An Exploration of Documentary Use in Global Education

A Thesis

Presented to

The Honors Tutorial College

Ohio University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for Graduation

from the Honors Tutorial College

with the degree of

Bachelor of Sciences in Media Arts and Studies

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by

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June 2010

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on how three specific documentary films could be used in high school and undergraduate classroom settings. More broadly, it uses feedback from a series of focus groups to discuss what role internationally focused documentaries may play in enhancing American students' global awareness. While reports from organizations such as National Geographic showcase young American's need for a broader understanding of the world, this research also discusses how ethnocentric teaching methods and increased use of standardized assessment impact global education in the United States. As the world grows more interconnected through globalization, I explore how developing a greater global conscious may be the next steps in a democratic education. In addition, this thesis looks at how documentary's basis in storytelling and media may facilitate students' understanding of international interdependency. Incorporating opinions from undergraduate and international graduate students, the thesis concludes with a realistic sense of incorporating films into high school and undergraduate classes. Although educators may face challenges in introducing controversial themes that are latent in most global issues, global education is not a need to be overlooked due to a lack of resources or support. While broadening students' scope of their world may be facilitated through many different methods, documentaries could be utilized in a variety of ways to help peak students' interest in global topics and help them consider solutions to the problems we face in a global age.

Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

In my first political science class at Ohio University, our professor introduced us to the military controversy between the United States and Latin America through the film, *Hidden in Plain Sight* (2003). This documentary profiles the history of the School of the Americas, which became particularly controversial for training Latin American leaders in torture and U.S. military tactics. As a freshman, I was entirely unaware of this issue, and the film shocked me. I was naïve to the idea that the U.S. would be involved in such atrocious scandals, but more surprisingly, I was unaware that these issues existed.

In retrospect, I see that this film served as my introduction to global injustice and developing countries. The documentary made me realize how little I had learned about the world in high school; I quickly became active in absorbing as much knowledge as I could and spreading awareness of social justice issues. One way I manifested this passion was through Fair Trade campaigns, which eventually led me to intern with an agricultural cooperative in Nicaragua for four months. Three years later, I still attribute my interest in global injustice issues to this brief encounter with a powerful documentary.

As a video production student, I have become active in documentary filmmaking myself. With experience in this field, I now critique that initial documentary, *Hidden in Plain Sight*, as presenting a biased viewpoint and overuse of music for emotional reaction. Even with these flaws, I respect this documentary and

many others because they serve to visually and emotionally stimulate their audience. For instance, documentaries have taught me about the impoverished conditions of Brazilian charcoal workers (*The Charcoal People of Brazil,* 1999), to how dam construction in China has displaced millions of people (*China's Three Gorges: A Flood of Controversy,* 2008). Such films have been instrumental in my understanding of the world. Because of their impact on me, I was interested to see how other students learn from documentaries and whether they feel films are effective learning tools for developing global awareness. While documentaries will not motivate every viewer to physically engage with social justice issues, I believe films' visual impact may stimulate U.S. students to develop a more sophisticated global awareness.

Background of the Study

Based on my personal experience and literature review, I believe that increasing geographic literacy and global understanding among U.S. students should be a high priority in the age of globalization. As the U.S. continues to immerse itself in global affairs such as USAID and World Bank projects to wars in the Middle East, reports show that over half of young Americans cannot find Iraq on a map and that nearly that same percentage believes India is a primarily Muslim nation (National Geographic Ropers, 2006). These are just several of the findings from the National Geographic Ropers Geographic Literacy Survey, which sought to "assess the geographic knowledge of young Americans between the ages of 18 and 24" (p. 4). The survey found that "far too many [young people in the United States] lack the most basic skills

for navigating the international economy or understanding the relationships among people and places that provide critical context for world events" (p. 7).

Another study pertaining to young Americans' global attitudes was performed by researcher Velta Clarke (2004). She recreated a U.S. Department of Education Survey that examined elementary and high school students' attitudes toward and knowledge of other countries (1974). In her research, Clarke focused on gathering opinions of an adult demographic, and she surveyed a diverse sample of 701 students at a liberal arts college in the U.S. Specifically, she investigated "the degree of students' global awareness and personal involvement, and...international attitudes" (p. 56). Clarke used the survey to research the "cognitive, affective, and participatory dimensions" of global education (p. 57).

Clarke's results show that the study of foreign language, travelling, or taking a course on global subjects made a positive contribution to international attitudes and ability to appreciate a foreign culture (p. 62). However, based upon other data, she claims that the students displayed significant ethnocentrism. For instance, Clarke found that 71% of those surveyed affirmed the belief that U.S. culture is superior to other nations (p. 63). In addition, "60%...said they would not study, and 52% said they would not work in another country" (p. 63). The researcher notes that ethnocentrism has been a norm in the U.S. for decades, especially with the increase of English as a dominant language (Clarke, 2004). Clarke explains that this is disadvantageous during a time of globalization, and that the war on terror especially highlights U.S. citizens' need for foreign language and cross-cultural skills.

Based on her findings and identification of the U.S. as a major player in globalization's corporate growth and humanitarian obligations, Clarke advocates for a more internationalized curricula. She and other scholars propose an international curriculum that would support more study abroad programs and foreign language proficiency (Gutek as cited in Clarke, 2004). In sum, Clarke writes that such a curriculum would ideally "inspire students to empathize with global issues" and help further U.S. citizens' positions as international leaders (p. 69).

Global education, such as Clarke proposes, may serve as an instrumental theme in changing the way U.S. students learn about and view their world. While this idea may seem appropriate for an era of globalization, it draws its origins from an older article, *An Attainable Global Perspective,* proposed by Robert Hanvey (1976). Hanvey suggests that several elements are necessary in attaining the perspective, from "perspective consciousness" to "awareness of human choices," and his article discusses how these elements many be integrated into school curricula. Though he published this article thirty years ago, today's high school courses pertaining to international development and global issues are offered as little more than electives in many cases. The fact that Clarke and Gutek (2004) have just recently argued for international curricula illustrates how global themes have been stifled up until this point.

Only in the past several years have education-based organizations and partnerships started to propose international themes, and many teachers themselves are not adequately prepared through their certificate-granting institutions (National

Geographic, 2006; The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2004; Kirkwood-Tucker, 2001). Further, increasing standardization efforts through laws such as No Child Left Behind leave little room to integrate new and creative themes into classrooms. Certainly, it will be a struggle to modify a traditionally ethnocentric nation, but with the era of globalization upon us, I believe many are realizing the benefits of sophisticated global awareness. My research on using internationally-focused documentaries in global education attempts to offer a small contribution to how we may start to make these necessary advancements.

Statement of the Problem

Based on the empirical data on U.S. students' lack of global understanding and the struggles teachers face in implementing these themes, my research explored how internationally focused, social justice documentaries (hereafter referred to as "documentaries") could be used as an adaptable learning tool to enhance global education and awareness.

Research Questions

By holding focus groups with undergraduate students, I gathered qualitative data on how and what students learn from a selection of international documentaries. I wanted to explore their ideas on using documentaries as a learning tool in high school and undergraduate classes. In addition, I wanted to research how visual representation of a global issue affected their understanding of that topic (i.e. youth labor, Fair Trade). Specifically, I posed the following research questions:

1. How might students learn about the world through documentaries, and could documentaries motivate them to learn more about global issues?

2. How do students see documentaries as a learning tool, and what do they gain from documentaries that is not gained from lecture or reading?

3. How might watching more documentaries on international issues have enriched students' education in high school, and in which classes could these documentaries be appropriate?

Purpose and Significance of the Study

Due to my personal experience in high school, I am interested in improving the ability of high schools to raise students' global awareness. My goal is for this research to provide a reference for educators who want to integrate global themes into their classrooms at the high school and undergraduate level. By providing students' reactions, opinions, and criticisms towards a selection of documentaries, this research could help educators develop film-based lesson plans or discussions in their own classrooms. Specifically, undergraduate and graduate students' opinions may suggest in which classes these documentaries would be appropriate. By creating a database of questions students raised relating to the each documentary's issue, the research would allow teachers to foresee how their own students may react to the films. In general, documentary-based lesson plans could be particularly useful in today's educational system, as they serve as a quick way to integrate global themes in a variety of courses.

To the benefit of the larger community, leaders in global education such as

National Geographic and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills could utilize the research. These organizations could make a database of documentaries and associated learning tools available to educators nationwide. Similarly, the research could be used on each documentary's personal website to help them inform viewers of the films' educational value. By utilizing a questionnaire on global awareness in each focus group, the results of this research may be added to the growing library of data on students' global attitudes and knowledge, as well. The questionnaire and focus groups themselves could aide in participants' developing a broader global perspective, and, if teachers utilize the results, could lead to widespread global awareness in several communities.

Global educators and educational organizations may want to utilize this research, as it differs from other work in the field. Specifically, it is unique in combining technology and visual media based learning with global education. This research also looks at common tools—media and storytelling—as a way to inspire students' interest in global issues, and it suggests solutions instead of focusing on the obstacles in developing healthy global attitudes. This study makes a unique contribution, as other literature looks at the study of foreign language and print-based methods in enhancing global education, not integrating visual media with which students are already familiar. In addition, this research shares student opinions rather than those of researchers or curriculum developers regarding the usefulness of a documentary method. This allows readers and the researcher to understand how and what students enjoy learning, rather than what they should be expected to learn through standardized

curriculum.

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations: I kept this study to global education strictly within the United States, and, while international authors and those with international experience were incorporated, most were of domestic origin. For data collection, I recruited students from classes I believed to have some association with media, education, or international affairs. These included classes in Spanish language, Latin American studies, introductory media, upper-level education, and geography. Last, for the focus groups I used three documentaries that I had seen previously and had won film or media awards. Separately, these documentaries focused on Ethiopia, Bolivia, and India, and, respectively, dealt with the topics of Fair Trade, youth labor, and brothel workers/prostitution. Each documentary also significantly focused on poverty issues within their respective country.

Limitations: This study was limited to a nine-month research process, and my focus groupparticipants and thesis advisors were gathered strictly from the Ohio University, Athens campus from September 2009 until May 2010.

Definition of Terms

Documentary: a non-fiction film whose intentions are to represent a story, history, or issue through a visual and/or auditory medium. From a journalistic standpoint, a documentary may attempt to cover a topic objectively or without opinion. For

example, these would be educational pieces on Public Broadcasting or television stations dedicated to nature or science topics. Other documentaries allow for more creative freedom, and may be categorized in the realm of art, while others may have an agenda to represent social justice issues and persuade viewers to action. Although Michael Moore has made many question the transparency and accuracy of this latter type of film, many other social justice documentaries present issues with more honesty. For the purposes of this research, I used documentaries that I felt judiciously portrayed a social justice issue.

Globalization: the act or process of globalizing**:** the state of being globalized; *especially* **:** the development of an increasingly integrated global economy marked especially by free trade, free flow of capital, and the tapping of cheaper foreign labor markets. (Miriam-Webster, 2010). It is important to note that there are many definitions of globalization. Some may define it strictly from an economic standpoint, referring to trade regulations, free flow of capital, and opening of international markets. Globalization may also be understood from a social justice perspective, in that many believe free trade agreements and open markets have only furthered wealthy nations' power while continuously marginalizing developing countries.

Digital Story-Telling: using personal digital technology to combine a number of media into a coherent narrative. In its minimalist form, a digital story consists of still pictures, voice-over narration, and perhaps music, titles, and transitions. (Ohler, 2009)

Organization of the Study

This study is composed of two major sections including a literature review and data analysis. It follows seminar paper guidelines created by Dr. Jaylynne Hutchinson for graduate students in the College of Education, but it also includes methodology and research sections due to the nature of my study. Major portions of the seminar paper guidelines are utilized in the thesis introduction to explain my interest and background in the area of documentaries in global education.

The subsequent methodology section (Chapter Two) describes my focus group protocol, method of recruiting students to participate in the study, and research questions I posed to the Institutional Review Board. Chapter Three provides a literature review methodology followed by a literature review divided into four major sections: global citizenship in education; global education; standardization and alternative teaching methods; and media and storytelling. I follow these sections with a conclusion regarding how the literature has framed how I see the potential use of documentaries in global education and raising global awareness.

Chapter Four describes and analyzes the data I collected in my pilot studies, as well as undergraduate and graduate focus groups. For this section, I chose a grounded theory of analysis, allowing themes and connections to emerge from the data without an agenda. In other words, I analyzed students' feedback objectively, and did not use the data to support my opinions on the use of documentaries in global education.

Finally, I conclude this thesis with final reflections on my research protocol and provide recommendations on using the three documentaries in classroom settings.

This section may be particularly useful to those attempting to recreate a similar study, as I further describe the obstacles faced in using focus groups as my major source of data collection and the changes I had to make throughout the research process. My intention for this thesis is to discuss how the literature and student feedback frames the use of documentaries to enhance global education and awareness, and for the challenges and insights from my research to be useful to students and educators in the future.

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Chapter Two: Methodology

Documentaries Used in Research

Throughout the thesis, I refer to the following films often, as they were instrumental in several stages of my research. To avoid explaining the background of the films each time I mention them, I have described them in detail here.

Born Into Brothels: Calcutta's Red Light Kids (2004): English photographer, Zana Briski describes her two year project trying to teach children of brothel works photography. The brothel is located in the Red Light District of Calcutta, India, and Briski attempts to sell the photographs the children have taken in high society venues across the world. Her goal is to use the profits from the photographs to send the children to better schools in their area. (85 minutes).

The Devil's Miner (2005): The filmmakers allow their main subject—14-year-old Basilio—to describe his double life as a silver miner and high school student in this documentary. Impoverished conditions in the community and lack of a father have forced Basilio to support his family through the extremely dangerous, but one of the only available, job in the mines. The film also introduces viewers to the culture of mining and non-traditional religious practices that have been present in the community for generations. (82 minutes).

Black Gold (2006): Juxtaposing Western obsession with coffee consumption and the realities of producing the food crop in Ethiopia, this film provides a good introduction to the injustices of international trade. The film's main subject—an

Ethiopian coffee cooperative leader—shows coffee's journey across the world and the leader's personal struggle to find more buyers for his cooperative. The film also includes several African nations' plight during international trade talks and implies that food aid is an impractical solution to Africa's poverty issues. (78 minutes).

Methodology

This research took place over three quarters at Ohio University from 2009 to 2010. The main objective was to gather undergraduate student opinions on the usefulness of three documentary films, and I did this by facilitating a series of three focus groups. I chose a qualitative method of data collection by holding round-table discussions in which each student responded to open-ended questions. Based on previous familiarity with focus groups, I felt that this was the best method to gather thoughtful opinions on films while recruiting a wide variety of students. I chose this method over distributing a survey en mass, as I wanted to speak one-on-one with students and collect data on three specific films. With a focus group, I was able to guarantee that students would watch the entire film, and, relying on the intimate environment of a small group of people, I felt that these dynamics would help students feel comfortable sharing their opinions.

In addition to discussion, I asked students to complete a short questionnaire regarding their high school demographic and knowledge of global issues. With this information, I gathered a basic quantitative assessment of students' backgrounds and

their familiarity with several global issues. After facilitating the undergraduate focus groups, I held a final meeting with several international and traditional graduate students in the College of Education. The impetus for this meeting was to understand how those with teaching experience viewed using documentaries in the classroom and the level of global awareness among U.S. students.

Before undertaking the focus groups, the study was approved by the IRB, and I held two pilot studies to become familiar with facilitating a group discussion. I gathered students for the pilot studies from the class MDIA 101 (Introduction to Media) and screened *Born into Brothels* to each group. These pilot studies were different from the final focus groups, as the professor from MDIA 101 gave students extra credit for participating. In addition, I incorporated an Indian graduate student to help facilitate a discussion on the film and answer any questions the students rose regarding the issue or the region. Initially, incorporating international students in each focus group was part of the larger research project; however recruiting international students for this purpose and coordinating schedules became too difficult.

The pilot studies served their purpose in helping me create solid guidelines for the following focus groups. While my final method differed slightly from the one described in my Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, I kept the essential process very similar to those guidelines. First, I recruited students from a variety of undergraduate classes by contacting professors and asking if they would allow me to present my study during the first ten minutes of their class. Throughout the duration of the research, I attempted to recruit students from business, geography, media, Spanish,

and education classes. During the class presentation, I informed students them that the focus group would involve watching a documentary, discussing what they thought about it on audiotape after, and completing a short questionnaire on global awareness. I also informed them that I would compensate them with pizza and a gift card to a local coffee store. I passed around a sign-up form on which students wrote their emails, and I contacted those students thereafter to finalize a meeting place for the focus group.

Each of the three focus groups I held followed the same protocol. After welcoming students to the focus group, I re-familiarized them with the goal of my study—to understand how students felt about the usefulness of the documentary they were about to view. I told them we would discuss whether they thought the documentary would be effective/appropriate in a high school or undergraduate level class, as well as their general opinions on the quality of the film. I also explained to the students why I was interested in this research, telling them that my high school did not provide enough education regarding global geography or issues. I informed them that, as a video production student, documentaries introduced me to many global issues, and I wanted to know if others felt documentaries were as good a learning tool as I did.

In addition, I told participants that recent surveys regarding U.S. young people's geographic literacy interested me in conducting the research. I described to them the National Geographic Ropers Geographic Literacy survey from 2006, explaining that some of the survey's results found that 50% of survey takers could not

locate Iraq on a map, and that nearly that many believed India was a primarily Muslim Nation. While I told students my opinion on the usefulness of documentaries and lack of global education in the U.S, I explicitly told them that the goal of my research was to collect unbiased, realistic data. For instance, I told them I wanted to know *their* opinions on the films, explaining that if they thought the documentary was inadequate, that this was just as important to my research as opinions supporting documentaries. In general, I informed participants that I wanted them to share any opinions they had on these topics.

After this introduction and signing IRB consent forms, I gave a brief description of the film's subject. We watched each film without interruption; however, I skipped one scene in *Born into Brothels* to make the film shorter and another in *The Devil's Miner* to avoid watching a graphic scene in which an animal is slaughtered. The scene skipped in *Born into Brothels* showed the children travelling to the beach to take pictures. After showing this film twice in the pilot studies, I noticed that it was not pertinent to the film's development, and I needed the extra time for post-film discussion. For *The Devil's Miner* I chose not to show the animal-slaughtering scene, but did describe to the viewers what the scene entailed. I feel this was a justified action, as the viewers responded that they preferred not to see the scene, and that they would not show it in a high school setting either.

Once the film ended, we gathered in a round-table formation, and I told participants that I wanted to hear from each of them regarding each prompt. From there, I proceeded to ask them the following questions:

1. What did you know about the country/issue before watching this film?

2. Were you surprised by what you learned?

3. What were some of the most engaging parts of this film? Why?

4. What are some of the challenges you see in the quality of this film or the portrayal of the issue?

5. Is it important for US students to know about other countries and issues such as the one presented in the film? Why or why not?

6. Do you think you received enough education about other countries and global issues in high school? What were some of the things your high school did that were beneficial in this?

7. Is this film appropriate for high school students?

8. How would a documentary, such as the one you just viewed, have impacted your learning and understanding of the issue represented in the film when you were in high school?

In each focus group, this discussion took approximately half an hour, and I asked students to finish the focus group by completing a short questionnaire (Appendix A). I collected these questionnaires and thanked students for their participation.

As I had hoped, the focus groups proved to a good method to collect insightful data from students with various backgrounds and interests. Each student responded to each question with genuine consideration, and they completed the questionnaires in detail. However, I did experience some tribulations with the focus group, particularly in recruiting enough participants and gathering contrasting opinions to the ones I had shared. In the proceeding section entitled “Conclusions and Reflections,” I discuss in

detail the difficulties I experienced with focus groups and data collection. In general, the focus groups introduced me to the research process, and the students who voiced a need for more global education made me feel that my study was worthwhile; however, I would have liked my participants to offer more judicious opinions on using documentaries in global education.

Last, I held an informal focus group of 6 international graduate students from the College of Education. After completing my data analysis from undergraduate focus group feedback, I felt the need for an additional perspective. In meeting with the international students, I explained my study to them, asking their opinions on the use of internationally focused documentaries as well as their experience with U.S. students' global awareness. While some recommendations emerged naturally from the discussion, I also asked for their thoughts on the challenges and opportunities in U.S. culture for increasing young Americans' global awareness. In general, this discussion was extremely valuable to the overall project, and it helped me to formulate unique conclusions and think about my data in new ways.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

Literature Review Methodology

Throughout my research, I dedicated my reading to the following topics: the implementation of global citizenship in public education, global education and its need in today's schools, standardization and alternative teaching methods, and storytelling and media as learning tools. I also looked at the importance of technology use and media literacy, as documentaries incorporate both of these topics. From many books and articles, I became familiar with the major scholars in these fields. For example: Merry Merryfield and Toni Kirkwood-Tucker have written extensively on global and citizenship education, Howard Gardner and John Dewey in teaching methods, and David Ohler in digital storytelling. Within the literature review, I also referenced older writers and those who may be considered "radical" within their fields. For instance, I believe Robert Hanvey's (1976) article introducing global education is still important to consider, as his work sets the stage for today's discussion in this arena. Additionally, his philosophy regarding global education is often still referred to in contemporary literature on the subject (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2001). Regarding the work of today's non-traditional scholars, I found that Stanely Aronowitz's opinions on the U.S. school system offered a unique outlook pertaining to my research. Specifically, he looks at education from a leftist critical standpoint and how it serves students of poor and working class backgrounds. Considering that a fundamental of global education is to reach a broad variety of students, I felt Aronowitz's viewpoint was an important one to consider.

Defining global citizenship and global education goes beyond clarifying fundamentals, however, and this literature review attempts to explain these themes' significance in the United States education system. By looking at the purpose of education, I discuss the schools' role in incorporating global education and citizenship as a means to secure our nations' democracy. As my research pertains to documentary films, this review also interprets media literacy, popular culture, and technology's significance in the classroom. Arguments for incorporating these themes in classrooms occur in light of a recent push for curriculum standardization and more testing, which may challenge their presence altogether in today's school system. In general, the literature review should frame how I have looked at global education and citizenship in a democratic society, and how documentaries may be useful in enhancing these themes.

Global Citizenship in Public Education

Pertinent to my research is the theme that education is constantly evolving. Currently, the state of educational change may reflect increasingly globalized societies in which we live, and educators are rethinking with what skills students need to be equipped for the 21st century. The idea of instilling students with skills necessary to perform in society is not a modern development. Founding fathers from Thomas Jefferson to John Dewey have interpreted schools' role in preparing and developing youth into progressive adults. One of the themes that has remained constant in educational philosophy is that U.S. schools should prepare students for a democratic

society. In other words, schools should function as institutions of democracy, enlighten the next generation of democratic leaders, and instill students with democratic ideals. Other ideas that have been central to U.S. education is developing students to be citizens and understanding what citizenship means in a democratic society.

Newer themes that have arisen look at how U.S. education may be based in nationalistic tendencies, thus creating a body of ethnocentric individuals. While democracy remains a central goal in U.S. schools, we are encouraged to reconsider what democracy means in a global age, and if curriculum should be diversified with more international themes. Understanding that our democratic societies are becoming more global, scholars are discussing the idea of international loyalties and responsibilities along with traditional domestic ones. The idea of global citizenship presents a possible approach this issue. However, there is not a consensus on how to integrate this idea, and deciding how to balance international and national responsibilities remains difficult.

Traditionally, the existence of U.S. public schools has been a key example of democracy. While the United States was just clarifying its philosophy as a nation, the idea of public, free schools emerged as a necessary component. According to J. Hansen, the goal for public schools was to create an "enlightened and informed citizenry" that would be able to govern themselves through a democracy (as cited in Walling, 2004, p. 49-52). Hansen writes the following:

> Such optimistic hopes for democracy depended entirely on the nature and quality of the education provided to every citizen. Thus public education has been and will remain a central part of the national discourse. Without education, we run the obvious risk of regression and degeneration. If humans are capable of self-governance, then schools serve a greater purpose than just instilling [students with] particular skills. (2004, p. 51)

Whether democracy should "take care of the people" through a government made up of elites, or if common people should "take care of democracy" was an issue of contention among the founding fathers (Goodlad, 2004, p. 5). However, one of the major leaders in the argument for public education, Thomas Jefferson believed that democracy could not thrive among an uneducated people, and today's public schools remain a mark of democratic society (Goodlad, 2004).

Similarly, a goal of U.S. education has been to develop citizens. One could say that "citizens" are the educated individuals able to support and further democracy. While there are differing ideas of "citizenship," in its traditional definition, the term coincides with societal participation. For instance, a citizen would be actively engaged in voting and perhaps community volunteering (Kubow, 2004). As Patricia Kubow (2004) clarifies, citizenship education is often divided between two approaches: guiding students to accept/improve their community versus encouraging students to actively challenge societal norms and think critically of current political systems. She explains that, in general, today's citizenship education implies an understanding of "government structure and administration" (2004, p. 102).

It is important to consider that significantly different definitions of democracy

and citizenship exist throughout all realms of society. As Westheimer and Kahne write:

> For some, a commitment to democracy is a promise to protect liberal notions of freedom, while for others democracy is primarily about equality or equality of opportunity.
> (as cited in Walling, 2004, p. 29)

Indicative of inevitable changes to definitions of democracy and citizenship, John Dewey's writings have acknowledged the difficulty in preparing students for an evolving society. For instance, he wrote "it is impossible to foretell definitely just what civilization will be 20 years from now" (as cited in Ryan, 1998, p. 281). Dewey explains that regardless of this dilemma, society is a "union of individuals," and the educated person within society will be a social creature. According to Stanley Aronowitz (2008) one of Dewey's philosophies was that education should assist "the young to direct their own lives," (p. 24). From these statements, one can gather that schools have always faced the task of helping students adapt to modern times.

Understanding that scholars of past centuries were able to conceptualize the societal changes that arise across generations is pertinent to increasingly globalized communities in which we live. In particular, globalization is challenging notions of democracy and citizenship education as nations become increasingly interdependent. For instance, Nel Noddings (2005) contemplates where loyalty and responsibility should lie when citizens of one nation may depend on food, services, and/or employment from another. Editor of *Diversity and Citizenship Education* (2007), James Banks mentions the increasing importance of diversifying school curriculum

and how it is changing traditional ideas of citizenship education. Banks explains that, amidst diversification, pluralistic nation-states must still be concerned with unifying their people and "cementing the commonwealth" (2007, p. 3).

Goncalves e Silva considers that citizenship education in democratic societies is meant for the "betterment of whole societies, and not just for the rights of their particular racial, social, or cultural group" (as cited in Banks, 2007, p. 4). Banks writes that within democratic, multicultural nations, a major goal of citizenship education is to help students "acquire knowledge" to make their nations more democratic and just (2007). Similarly, Gutmann writes that "these societies [democracies] are characterized by civic equality" and that students should be taught "toleration and recognition of cultural differences" (as cited in Banks, 2007, p. 4).

While one of the central issues discussed within *Diversity and Citizenship Education* is how to diversify while maintaining national unity, Gloria Ladson-Billings (as cited in Noddings, 2005) points to other challenges within citizenship education. For instance, she looks at defining citizenship for those who feel ties to more than one nation. Ladson-Billings considers that people with these connections have "multicultural citizenship," and she writes that it is a common position among people with diverse ethnic backgrounds (as cited in Noddings, 2005, p. 73). She indicates that this is problematic, as whites have been the predominant group in the United States, and thus they are better supported by/favored in the nation's cultural and civic realms. Perhaps as a proposed solution to this issue, Ladson-Billings cites the following by Kymlicka (1998):

> If there is a viable way to promote a sense of solidarity and common purpose in a multination state, it will involve accomodating, rather than subordinating, national identities. People from different national groups will only share an allegiance to larger polity if…their national identity is nurtured rather than subordinate. (as cited in Noddings, 2005, p. 74)

Nel Noddings (2005) reframes the idea of multicultural citizenship as "global citizenship," and considers how the title may play out amidst today's globalized society. Recently, we have seen a transformation regarding global issues from peak oil to pandemics to the depletion of natural resources. In addition, access to travel, media, employment, and goods and services on an international scale has contributed to the phenomenon deemed "globalization."

These conditions, Noddings writes, have resulted in concern with the "welfare of all human and nonhuman life," and the "preservation of the Earth as a home to that life." She mentions that it presents conflict for many as they "dream of peace during times of war," and struggle with the "appreciation of diversity and the longing for unity." Becoming global citizens and understanding interdependence may offer a way to navigate through these challenges, Noddings suggests.

Noddings explains that there are multiple ways of looking at global citizenship. She writes that one way to define it is from an economic standpoint. This type of global citizenship is the ability to work and live abroad and accept the free trade system within globalization. It is a more individualistic view, and reflects a person's ability to succeed in a globalized world. On the other hand, some who feel they are global citizens vehemently oppose the economic system as it plays out today. Some

believe that free market capitalism results in worldwide economic injustice and proves detrimental to Earth's environment as a whole. Global citizenship, from this perspective, suggests a responsibility to stop these injustices and reject the system in place rather than succeed within it.

This contrasting view presents challenges for educators. If citizens felt equal concern for all nations and all people, it seems impossible to also support globalization and its proclaimed injustices. Noddings suggests that peace would have to be a precondition for global citizenship; however, considering the state of war in which nations engage, she acknowledges the conflict that peace requires integrating global and national loyalties. Noddings also acknowledges the argument as to whether globalization is beneficial or creates injustices. She explains that many argue that any growth or development disproves injustices, and that, if a poor nation is at least developing, it is also benefiting from globalization. However, Noddings does write that evidence of economic injustice does not always match up with growth and development statistics.

Considering that teachers must present information objectively, it could be difficult to discuss these issues. They would be required to present both sides of globalization and thus possess substantial knowledge of the theme and its consequences. As Merry Merryfield (2000) and Toni Kirkwood-Tucker (2009) point out, teachers already face a lack of preparation regarding educating on global issues. In her research, Kirkwood-Tucker implies that this is due to a lack of motivation to explore international subjects on behalf of students majoring in education. She cites

two studies—one from 1989, another from 2003—that show education majors had significantly less "exposure to international subjects, foreign language, and overseas experience" compared to students in other majors. Kirkwood also shares a 1980 survey, which estimated that "less than 5 percent of teachers had any academic training in global or international topics or issues" (p. 241).

One of the top global education experts today, Merryfield (2000) looks at this issue as an institution's responsibility to their students. She writes that the demographic majority of U.S. education professors are over fifty, white, and male; thus, she questions if this homogeneity has led to an educational force with little international exposure. Merryfield also states that "most of today's teachers have not been prepared to teach for diversity…or even recognize the effects of globalization in the lives of their students and communities" (2000, p. 430). In her article on the subject, Merryfield shares several teachers' testimonies on how they came to be global educators. In this reading, one sees that many of them were introduced to diversity by experiencing racial or class prejudices in the U.S., , but others came to understand it through more uplifting experiences abroad.

While Merryfield claims "experience alone does not make a multicultural or global educator," she explains that becoming aware of multiple perspectives is almost a prerequisite to becoming a global educator. She suggests that the privilege of white, middle-class professors has prevented them from witnessing the outsider's perspective, and thus has kept them from preparing others to teach for diversity and multicultural studies. Merryfield concludes that future teachers need to acknowledge

white privilege and unidentified racism. Without this, and without more diverse collegiate faculty, she writes that future teachers will face challenges in introducing diversity and global education into their classrooms.

From centuries past to present day, these readings present a framework through which to discuss education's role in encouraging citizenship and democracy among students. Citizenship education is changing in light of globalization, and scholars are discussing how to teach more diversified curricula while maintaining a nation state with unified ideals and morals. They are also considering how global networks may change our ideas on national loyalties and responsibilities. Nel Noddings covers the idea of global citizenship, and how it may be a new focus for future educators. While determining whether or what type of citizenship schools should encourage, the literature suggests that schools will inevitably serve as one of students' major introduction to society. During this time of globalization, it is questionable how students should be made aware of international interdependence. The readings suggest that, as participants of this global system, we should consider how national and global commitments could be shared. However, without experienced educators at the high school and college level, it may be difficult to initiate these efforts in the first place.

Global Education

As is the case with global citizenship, global education poses many opportunities amidst its challenges, and perhaps defining the term must be the initial

goal among educators and scholars alike. Robert Hanvey's article *An Attainable Global Perspective* (1976) served as one of the first introductions to this theme in the late seventies. Hanvey's publication sorts global education into five categories: perspective consciousness, state-of-the-planet awareness, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, and awareness of human choices. Since then, many have added to and critiqued these themes (Dyer, 2005; Kirkwood-Tucker, 2001; Noddings, 2005). In general, there is agreement on several basic principles of global education, which has come to be seen as a framework to help students adapt the necessary skills for the 21st century (Clarke, 2004, Dyer, 2005, Kirkwood-Tucker, 2001, Noddings, 2005).

Toni Kirkwood-Tucker (2001) is one leading scholars who has identified four major themes of global education on which there is agreement. She explains that a common understanding of global education's underpinnings lie in "multiple perspectives, comprehension and appreciation of cultures, knowledge of global issues, and the works as interrelated systems" (2001, p. 12). Regarding the definition itself, Kirkwood-Tucker acknowledges that "global education" is constructed of two ambiguous terms, and that even more phrases have been used interchangeably to describe the same theme. Because global education is still a relatively new field, she explains, it is not surprising that defining it has been a challenge.

According to Julie Dyer (2005), it is important to note the distinction between globalization and global education, which are often used interchangeably. Dyer suggests that *global education* could act as a means through which students

understand the process of *globalization*. Clarifying that globalization and global education are not the same thing, Dyer sees the link between the two themes useful in understanding their separate definitions. One clarification of terms that Kirkwood-Tucker (2001) finds important is the difference between *international* and *global* education, explaining that *international* education has traditionally been a foreign language learning approach for students of higher education. *International* education, as Kirkwood-Tucker explains, has mostly served as a supplement to traditional courses and utilized by those trying to achieve positions in international politics (2001). On the other hand, Kirkwood-Tucker argues that *global* education is meant to serve the general public so that they may become aware of how their world works and how to succeed in a global society (2001).

Understanding that global education is meant for a broader audience, Kirkwood-Tucker discusses several authors' comments on the goals of teaching this subject. Anderson (1990) mentions that students should be prepared for a world in which the United States is not as globally influential and where inequities have risen (as cited by Kirkwood-Tucker, 2001). Several authors point to the need for global education to address the role of non-governmental organizations in local and international politics (Alger and Harf 1986; Kniep 1987, 1986; & Lamy, 1987 as cited in Kirkwood-Tucker, 2001). According to Lamy (1987), global education should balance contemporary and historical events with knowledge from tribal and indigenous cultures. Kirkwood-Tucker (2001) and other scholars have come to a similar opinion that global education should foster students' empathy towards and

tolerance of other cultures in order to attain a more peaceful world (Noddings, 2005). Likewise, Selby and Pike's definition focuses on the "transformation" of students through global education. Specifically, they write that global awareness should invigorate students to transform their world into a more equitable one (as cited in Noddings, 2005).

Professional organizations have also acknowledged global education and have created their own standards for its implementation. As Kirkwood-Tucker notes, the Task Force on Global Education of the United States Commissioner of Education created a framework similar to Robert Hanvey's, but also included an "ethical component" stating that students should be able to understand his/her role within the community and the world. Kirkwood writes that both the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education incorporate broader definitions of global education. These frameworks consider the interdependency and connections between nations through a social, economic, and ecological lens. A more complex consideration of global education is provided by the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS), which suggests there is an inseparable link between the future of humanity and the well being of the world's environment. Reminiscent of this paper's previous topic, the NCSS's definition also suggests that citizenship is a necessary component within world and local affairs.

To implement global education themes, several authors have discussed their personal teaching methods and recommendations. However, before discussing their

specific practices, it is significant to note a changing consideration of global education as posed by Johann Le Roux (2001)

> Global education is not some alien or foreign form, perspective, theory or curriculum of foreign education. Nor is it an additional subject to be dumped into an already crowded curriculum. Global education is common sense and should focus on practical value and logical interrelatedness of things learned. It is argued that global perspectives should prevail and be taught in every classroom and every subject. (as cited by Dyer, 2005, p. 5)

Nel Noddings (2005) supports incorporating global education throughout multiple subjects, rather than holding social studies teachers responsible for diversifying curricula. Her book and others provide some ways teachers have integrated global education into everyday subjects (Abdi and Shultz, 2008; Hufford and Pedrajas, 2007). For instance, Stephen Thorton suggests comparing U.S. history lessons with modern issues (as cited in Noddings, 2005). Thorton writes that "historic waves of immigration to the United States could be compared with the current issue of displaced person and refugees," and that "mining on the American Western frontier [could be compared] with the Bush administration's aspirations to drill for oil in the vast tracts of the Alaskan Arctic wilderness" (as cited in Noddings, 2005, p. 88).

Nel Noddings proposes another way to view global education, suggesting that the term could be synonymous with peace education. Despite this alternative name, it is significant to note that peace education does not present fewer obstacles than global education. As Noddings (2005) and Banks (2007) explain, one of the challenges to global education is maintaining national unity while teaching students about international interdependence. For example, Noddings questions global

citizenship's compatibility with national citizenship, as the former "requires us to value the lives of all people, not just those of our own nations" (2005, p. 17). Especially in a time of war, as Noddings writes, it is to be expected that patriotism and national ties will overtake global compassion. Based on this conflict, she explains that peace must therefore be a precondition to educating for global citizenship. (For the purposes of this paper, "global education" and Noddings' phrase "educating for global citizenship" refer to the same idea)

As Noddings writes, peace education is difficult to integrate in the first place, as most of history and politics classes focus on "wars and the rise and fall of nations," not peace and conflict resolution (2005, p. 18). While plenty of examples of non-violent actions and literature exist, Noddings explains that these are often in the form of art or mediums that do not always fit into the historical realm. For example, she contemplates that while there is a plethora of anti-Vietnam war songs, they may be more appropriate for an English class than history. In addition, Noddings suggests that anti-war movements on behalf of religious organizations would be pertinent to address during a time when religion is so often associated with war and violence. However, the obstacle in incorporating peace movements remains that they do not fit into one category, and thus students many never conceptualize how they are all connected (Noddings, 2005).

Despite that examples of peace movements might be muddled across subjects, Noddings argues that this in and of itself illustrates how the theme can be integrated throughout curricula. Aside from English class incorporating anti-war songs, and

religion classes discussing faith-based peace movements, Noddings explains that peace studies could also be incorporated into math and science. Although perhaps a morbid example, Noddings suggests that math classes could discuss the number of casualties addressed in war. Alternatively, she writes that they could examine the lifetime of radioactive decay associated with the Hiroshima bomb. Within the sciences, Noddings suggests looking at the environmental consequences of war. Personally, I see many connections between environmental destruction and peace studies, especially as we hear of rising sea levels displacing entire groups of people, as well as diminishing livelihoods as we overfish oceans and urbanize natural areas. In general, perhaps peace may be an easier way for many students to conceptualize global interconnectedness and how nations are tied to one another.

Beyond definitions and methods of integrating global education, I would like to touch on the *need* for global education in United States schools today. I have previously mentioned the National Geographic Roper survey and Velta Clarke's study; I will briefly revisit these examples as I feel they are strong indicators that the nation lacks a successful global education component. The National Geographic Roper survey was conducted in 2006 and surveyed over 500 young Americans. The researchers found that students had a "limited understanding of the world," and they concluded this from results showing that 48% of survey takers were not able to find Iraq on a map and that nearly that many believed India was a primarily Muslim nation. Velta Clarke's study recreated a survey from 1979 to measure students' global attitudes. She carried out her research at a liberal arts college in the United States,

finding that 71% percent of those surveyed affirmed U.S culture was superior to other nations. From this, Clarke concluded that participants "displayed ethnocentrism," which she said was not appropriate in an increasingly international society.

Examples of ethnocentric attitudes are provided in additional surveys, and the concern with nationalistic based education is shared among several scholars (Aronowitz, 2008; Bigelow, 2007). For example, the Pew Research Center released a Global Attitudes Survey in 2003 in which United States citizens were among the most likely to believe their culture was superior to others. In addition, high school teacher Bill Bigelow believes students have been so indoctrinated into nationalistic-based education, that they can rarely remove themselves from this mindset.

Bigelow provides an example from his global studies class for high school juniors, in which they discussed controversies on the North American Free Trade Agreement. In a role-play students were placed in several groups from poor Mexican farmers to U.S food companies. Bigelow writes that, once students started to see how the poor Mexican farmers and U.S. environmentalists started working together, that the "us" and "them" mentality was not as logical. However, Bigelow explains that later in the unit when discussing immigration policy, students "retreated to [nationalism's] simple-mindedness," stating that immigrants are taking "our" jobs and that the "'United States needs to focus on the United States…We need to worry about us'" (as cited in Westheimer, 2007, p. 88). Bigelow suggests that the "us" versus "them" mentality represents nationalism's inherent role in U.S. education. He indicates that change will come from teachers who aren't afraid to challenge students'

idea of who and what defines the United States and question that controversies may not feet neatly into national boundaries.

Offering another example of nationalistic based approaches to teaching in the United States, Toni Kirkwood-Tucker (2001) cites an issue with the traditional of teaching the American Revolution by Tucker and Evans. These scholars argue that the American Revolution's success is traditionally taught without mentioning the Spanish and French assistance provided to General George Washington. Kirkwood-Tucker then adds that many of the American history teachers she has encountered are not even aware of this piece of history (2001).

According to Stanley Aronowitz, nationalism presents itself in American education, in that "high schools do not teach philosophy or social history—principally the role of social movements in making history—or treat world literature as a legitimate subject of academic study" (2008, p. 25). As Gloria Ladson-Billings points out, U.S. students may be taught to become active citizens, but that "this preparation is likely to be in the form of uncritical acceptance of the United States as the 'best' country in the world" (as cited in Noddings, 2005, p. 75). Ladson-Billings indicates that, in general, traditional social studies approaches focus too much on United States history, values, and economy, and thus leave little room to discuss how other cultures consider these same topics (as cited in Noddings, 2005).

Understanding that nationalism and ethnocentrism may threaten the integration of global education (especially while the theme itself is still emerging), educators may turn to national organizations that provide teaching frameworks and lesson plans to

incorporate such themes. For instance, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills is a national organization that encourages states to become leaders in teaching frameworks for the 21st century. Their online database lists "global awareness" as one of the interdisciplinary themes that the organization suggests should be used to enhance core subjects (2004). The partnership provides seven resources for educators wanting to know more about successful examples of incorporating this theme and lists programs and plans that individual states have followed to become "Partnership for the 21st Century Leadership States."

National Geographic has also been instrumental in initiating a global and geography literacy campaign known as *My Wonderful World* (2007). While the impetus for this campaign stems from the National Geographic Ropers survey on geographic literacy (2006), their website explains that the campaign focuses on global connections, not only geography (2007). Since its foundation, the organization has founded a geography awareness week, offers weekly e-newsletters to members, and provides global and geography literacy resources for parents, teachers, and children on their website. In addition to offering learning materials, the organizers are trying to make geography awareness a strong presence among state coordinators and policy makers, and they have promoted this theme through conferences, public service announcements, and by collaborating on projects with corporate and non-profit organizations.

As national organizations acknowledge global educations' significance, surveys and scholars suggest that ethnocentrism and nationalism will be a strong

barrier to integrating global education themes. However, educators are not without resources and scholars like Noddings and Thorton are eager to discuss how peace and global studies may be easily integrated across curricula. In addition, educators and researchers such as Bigelow and Kirkwood-Tucker have made significant steps in identifying how nationalism plays out in the United States, and how global education may help students in understanding globalization and interdependency. As Kirkwood-Tucker (2001) suggests, students entering kindergarten in 1999 will face a radically different world when they graduate high school in 2012, and their daily lives will involve communication with diverse people and cultures. She mentions that this "new world order…will challenge their emotional, intellectual and physical well-being" (2001, p. 10). In her conclusion, Kirkwood-Tucker argues that global education can assist in developing a more peaceful world, and that global education has "gained new momentum and plays an increasing role in the United States and the world" (2001, p. 14). As reflected in the title of her article, she concludes that the "global age requires a global education" (2001, p. 14).

Standardized and Alternative Student Assessment

As indicated in the previous sections, global education, awareness, and citizenship are gaining significance in the educational realm. Challenges to integrating global themes include having a teaching staff knowledgeable on controversial topics, maintaining a national identity while offering a diverse curriculum, and struggling

with the possibility of a traditional ethnocentric mindset. An additional challenge lies in the United States' recent increased use of standardized tests. Because students' scores on the tests can determine school funding as well as the individual students' future, many teachers have focused their lessons around test material. While this may increase students' test scores, it prevents teachers from integrating new or creative material, such as global awareness. This section discusses a brief history and current manifestation of standardized testing, and it looks at how Howard Gardner's (1999) alternative approach may present a method for teachers to integrate global themes.

For students and parents of the 21st century, "standardization" and "high-stakes testing" have become commonplace words. However, the roots of these terms extend much farther back than the year 2000, and it is questionable if most people understand the history and social implications of these additions to the public school system. One topic that has led to increased awareness of standardizations is the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act of 2001. Despite its highly publicized controversies regarding school funding and ramifications of student testing, Congress is considering this act for reauthorization. Many find that the growing significance of student test scores has had a negative impact on students' learning, teachers' freedom in the classroom, and society at large. While alternative methods of assessment have been studied extensively, it appears that the continued singular emphasis on standardization and testing may inhibit the integration of alternative methods of assessment and learning.

As Joel Spring (2004) explains, standardization and accountability emerged hand in hand in the late 1970's with the book *A Nation at Risk* (United States

Department of Education, 1983). This publication popularized the idea that schools should report "their accomplishments and failures to the public" (2004, p. 183). Test scores thus appeared an efficient method of illustrating schools' and students' performance, and a way for officials to make informed decisions on how to make changes to school systems. As high stakes testing critic Alfie Kohn (2000) points out, test scores became an easy way to measure a school's progress and allowed politicians to show concern about these issues. Kohn reflects on the fact that our society has a tendency to associate numerical data with scientific fact. This belief, he indicates, is another reason why test scores become a popular and trusted measure of assessment in the United States.

When scholars and politicians discuss standardized testing, they are referring to exams such as the national Scholastic Aptitude Test or state-tests such as the Ohio Achievement Test. Following, the Ohio Department of Education explains why these tests are mandatory:

> The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001(NCLB) requires all states to establish academic standards that tell what students should know and be able to do in reading and math at the end of each grade. NCLB also requires states to test all students in grades 3-8 annually in reading and math to assess how well students are meeting the academic content standards. The results of the tests are used to identify districts, schools and students that may require additional resources to meet state academic standards.
>
> (http://ohio3-8.success-ode-state-oh-us.info/faqs.aspx, 04/30/2010)

While terms such as "aptitude" and "achievement" are given to these exams, they are often translated as "high-stakes testing." This refers to the significant ramifications of student test scores, especially in light of No Child Left Behind. For most students,

individual test score determine what colleges and universities will accept them, whether their high school will grant them a diploma, and if they will pass onto the next grade level (Kohn, 2000). For schools, test scores determine whether a school is "passing" or "failing" according to NCLB standards, and they are a factor in how much money schools are provided (Spring, 2004).

The NCLB act is described as method to determine the success of a school, and how the government needs to aid certain schools to improve (Spring, 2004). One of the major critical discussions surrounding the testing paradigm is that tests may not be the best assessment method for all students. By determining a school's "progress" and "success" mostly through the numerical data associated with test scores, government and school officials may not truly be understanding student aptitude or a schools' ability to educate.

Several reasons that tests may not be the best assessment method are argued by scholars Spring and Kohn. As Spring points out, tests often utilize low-level thinking skills rather than encouraging students to think critically, and Kohn argues the same. He points out that a study on standardized mathematics tests yielded that less than 3% of the questions required "'high level conceptual knowledge'" (2000, p. 8) In addition, Kohn argues that tests do not reflect real-world situations involving evaluation. For instance Kohn argues that, in actual work situations, people are allowed to ask coworkers for help and are not secretly demanded to take multiple-choice examinations to gauge their effectiveness (2000). Spring also indicates that test-taking skills may be taught, thus decreasing tests' validity in determining students'

knowledge. He offers the example that many private test-taking services exist specifically towards such efforts. This reflects a larger issue of corporate involvement in the public school system. For example, the standardized tests that schools use are often supplied and graded by the same corporate entity. In addition, these corporations sell test-taking guides and instructional materials to schools so that their students may score better on their tests (Kohn, 2000).

Beyond issues within the school building, these assessment methods also reflect (and sometimes worsen) socioeconomic and cultural issues (Kohn, 2000; Spring, 2004). As Spring writes, "the testing approach shifts the discussion from the conditions of learning to the motivation to learn" (2004, p. 186). In other words, school officials and politicians may argue that teachers and students are to blame for poor scores rather than resources or economic situation of the school district. Indicating that resources *are* a key factor in high test scores, a study by the Rand Corporation shows that the following school situations correlate with higher test scores: higher expenditures per student, smaller class sizes, higher teacher satisfaction with classroom resources, and less teacher turnover (Spring, 2004).

According to Spring, the factors facilitating higher test scores explains why poor scores are often associated with low-income students. He argues that school districts in economically depressed area often have much larger classes, fewer resources, and a less consistent teaching staff. This leads to another issue that published test scores may further a cycle of lower performing schools existing in lower economic school districts. Because schools must publish their assessments and

test scores, Spring explains that real estate agencies can use the scores to their advantage. For example, real estate agents can increase the price of housing in districts with high performing schools and market them to new residents with school age children. This could lead to further separation of highly achieving schools in only wealthy areas, and, as Spring states, "branding of low-income students as failures" (2004, p. 189).

Spring also argues that tests nearly require that students possess a certain level of cultural background to score well. He explains that he once missed a math question because he did not know the meaning of a word. Understanding that test questions are often intended for students of certain cultural standing, Stanley Aronowitz (2007) argues that standardized testing is one of the most recent methods to exclude students of working-class backgrounds from higher education.

One may consider that these conflicts create a particularly negative and stressful learning atmosphere for both educators and students. According to the National Council of Teachers of English, "high stakes testing often harms students' daily experience of learning…[and] diminishes the emotional well-being of educators and children" (as cited in Spring, 2004, p. 191). Regarding students' emotional health, Kohn reflects on the fact that test-anxiety has recently become a concentration of educational psychology. While some students are overly concerned with their scores and develop anxiety, Kohn also indicates that many students simply disregard the tests entirely and choose not to apply themselves.

Regarding student and school satisfaction with tests, Kohn indicates that tests'

efficiency keep many from questioning their usefulness. As he writes, "[It is] easier to rate how well we're doing something than to ask whether what we're doing makes sense" (2000, p. 4). This may reflect one scholar's question of whether schools' curricula and teaching methods are relevant to students in the first place (Thorton, 2005). As Stephen Thorton writes:

> In the almost certainly futile quest to bring all young people to 'world-class' standards—defined as college preparatory work—many high school students are coerced into studying material in which they neither have an intrinsic interest nor see life relevance. …Nevertheless, these failures seem to be taken by policy-makers as signs that we need to buckle down still further rather than asking the critical question: Is there important material to study that young people might find relevant to their lives and the world in which they live?
> (as quoted in Noddings, 2005, p. 85)

While this increased use of standardization and the NCLB act may enable visual, numerical accountability, Thorton brings up an important point that standardized material simply may not be useful or interesting to students.

Acclaimed creator of the multiple intelligences theory, Howard Gardner offers an alternative teaching and assessment method. It is important to note that Gardner is not a self-proclaimed anti-standardization or anti-testing scholar. In fact, he writes that he favors "regular assessment and high standards for student work," and describes that, ideally, a standardized assessment would secure a common knowledge among citizens (1999, p. 39, 107). However, Gardner's discussion on teaching for multiple intelligences offers an alternative approach to traditional standardized tests and curricula.

Gardner explains that the first intelligence test, the Intelligence Quotient (IQ)

was originally designed to help people improve upon their intelligences. When it arrived in America during 19th century waves of immigration, the IQ test became standardized, and a way to compare people to each other. In contrast to a "mutuality of intelligence" as examined in the IQ test, the theory of multiple intelligences suggests that people might explore up to eight separate intelligences through which to most effectively gather and understand knowledge (Armstrong, 2000; Gardner, 1999, p. 65). As opposed to "linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence" that have been popularized in schools, Gardner argues that "we should also place equal attention on individuals who show gifts in the other intelligences" (Armstrong, 2000).

The problem with modern, popular curricula, as Gardner explains, is that educators are obliged to teach a wide variety of topics "from Plato to NATO" and "Cleopatra to Clinton" and cover an entire textbook's worth of material. This, he writes, "virtually [guarantees] that most students will not advance toward a genuine understanding of the subject at hand" (1999, p. 122). With fact memorization, Gardner explains that students are not able to gather meaning, and that a deeper level of understanding only occurs when facts are "pieced together by a framework, theory, or sequence" (1999, p. 155).

Without this deeper understanding, he argues, many children develop misconceptions of how the world works early in life. Even though they may be able to memorize individual pieces of information, children may have a flawed understanding of underlying theories and concepts. For example, Gardner explains that many students do not have a proper understanding of evolution, believing it is a process of

adaptation rather than mutation. He explains that common teaching methods, such as testing students only on content of lectures and textbooks, is partly to blame because it does not challenge students to apply information in new ways.

In his book *The Disciplined Mind,* Gardner describes an ideal curriculum as one that "inculcates in students an understanding of major disciplinary ways of thinking" (1999, p. 118). Gardner has selected science, mathematics, the arts, and history as the major disciplines, and suggests that his teaching method would, respectively, facilitate students' ability to think like a scientist, a geometer, an artist, and a historian. As he points out, these disciplines should be taught in depth, exploring a "*manageable set of examples,"* as opposed to massive amounts of fact memorization (1999, p. 118). Gardner writes that it is not the exact examples that matter, nor that this teaching method's goal should focus on making experts out of students. Rather, studying examples from multiple professional perspectives should "enable [students] to draw on these modes of thinking in coming to understand their world" (1999, p. 118).

The scholar provides an example of this teaching method in regard to studying Darwin's finches. The biologist, Gardner writes, will question how the birds have been able to survive, and how different species have come to the island. The artist may have a more introspective approach and seek to capture how he or she felt about the beauty of the finches. By studying the birds for an artistic purpose, the artist may develop new skills in the realm of observations, data collection, but also further his or her artistic abilities. Alternatively, the historian may consider how Darwin's observations of the

finches played into his scientific discovery of the theory of evolution.

In contrast to fact memorization, this example illustrates how Gardener's teaching methods encourage new levels of thinking and understanding. Further, Gardner's method may enable more global themes in the classroom, as opposed to teaching material to improve test scores. As he indicates that the exact examples used in his core curriculum are not the most significant aspects, Gardner's method may allow teachers to integrate more global examples to illustrate core subjects and topics.

While Gardner does not oppose testing or standards, he does argue that fact memorization will prove obsolete in an era where so much information is at our fingertips, and he argues that tests do not "reveal the thinking that underlies the response" (1999, p. 65). Indicating further criticisms of standardized assessment, Kohn and Spring argue that they may not present the best way to measure students' knowledge. For instance, they write that tests often employ low-level skills and may require a certain cultural background of test takers. As Kohn, Spring, and Thorton point out, testing and standardized material may result in social ramifications and a negative or disengaged learning atmosphere. In this light, perhaps Gardner's application of multiple perspectives, acknowledging multiple intelligences, and teaching for understanding could present a positive change for schools and students alike. In addition, a teaching method based on understanding rather than fact memorization may allow educators to more easily integrate global themes.

Media and Storytelling

Understanding that the United States is not likely to make a dramatic change in the use of standardized assessment, it is important to consider how teachers might still be able to integrate global themes easily. My research looks at the use of documentaries as an efficient and engaging learning tool, and my personal experience has indicated that they are successful in these endeavors. Based on the literature I covered, I found that documentaries might be particularly useful, as they combine technology/media and storytelling. As I see youth become increasingly savvy with technology, perhaps the visual and media aspect of documentaries present a way to connect with students as they move away from printed mediums. Although our world is becoming more technology oriented, it is worth considering that story remains a constant method of communication. As the literature indicates, humans' ability to understand and communicate by story develops early in life, and by nature, documentaries unfold through this method of communication. In addition to offering a visually stimulating way to integrate global themes, I believe documentary's technology and storytelling components illustrate why they may be a strategic learning tool.

Throughout the literature research, I found that story is an element that students come to understand before setting foot in a classroom (Ohler, 2009). Several scholars believe that educators should pay attention to the familiarity, experiences, and skills that students bring to school from their home life (Dewey, 1998; Aronowitz,

2008, Ohler, 2009). By understanding what students become familiar with in a home environment, perhaps teachers can have a better chance in connecting students with educational lessons.

As John Dewey writes, students come from a variety of backgrounds, and they embody certain skill sets and knowledge from their home life (as cited in Ryan & Cooper, 1998). Dewey explains that the society students have come to understand through their home life should not be separate from the society a school constructs for its pupils. The home, Dewey writes, "Is the form of social life in which the child has been nurtured," and how he or she comes to understand morals and values (p. 282, 1998). From a social developing standpoint, Dewey explains that the school's responsibility lies in "deepening and extending the child's sense" of values (p. 282, 1998). As condensed societies, schools may offer a way for students to grow to understand the complex structures within their world. This is summed up in Dewey's critical statement that schools should not be the students' "preparation for future living," but, rather, a "continuous reconstruction of experience" (p. 281, 283, 1998)

Dewey's thoughts are important in considering schools' role in developing students today, and how educators may introduce students to a globalized world. As society becomes more technology-based, the skills students learn at home may include familiarity with many electronic devices, popular culture, and the internet. Familiarity with these aspects may be considered part of a larger umbrella theme, "media." In order to continuously reconstruct what students already know, perhaps educators need to better understand media's significance in young people's lives today and utilize

media-based approaches to learning. In *Against Schooling* (2008), Stanley Aronowitz argues a similar point.

Specifically, Aronowitz looks at how media and popular culture have become a second form of education for today's youth. He states that media "are a crucial source of education and may, in comparison to schools, exercise greater influence on children and youth" (2008, p. 31). Aronowitz connects this to youth's past and present use of popular culture to learn about and critique their society. Music in particular, he suggests, offers a good example with regard to the anti-Vietnam war movement, as well as more modern critiques of a middle-class, suburban lifestyle. For instance, one may consider artists from John Baez to Green Day as musical critics of society (*Where Are You Now My Son?,* 1973; *Green Day,* 2004)

In addition to musical critiques, Aronowitz looks at how the film and television aspects of popular culture may act as tools of inspiration for young people. He explains that these mediums have become subjects of cultural and academic critique with "massive influence on what we know and how we learn." Aronowitz notes it is important to consider how media influences the values and "cultural imagination of children and adolescents" (2008, p. 31). Suggesting film and television have certain effect on our consciousness, he cites Hortense Powdermaker's study that cinema has helped people develop a wider network of imagination. Specifically, Powdermaker's research deemed Hollywood and its output of films a "dream factory," which had "profound effects on our collective unconsciousness" (2008, p. 34). While film could be seen as a simple form of entertainment, Powdermaker looked at the

cinema as having "general social influence" (2008, p. 34).

Understanding that media and popular culture may be looked at as the second strongest mode of education, Aronowitz suggests it is the school's error to keep it outside curricula. He writes:

> By consistently refusing to treat popular culture…as objects of legitimate intellectual knowledge, schools deny the validity of student experience even if the object were to deconstruct them. (2008, p. 34)

The idea that schools should acknowledge media and popular culture ties into the greater theme of media literacy, which has gained significant attention as a necessary skill for young people to acquire today.

In his book, *Digital Storytelling*, David Ohler (2009) writes, "until students become persuaders themselves, the persuasion of media remains hidden to them" (p. 12). By creating media projects and learning through digital storytelling (DST), Ohler says children can develop both traditional and media literacies. Ohler's quote indicates that young people's immersion in media and technology illustrates the need for teaching media literacy. He also suggests that, due to students' familiarity with technology, teaching media literacy may not be as challenging as teachers who are not technologically-savvy may fear.

Digital storytelling, according to Ohler, is equivalent to "new media." He acknowledges the vagueness in combining these broad terms, but attempts to define the phrase accordingly:

> Digital storytelling (DST) uses personal digital technology to combine a number of media into a coherent narrative…

> In its minimalist form, a digital story consists of still pictures, voice-over narration, and perhaps music, titles, and transitions. (2009, p 15, 54)

While Aronowitz acknowledges media and popular culture's influence on this generation, Ohler deems today's youth "digital natives" and believes they have developed a thorough understanding and dexterity with technology and media outside school. For instance, young people are able to send text messages, take pictures with cell phones, and even develop web pages by teaching themselves the necessary skills (Ohler, 2009). "To them," Ohler writes, "technology is largely just intelligent furniture" (2009, p. 45). Because students are more familiar with story and media-saturated environments than printed mediums, learning new material through printed word presents a challenge. According to Ohler, using printed material in combination with introducing analytical/technical writing methods often results in students' disconnect with the material because they are trying to link learning that occurs at home with that which is taught at school.

Considering that familiarity with technology may create dissonance with school material, Ohler indicates that DST may be a way to reach more students, as it incorporates elements of story. To support the idea that story is an effective learning tool, Ohler cites Keiran Egan's work, which acknowledges students' understanding of story at a very young age as a form of communication. Combining story with digital mediums, Ohler argues that DST "allows students to speak in their own language," and, "allows them to express content-area understanding in ways that are familiar," (2009, p. 10).

While DST supports incorporating media and technology in the classroom,

scholars have also considered that there is a basic need for storytelling in our communities and classrooms (Dyson, 1994). Ohler agrees, saying that stories are "essential for survival." They are practical, he explains, as they allow us to organize massive amounts of information that would otherwise be the "ongoing chaos of life." He says that stories are useful in conflict resolution and represent a way for people to understand their personal role and develop connection to others in society. Further, they are simply an easier way to remember information, as they facilitate an audience's emotional connection to the material.

In order to facilitate DST in the classroom, Ohler lists several tried examples of digital storytelling in pages 18-22 of his book (2009). These are student and professionally created videos and animations that examine subjects from the mathematics of rolling a ball to drug recovery, and they are appropriate for a variety of school-age children. An example of incorporating digital storytelling in the classroom would involve showing these videos and involving students in creating their own media projects.

Another important aspect that Ohler considers is how DST can aide teachers in achieving several K-12 subject standards. For instance, he mentions that most DST projects will inherently utilize most International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards. Regarding reading and English subjects, Ohler argues that DST matches their respective standards, as it "deals directly with production and understanding of narrative" (2009, p. 44). Almost all DST incorporate narrative, he mentions—even web sites, which often utilize multi-media collages incorporating

story. In addition, Ohler mentions that when looking at language arts standards referencing "texts," it is important to note that today's "texts" include a wide range of mediums. For instance, one standard calls for students to understand texts so they are able to learn new information and develop an understanding of the U.S. and other cultures (2009, p. 46). As Ohler indicates, a wide variety of texts beyond the printed word exists to explore domestic and international cultures.

Encouraging students to connect technology-based narrative with traditional reading and English based structures points to DST's larger benefit—media literacy. On a basic level, Ohler defines media literacy "as recognizing, evaluating, and applying the methods of media persuasion" (p. 54). Over the years, a strong body of research on media literacy has developed and its significance in today's world noted. Several texts mention the need for media literacy in the 21st century (Ohler, 2009; Share, 2009; Alvermann, 2002). As Ohler points out, workplaces increasingly need employees to absorb information via the web and other multi-media collages. Further, organizations are also asking their workers to participate in online communities to share research and ideas (Ohler, 2009). In this sense, Ohler describes the ability to digest new media a matter of "survival" in the new age, not just literacy. He indicates that media literacy involves not only understanding how to navigate new texts, but also realizing how one is being persuaded by media. Understanding how to think critically about media, Ohler explains, students may develop a more critical approach to media consumption.

Another way to develop analytical media consumers is through the teachers

themselves. One of the last ideas relative to this research that Ohler considers is teachers' significance in the information age. While anyone may have access to a massive number of websites, multi-media stories, digital and print texts, information availability has not made teachers obsolete. Above all, they are needed to help students navigate their way through the information, determine useful resources, and decide what is pertinent to his/her particular study. Ohler writes that, although undeniably useful, the technology-rich society in which students grow up is "overwhelming and often distracting" and teachers are necessary for students to refine their possibilities (2009, p. 14). He notes that the best method to help students develop media criticism is to teach story first and look at technology as a secondary framework.

Previously mentioned scholar, Howard Gardner (1999) has considered the power of story, as well. In his book, *The Disciplined Mind*, Gardner looks at how teaching several core subjects may facilitate students' ability to develop an analytical skill set based on several professional mindsets. In particular, he discusses how three key concepts—evolution, the music of Mozart, and the Holocaust—can be used to illustrate multiple themes to students. In order to tap into a variety of student intelligences and relate the core concepts to other issues, Gardner suggest approaching the subjects from multiple entry points.

While he describes seven entry points, Gardner mentions that a *narrative* entry point is "perhaps the most effective way to involve a large number of learners" (1999, p. 189). Through a narrative entry point, Gardner suggests that the basic story can

stimulate linguistic and personal intelligences, and that more developed visual tools such as drama and cinema can tap into additional intelligences. He explains that story "should generate initial curiosity and help sustain interest in the topic" (1999, p. 191).

Regarding the three core concepts, Gardner suggests ways to incorporate narrative entry points to each. For example, Darwin's journey on the *Beagle,* to his formation of a theory, to the debate in making his findings public would offer narrative approaches to evolution. Mozart's music could be examined through the composer's life story, and Gardner points to the play and film *Amadeus* as an example. He also suggests that music takes on a different notion of narrative, in that a musical composition and its motifs evolve in a narrative structure. That is, sections of the composition are performed with different speed and emotion, and one may examine how these distinctions work together to make an entire piece. Last, Gardner mentions that the Holocaust presents an array of narrative entry points. For instance, educators may reflect on the instrumental people and efforts to creating the Nazi Party, or examine the history of the groups of people involved in the genocide. In all of these examples, Gardner concludes that their story element should interest a wide variety of students and facilitate curiosity.

Through these scholar's arguments, one may gather that story is a useful, if not critical tool in developing student engagement with a topic. As Ohler point out, children learn from story at a young age, and understand how to use it as a means of communication. Both Dewey and Ohler indicate that it is crucial for educators to recognize the skills students learn at home, and although printed mediums may be

replaced with electronic devices, story remains a means through which to reach a wide variety of students. Incorporating narrative-based technology such as digital storytelling may present a method to engage students' multiple intelligences; in addition, it could offer a way to legitimize students' familiarity with technology and popular culture, allowing them to incorporate their skills and knowledge with traditional and standard lessons. Perhaps most important, incorporating digital and narrative-based methods, educators may facilitate students' media literacy. While this would allow them to reflect critically on media, it could also lead to student's success in the workplace.

Regarding my research, I believe these scholars' arguments may help us consider how documentaries could be beneficial in everyday curricula. The discussion on students' familiarity with technology and story indicate that documentaries may be a teaching tool with double benefits. For instance, as they incorporate digital and narrative-based methods of communication, documentaries may help global education topics resonate with a wider variety of students and generate curiosity from the initial introduction of a theme. In addition, documentaries may improve students' ability to deconstruct media and story, and by incorporating film and/or digital media-based tools, teachers may relate to students' increasing familiarity with popular culture and technology.

Conclusion

These scholars' thoughts have been framed within the context of enhancing global education with documentaries. Throughout the review and in proceeding chapters, the term "global issues" is used to describe points in teaching "global education." To make sense of the review and data, it should be acknowledged that the first term is equally as vague as scholars have deemed "global education." To clarify, "global issues" in the context of my thesis refers to any modern societal/cultural events, practices, and conflicts that occur in or involve geographic and demographic regions around the world. While I generated a list of global issues for a focus group questionnaire (Appendix A), some specific examples would include the Palestine/Israeli conflict, sending electronic waste to China for disposal, and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The indication for this research is not to encourage teachers to cover each of these topics. Rather, it is for educators to utilize documentaries to raise students' awareness of cultures and conflicts outside of the United States. Along the lines of Howard Gardner's (1999) educational philosophy, teachers need not determine a specific set of global issues, but, instead, discuss issues in depth that will facilitate students' broader understanding of the world outside U.S. borders. Pertaining to documentaries, films will not exist on each issue a teacher may want to cover. However, as demonstrated in the films used for this research, many documentaries do extensively illustrate global issues. While a documentary could stand alone in this context, films may also be used to provide geographic or cultural background to

broader lessons on global themes.

Throughout much of the literature review, I focused strongly on obstacles teachers face in initially implementing these global themes. For example, despite four decades of discussing global education, the phrase is yet to be universally understood among educators. While this may inhibit congruency among global education materials, ethnocentric teaching methods and non-diverse teaching staff may also challenge national recognition of the need for raising U.S. students' global awareness. Along these lines, the recent trend toward standardized assessment and constant push for increasing test scores may impede on teachers' class time to connect lessons to larger, global themes.

These obstacles within the U.S. education system are juxtaposed with increasing evidence that young Americans lack geographic literacy and global awareness. Strangely, this awareness gap is occurring as technology and globalization furthers complex relationships and dependency among nations. Although students' familiarity with technology may be increasing, thus linking them to the rest of the world, perhaps we are still missing the educational structure that helps students see their technological world in the context of interdependency.

As Aronowitz (2008) and Ohler (2009) mention, there is also evidence of an increasing disconnect between students' media-saturated lives and the societies schools recreate. Illustrated by Spring (2004) and Kohn (2000), one of the challenges to a more student-engaging curriculum may lie in the fact that schools' educational success are determined by standardized test scores. While Gardner offers a new

teaching paradigm that would support the use of global themes and films to cover topics in depth, this will not be possible until higher-up school administrators and the U.S. government recognize the need for increased global awareness. Even without a structural change to the educational system, documentaries could allow educators to quickly integrate global themes.

Perhaps, if schools utilized more media such as documentaries illustrating global issues, the documentaries could serve a dual purpose—using media-based learning tools to connect school with students' lives, as well as broadening their global consciousness and understanding of interdependency throughout the world.

Chapter Four: Data and Analysis

Data Review

The methodology for this analysis incorporated the use of grounded theory as discovered by Glaser and Strauss (as cited by Borgatti, no date). This theory suggests researchers carefully read their data several times, and that by doing so, the researcher should eventually perceive common categories or concepts and interrelationships throughout the data. Glaser and Strauss have also been noted in their discussion of coding and how it is used to tie the data together (Borgatti). While they indicate several approaches to coding, two particular methods—open and selective coding—appealed to me. In open coding, the researcher associates nearly every line of text or cohesive statement into categories or themes. In selective coding, the researcher is encouraged to create a story from the data, and find ways to connect all the information to a central theme.

As an amateur researcher, I found the open coding process helpful in sorting my data into several themes. Because I had never written this type of document prior, I also found comfort and familiarity in the idea of using data to create a story. However, I did not relate the data to one core theme as selective coding suggests; rather, I used the story element to discuss how four major themes are relevant in using documentaries in global education. In addition, grounded theory calls for researchers to consistently make memos and notes regarding how the data relates back to the literature review or theories pertinent to the research. As I read through the transcripts, I continuously followed this method and made notes indicating where specific

feedback tied back to the literature. By combining these two coding methods and relating the data to the literature review, I felt that I was able to deliver a cohesive written analysis on what I found and also answer my research questions, which are restated below.

1. How might students learn about the world through documentaries, and could documentaries motivate them to learn more about global issues?
2. How do students see documentaries as a learning tool, and what do they gain from a documentary that is not gained from reading or lecture?
3. How might watching more documentaries on international subjects have enriched students' high school education, and in which classes might these documentaries be appropriate.

Throughout my coding, I focused on what pieces of participant feedback could answer these questions. In doing so, I found that four major themes arose relating to the overall use of documentaries in global education. It is important to note that, although I did not pose it as a research question, I found that one of these themes should have been posed as one earlier. This theme will be discussed as "the need for global education among young American students," and the question would have been posed as, "what is the need for global education among young American students today?" I drew this theme from the results of the student questionnaire as well as periods in the focus groups in which students' discussed their individual and, more generally, American experience with global education. The four major themes that arose from my data are, therefore:

1. The need for global education among young American students.
2. Practical approaches towards implementing documentaries in classrooms.
3. Specific topics the films generate that would be appropriate for high school and undergraduate classes.
4. Students' engagement with the films

In my analysis, I electronically transcribed each of the focus group audio-recorded discussions and analyzed them by group. Each tape was relatively the same length in time—30 minutes—and I prompted all groups with the same questions. In total, 13 undergraduate students from varying backgrounds provided feedback on the films. Specific demographic information from each focus group is as follows:

FOCUS GROUP 1

Film	The Devil's Miner				
Total Participants	5				
Students' Majors and Rank	Spanish Education-Junior	Integrated Mathematics Education-Senior	Middle Childhood Education-Senior	Middle Childhood Education-	Integrated Language Arts-

FOCUS GROUP 2

Film	Black Gold					
Total Participants	6					
Students' Majors and Rank	Media Studies-Senior	Video Production-Freshman	Fine Arts-Freshman	Video Production-Junior	Media Studies-Sophomore	Video Production-Freshman

FOCUS GROUP 3

Film	Born Into Brothels	
Total Participants	2	
Students' Majors and Rank	Political Science/Economics-Sophomore	XXXXX XXXXX-XXXXX

While I screened three separate films, and participant responses related to the respective films, I felt that almost all of their feedback was universal. In other words, their opinions on using documentaries for global education were not strictly dictated by the nature of the film they watched. In addition, student responses correlated across groups, indicating that feedback could be used to describe documentaries in general, not strictly regarding a specific film. With the exception of "specific topics the films generate" all analysis sections incorporate a combination of participant feedback.

Following, I will discuss each theme individually and at length. The first incorporates the results of the student questionnaire, as well as students' high school experience with global education. This section also includes the participants' general feelings on American's global awareness and education. The second theme reflects participant feedback on how documentaries could make a useful learning tool. While I did not directly ask this question, many participants indicated that teachers would have to follow certain measures so that the film was successful. Participants from Focus Group 1 were all enrolled in the College of Education, and they were particularly mindful regarding this theme. Following, I focus on how students engaged with the film, and discuss specific parts they found particularly interesting or emotionally grabbing. Last, the section regarding specific topics generated by the films incorporates cross-group participant feedback, but also divides the feedback by group and incorporates some of my own thoughts on the theme. While the participant feedback related to separate films, I was able to tie their opinions and ideas into several cohesive themes, which I will later use to address my research questions.

The Need for Global Education

As discussed in previous sections, the results of a national geographic literacy survey generated the initial motivation for my research. The National Geography Ropers Geographic Literacy Survey (2006) provided many examples of young American students illustrating a poor sense of geographic literacy. The organization's researchers also reported that their findings indicated that young Americans "demonstrated a limited understanding of the world beyond their country's borders," (2006, p. 6). The survey's questions varied from identifying countries on a map, certain nations' major religions, and the most common languages spoken worldwide.

Although I did not have the means or the intellectual background to recreate a survey of similar caliber, I wanted to gauge my participants' familiarity with global issues through a written questionnaire. The questionnaire prompted students to describe their definition of global awareness as well as their personal demographic information regarding high school setting and population. It also included a list of 20 global issues and asked that participants indicate how many they felt they could discuss in a conversation. Between 13 total participants and 20 issues, participants indicated that they felt comfortable discussing 80 of topics. Comparatively, if each student had been familiar with half of the 20 issues, this number would be 130.

The main issues students indicated they were familiar with included HIV/AIDS, climate change, and genetically modified food. The issues students were least familiar with included The Millennium Development Goals, electronic waste disposal, and modern slavery. In addition, no one indicated familiarity with the fishing

industry crisis/over-fishing. It is important to note that this data does not delve into the geographic literacy component of global awareness. Rather, it looks at participants' familiarity more with conceptual ideas. While geographic literacy perhaps indicates students' basic global awareness, I believe this data still offers an adequate assessment, as students could have easily heard about the issues in class, through television, Internet, or radio news, as well as other online forums. In other words, information on these issues is nearly as accessible as maps or other learning tools for geographic literacy.

In addition to this quantitative assessment, I would like to touch on participants' familiarity with the films' topics. After each screening, I asked participants what they had known about the issue and/or country the film portrays. In the first focus group, I screened *The Devil's Miner*, which focuses on youth labor in a Bolivian silver mine. When asked what they knew about the subject and country prior to the film, participants said that they either knew nothing about Bolivia, guessed or knew only that Bolivia was in Latin America, didn't know much about Bolivia or Latin America, or guessed that Bolivia/Latin America was associated with coffee.

In the second focus group, I screened *Black Gold*, which looks at the process of Fair Trade coffee in Ethiopia. Prompted with the same question, Stephen said he knew nothing about it, but the remaining participants admitted to having little/some familiarity with the issue. For instance, Jacob indicated that he knew it was "better" to buy Fair Trade, but did not mention understanding the reason behind it. Mark said that he had heard about the World Trade Organization before (the film depicts the 2003

WTO meeting in Cancún, Mexico), and Adam said he knew about Fair Trade because his sister works in a café selling this type of coffee.

In the last focus group, only two students participated, which may have limited the variety of responses. The film, *Born into Brothels*, looks at children of prostitution workers in Calcutta, India. Both participants indicated that they were familiar with prostitution or poverty in India. Laura mentioned that she had seen a National Geographic episode on a similar topic, and Dan said he was familiar with India's history as a British colony, but not the brothel workers. However, Dan did mention that he had heard about India's dichotomous society of extreme poverty and high-tech industries.

While the last focus group differed in that all participants were familiar with the topic, all focus groups discussed issues with lack of global education in their high schools. It is important to note that I failed to prompt the first focus group regarding their level of global education in high school. However, students still brought up the issue on their own accord, and, in all the focus groups, only two participants said they received substantial global education. These two students also indicated that their experience with global education required personal ambition and choice. For instance, Dan said that his classes offering significant global education were electives, and Adam indicated that he would not have received global education had he not had the ambition to take Advanced Placement classes or use the Internet to do his own research.

In conversations about global education in high school, students discussed a

lack of opportunity, but, also, they indicated the importance of having more global themes in school. For example, Felicity discussed that she came from a small town in which many people "don't really know about American politics, let alone…international politics." She said that college introduced her to seeing life outside the "American way," and that "people need to get that at a younger age." Jacob also indicated that a typical American only receives a "finite number of views" through watching the news. He said that being introduced to global issues at a younger age "would definitely help open your mind up to bigger things as opposed to when you grow up and go to college, because not everyone does that."

While these comments illustrate how college can facilitate a larger world view, another student mentioned that higher education does not always make a difference. In the third focus group, Laura indicated frustration with a lack of interest in global themes and problems among the wider Ohio University student body. As she said, "It's not like people don't know. It's like they don't know and they don't *care* that they don't know." Laura related this to the environmental movement, in which she was an active participant. In her involvement in spreading environmental awareness, Laura found that her fellow peers did not want to know about the issues because the problems were too complex, and students felt that they could not personally fix them. Laura also referenced that the goal to make money may impede on students' interest in these topics. In other words, she indicated that our culture places higher importance on income than having knowledge about the world.

As reflected in Felicity and Jacob's comments, one can conclude that an

introduction to global issues and non-American world views could be the first step to opening a students' consciousness. However, it is important to start at a young age, because, as Laura discusses, college students' concern with their future income may inhibit their interest in global awareness. In addition, the complexities of worldwide issues may be overwhelming for many. Concern with money-making may be seen as self-serving endeavor, especially if it overpowers a desire to learn about other cultures and people. Sharea, an education student from the first focus group, considered the connection between these two themes in a different light. While she said that American students appear self-centered, she said that their apathy towards growing a global consciousness may be due to the fact that they simply do not know enough to care.

Perhaps Sharea's statement, along with Laura's experience with college students' dissonance with environmental issues, reflects that students require a better basic knowledge to challenge these problems. If teachers introduced global themes at a younger age, it is possible that students' understanding would broaden as it did for Felicity. Equipped with a better knowledge of other cultures and problems around the world, perhaps students would not fear their complexities, but rather feel excited to engage in their solutions.

Practical Approaches

As discussed in the literature review, it is unlikely that standardization and national testing will make a dramatic change in the following years, allowing teachers

to more easily integrate global themes. Additionally, as made evident by Sharea thoughts in the previous section, high school students may not have the capacity to feel deeply connected to or compassionate for an issue they know little about. One focus group I held was made up entirely of undergraduate education majors, and they helped remind me of these realities. At the same time, each of the five participants voiced support for increased global education through documentaries, and they provided recommendations for its implementation. Their feedback has created the basis of this section, while student opinions from the other focus groups supported similar themes.

One of the major themes that emerged was the importance of providing students with background and follow up to the documentary. As Maddie, a math education major, said "an average student would be excited to have a day where they watched a movie instead of class," but followed by explaining that the film would have "to be prefaced and followed up with a really good lesson about child labor and Bolivia," referencing the film they watched in the focus group. Maddie also mentioned, "If you just show a movie for the sake of showing a movie, probably…your kids won't care. It's what you do—the discussions you have, the activities that stem from it afterwards that is the enriching part." While it was mentioned that quizzing students on the documentary's subject and making them take notes could make students more engaged, Maddie concluded that "it's what you mold around it [the film] to make the kids get what they should be getting out of it instead of diligently taking notes and taking it as a movie day."

Reflecting this theme, Sharea referenced the importance of following documentaries with lessons. She also discussed how implementing global education would not be as simple as doling out a test or pamphlet to students. As she stated,

> You can't just show the movie and say, 'there's your global awareness for the day.' You have to make some kind of connections to it, and I think it needs to be shown, though, because if you don't, you risk having no global education…Like all of us have said, we didn't' get much of that in high school, but I did outside research and things on my own and wished that I had that in my high school. So, you have to show those kinds of things because you don't know who's sitting in your class.

Sharea's comment may reflect Johann Le Roux's notion regarding a changing view of global education. As stated in the literature review, Le Roux argues that global themes should be integrated across curriculum, not, as Sharea mentioned, something to cross off a checklist.

In order to implement global awareness on a more widespread and sophisticated level, the feedback reflected that schools must facilitate and encourage teachers to do so. First and foremost, it is important to understand that teachers may face challenges from administrators and parents in implementing these themes. Many documentaries on international subjects, including the ones used for this research, involve touchy and controversial subjects. For instance, *The Devil's Miner* depicts how miners worship a devil that they believe lives in the mines. *Black Gold* portrays America and Europe's trade regulations in African nations in a very poor light, and suggests that the popular American company, Starbucks, does not make substantial efforts to support the region from which it purchases coffee. Finally, the filmmakers of *Born into Brothels* do not hide their subjects' gratuitous language, and many may see

the subject of the film itself—prostitution—as unsuitable for high school students.

The focus group made up of education majors offered substantial feedback on the controversies that may arise, but also how to make the films appropriate. First, Maddie suggested that administrators may not allow teachers to show *The Devil's Miner* due to its religious subject, but other students in the focus group disagreed. For instance, Darlene mentioned that the film would be appropriate, as high school is a time when controversial subjects are brought into discussion. From the second focus group, Stephen reiterated this idea when discussing his opinion on the appropriateness of the film *Black Gold*. Specifically, he stated,

> I definitely think this [film] would be appropriate, especially since high school is the time when you're…starting to realize that you are going to have an impact on this world, and you are starting to form opinions on…what the world should be like.

Darlene followed by discussing how teachers' presentation of the material would be the determining factor in the film's appropriateness. As Sharea mentioned, devil worshiping in the film about Bolivia could be similar to discussing Catholic and Jewish beliefs. She continued, saying that examining religion isn't "telling [students] what's right or wrong. It's just different. We're just learning it." Concluding, Darlene reflected that "part of exploring another culture is exploring *all* of their culture, including religion" indicating that teachers and schools should not determinedly withhold certain information about other peoples and societies. She and fellow participant, Alexis decided that, as long as teachers kept their opinions from the lessons and were consistent in their teaching of cultural differences, students would most likely accept the material objectively.

Reflecting how schools successfully facilitated global education, several students shared their experiences in high school. For instance, Dave mentioned that his high school often utilized the film *Hotel Rwanda* (2004), and that it furthered his understanding of genocide.

In the same focus group, Laura discussed how her all-girls high school wanted to teach girls to be more critical of women's role in society, and that this also facilitated Laura's larger critical perspective on society in general. Specifically, Laura mentioned that one of her teachers showed a film on human trafficking, and that this "opened up a totally different realm of my brain," because she began to understand that the issue of human trafficking was not isolated to a certain country or area. Laura also mentioned that after leaving the all-girls school, she was aware that "you always have to search for more." For example, when watching a commercial or film, Laura would take notice of the director's angle, and question what and why the media was portrayed a certain way.

Regarding the film from her focus group, *Born into Brothels*, Laura mentioned that documentaries would be a good way to help students develop their own critical analysis. She articulated that, if students were provided with the facts about the situation, as well as the angle the film attempted to take, they would be prepared to ask critical questions of the issue itself and what made it occur. In the case of brothel workers in Calcutta, India, perhaps students would question why this demographic is poor and how they became poor initially. She concluded that viewing a documentary provides students with more than the knowledge that poverty exists in that area.

Both Dave and Laura's experience illustrate how fiction and documentary films can be used as learning tools. In particular, Laura's learned critiques of media reflect David Ohler's (2009) argument that digital storytelling can help facilitate media literacy. Ohler suggests that …. It is important to note that Laura's school facilitated global awareness activities in other ways, as well. She mentioned that if she had seen *Born into Brothels* in high school, she would have started a club around the issue or screened the movie at school. Laura said that she would have spread the word about these initiatives through a morning announcement in which students were allowed to include their events. In addition, Laura mentioned that she would have asked a history teacher to find a speaker for the movie-screening event.

Clearly, Laura has always been a motivated student, engaged in enriching her global consciousness. Several of the education students indicated that this would not be a common trait to encounter in high school. This points to the last theme in practical approaches to implementing documentaries, which is for teachers to try to understand their students and gauge their interest. As several participants mentioned, if they had watched the same documentary in high school, it wouldn't have had as resonating an effect on them as it did as college students. Alexis explained that this might be because high school is "just that time where you're pretty much just about yourself." For instance, Alexis said that in high school she was not superficially interested in herself, but that she "wasn't concerned with what else was going on in the world because I had so much going on with high school." While teachers may develop lesson plans and quizzes around the films to engage students, Alexis also

acknowledged that if a class simply cannot stay focused or has behavioral problems, that the film may not serve a purpose. In conclusion, she said that a teacher must "accommodate what [their students are] actually capable of learning, capable of caring about."

Alexis' comments and this section of data make evident that, even if teachers want to implement global education and documentaries, they will face challenges. Students may not have the mental capacity to engage with the film, and schools and parents may discourage the use of certain controversial topics. As the feedback illustrates, however, schools and teachers can facilitate global awareness through student-initiated activities. In addition, teachers' consistency in discussing controversial themes and engaging lesson plans could appease opposition to provocative subjects and make documentaries an enriching learning tool for their students.

Specific Topics for Teaching

The previous section's discussion of challenges makes evident the major need for teachers to connect the documentary films to students' lives. Following, I discuss the participants' ideas on topics each film addresses. After watching the films several times myself, I also include my own observations on what school-related topics the films could enhance. In addition, participants indicated an overall interest in learning non-American viewpoints and understanding poverty. This may be due to the fact that, unintentionally, the three documentaries I selected were produced with non-American

influence and also address poverty. That is, the films' production crews were not all American directors or producers, and the films were not strictly funded by American institutions. Perhaps simply by nature of most global issues themselves, the films also explore poverty in their respective countries.

It is interesting that participants specifically voiced their interest in non-American viewpoints, as several scholars in the literature review argued about nationalism and ethnocentrism in public school curricula (Aronowitz, 2008; Bigelow, 2007; Kirkwood-Tucker, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2005). I do not believe that the students' interest in this theme nullifies arguments from these scholars. Rather, I feel that these participants have acknowledged the tendency of a one-sided or pro-American education system. For instance, in the focus group where I screened *Black Gold*, Jacob said the film was good for showing alternative viewpoints because "you just see our [American] side most of the time when you watch things." Similarly, Felicity said that she enjoyed watching a film from a non-American perspective because "we always seem to be set in our [U.S] way of showing things."

Throughout the feedback, I also found that participants associated their interest in non-American perspectives and poverty with a desire for understanding reality. For example, Laura pointed out that American children may be shown a variety of other cultures through programs such as *Sesame Street,* but that these representations are often only of well-dressed people and beautiful places. While both participants in this focus group acknowledged the need to provide children with positive outlooks (thus justifying *Sesame Street*'s approach), Laura indicated that, at the appropriate age,

students need to be presented with the realistic, less glamorous scenarios across the world, as well.

In the same focus group, Dave also made connections between reality and poverty, and the need for Americans to understand how these themes are connected. Regarding *Born into Brothels*, Dave acknowledged the film's provocative scenes, but also said that these aspects are not "gratuitous for the sake of being gratuitous. [They are] gratuitous for the sake of being what it is." In other words, the filmmakers were not making attempts at sensationalism, but simply depicting the real situation. Later, Dave mentioned the value he felt in having more American students acknowledge this type of reality. While he was referring to the film, he said that knowing the specific issue of brothel workers was not of the essence. In this line of thought, Dave's input reflects Howard Gardner's idea on teaching a core curriculum. According to Gardner, it is not the specific examples that matter in a core curriculum, but rather that the examples illustrate broader themes and encourage students to think critically from multiple perspectives. Similarly, Dave said, "there are so many issues that it's not necessarily important which one you know about. I think it's more to get the idea…that poverty exists in other places," and to understand poverty beyond Western standards.

As this data describes, each documentary could cater to student interest in non-American viewpoints as well as understanding the realities of poverty across the globe. Each documentary could be used to enhance lessons on culture and geography regarding each film's respective country or region, as well. Of course, each film

covers its own unique topics, and the following themes generated by myself and the focus group participants follow.

In *The Devil's Miner*, a fourteen year old boy, Basilio, works in the silver mines to pay support his family and pay for schooling. The filmmakers do not describe what happened to the father figure, but it is often referenced that he is not part present. In the focus group, several students picked up on this aspect, saying that many American students could relate to not having a parent figure present or being an orphan. Because Basilio also works to support his family, Darlene pointed out that high school students who work after school or even babysit for this family may find this film relatable. On a more basic level, this film would also be appropriate for classes discussing religious beliefs, Spanish language, Bolivia, Latin America, or mining.

The second focus group watched the film *Black Gold*, which concerns one man's journey to sell more of his cooperative's fair trade coffee around the world. Students in this focus group were particularly interested in realizing how prices of food products truly do affect farmers. Jacob also mentioned that the seeing Tadesse's journey from Ethiopia to European nations interested him, because he could see the dichotomy between societies that produced coffee and those who purchased it. As considered by others and myself, the film could enhance lessons looking at industry processes, corporate business, coffee production, Ethiopia, poverty in African nations, international trade, and international aid.

In the last film, *Born into Brothels*, photojournalist Zana Briski teaches

children of prostitutes how to do photography and tries to find ways for them to attend better schools. As discussed previously, Laura felt that this film could help facilitate high school students' media literacy and critical analysis because it was shot using obvious angles. In addition, Laura said that she enjoyed how the film depicted the beauty of the children's potential and spirit amidst an ugly situation of poverty and prostitution. Last, by the end of the film, Zana Briski is able to enroll the students in better schools, but not all of the children want to attend. Laura mentioned that this presented a good exercise, because, as American viewers, we are upset that the students do not want to attend the schools. She said that this allows Americans to consider how their culture and goals may be quite different from those who live in the Red Light District of Calcutta, India, and to realize that not everyone wants what Americans desire. Otherwise, I feel this film addresses topics relating to photography, prostitution and brothels, the Hindi language, and child development and psychology.

While each of these films addresses a variety of themes, they could each be instrumental in showing students a modern representation of another part of the world and addressing the reality of poverty. In addition to understanding poverty, participants voiced a strong interest in how the films portrayed politics and cultural norms outside of an American viewpoint. While I feel *Black Gold* is fairly objective in many ways, it undoubtedly suggests that American aid, the corporate entity Starbucks, and overpowering presence at international trade talks is unfair. This film, along with *Born into Brothels* would be particularly useful in showing students opposing viewpoints to American nationalism and ethnocentrism. Despite this controversial

aspect and others within the films, participants agreed that each was appropriate for high school students, and indicated specific areas of interest that could be relevant to teenagers and young adults.

Engagement with the Films

In attempting to answer one of my research questions—what do students gain out of films that they do not experience from reading or lecture—I wanted to highlight specific instances of student engagement with the films. While documentaries obviously appeal to any learner's visual interest, I found that the participants experienced levels of engagement beyond this basic aspect. In particular, this manifested itself through investment in a particular character, connection with children, and learning about the process of an industry.

Similar to a novel, a documentary film will utilize a narrator or hone in on several main characters to tell a story. In the case of *Black Gold*, the directors chose Tadesse Meskela, the representative for 74,000 Ethiopian coffee farmers, to illustrate the process of Fair Trade and coffee exporting. As Tyler explained "I was really rooting for him because I wanted [Tadesse]…to help those people, to get them the fair wages. I really wanted something to happen there." Felicity mentioned a similar sentiment towards Tadesse's efforts. She added that her interest in Tadesse came through the fact that he "wasn't just complaining about Western countries. He was actually trying to go out and find someone that would give him better trade for his coffee." Participants who watched *The Devil's Miner* also expressed a commitment to

the main character, Basilio. As Alexis described, "I almost wanted to cry at some points because…I wasn't really shocked [by child labor], but I was more emotionally focused on him and his situation and knowing that this child would have to go through that when, in America, that would never happen."

In the same focus group, Darlene pointed out that investing in a character in this way makes documentary viewing personal. She followed by saying that people are generally compassionate when they are engaged with characters from the films "especially when [the characters] are kids. It's hard not to get connected with that." Earlier, Darlene mentioned that she was also "drawn to the moments of family interaction," and seeing how the time Basilio and his brother spent with older miners appeared to be "an influential part of how they grow and learn." *Born into Brothels* focuses on children, as well, and participants in that focus group noted their own connection with this element. For instance, Laura expressed astonishment in seeing that children in such dire circumstances still held so much potential. Dave also mentioned that the most engaging parts of the film for him were during the extended interview with the children, especially when their reactions to questions were evident. It is worth considering that these instances may be particular engaging because, as opposed to interviews with adults, children's expressions in interviews appear more honest and sometimes share more of their answer to a question than through their words.

Perhaps having access to these rare, behind-the-scenes "truths" is what generally draws people to documentaries. Separate from characters' honesty through

interviews, focus group participants who watched *Black Gold* were interested in seeing processes they would not ordinarily witness. For example, Tyler articulated that in high school, he would have enjoyed how this film depicted "the chain of events that lead from the farmer to the sellers and so forth," and, similarly, Jacob said that he enjoyed learning "every aspect of the whole industry" from growing the bean in Ethiopia to seeing it for sale on European market shelves. Later, Jacob suggested that this element of the film illustrated how "a corporation isn't just a certain product and a catch phrase," and that this helped the viewer begin to see layers within these enterprises.

While *seeing* the coffee process as described above may have made the industry easier to understand for Jacob and Tyler, the participants' feedback suggests that their engagement with the films was more complex. For example, Tyler and Felicity's commitment to waiting for the final outcome of Tadesse's journey reflects David Ohler's argument that story is an effective method of communication. Further, the participants' discussions went beyond the simple fact that the material was presented visually. Rather than describe the uniqueness in witnessing the stories take shape, participants mentioned specific instances and characters with whom they felt connected.

Conclusion

As a first time researcher, I was surprised to find that four major themes could be drawn out of over an hour and a half of transcripts. By the end of the third focus

group, I realized I had reached a point of saturation, was not receiving startling new feedback, and thus decided not to initiate new focus groups. In general, participants agreed that high school students face a lack of global education and that documentaries could help fill this gap. Although participants' responses did not challenge or contest this idea, many critiqued the implementation of documentaries in ways I had not considered. Further, they generated many classroom-specific themes for each documentary and discussed why each was relatable to high school students. In particular, it was helpful to hear how participants recognized challenges in bringing controversial topics, but also argued in support of introducing a younger audience to global issues and awareness.

I was also interested to find that participant engagement with the films extended beyond a visual interest in media. This allowed me to contemplate the process and benefits of implementing digital storytelling as David Ohler describes, as participants indicated that elements of story and media literacy tied into the documentaries they viewed. Another particularly rewarding aspect of the focus groups involved hearing how a participant's comment reflected Howard Gardner's thoughts on a teaching for understanding. That is, Dave's thoughts on introducing students to topics of poverty suggested that specific examples were not necessary; rather a general understanding of life outside Western standards could open new realms of thought for them.

Along with participants' interest in gaining a worldview from non-American made documentaries, understanding global poverty points to the student desire for a

non-ethnocentric curriculum and increased global awareness. However, both the data and Merry Merryfield's argument from the literature suggest that fulfilling this interest will require facilitation from teachers and school administrators, teacher education programs, and the United States Department of Education. Perhaps with increased global education, more students will be drawn to engage other students in these themes as Laura indicated she would in her high school. With a better understanding of their world, it is possible that students will start to consider solutions to controversial problems rather than avoid them in a search for a lucrative and easy future.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Reflections

Conclusions and Reflections Review

Throughout my literature review and data collection, I was concerned that my research would not yield significant findings. The participants overwhelmingly supported the use of documentaries and further global education in high schools. They also pointed to the same challenges that arose in the literature, in that, increasing standardization and opposition to controversial topics in high schools might prevent teachers from utilizing films on global issues. Initially, I worried that this lack of controversy meant I failed in finding answers regarding whether documentaries on global issues should be implemented in U.S. education. However, after an informal focus group with several international graduate students in the College of Education, I realized that the aim of my research was not to find answers to a 'yes' or 'no' question. Rather, my goal was to answer my research questions and suggest *how* documentaries could be utilized in global education.

It is important to note that I did not treat the focus group with international students as data analysis along with the undergraduate focus groups. Instead, I specifically wanted the international students' feedback to guide my conclusions and reflections. Rather than describe all the points discussed in their meetings, I drew out several main themes, which made me feel that my research had finally crossed into new territory. Along with the literature review and undergraduate focus group feedback, I had substantial information to answer the research questions and discuss new conclusions to my topic.

The international student feedback particularly helped guide my final ideas, as it paralleled several comments from the undergraduate focus groups. With this data, I came to three main conclusions about the use of documentaries and global education in the U.S. education system. First, poverty is essential to examining global issues, and American students are in need of a core understanding of this topic. Second, the need for global education is partially rooted in Americans' learned isolation and self sufficiency as a nation and people. Last, the opportunity for enriching global education may lie in the United States' culture of free expression and debate. Proceedings, these themes are described separately, but elements of each are integrated into the research questions and final conclusion.

Poverty's Relevance

In the global education section of the literature review, Nel Noddings (2005) argues that peace may be a precondition to global education. She bases this on the idea that, during a time of war, national loyalties will overtake concern for caring about all nations and peoples. In other words, global loyalties and responsibilities will dissolve when the national frontier is threatened, and so, perhaps the only solution to this is to remove war from the equation. Noddings also suggests that understanding peace will facilitate students' initial caring for and about other countries and cultures.

While peace education may encourage students' empathy towards other nations and people, I believe an even more essential element lies in understanding

poverty. In the international student focus group (hereby described as the IFG), Karla mentioned that documentaries on global issues almost always represent developing countries in a negative or depressing light. For instance, they cover poverty, disease, and misfortune, and tend not to focus on positive or beautiful aspects of these areas. Karla said that these elements may cause Western students' disinterest in gaining a better understanding of these nations. Comparatively, Nash and Karla mentioned that students from developing and non-Western countries are familiar with images of wealth and success in the United States, and thus are often interested in residing in or visiting the country.

Hearing this comment, I realized that each of the documentaries I used in my research fell to the same standard. The films depict slum conditions in Calcutta's brothels, malnourishment and lack of education in Ethiopia, and incredibly dangerous work conditions and lack of better employment for children in Bolivia. As mentioned in the IFG, documentaries portraying the positive aspects of developing countries are rare or impossible to find. Understanding this, Karla mentioned that it still may be possible to highlight positive aspects of these cultures. For instance, she mentioned that a film on the Bushmen—a tribal people from the southern African region—could be used to discuss how their culture has retained certain skills lost by developed countries (i.e. knowledge of plants and natural healing).

John critiqued this idea, arguing that, even with a skilled teacher, viewers could easily see the culture as uncivilized or unappealing. Karla acknowledged this point, and she added that in the cultural anthropology course she teaches at Ohio

University, students can easily leave her class with the same opinions they had entering. In other words, despite discussions and viewing films on other cultures, students may not see any positive aspects of people unlike themselves, especially if the people in the film are impoverished or depicted in a depressing light.

Even if students *do* acknowledge positive or interesting aspects of a culture less developed than their own, it is easily forgotten. In the IFG discussion, Diana mentioned that students do not retain these thoughts, because, upon leaving the classroom, they are surrounded by United States culture, and, as Nash indicated, perhaps the United States culture is one that does not even acknowledge its own poverty. This reflects the discussion from the third undergraduate focus group, in which Laura discussed how most young Americans are focused on their own economic improvement rather than the welfare of the planet or its people.

In the same discussion, Dave also pointed to the need for students to have a general understanding of poverty, especially outside of Western standards. As Karla mentioned, images of poverty and problems in developing countries dissuade students from mentally investing in those nations. However, as the focus group discussions may suggest, it is not necessarily the images of poverty and struggle that discourage students' interest. Perhaps, instead, this dissonance occurs because students have never truly acknowledged the reality of poverty and have not been encouraged to do so.

Karla suggests that educators attempt to focus on positive aspects of other cultures within a film, despite the negative elements it might portray. Instead, I believe the best approach is to help students understand poverty as a reality. As scholars in the

literature review and focus group discussions indicate, many U.S. students may have been raised on an ethnocentric education system that inherently does not recognize worldwide poverty. In this sense, it is understandable that U.S. students would not be interested in these issues because they are simply so unfamiliar. The fact that documentaries focused on global issues will almost always include an element of poor living conditions, social injustice, malnourishment, or lack of opportunities for improvement perhaps indicates that acknowledging poverty is an underlying theme to understanding most topics in this realm. Once U.S. students understand the global scale on which poverty exists, perhaps they will view other cultures as a true reality rather than automatically develop dissonance with the unfamiliar.

Understanding Interdependency

Challenged by the reality of poverty and complexities of global issues, U.S. students' global awareness may also be impeded by a lack of understanding their country's interdependency with other nations. The fact that countries increasingly rely on each other for tangible items from food and military aid, to non-material services, to employment is an essential element of globalization. As discussed by Noddings (2005) and Kirkwood-Tucker (2001), it is one of the root needs for global citizenship and global education. From the focus group feedback, I took note that the United States is often understood to be mostly economically efficient. I also gathered from the international students that U.S. citizens are often taught to be self-sufficient and independent, which may infringe on their conceptualization of how countries affect

each other. From this data, we may infer that, without understanding how their country is dependent upon and affects others, U.S. students will face difficulty in grasping global issues.

In the focus group where I screened *Black Gold*, Stephen offered his idea regarding why more U.S. students should know about issues of international trade. While Stephen acknowledged that the United States depends on "China and other countries," he said, "As Americans, we're just so self-sufficient…We're financially secure in a way that makes us ignorant to others who are not, such as those from Ethiopia." According to the CIA World Factbook, external debt is defined as "the total public and private debt owed to nonresidents repayable in foreign currency, goods, or services," and the United States places first on the list by country (2010). Clearly, Stephen's comment does not take this into consideration, but, rather, points to Americans' individual financial security. Due to our day-to-day economic comfort, perhaps Americans do not necessarily consider the impact of their nations' international trade and purchasing. As Stephen proposed in regard to U.S. citizens' relationship to developing nations, Americans "don't have any need to know about them, and yet they have a need for *us* to know about *them*."

In comparison, Nash from the international student focus group (IFG) indicated that many of "those" nations know about "us" due to colonization. For example, he and others noted that citizens of many African nations have internationalism built into school curriculum because colonizers wanted their conquests to know about the mother country and also to speak the national language.

Reflecting on U.S. history as a medley of colonizing European explorers and pilgrims who moved to another country strictly to discover new territory and isolate themselves from British rule, perhaps it is not surprising that the separatist mentality carries on today.

According to Diana from the IFG, the independent mindset plays out even in U.S. children's television programs. She described a situation with her 2-year old daughter, in which the daughter was watching the popular show *Dora the Explora* (2000). Diana explained that the program was advocating for child viewers to feel confident about themselves and their abilities to do anything. While Diana voiced her support for children to feel high self-esteem, she expressed concern with this and other programs' incessant message of self-sufficiency. Eventually, she felt moved to explain to her daughter that, "Someday you are going to need to rely on somebody else…and that's okay!"

While this example refers to a much younger audience than high school students, the "you can do anything" message seems to play out across multiple age groups. If Americans are indeed so encouraged towards self improvement and development, it is not surprising that we may forget how our daily activities rely on the efforts of so many others. However, developing global awareness is not simply, for instance, knowing where our coffee comes from. It also requires Americans to understand how U.S. policies affect dependency throughout other nations. As illustrated in *Black Gold*, many African nations have become dependent on U.S food aid. The documentary suggests that, if the U.S. and other nations would simply pay

more for the price of coffee, these nations could improve themselves, rather than depending on aid.

Arguably, the layers of this issue may be too complex for some high school students to grasp. However, looking at the amount of goods that nations exchange today as well as how companies have based employment internationally may offer a simpler way for young Americans to understand interdependency. While not to deter students' self worth and belief in their own potential, acknowledging international ties may at least help them see that their nation is not isolated or without affect on other countries.

An Opportunity amidst Challenge

As the previous sections suggest, American's individualism and lack of knowing poverty's reality may hinder students' global awareness. However, an opportunity may also lie in our nation's unique culture. In the international student focus group, several participants discussed the fact that U.S. citizens are acutely aware of their first amendment rights. For American students, this plays out as freedom of expression in the classroom, where students are likely to express themselves and their opinions rather than passively absorb all information.

Participants from Kenya, Ghana, and Japan mentioned how this contrasted with their cultures' educational philosophy. As John pointed out, Ghanaians often practice didactic learning, where, as he described, students are filled with knowledge by their teachers. The other participants followed, explaining that it is considered

extremely rude to challenge an educator in their country the way that American students do so in the United States. For example, in many American classrooms, students are encouraged to ask critical questions or even debate their teachers and fellow peers. In a sense, students who present these challenges may be more engaged than those who do not show interest through critique and debate.

As discussed in the literature review, Stanley Aronowitz (2008) mentioned that another example of youth's critical approaches may be seen in popular culture. Specifically, Aronowitz discussed how music and television offer young Americans freedom of expression, and he provided examples of how music across generations has critiqued society. Aronowitz also argued that these elements be further integrated into the school system, so that students feel that *their* culture is acknowledged as significant by adults and educators.

The reason an argumentative and critical culture may facilitate global awareness perhaps lies in the controversial aspect of many global issues. As discussed in the data analysis, administrators and parents may prefer to shelter youth from cultures and practices unlike those in the United States. Specifically, participants mentioned that the instance of devil worshiping in the film *The Devil's Miner* might spark opposition. However, understanding that youth are interested in debating and offering their opinions, perhaps those against integrating these themes should acknowledge that students will better engage in such challenging topics.

An example of how these topics foster rewarding discussion was discussed in the literature review via Bill Bigelow's lesson on immigration policy and the North

American Free Trade Agreement. Although Bigelow (2007) admitted that students eventually returned to the "us" versus "them" mentality, the initial scenario in which students took opposing sides facilitated their understanding that immigration and trade could not be as easily explained as Mexicans against Americans.

While none of the documentaries I utilized in the research illustrate immigration themes, students could still have very strong opinions on the issues presented in each film as well as their proposed solutions. For instance, with *Born into Brothels,* students may debate whether prostitution should be a legal form of employment and whether it was appropriate for Westerner Zana Briski, to insert herself in an Indian culture and decide that the children should attend better schools. In *The Devil's Miner*, viewers could discuss proposed solutions to child labor and mining, and what role, if any, Americans may have in helping children in Basilio's situation. Last, *Black Gold* offers students the opportunity to discuss the U.S.'s role in international trade, and if Americans have a responsibility as consumers to purchase ethically traded products.

As discussed throughout the thesis, by understanding the realities of a situation, students may be more likely to engage in discussing the themes rather than ignoring a scenario due to its complexities. Perhaps this information suggests that American students are truly interested in furthering their global awareness; however, they need to be presented with an opportunity to express themselves in order to engage in these themes. Presented with sufficient background and plausible opposing sides to

a global issue, American students may reap a greater understanding of their world through debate and critical discussion.

Answering the Research Questions

In the initial state of creating my thesis, I posed three major research questions. Based on the literature review, focus group data, and a discussion with international graduate students from the College of Education, I discuss the answers I have developed to these themes.

> Q1. How might students learn about the world through documentaries, and could documentaries motivate them to learn more about global issues?

Students might learn about the world through documentaries provided educators follow several practical approaches. For example, teachers should seek approval from administrators and parents that students may watch a potentially graphic or controversial film in the classroom. If faced with opposition, educators may attempt to explain that a challenging theme may be more engaging for students because they have an opportunity to discuss their opinions on real world problems and solutions. When presenting the film and lesson, educators should also provide significant background to the issue, as well as discussing who made and funded the production of the film. The educator must also be consistently objective when presenting information on another culture, explaining to students that difference is neither right nor wrong.

Documentaries could motivate students to learn about more global issues, especially if information is presented in a way that students can understand the material and offer their opinions on the topic. Students who are already interested in global issues, but who may have not previously had an opportunity to engage with them, may find the experience particularly rewarding. As illustrated by Laura in the third focus group, some students may feel motivated to go beyond the classroom and share information on the issue with others. However, schools and teachers must encourage and facilitate opportunities for students to engage in this way. For instance, administrators may allow student clubs to show films after school, and teachers may offer to bring speakers to the school to discuss the topic further. By following documentaries with substantial lessons on the same theme and/or facilitating after school programs, perhaps the most important factor in motivating students lies in presenting them with additional opportunities for engagement.

Q2. How do students see documentaries as a learning tool, and what do they gain from documentaries that is not gained from reading or lecture?

Based on focus group feedback, students supported the use of documentaries as a learning tool, and many mentioned they would have liked for their schools to integrate more global themes and documentaries. They indicated that none of the documentaries screened in the focus groups were inappropriate for high school students, and that it is important for students to receive non-American viewpoints at an earlier age.

Participants also suggested that documentary films offer unique elements to

learning. For example, they discussed how they became personally connected to the characters. This connection took shape because the character was a child to whom participants could relate and, in the case of *Black Gold*, participants wanted to follow the main character's journey to achieve higher wages for his farmers. Along with these elements of story, participants were also interested in documentary's ability to show a "behind-the-scenes" look at the entire process of an industry or corporation (i.e. how coffee is bought and sold and travels from farm to supermarket shelves).

Whether portraying the plight of children in impoverished situations or the reality behind commodity food items, documentaries have a tendency to reveal what we don't ordinarily see in the news or day-to-day life. In addition, they facilitate students' engagement by telling a story in which empathy for characters is easily experienced. As opposed to reading or lecture that may be ethnocentrically biased, documentaries offer a unique way to compare Western culture with the rest of the world and allow students to see how other countries consider the United States.

> Q3. How might watching more documentaries on international subjects have enriched students' high school education, and in which classes could these documentaries be appropriate?

Similar to the first questions' discussion, watching more documentaries on international subjects may have lead to students engaging other students on the issues. As participants indicated, the documentaries screened in the focus groups could have helped them develop a social and global consciousness earlier in life. However, not all high school students continue to higher education, and many may be more focused on

economic stability than global awareness by the time they attend college. Therefore, watching documentaries of this nature earlier could prepare students to understand complex issues and consider their role in an increasingly connected world.

Specifically, most documentaries on global issues will discuss poverty. As discussed in the conclusions section, acknowledging poverty's reality throughout the world may be essential for students to understand most global issues. While it is unrealistic that an entire class may be dedicated to poverty, perhaps it should be a topic all schools should focus on in depth at some point. Outside of this central theme, many documentaries will highlight an issue within one or two countries in particular. Therefore, they may be used in classes exploring cultures or languages of those countries, but also used to enhance world geography lessons.

While documentaries screened in the focus groups depicted depressing situations of poverty and malnourishment, foul language, nudity, and devil worshipping, no participant said that a documentary would be inappropriate for high school or undergraduate college audiences. In general, they suggested that students would be excited to watch a film along with a lesson, and that certain documentaries could help provide students with an overall picture of an issue.

Advice for Future Researchers

Without surprise, my research and data collection did not flow perfectly. I attempted numerous focus groups that did not yield enough participants, and time forced me to end my research with only 13 participants. While I feel the feedback

resulted in very insightful ideas, and I drew substantial conclusions from my data, I also faced a lack of diverse or opposing opinions to global education and documentary use. As any research will teach us, there are always ways to improve and learn from each other's less than ideal scenarios. Thus, I would like to dedicate a small portion of my thesis to future students embarking on a first-time research project.

One of the major obstacles I faced was finding enough participants for the focus groups. Although I found many professors willing to give me 10 minutes of class time to present my study, the students did not follow through with their commitment. That is, for each class presentation but one, I had at least five to eight students sign up for the focus group. However, after I emailed those students the room number and reminder emails of the focus groups, many times only one or two students would actually attend. I believe this is due to the time lapse between my presentation to the class and the actual date of the focus group. Because I wanted to give students time to plan around the focus group, I waited approximately one week between student sign-up and hosting the proposed focus group. Perhaps a better method would have been to hold the focus group one or two days after the class presentation. This way, students would have the presentation fresh in their mind, and thus retain enough interest to follow through with attending.

In my opinion, another issue that arose was saturation in opinions and feedback from my focus group participants. In other words, none of the participants challenged the use of global education or documentaries in the classroom, and this viewpoint would have added another element to my research. I believe that this is due to the fact

that participants who came to the focus groups were interested in global issues and/or documentaries before I even introduced my study to their class. As incentive, I offered students free pizza and gift cards for attending, rather than extra credit. As most students are probably not in dire need of free food, I believe a wider variety of students would have participated had I offered extra credit, instead. Unfortunately, this method of recruiting student participants is not encouraged by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). That said, it is not forbidden either, and I would encourage future researchers going through the IRB process to request this incentive as opposed to free food and gifts.

Of course, it is also of utmost importance to have all materials such as questionnaires, IRB consent forms, and material incentives organized and readily available to pack up and take to the focus groups. Luckily, I developed organizations skills before writing my thesis, and so this was an easy task to keep up with. One way I organized my materials was with a meticulous kept filing cabinet including separate sections for all thesis and focus group materials. While keeping this and all other aforementioned recommendations in mind may seem overwhelming at first, it is simply a matter of starting an organized system from the beginning and not becoming lazy with the upkeep. In general, an energetic and dedicated attitude is also necessary, as it will probably yield more considerate feedback from participants, and help a researcher maintain interest in his or her project.

Final Conclusions

According to some, an undergraduate thesis is a journey in demonstrating a broad understanding of a topic or issue. As a video production student who had never taken an education based class, I have learned about the democratic underpinnings of the U.S. education system as well as the roots of modern standardization and high-stakes testing. Along with defining global education and global citizenship, I have developed a grounded idea of the obstacles our teachers face and the approaches they may take to raising students' global awareness.

While much of my research involved hours of formulating a mental background of our education system, this thesis also catered to my filmmaking interests, as well. Indeed, watching documentaries month after month with a scrutinizing eye, and hearing participant feedback, I have become a better critic of the medium. In addition, this process introduced me to how documentaries engage students through elements of story, offering non-American viewpoints, and showing us scenes of the world that we would never witness in our day-to-day lives. Participants' interest in the films' subject matter along with their individual call for more global education reinforced my belief in using documentaries as learning tools. Based on my findings, I would recommend that educators seek out documentaries that examine poverty and present controversial situations. By asking students their opinions on real-world problems, I believe those students will better value their own understanding of the issue, think critically about it, and investigate further.

In addition, perhaps one of the most rewarding results of this experience is that I am able to offer "findings" in the first place. Initially, I thought that the density of the literature I read meant that my 22-year-old opinions could not weigh in. While I still do not believe my writing could compare to the literature I sifted through, I *would* feel confident discussing my research with any of the scholars. In general, understanding aspects such as Nodding's (2005) thought on the preconditions of peace in global education, Gardner's recommendations on an in-depth curriculum, and Ohler (2009) and Aronowitz's (2008) support of digital storytelling and popular culture in the classroom provided a background for me to form my own ideas. Whether teachers find time to introduce students to poverty on a worldwide scale or deconstruct the perhaps learned self-sufficiency and independence in U.S. culture, documentaries present a stimulating introduction to these themes. From focus group participants' interest in the films and topics to international student's perspectives on opportunities in U.S. culture for discussing global themes, it is hopeful to consider that students would actively engage in global issues if provided the opportunity.

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