

Coming of Age in a Globalized World: The Next Generation

by J. Michael Adams and Angelo Carfagna

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The world is constantly changing. Innovations in technology, increased global commerce, and the ability to easily travel the globe are all signs that the world is shrinking and that international connections are increasing. In *Coming of Age in a Globalized World: The Next Generation*, authors J. Michael Adams and Angelo Carfagna discuss the meaning of the globalization phenomenon, its impact on the future, and how the values of world citizenship can aid humanity in adapting to an evolving reality. Directed toward students and educators, *Coming of Age* encourages readers to consider the manner in which they engage with other members of the global community and the effects of those varied interactions. The authors consider three main concepts: defining globalization, defining world citizenship and its principles, and integrating one's understanding of the aforementioned concepts into society and personal values.

Adams and Carfagna describe globalization as “connecting the dots, finding patterns and relationships between seemingly unrelated ideas or events” to consider the world as a whole instead of broken into separate independent nations and individuals (p. 1). Theoretical lines are drawn to the similarities in revolutions in world history and the manner in which new technologies and major innovations affected change in the past, including the invention of the printing press and its effect on the increased availability of educational materials and greater opportunity for literacy beyond the upper class of society. The conclusion is that globalization is inevitable. Change is a constant in world history: members of society need only consider how they will respond. The authors encourage the reader to become familiar with more of the world in order to facilitate a broader worldview.

According to the chapter, “A Foundation for World Citizenship,” becoming a world citizen means learning to address world issues, viewing challenges from diverse perspectives, and taking responsibility for the impact individual actions have on the globe. The shift to global citizenship does not mean relinquishing one's nationality but instead it means embracing multiple identities, just as people move between “roles as wife...friend, worker, town resident, and national citizen without losing sanity” (p. 95). Consistently, the authors reinforce the reader's responsibility as a member of the global community to transcend borders of all kinds—geographic and perceived—to learn more about others to aid a successful adaptation in an evolving world that continues to bring diverse peoples and ideas closer together.

Adams and Carfagna exemplify the applications and embodiment of global citizenry through a number of diverse examples. To foster this perspective, the authors also promote globalized education in the classroom, citing the five essential concepts for student learning from Robert Hanvey: “perspective consciousness, awareness of planetary issues, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, and awareness of human choices” (p. 161). These concepts can further institutional values in higher education, as they did for the authors at their own university, that result in the graduation of students who comprehend their global responsibilities.

Overall, the text provides a well-informed perspective on the evolution of global society and concrete applicable strategies for the individual and collective approach to addressing world issues.

Adams and Carfagna's work has a great deal of potential for application to new student programs.

Coming of Age is appropriate for students at the college level in all walks of life, including adult learners. If supported appropriately with programming and university resources, the material in the text can serve as an excellent foundation on which to build students' college experience. Further, the text remains relatively objective. Each major discussion point includes potential arguments of those in disagreement with the concepts of global citizenship. Thus, the reader is enabled to develop his or her own understanding of the concepts from the many historical quotes used to support the material. Perhaps the best depiction of this is the chart titled "A Foundation for World Citizenship" that outlines the intersections between the world's prominent religions on the basis of the "Golden Rule" as a bastion of human rights (p. 120).

Some concerns educators might have about selecting this text for new student reading are the book's format and its potentially sensitive content. Unlike many novels or autobiographies assigned to new students for reading over the summer, *Coming of Age* is set up similarly to a textbook. While the information is compelling and informative, a new freshman may be discouraged by the book not being an easy read during the break between high school and college. Students who want to retain the information in this book will need to annotate and take copious notes to learn the various world organization acronyms and keep the history lessons intact.

The mild controversy in the text is that it questions systems of thought that are new to the first-year traditional undergraduate, such as the purpose of college and the impact of the events of 9/11 on the global community. Educators might find that these topics provide an excellent opportunity for discussion. Unguided, however, and for students who may have been personally and deeply affected by the 9/11, there lies the potential that they will become defensive around the concept of shifting from national pride to worldwide respect for humanity. These conversations would be best supported in the classroom.

To address these concerns, the best strategy is to use the book during the academic year instead of the pre-college interval so that potential xenophobic behavior and assumptions can be addressed as a community and a structure provided that actively encourages students to read the text. *Coming of Age* would best fit a first-year seminar course which provides ample opportunity to constructively discuss shifts in perception that may occur as a result of reading the text and applying its messages. If used over the summer, it would be imperative to create a virtual support structure or reflection mechanism to enable faculty or staff working with the students to use the assessment to guide program aides. This could be accomplished through message board postings or periodic electronic journal submissions about the text.

The text provides additional opportunities for enlightening student discussion. Group projects could be designed to learn about how other nations view the concepts of citizenship, become familiar with international news and how it could potentially affect students' local experience, and consider how people from other nationalities view common issues or practices of their society. More specifically, classroom debates on the value of nationalism versus global citizenship are inspired by Chapters 4 and 5. Reflection on the personal implications of the events of 9/11 and how it has affected members of other groups can be drawn from Chapter 5. An examination of the varied definitions of shared human responsibilities, especially those expounded by Parker, Ninomiya, and Cogan, and the "elements of global education" arise from Chapters 6 and 7.

The diversity of perspectives expressed in the text enables a seamless integration into campus programming. Adams and Carfagna cite international scholars from all walks of life as knowledgeable resources on the matter of world citizenship. From the renowned Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to a lesser known President Daisaku Ikeda and philosopher Kwame

Anthony Appiah, and everyone in between, the authors effectively considered the unique viewpoints of people all over the world.

Using the text as common reading, universities can set the tone for multicultural appreciation for the next four years. Once the expectation is established in the first year, subsequent graduating classes could more easily learn about the university's mission to embrace diversity by learning from and listening to the world. More importantly, the concept of global citizenship can become an institutional value held by the student community, not just by the faculty and administration. Campus leaders could consider the following ideas for programs:

- Themed lecture series: International political speakers or more intimate keynotes from social activists or prominent local immigrants.
- Themed orientation experience: The welcome speaker, daily cuisine, evening programming, giveaways, and promotions for orientation events could center around a particular nationality or ethnicity each session to expose students to diverse experiences and set the stage for the text prior to the start of classes.
- Global Citizen Passport: Create a series of year-long events students can attend that will enhance their understanding of the greater global society. Give each student a stamp on their event passport and reward them for attending by entering them in a drawing for an internationally themed prize.

Partnering with campus colleagues will also ensure program success. Discussing the content of the text and helping students express their reactions and concerns are integral to ensuring students have a positive experience with the material. The best support is in a living learning community wherein the students are housed relatively near each other and participate in a number of linked courses, including a first-year seminar course. This link will allow students to approach the subject matter from a number of academic disciplines such as English or composition, politics, and history and make intentional connections. Use of *Coming of Age* in the seminar or common English/writing course as a guide provides a friendly and close-knit atmosphere for students to learn more about each other's impressions in a space where they are encouraged to express themselves and learn from discussion rather than a typical didactic classroom setting.

Service-learning experiences focused on concepts of personal meaning from the text could forge a partnership between academic and student affairs. After reading the book, professionals could create intentional opportunities for students to apply their passion for helping humanity through involvement with local groups similar to those described in the text such as Oxfam, Habitat for Humanity, or the United Way. Being active in their local neighborhoods will help students learn more and make a difference right where they are so they can see the effects of their shifts in perspectives.

International or multicultural student affairs would also be an excellent partner outside the classroom. The following ideas may be considered in partnership with the lecture series:

- Global leadership series;
- Student-led think tanks to consider applications of the text;
- Dialogue circles, presentations, or roundtables from students who have studied abroad in non-English-speaking countries; and
- Partnering with international programs or international embassies for cultural exploration programs, cooking demonstrations, and conversations series.

Through this publication, the authors illustrate that the need to enhance students' perceptions of global issues is a necessity as they emerge into the world landscape as educated members of society. Armed with works such as *Coming of Age in a Globalized World*, educators should feel confident in their abilities to graduate capable world citizens.