren and Yemini (2017) provide a thorough review of recent themes in the academic discourse surrounding global citizenship education. The authors found that a decade of peer-reviewed global citizenship education articles and books from around the world could be categorized into two overarching themes. The themes, originally defined by Oxley and Morris (2013), included cosmopolitan and advocacy global citizenship, with each theme further divided into four subthemes. The cosmopolitan approach – subthemes: political, moral, economic and cultural – focuses on relationships and attitudes, whereas the advocacy approach – subthemes: social, critical, environmental and spiritual – is more action-based.

Another approach to global citizenship education comes from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) global citizenship education framework. This approach includes three learning domains: cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural. The cognitive domain refers to the 'knowledge and thinking skills necessary to better understand the world and its complexities', while the socio-emotional domain is inclusive of the 'values, attitudes and social skills that enable learners to develop affectively, psychosocially, and physically and to enable them to live together with others respectfully and peacefully' (UNESCO, 2015: 22). Conversely, the behavioural domain refers to someone's 'conduct, performance, practical application and engagement' (UNESCO, 2015: 22). This framework has gained popularity through recent publications from around the world, which subscribe to UNESCO's approach (Angyagre and Quainoo, 2019; Davies *et al.*, 2018; Sant *et al.*, 2018; Tarozzi and Torres, 2016; Torres, 2017).

Turning to global learning, this approach has come to encompass three areas of learning: the relationships between nations (international), the ways in which national borders are transcended (global) and cultural differences (intercultural). In short, global learning encompasses 'the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students acquire through a variety of experiences that enable them to understand world cultures and events; analyze global systems; appreciate cultural differences; and apply this knowledge and appreciation to their lives as citizens and workers' (Olson *et al.*, 2006: v). According to Hovland (2014), a reconceptualization of global education is needed in which the earlier academic focus on institutional capabilities shifts to an emphasis on student learning outcomes, with greater attention given to what global learners can actually do and how they can apply the global competencies they acquire during their course of study. The goal of a global education, he argues, is not the creation of courses and structures, but the nurturing of a different kind of student. Although the term 'global education' is used here, we feel that Hovland's ideas are closely aligned with those of global learning and thus have included them.

The Global Learning VALUE Rubric of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), perhaps the strongest organizational proponent of global learning in the United States to date, includes a suite of knowledge, skills and attitudes essential for global learning. 'Through global learning, students should 1) become informed, open-minded, and responsible people who are attentive to diversity across a spectrum of differences, 2) seek to understand how their actions affect both local and global communities, and 3) address the world's most pressing and enduring issues collaboratively and equitably' (AAC&U, 2014). The six key areas of global learning defined in the AAC&U rubric – global self-awareness, perspective taking, cultural diversity, personal and social responsibility, understanding global systems and applying knowledge to contemporary global contexts – capture to a great degree the competencies developed by universities across the United States. Partly due to

the influence of the AAC&U, using the term 'global learning' has become increasingly popular in global initiatives at American institutions.

It is important to note that both global citizenship education and global learning go beyond the idea of an international experience. Traditionally, study abroad programmes have provided the main source of cultural exchange, fostering global awareness and intercultural competencies (Perry and Southwell, 2011). Yet there is growing consensus that while study abroad is useful, it is insufficient on its own to provide the comprehensive cultural competence and learning environment necessary to navigate modern global economies (Ashwill, 2004; Deardorff and Hunter, 2006; Musil, 2006). Learning a foreign language is also an integral component of students' global competencies (AAC&U, 2007; ACTFL Board of Directors, 2014; Redman, 2014). Like study abroad programmes, however, second-language acquisition alone is not sufficient (Bok, 2006; Deardorff, 2011; Hunter *et al.*, 2006). Instead, both study abroad and language study should be part of a 'set of educational experiences', including other opportunities such as globally themed residence halls, on-campus lectures or events, specialized courses and connecting students with peers abroad (Bok, 2006: 248). Introducing such experiences infuses the campus culture with opportunities to further individuals' global perspectives (Bok, 2006).

The University of South Florida (USF)

The University of South Florida (USF) is a public research university located in Tampa, Florida. Founded in 1956, USF is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and offers over 180 undergraduate degrees across 14 colleges and three campuses. USF serves more than 50,000 students, comprising undergraduates, graduates and non-degree-seeking students. During the 2017–2018 academic year, 41 per cent of students were African American, Black, Asian American, Hispanic, Native American or multiracial and 10 per cent were international students (representing 145 countries). USF has approximately 15,380 academic (faculty) and support staff employees and ranks in the top 30 nationally for research expenditure among public universities, according to the National Science Foundation. In 2018, the Florida Board of Governors designated USF as a Preeminent State Research University, placing it in the most elite category among the state's 12 public universities and solidifying its position as the only urban pre-eminent institution in Florida (USF, 2018).

Global learning at USF

USF is dedicated to student success and has infused the undergraduate curriculum with global learning in the context of global citizenship. The conceptual framework behind USF's global initiative therefore aligns to some degree with both global citizenship education and global learning as presented earlier. Notwithstanding the complexity of terminology and definitions within different global frameworks, for the purposes of this article, global citizenship, global citizenship education and global learning are all used to express the same basic concept, with USF's framework based primarily on Schattle's (2008) approach he presented in *The Practices of Global Citizenship*. He argues that global citizenship comprises three primary concepts: awareness, responsibility and participation. 'These three concepts can be viewed as a trajectory in which progressions of global citizenship emerge in the lives of individuals, with awareness of one's role in the world instilling a sense of responsibility that in turn inspires

participation in politics or civil society' (Schattle, 2008: 26). He first identifies awareness as an important concept of global citizenship, distinguishing between an inward (or self) awareness and an outward awareness. Self-awareness, as the term implies, speaks to an individual's sense of self and 'strong and well-defined roots' (Schattle, 2008: 28). Outward awareness, however, includes the ability to understand issues from multiple perspectives (sometimes isolated as perspectives that take in other models of global learning) and differences as well as commonalities in human experiences. Schattle (2008: 29, 11) also highlights self-awareness as an 'initial step of global citizenship and the lens through which further experiences and insights are perceived', whereas outward awareness 'provides the motivation ... to embark on sustained involvement in society or politics and to begin to take responsibility for a global common good'. Responsibility as global citizenship entails 'principled decision making and a sense of solidarity across humanity', while participation as global citizenship is defined on a basic level as 'contributing to the social or political life of a community [voice and activity]' (Schattle, 2008: 34, 40). Responsibility emphasizes individual choices that take into account the impact of one's actions on others, while participation implies activism and engagement (political or not) involving interaction with others. In its most intense form, participation can also involve actively seeking reforms within governing institutions (Schattle, 2008).

In conceptualizing the foundation for global learning, USF's model links Schattle's theory of global citizenship to key aspects of cognitive (thinking), conative (motivation to act) and affective (feeling) development. USF's holistic developmental outcome is global citizenship, with three global competencies contributing to this outcome: global awareness, global responsibility and global participation (see Figure 1). These three competencies link the cognitive, conative and affective domains of global citizenship. USF has defined three student learning outcomes for

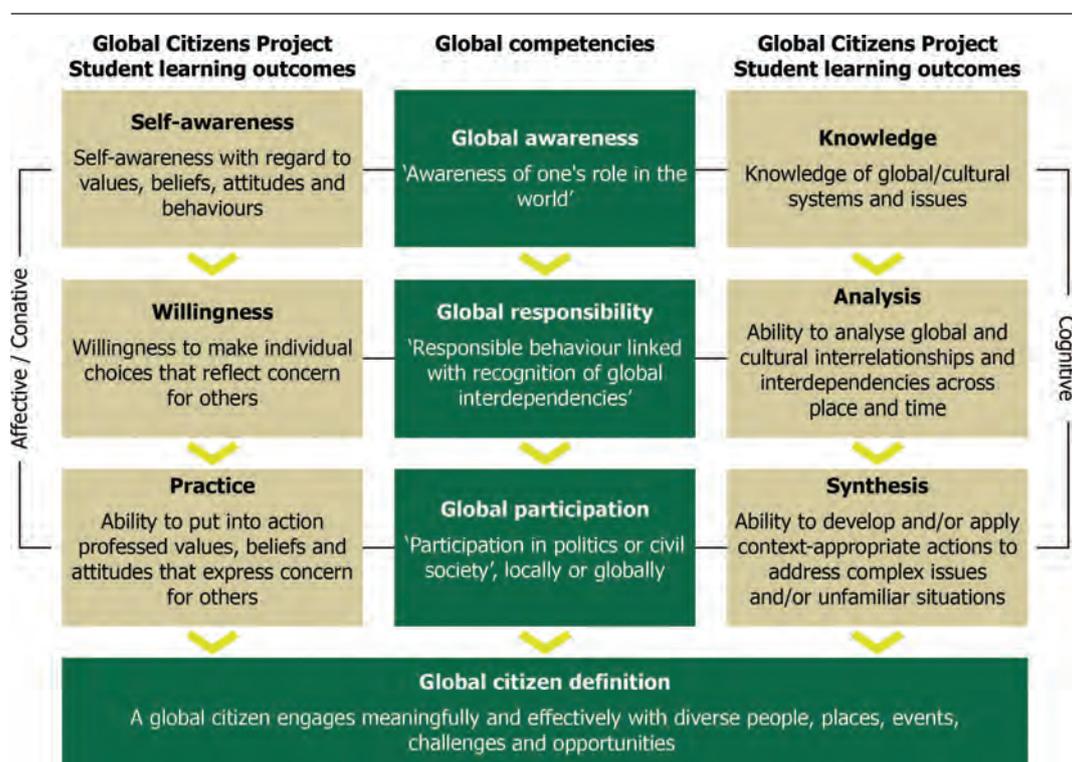


Figure 1: Conceptual foundation for global learning at USF (Source: GCP, 2015)

global learning within the affective/conative domain – self-awareness, willingness and practice – as well as three outcomes within the cognitive domain – knowledge, analysis and synthesis.

To support the university-wide global learning initiative, a division – the GCP – was established in Undergraduate Studies in 2015, dedicated to enhancing undergraduate students' global competencies through curricular and co-curricular experiences. The GCP collaborates with academics (faculty), staff and students across disciplines to certify courses, degree programmes and on-campus events to ensure they align with USF's goals for global learning. The GCP has also developed an award programme to help undergraduate students foster the qualities of a global citizen and be rewarded for their accomplishments. Global Citizen Award participants attend a series of on-campus global events and pursue two globally engaged activities to gain exposure to both information and experiences that will enhance their global competencies. Once students have attended an event or completed an activity, they submit a reflection through Canvas, USF's learning management system. Students are asked to rate their self-perceived learning gains and critically reflect on their experiences through constructed-response questions. The awards programme is designed to be individualized by students based on their own interests and needs. In order to allow for individualization within a structured programme with requirements that must be met, students submit reflections for all experiences they wish to be considered for the award.

The data collected from these reflections are analysed through the lens of the six student learning outcomes – self-awareness, practice, willingness, knowledge, analysis and synthesis – selected by the GCP to measure the cognitive, conative and affective global competencies previously outlined (Schattle, 2008). As these reflections follow student exposure to experiences and information provided through the GCP award programme, they are meant to capture both quantitative and qualitative data on the impact of such GCP programmes, and further inform the continuation or development of new programmes that would address the desired learning outcomes effectively. It is worth noting that after designing and implementing the GCP programmes, we were then motivated to capture the data generated by student interactions with those programmes. Therefore, the GCP, though not designed as a research project, provided data that could be analysed in a research context as a case study for the integration of global competencies into the undergraduate student experience.

The United Nations SDGs were chosen as the framework through which students explore global issues, allowing them to more readily identify the global nature of the various experiences USF offers. As the successor to the United Nations' eight Millennium Development Goals, the SDGs make up the development agenda that was adopted by the United Nations' General Assembly in September 2015. They encompass 17 goals with 169 targets and require the global participation of all nation-states and stakeholders. The range of goals addressed by the SDGs provides a comprehensive view of issues, including social justice, economic growth, environmental concerns and political action, thus appealing to students from any discipline. As students complete the requirements of the award, they provide meaningful written reflections on their globally engaged experiences viewed through the lens of one or more of the SDGs, and expressly connect these issues and experiences to their particular interests, their disciplines and undergraduate degree programmes and professional goals. We argue that the SDGs provide a relevant and sufficiently robust framework to guide undergraduate students in thinking about global issues. Many undergraduate students

have never considered what constitutes a global issue and, therefore, providing a concrete framework for categorizing global issues allows them to better contextualize the term 'global issues'.

GCP Sustain-a-Bull Workshop Series

In order to better prepare students to make the required connections between their experiences and the SDGs, the GCP developed the Sustain-a-Bull Workshop Series (in a nod to USF's mascot, Rocky the Bull), with each workshop in the series dedicated to a particular SDG. These workshops are offered each semester as a way to provide foundational knowledge of the SDGs and allow students to explore global issues not only as they relate to the global arena, but also to their local communities and personal lives. With workshop topics including, but not limited to, Zero Poverty (SDG 1), Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8) and Climate Action (SDG 13), the spirit of interdisciplinarity is at the forefront of all workshops. Each goal is presented as a multidimensional issue that requires cooperative engagement from a variety of stakeholders working towards a more sustainable future.

SDG workshops are designed to offer students a collaborative setting in which to learn about global issues, discuss their implications in an environment of mutual respect and ask and answer questions. Workshops are interactive, using a blended learning approach (a combination of online educational interactions and classroom-based activities) in order to promote collaboration, encourage self-reflection and facilitate in-class formative assessment. For instance, web-based platforms such as Kahoot! and PollEverywhere are used to generate team-based trivia games and gauge student perceptions, while classroom-based brainstorming activities and guided discussions are also an integral part of every workshop. Through this blended learning environment, workshops aim to offer students the opportunity to both learn about and challenge understandings of the global issues presented and engage in productive debate with one another about potential ways to address these issues. In terms of the conceptual foundation of the GCP, these workshops were designed to expand students' competency of global awareness by focusing on the development of Schattle's affective/cognitive domain of self-awareness and the cognitive domain of knowledge.

From the autumn of 2016 through to the spring of 2018, the GCP held 28 Sustain-a-Bull workshops that lasted 75 minutes each. Total student attendance at these workshops was 528, with an average attendance per session of 19 students. Of those who attended the workshops, 146 students from 45 disciplines and undergraduate degree programmes completed written reflections detailing their learning. Demographics of the sample group are presented in Table 1. The written reflection assignment consisted of a combination of rating scale and constructed-response questions. We analysed these reflections to measure student impact, focusing in particular on the GCP learning outcomes of self-awareness and knowledge. Box 1 displays the specific questions and associated answer options that were considered for analysis. The goals of these questions were (1) to report self-perceived learning gains and (2) to encourage students to reflect critically on their experiences in each workshop. Of the 146 students who completed written reflections, 64 students attended more than one workshop (and therefore submitted more than one reflection). Thus, the total number of reflections analysed was 271.

Table 1: Demographics of sample group with f representing frequency count (n = 146) (Source: Authors, 2020)

Ethnicity	f	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	1
Asian	15	10
Black or African American	15	10
Hispanic or Latino	38	26
White	59	40
Other/unknown	17	12
Gender	f	%
Male	33	23
Female	113	77
First-generation	f	%
Yes	66	45
No	76	52
Other/unknown	4	3
Student type	f	%
First time at university	100	68
Transfer	45	31
Other/unknown	1	1
Average GPA*	3.56	
Average age	22	

*Grade point average (GPA) is the average value of the accumulated final grades earned in courses over time.

The goal of Question 1 in Box 1 was to assess student learning generally. Students reported a high level of learning from these workshops, with the average score for this question equal to 3.6 (where minimum = 1.0 and maximum = 4.0). Delving deeper, Question 2 aimed to assess student learning more specifically with regard to GCP student learning outcomes. Students were asked to rate their learning for each GCP student learning outcome independently. On average, students reported that the workshops enhanced all outcomes, although self-awareness and knowledge were rated the highest. Table 2 presents a summary of the results from Question 2.

For Questions 3–7 in Box 1, we conducted qualitative content analysis using a directed approach. Hsieh and Shannon (2005: 1281–2) state that the goal of directed content analysis ‘is to validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework or theory’ and deem it an appropriate method when using ‘existing theory or prior research’ where the findings ‘offer supporting and nonsupporting evidence for a theory’. Our directed content analysis included predetermined themes to identify in the constructed responses (Cho and Lee, 2014), based on the previously mentioned conceptual foundation for the GCP. Since the workshops were designed specifically to expand students’ self-awareness and knowledge, we then narrowed the themes further to focus on these two primary themes, which were subsequently further

subdivided into secondary themes (Mayring, 2000), based on the conceptual foundation for the GCP. Box 2 provides the primary and secondary themes used for analysis.

Box 1: Questions and associated answer options that were considered for analysis

1. Overall, how would you rate your learning experience from this event?
 1. *I did not learn anything from this experience.*
 2. *I learned minimally from this experience.*
 3. *I learned somewhat from this experience.*
 4. *I learned greatly from this experience.*
2. On a scale of 1–4, please indicate to what extent you feel your participation in this event enhanced your learning with regard to each of the six Global Citizens Project learning outcomes.
 1. *Did not enhance*
 2. *Minimally enhanced*
 3. *Somewhat enhanced*
 4. *Greatly enhanced*
3. What attracted you to attend this specific event and why?
(constructed response)
4. What perspective(s) of this global/cultural issue were presented at this event and which perspectives or counterpoints were missing from this event?
(constructed response)
5. Describe a shocking, meaningful or ‘aha’ moment you experienced during this event.
(constructed response)
6. How did your experience at this event change or support the way you view and/or understand the world, your own country and culture, or the way you think you should navigate the world?
(constructed response)
7. Identify at least one UN Sustainable Development Goal and describe how this event contributed to its outcome?
(constructed response)

Table 2: Minimum rating, maximum rating and mean for learning enhancement with regard to each outcome from Question 2 (Source: Authors, 2020)

Outcome	min	max	mean
Self-awareness	1	4	3.42
Willingness	1	4	3.08
Practice	1	4	2.89
Knowledge	2	4	3.67
Analysis	1	4	3.11
Synthesis	1	4	2.91

Note: The outcomes with the highest two means are in bold.

Box 2: Primary and secondary themes used for qualitative content analysis

Self-awareness. Self-awareness with regard to values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours.

SA1. Define personal values and beliefs.

SA2. Explore how one's world view is shaped by personal values, identity, cultural rules and biases.

SA3. Evaluate congruency between values and action.

SA4. Recognize differences in people's values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours.

SA5. Recognize common human experiences.

Knowledge. Knowledge of global and cultural systems and issues.

K1. Identify and describe major global issues.

K2. Describe multiple aspects of global/cultural systems.

K3. Recognize that cultural systems experience historical and geopolitical processes differently.

K4. Recognize that global issues and systems are experienced differently at local scales.

The average word count for constructed responses was 286, and themes were counted per response (as opposed to frequency within a single response). Frequency counts by secondary theme are presented in Table 3. On average, students mentioned three secondary themes per response. All secondary themes were identified, with the exception of K3, suggesting that these workshops did not enhance students' ability to recognize that cultural systems experience historical and geopolitical processes differently. Within the Knowledge theme, K4 and K1 – 'Recognize that global issues and systems are experienced differently at local scales' and 'Identify and describe major global issues' respectively – were identified the most frequently. The high frequency of K4 suggests the workshops helped students to recognize that an issue, such as access to clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), for instance, may be encountered differently in the United States than in other locations in the world. For example, one student majoring in Public Health reflected on sanitation in China:

In China alone, more than 800,000,000 people live without sanitation. There are only 300,000,000 people in the US [sic] in total. That means the number of people living without sanitation in China is more than double the entire population for the United States. Internalizing that fact and broadening it to a global scale was particularly meaningful. (Entry 235, personal communication, 29 March 2018)

Another example of students recognizing that a global issue like zero hunger (SDG 2), for instance, is experienced differently around the world is one Nursing student's comment that they were

enlightened by the fact that even at the university level individuals can suffer from hunger issues. I thought this was shocking because I thought that most individuals were financially sturdy at the university level, considering they can afford to attend school. I soon learned this was not the case. (Entry 270, personal communication, 29 March 2017)

Both quotes represent the way in which students recognize how issues like these occur in many places around the world, but not necessarily in the same way.

Table 3: Frequency counts (f) by secondary theme (n = 271) (Source: Authors, 2020)

Primary theme	f	%
Secondary theme		
Self-awareness		
SA1	119	44
SA2	107	39
SA3	117	43
SA4	99	37
SA5	11	4
Knowledge		
K1	163	60
K2	100	37
K3	0	0
K4	169	62

Note: The highest two secondary themes within each primary theme are in bold.

Similarly, the high frequency of K1 in Table 3 suggests the workshops also helped students to identify what constitutes a global issue, such as decent work and economic growth (SDG 8). One student majoring in Behavioural Healthcare commented that attending the workshop led to them learning 'about the millions of people worldwide who are victims of modern-day slavery. I found out that there are currently 20.9 million victims worldwide, and these are victims of sexual exploitation, labor exploitation, and state-imposed exploitation' (Entry 116, personal communication, 1 January 2018). Another student, majoring in Communication Sciences and Disorders, had a 'shocking moment' in the workshop on inequality (SDG 10) when 'seeing the map of how money is distributed among nations and how disproportional it is to the amount of people who live there' (Entry 25, personal communication, 9 November 2017). As demonstrated through these responses, the workshops enhance students' understanding that the SDGs represent global issues with multiple manifestations and implications.

Within the Self-Awareness theme in Table 3, SA1 and SA3 – 'Define personal values and beliefs' and 'Evaluate congruency between values and actions' respectively – were represented most frequently. The high frequency of SA1 suggests that learning about the various aspects of the SDGs supported students' efforts to define and understand their own values and beliefs. For example, a student majoring in Psychology reflected that 'this experience changed the way I look at the ocean and will change the way I buy fish in the future' (Entry 8, personal communication, 15 February 2018), while another student majoring in Environmental Biology felt 'this event made me more self-aware of how big the problems of the environment are and how I can do my share to help stop the damage' (Entry 100, personal communication, 7 November 2016). These responses illustrate that the workshops expanded students' self-awareness, while the reflective element of their associated assignments enabled them to articulate these learning outcomes.

Additionally, the high frequency of the SA3 secondary theme suggests that exposure to a deeper understanding of the multidimensional issues of the SDGs led students to consider the actions they were willing to take based on the values they deem important. The evaluation of values and actions was exemplified when

a student majoring in Business Administration stated that the facts they learned during an SDG workshop, 'only strengthened my idea of pursuing a career that directly seeks to impact these goals with positive improvement, in this case possibly a position in government' (Entry 259, personal communication, 4 March 2018). Students not only evaluated their personal values and actions, but also those of the United States and how the two could be reconciled. One Biomedical Sciences student even noticed an incongruence between their own values and actions when they realized,

that the time for change is now, and that so many of us including myself, live mostly by pretending that these problems aren't as urgent as they are, but really, we should be more concerned. As for myself, I will definitely want to be making some different lifestyle choices. (Entry 84, personal communication, 3 November 2016)

Although on their own these quotes are not intended as comprehensive evidence of improved student learning outcomes, they have been selected here to illustrate themes present throughout the body of analysed student responses. In sum, data suggest that the workshops resulted in students assessing their own values and actions as well as those of their culture and community, and any cross-contextual commonalities or discrepancies. Furthermore, experiencing the workshops along with others from different backgrounds and disciplines helped students to consider what they value and the actions they are willing to take to better express or represent those values.

Conclusion

The USF's GCP developed a series of interdisciplinary workshops to help undergraduate students explore global issues within the framework of the SDGs. We analysed 271 written reflections from students who attended these workshops to measure student impact and learning. The goal of the Sustain-a-Bull Workshop Series was to enhance students' global awareness, as outlined by Schattle (2008), by focusing on the self-awareness and knowledge outcomes with regard to the conceptual foundation for global learning at USF. Self-reported learning gains across all six GCP student learning outcomes suggest that these goals were met, as students reported self-awareness and knowledge as the top two outcomes most enhanced by attending these workshops. Qualitative content analysis of constructed responses further supports the conclusion that self-awareness and knowledge skills were enhanced. More specifically, the intent behind these workshops was to strengthen all secondary outcomes (identified as secondary themes in this analysis) related to self-awareness and knowledge. In this respect, we were successful to some degree across all secondary outcomes, with the exception of one (K3).

The results of this study suggest that the SDGs provide a relevant and sufficiently robust framework for guiding undergraduate students in their thinking about global issues as well as their relationship with these issues. As such, the data also suggest that the framework provided by the SDGs can be comprehensively infused into an undergraduate curriculum on a large scale with positive student learning outcomes. In conclusion, the SDGs, as a lens through which to explore global issues, help to enhance global learning across disciplines by contributing to cognitive, conative and affective development.

Notes on the contributors

Sommer Mitchell is a political scientist with a research focus on international security, legitimacy and private military and security companies. She teaches courses in global studies and has worked with academics (faculty) to globalize undergraduate curricula.

Holly Swayne is a social scientist with a research focus on high-profile activism and global health security. She has taught in areas of interdisciplinary social sciences and global studies, and has worked with undergraduate students and academics (faculty) to facilitate globally engaged learning.

Kara A. Fulton is an applied anthropologist with a research focus on community identity and shared practices. She teaches interdisciplinary undergraduate courses and has worked with academics (faculty) to globalize their courses and curricula.

Jennifer Jones Lister is Director of the Global Citizens Project, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of South Florida. She conducts federally funded research in several areas of health care.

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