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Effects of an International Undergraduate Honors Course on Awareness of Global Justice

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Abstract: How can undergraduate students be prepared for global citizenship? This question was investigated in a mixed-methods case study of an international, blended one-semester course. Undergraduate honors students (N = 22) from the USA and the Netherlands collaborated to explore what it means to be a member of the global community. Curriculum guidelines from the social justice oriented education for global citizenship were used to analyze the course's program and focus the case study. The research questions were as follows: 1. How did the course relate to the curriculum guidelines? 2. What and how did students learn from the course? Analyses of the program showed that the course partly reflects the social justice oriented global citizenship education, in particular by addressing intercultural sensitivity and experiential learning. Quantitative measures in a pre-post design with control groups (N = 40) showed some growth in ethical sensitivity and social awareness. Qualitative measures indicated that participants developed a broader view on society and demonstrated a more open and active attitude towards others after the course. Experiential learning was considered a powerful aspect of the pedagogical approach. The results are discussed in relation to a developmental process whereby students gain awareness of global justice issues.

Keywords: global citizenship education; higher education; honors program; critical citizenship; global justice; case study

1. Introduction

Appeals to provide civic education and develop societal commitment in higher education have been made in many parts of the global North [1–3]. Ultimately, preparing students for their future role in society and giving them opportunities to reflect on who they want to be may make them citizens who are socially concerned and engaged (i.e., effective citizens in a diverse democracy) [1]. Their engagement is imperative, given the severity of global issues, such as climate change, racism, and poverty. Several theories have been advanced on how to prepare students for global citizenship [4]. Yet, few studies have looked into the effects on undergraduates or what works for which students [5].

The present study illustrates how undergraduate honors students can be prepared for global citizenship. In the autumn of 2011, two universities, one in the USA and the other in the Netherlands, were invited by the State University of New York, Collaborative International Online Learning (SUNY COIL) to develop a Global Networked Community (GNC) course. The two universities used this opportunity to set up a parallel research project on how such a course would foster students' insights and motivation to address issues of global justice.

In the undergraduate honors course, Searchers in Society (SIS), students from the two countries worked together in a common program and collaborative online class to find out what it means to

be a member of the global community. They learned about the complexity of globalization processes and the influence of globalization on local communities [6]. The course was targeted at undergraduate honors students, as they are deemed to be both able and motivated to take on more than the regular curriculum offers [7]. In the Netherlands, societal engagement is considered an important aspect of honors education [8]. For instance, at the Hanze University of Applied Sciences, honors students are to focus, generally, on societal themes and learn to use their abilities for the common good [9].

In this study, we apply the justice-oriented approach of global citizenship, which includes a desire to improve society [10]. The focus is on gaining insight into the root causes of injustice and envisioning changes in the systems that reproduce it. Such insight allows informed action [11,12]. The global dimension of citizenship captures the international markets merging and becoming interdependent [13], as well as the global crises the world faces, such as poverty and the environmental crisis [14]. The global dimension of citizenship education is further connected to Nussbaum's moral cosmopolitism [3,15], especially regarding one's ability to think as a citizen of the world and to imagine inhabiting the position of someone quite different from oneself.

When citizenship education deals with global issues, justice, and equality, civic development involves moral aspects [4,5]. Morality involves judgements about how to act towards others [4]. Moreover, core democratic rules are based on moral principles, such as tolerance, respect, and concern for the rights of individuals and groups. Finally, problems that confront engaged citizens always include strong moral themes, such as environmental issues and responsibility towards future generations [5]. In turn, moral development entails ethical sensitivity, moral motivation, moral judgment, and moral character [16]. Of these four, ethical sensitivity is said to be the most important as it is conditional for the other three [17]. Ethical sensitivity implies recognizing a situation as a moral one and identifying with the role of another person [18].

Excellence in higher education is often steered by the requirements of the market and the knowledge economy [19]. Honors education, being under development, however, offers possibilities to develop courses aimed at critical global citizenship. Various studies emphasize the importance of ethics and global citizenship for all students. In addition, the following considerations especially apply for high-ability students [20]. First, they show an above-average interest in moral issues and the wider world at an early age [21,22]. Second, they could use their abilities to help address today's global challenges [23]. Finally, the possibility of obtaining powerful positions in one's professional life makes it important to take a broader perspective on society and on ethical decisions in particular [24].

After reviewing the literature on the subject, we built the curriculum guidelines for global justice citizenship education (GJCE) to guide the way to work on societal engagement (see [25] for methods and results of this review). The curriculum guidelines for GJCE were used to analyze the characteristics of the SIS course, and students' experiences and learning outcomes. Since the guidelines and the course were developed simultaneously but largely independently, the first research question concerns how the course relates to the GJCE principles. The second question concerns what and how students gained from the course, regarding the intended learning aims specified in the curriculum guidelines.

2. Curriculum Guidelines for Global Justice Citizenship Education (GJCE)

In this section, we explain the curriculum guidelines for GJCE (see Table 1). While these elements are discussed sequentially, they are notably intertwined; content can be distinguished from approach, but not separated from it. For instance, experiential learning can enhance intercultural awareness and also motivate the student to take action. Furthermore, when students discover possibilities to act for change towards a more just society, their motivation can be positively influenced. As Colby notes, motivation is multifaceted and involves a sense of efficacy or empowerment [5]. They also note that courses directed at civic and moral development can boost motivation.

Table 1. Curriculum guidelines for global justice citizenship education (GJCE).

Domains	Curriculum Guidelines
Knowledge	- Gain historical (root causes of injustice) insights and see local–global connections - Focus on one global-justice issue
Attitude and values	- Develop ethical and intercultural sensitivity - Recognize own values and critically reflect on mainstream thinking - Contact people with different socio-economic positions, cultural backgrounds and life chances data
Pedagogical approach	- Spend at least 15 h in civic contexts [26]

Based on [25].

Knowledge provides the basis for insight into global justice issues and their root causes. The focus is on justice and sustainability-oriented issues, such as poverty, racism, and climate change. Deep knowledge plays an important role in effective action [5]. Three elements of deep knowledge are considered important: A focus on one global issue, historical insight, and the relationship between local and global.

First, depth can be achieved by examining one global issue rather than learning more superficially about different places and current challenges. Narrowing the focus allows one to grasp the social, political, and economic structures that underpin injustice and power differences. Second, the historic dimension offers insight into the societal context in which the issue developed [27,28]. When neglecting colonialism or considering it as something from the past, we will fail to see its influence on the construction of the present. Especially, regarding the emergence of wealth in the 'global north' and the role of the international division of labor, and the exploitation of the 'global south' for the preservation of this wealth [27,29]. In such an approach, poverty becomes a lack of sources, services and markets, and a lack of education. Poor people are being made responsible for their own poverty and the project of development of the other is sanctioned as being a 'civilization mission' [27,29,30]. A recent example where such a process was made transparent is the book 'Congo, The Epic History of a People' by David van Reybrouck. Finally, students should understand the global dimension of their own actions and the interdependence between places in the world [31].

The second content-related aspect concerns *attitude and values*. With respect to attitude, it is considered important to take the perspective of 'the other', to pay attention to the welfare of others, and to recognize ethical dilemmas, which are all elements of ethical sensitivity. Aside from this care-oriented attitude towards interpersonal relationships, justice-orientation is also considered important. Justice-oriented moral reasoning relates to applying general principles to individual cases, such as gender justice. Contact and engagement with people from other cultural or socio-economic backgrounds can yield new insights into oneself and one's biases [32]. For students from middle- and upper-class families, such encounters allow them to look beyond their 'privileged lives' [33]. When such encounters take place, students need intercultural sensitivity, which is the ability to notice and experience cultural difference [34,35].

Learning about values through reflection and discussion can contribute to attitude development, which is especially important in the Dutch context where values do not get much attention in the regular curriculum of higher education [36]. We distinguish two skills: The first skill is recognizing values behind statements, ideas, and perspectives, and evaluating how they relate to students' own values. Such skills can be taught by exposing students to different perspectives. They can be asked to think and write about the possibilities and limitations of statements on a certain issue and then discuss these points [37]. The second skill is to critically reflect on values, especially on 'mainstream' thinking

related to the dominant neoliberal ideology. Students should be given the opportunity to look into alternative (emergent) ideas and practices and discuss their underlying values.

In the *pedagogical approach*, the focus is on experiential learning. This kind of learning takes place when students learn from concrete experience by critically looking back at the activity, giving meaning to it, and actively testing the resultant insights in another situation or context [38]. Colby emphasizes the importance of a pedagogy that requires students to be active and emotionally engaged in their work [5]. On this approach, students also reflect, interpret, and connect their experiences, whereby, experiential learning can have a positive influence on students' moral and civic development. When the context is civic, it can offer "social and conceptual complexity and ambiguity and often elicit emotional responses as well as unexamined stereotypes and other assumptions" [5] (p. 139).

The curriculum guidelines for GJCE were used to examine the SIS program, explained in this section. During the 17 week course (112 h), students from a US and a Dutch university participated and collaborated in a mutual online class. Searchers in Society is an example of globally networked learning (GNL), where students from different continents meet up without traveling abroad. The first session took place in 2012 and yielded the data presented here.

SIS focused on the complexity and layers of the globalization process and inquired, "What does it mean to be a member of the global community?" [6]. To delve into this question, the course offered three modules. The first was "Making connections, from local to global", in which students looked within their community for all kinds of signs of globalization. The second module, "The complexity of globalization", examined what it means to be a member of the global community, depending on the group to which one belongs and where one lives in the world. During this module, students interviewed migrants, or people who work with migrants, in their community. During the third module, intercultural teams (from the USA and the Netherlands) worked on a final product to answer the central question of the course.

The economic, political, and cultural dimensions of globalization were addressed [6]. Attention was drawn to one (broad) globalization issue, in that students studied the effects of globalization on the movement of people across borders and the resultant impacts on their citizenship rights. They interviewed either migrants or people working with them. This experience was linked to theories of culture, intercultural communication, and cultural practices.

The course activities were student-centered and designed to help students learn how to uncover assumptions, analyze situations by considering multiple perspectives and building a case, and supporting their claims with valid evidence. The role of teachers in the course was that of a facilitator and role model. Their focus was on modelling students' inquiry processes.

Three synchronous online class meetings were held and the degree of intercultural collaboration kept increasing [6]. Outside class, students and teachers communicated both synchronously and asynchronously via social media. Course materials were accessible online. Moreover, students were asked to share their knowledge and experiences by writing eight individual blogs during the course. The other students and the teachers could react by providing feedback and asking questions.

To analyze the characteristics of SIS, we raised two questions. The first concerned the program: How did the course reflect the curriculum guidelines for GJCE? The second concerned its effects: What and how did students gain from the course, regarding the intended learning aims specified in the curriculum guidelines?

3. Materials and Methods

This paper details a case study conducted with a mixed-method approach [39]. Table 2 provides an overview of the two main research questions and the sub-questions, as well as the instruments used to answer these.

Table 2. Research questions, methods, and instruments of the case study.

Questions	Methods and Instruments
(1) Presence of the guidelines in the course. What are the characteristics of the program? To what extent were the curriculum guidelines for global justice citizenship education (GJCE) present?	Analysis from course website; two teacher interviews; teachers' questionnaire on the curriculum guidelines
(2) Learning outcomes Knowledge Do students show an increase in social awareness, and knowledge and insights regarding a global issue after participating in the course?	Pre- and posttest with control group: Social Awareness Scale from the Shared Futures Survey (SFS); Open-ended Evaluation Questions (OEQ)
Attitude & Values Do students show an increase in moral development, intercultural sensitivity, and other aspects of intercultural learning? Do students report a possible change in values or opinions after participating in the course? Are students motivated to make a contribution to a more just world after taking this course?	Pre- and posttest with control group: Ethical Sensitivity Scale Questionnaire (ESSQ); Intercultural Sensitivity Scale Questionnaire (ICSSQ) OEQ Pre- and posttest with control group: "Valuing social action", "Civic engagement", and "Speaking up, acting out" from the Shared Futures Survey; OEQ
Pedagogical approach What are students' perspectives on how they learned?	OEQ

To investigate the extent to which the curriculum guidelines for GJCE were present in SIS, the course program was compared with the guidelines. We used the course description on the website and conducted teacher interviews halfway through and towards the end of the semester (October and December 2012) to collect information on the aims, content, learning activities, learning environment, and ways of grouping [40]. The individually interviewed teachers were asked whether the course was implemented as envisioned, what adjustments were eventually made, and why. The transcripts were returned to them for additions and improvements. Furthermore, the teachers provided written information before and after the course took place (June 2012 and May 2013) on where and how they considered the curriculum guidelines to be present in the course program. They each wrote down their thoughts on each guideline, with regard to both the program and its implementation. Also, to get a better sense of how things went, two of the authors attended two course meetings.

To collect data about the effects of the course on student learning, in terms of global justice citizenship, both quantitative measures (pre- and posttests), as well as qualitative measures (open-ended evaluation questions) were used (see Table 2). We used a pre- and posttest design with control groups to measure the effect of the course on students' ethical sensitivity, intercultural sensitivity, and motivation to contribute to a more just world. We chose to measure ethical sensitivity because, as was explained in the introduction, the concepts of moral and civic development are intertwined. Moreover, ethical sensitivity can been seen as conditional for other aspects of moral development [41]. Ethical and intercultural sensitivity are both needed for being able to understand the world "from the point of view of the other" [3] (p. 11). Moreover, the recognition of cultural diversity in identities is an important element in current citizenship education [42]. Students filled out the forms at the first (pretest) and last session (posttest). Honors students from both universities who did not participate in the course served as the control group and filled out the forms around the same time.

The Ethical Sensitivity Scale Questionnaire (ESSQ) consists of seven dimensions (see Table 3) and 28 items, measured on a 5-point Likert scale [17,43]. These dimensions are hierarchical, going from basic to more complicated [44]. The operationalization of the ethical sensitivity model is satisfactory in that the psychometric properties of the ESSQ are scientifically valid [43,45].

Table 3. The seven dimensions of the Ethical Sensitivity Scale Questionnaire (ESSQ), with statement examples.

Dimension	Example Statement
(1) Reading and expressing emotions	I notice if someone working with me is offended by me.
(2) Taking the perspectives of others	I tolerate different ethical views in my surroundings.
(3) Caring by connecting to others	I am concerned about the wellbeing of my partners.
(4) Working with interpersonal and group differences	I try to consider another person's position when I face a conflict situation.
(5) Preventing social bias	I recognize my own bias when I take a stand on ethical issues.
(6) Generating interpretations and options	I believe there are several right solutions to ethical problems.
(7) Identifying the consequences of actions and options	I see a lot of ethical problems around me.

The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale Questionnaire (ICSSQ) consists of 23 items on a 5-point Likert scale [46]. This tool is based upon Bennett's (1993) development model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS), which focuses on people's cognitive and behavioral reactions to cultural difference. It concerns the ability to construe and, thus, experience cultural difference, which can become an active part of one's worldview [34]. The instrument measures five positions of intercultural sensitivity: The first three represent a more ethnocentric orientation, and the last two a more ethno-relativist orientation (see Table 4). Its validity was tested and the ICSSQ is considered to be a promising, useful, and compact instrument [35].

Table 4. The five Intercultural Sensitivity Scale Questionnaire (ICSSQ) positions, with statement examples.

Position	Example Statement
(1) Denial	I do not need to care about what happens in other parts of the world.
(2) Defense	I divide the students at my school into "our people" and "other people".
(3) Minimization	People around the world need and want approximately the same things.
(4) Acceptance	Different behaviors make me see things in a new way.
(5) Adaptation	I am able to put myself in the position of a person from another culture.

The Shared Futures Survey (SFS) of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) is widely used in the USA to ascertain students' thoughts and experiences on various civic, social, cultural, and global issues. This instrument is based on measures tested in other surveys; factor and reliability analyses were used to create and verify the scales [47,48]. Four of the SFS scales were used in the current study (see Table 5). Social awareness refers to the extent to which one believes it is important to be socially and culturally aware (in terms of both knowledge and attitudes or values). The second scale, valuing social action, measures the extent to which individuals appreciate the need to take public action. The third, civic engagement, measures a student's self-reported civic behavior in the past year. The fourth, speaking up and acting out, measures a student's political actions in the same period. The latter two are action-oriented scales, in keeping with the curriculum guidelines of GJCE for developing motivation and discovering possibilities to take social action for a more just world.

Table 5. Shared Futures Survey (SFS) scales and statement examples.

Scale	Example Statements
Social awareness	Working to end poverty; promoting racial tolerance and respect
Valuing social action	Creating awareness of environmental issues
Civic engagement	Participated in volunteer work; acted with others to educate people about a global issue I care about
Speaking up, acting out	Signed a petition; joined a boycott

The second strategy to gather data was to ask participants about the significance of the course. Students filled out an open-ended evaluation sheet (pencil and paper) at the end of the last session (see Table 6). Ultimately, the answers were categorized according to the curriculum guidelines by two ndependently working coders; differences were resolved through discussion.

Table 6. Open-ended evaluation questions and related aspects of the global justice citizenship education (GJCE) guidelines.

Questions	Guidelines
What was the most important thing that you have learned from this course?	All aspects
How have you been challenged in this course?	All aspects
What have you learned about yourself?	Attitude and values
Which of your values, opinions, or beliefs have possibly changed?	Attitude and values
What was the most powerful learning moment that you experienced during the course? Please describe what happened.	Pedagogical approach
What do you value most about how you learned in this course?	Pedagogical approach
What possibilities do you see for yourself to contribute to a more just society in the future?	Overall aim

Twenty-two university students—13 living in the Netherlands and 9 in the USA—participated in the course. The control group consisted of 18 non-participating students, of whom 12 were living in the Netherlands and 6 in the USA. To check for comparability between participants and the control group, data were collected on age, gender, highest educational level of parents or guardians as an indicator of socio−economic status, and self-reported cultural-ethnic background. We anticipated that age could affect the data, as older persons have more life experience. Furthermore, gender could affect the data as women tend to score higher than men on ethical sensitivity [17] and intercultural sensitivity [35]. Both socio-economic status and cultural backgrounds can influence value orientations, the way people look at and interpret the world, and their moral considerations [49].

The data indicated that the participant group (M = 21.3, SD = 2.1) and control group (M = 21.3, SD = 2.1) were comparable regarding age and socio-economic status (74% and 78% bachelor degree or higher for the participants and control group, respectively). Regarding gender, however, women were over-represented among the participants (79% vs. 50%). Finally, the self-reported cultural-ethnic background was diverse in both groups: In the participant group, 54% mentioned having a background in another country or culture than (the main culture of) the country where they lived, whereas, in the control group this portion was 44%. Such cultural-ethnic diversity offers opportunities for participants to learn from each other. However, both groups were far above average regarding socio-economic status: In comparison, about 34% of people in the Netherlands [50] and 42% in the USA [51] have completed higher education. The relatively high socio-economic position of the study population suggests a homogeneous setting that is not conducive to learning about diversity.

4. Results

4.1. Comparison: Curriculum Guidelines of Global Justice Citizenship Education (GJCE) and the Searchers in Society (SIS) Course

The curriculum guidelines for GJCE contain the following domains: Knowledge, attitude and values, and a pedagogical approach. Table 7 provides a summary of the comparison between the guidelines and the course, which will be further explained in the text.

Table 7. Implementation guidelines for global justice citizenship education (GJCE) in the course, Searchers in Society (SIS): An overview.

GJCE Guidelines	Course SIS	S
One global issue	Complexity of globalization	−/+
Local–global influences	Local–global relations	−/+
Historical insights root causes injustice	Some attention for historical elements	−/+
Contact with groups other cultural or socio-economic backgrounds	Contact with groups other cultural or socio−economic backgrounds	+/−
Intercultural sensitivity and awareness	Intercultural cooperation in international groups	+
Recognizing values and critical reflection on mainstream thinking	Mainly connected with cultural identity and (critical incidents in) intercultural exchange	−/+
Experiential learning. Spend at least 15 h in civic contexts	Experiential learning by intercultural cooperation;	+
	25% in the community and interview migrants (or people who work with migrants)	−/+

Note. S = Similarities. − = not present; −/+ = a little present; +/− = clearly present; + = strongly present; ++ completely incorporated.

4.1.1. Knowledge

We first explored how the knowledge component of GJCE played out during the course. Three elements are important here: The focus on one global issue, the historical dimension, and local–global relationships. The purpose of the course was related to increasing global interdependence and the impact of globalization on daily life, which was a broad theme. The teachers stressed that, above all, globalization is complex; the students acknowledged this complexity by the end of the course. Within this theme, the broad *global issue* of migration and related citizenship rights was present in the second module. Complexity in this theme relates to citizenship being determined by national boundaries, in contrast to the idea of "universal" human rights—that human rights should be granted to all human beings by virtue of being human. The main question of this module was: How does migration affect people's lives? The second module examined what it means to be a member of the global community, depending on the group to which one belongs and one's place of residence. Teachers allowed students to choose who they wished to interview in the community and to define their research questions. They later reported thinking that doing so came at the expense of attention paid to specific issues in depth.

Regarding the historical dimension, students were urged to take *historical events* into account when developing a working definition of globalization. Then, for the final project, when students presented a digital showcase on what it means to be a member of the global community, they were also required to take the historical context into account.

The third element, *linking the local or regional and global*, manifested in the aims, modules, and assignments. For instance, in the first assignment, students were invited to make connections between the local and the global by looking for signs of globalization in their community (using photography) and sharing their findings. In the second module, students were immersed in their local communities and then shared what they learned with the other students (in the USA or in the Netherlands) to gain a cross−cultural perspective on the issue of migration.

4.1.2. Attitude and Values

We subsequently explored how the course related to the curriculum guidelines regarding attitudes and values. This domain includes moral and intercultural learning, which can occur through contact and interaction with people from other socio-economic positions or cultural backgrounds. It also includes expanding horizons: Gaining another perspective on one's own values and habits, accessing other perspectives and a broader perspective on the world, and considering one's own behavior, with regard to people from other cultures.

The course was designed to stimulate increasing cooperation in intercultural teams consisting of students from both universities. Furthermore, students interviewed migrants or people who work with migrants. Teachers' implementation information revealed that contact and interaction occurred both within the classroom and in the local community. Teachers wrote that students attending each university brought along different life experiences and that the communities in which the students live are different. Moreover, groups of students had the opportunity to meet members of their local communities who had different life experiences. It was not clear to the teachers to what extent students reflected on those differences. Furthermore, the teachers "added a session on intercultural collaboration to help students understand the perspective of the 'other' group members".

The second element, recognition of values behind statements, policies, or activities, was expected to advance reflection on values, including how they relate to students' own values. Furthermore, critical reflection on the values, especially on mainstream thinking, might induce students to try to understand the origins of various perspectives and their implications, and to gain new or alternative perspectives.

Recognition and critical reflection on values and opinions was occasionally present in the course. For example, students were asked to reflect on the culture of their country with the help of Geert Hofstede's theory on cultures, (Geert Hofstede has received many awards for his intercultural research all over the world. His cultural-dimension theory provides a systematic framework for the assessment of differences between nations and cultures.) which considers values. Furthermore, it was present when students indulged in a debate between "globalists" and "skeptics", and on one occasion when the students were asked, "When is globalization bad and for whom?" and "When is globalization good and for whom?" Finally, students reflected on speeches by Kofi Annan (in 2002, before the Iraq war started) and Barack Obama (in 2012), guided by the questions, "What assumptions do they make?" and "How do they address 'us' and 'them'?" They were not specifically asked to discuss "mainstream" perspectives.

4.1.3. Pedagogical Approach

The pedagogical approach of experiential learning could, when combined with the other curriculum guidelines, enhance social responsibility, tolerance, and moral learning, in general. In the course, SIS, the activities were inquiry-based, including online experiential learning and in both communities. Teachers' implementation information revealed that "students went into their communities to find evidence of globalization through photography and interviews with immigrants or people working with immigrants. The time spent in the community remained as planned (25% of class time)". Reflection occurred in class discussions, as well as on the student blogs. For instance, students reflected on the interview by discussing: How did the interview(s) meet your expectations? In your community, has migration made people's lives harder or easier? On a more personal note, what did you learn? What impressed you, or disappointed you? What do you think is your place in this context? Do you see yourself as a part of this, and if so, where would that be?

4.2. Pre- and Posttests

4.2.1. Analytical Strategy

We tested whether the course had an impact on students' *ethical sensitivity*, *intercultural sensitivity*, and *motivation to contribute to a more just world* by using a factorial repeated measure analysis, with the group as an independent measure (course participant group vs. control group). Specifically, we tested whether these three outcomes increased in the participant group, but not in the control group. As such, statistically, we were looking for interaction effects between group and pre-post measures.

We will further report the results in the sequence of the curriculum guidelines for GJCE (see Table 1).

4.2.2. Knowledge

We used the subscale "social awareness" from the SFS to check for a possible gain in knowledge about and insight into global justice issues among the participants. For results of reliability measures (Cronbach's alpha values), see Appendix A. Means are reported in Table 8. The simple effect showed a trend of an increase among participants $F(1,35) = 2.77$, $p = 0.10$, $\eta^2_p = 0.08$, while no such increase occurred within the control group, $F < 1$. However, no significant difference in the increase of social awareness between the participants and control group was found. The analysis did not show the anticipated interaction $F < 1$. Further, although participants did not differ from the control group at the beginning of the course, $F(1,33) = 1.90$, $p = 0.18$, $\eta^2_p = 0.06$, they scored higher on social awareness at the end of the course, $F(1,33) = 5.46$, $p = 0.026$, $\eta^2_p = 0.14$.

Table 8. Means and standard deviations subscales of the Ethical Sensitivity Scale Questionnaire (ESSQ), two combined subscales of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale Questionnaire (ICSSQ), and the tree subscales of the Shared Futures Society (SFS).

	Participants		Control Group	
(Sub) Scale	**Pre M (SD)**	**Post M (SD)**	**Pre M (SD)**	**Post M (SD)**
ESS1	3.62 (0.54)	3.63 (0.44)	3.66 (0.58)	3.62 (0.67)
ESS2	4.16 (0.38)	4.16 (0.44)	3.99 (0.53)	3.84 (0.61)
ESS3	4.12 (0.48)	4.29 (0.35)	4.01 (0.66)	4.10 (0.79)
ESS4	4.01 (0.49)	3.97 (0.49)	3.68 (0.64)	3.74 (0.55)
ESS5	3.76 (0.58)	3.75 (0.54)	3.78 (0.40)	3.74 (0.57)
ESS6	3.65 (0.56)	4.0 (0.48)	3.77 (0.64)	3.74 (0.55)
ESS7	3.67 (0.57)	3.83 (0.54)	3.65 (0.79)	3.68 (0.74)
DD	1.78 (0.36)	1.83 (0.40)	2.08 (0.44)	2.05 (0.62)
AA	3.98 (0.34)	3.98 (0.36)	3.78 (0.56)	3.74 (0.50)
SA	3.15 (0.56)	3.33 (0.46)	2.89 (0.54)	2.95 (0.48)
CE	2.38 (0.99)	2.50 (0.87)	2.18 (1.00)	2.29 (0.95)
SuA	1.57 (0.43)	1.56 (0.45)	1.46 (0.41)	1.48 (0.57)

Note: DD = denial and defense; AA = acceptance and adaptation; SA = social awareness; CE = civic engagement; SuA = speaking up and acting out. ESS1 N participants = 19, N control = 17; ESS2 N participants = 19, N control = 17; ESS3 N participants = 19, N control = 17; ESS4 N participants = 18, N control = 18; ESS5 N participants = 19, N control = 17; ESS6 N participants = 18, N control = 18; ESS7 N participants = 18, N control = 18. DD N participants = 19, N control = 18; AA N participants = 19, N control = 18. SA N participants = 19, N control = 16; CE N participants = 18, N control = 16; SuA N participants = 18, N control = 16.

4.2.3. Attitude and Values

As we expected moral and intercultural learning to take place, we measured students' ethical and intercultural sensitivity to test the effect of participation in the course.

Ethical sensitivity. For results of reliability measures (Cronbach's alpha values) on the seven subscales of the ESSQ, see Appendix A. In the current study, the alpha values were satisfactory, except for Subscale 5. According to Tuckman (1972), a lower boundary of 0.5 is acceptable when measuring attitudes. It was decided to include all seven subscales in the analysis as their reliability had been proven in former studies [17,43,45].

We ran the analysis for the seven subscales of the ESSQ separately. Results revealed a significant interaction, with respect to the subscale generating interpretations and options (ESS6) $F(1,34) = 5.91$, $p = 0.02$, $\eta^2_p = 0.15$. To interpret this interaction, we conducted a simple effect analysis (means are reported in Table 8). This analysis showed that there was, indeed, a significant increase of generating interpretations and options within the participant group $F(1,34) = 5.95$, $p = 0.02$, $\eta^2_p = 0.15$, while this was not the case within the control condition $F < 1$. With respect to the other subscales, no significant interaction effects were found Fs < 1.

Intercultural sensitivity. The reliability of the subscales of the ICSSQ in this research was also tested with the parametric Cronbach's alpha. The results showed a low reliability on all of the six subscales $\alpha < 0.50$. Combining the lower stages of intercultural sensitivity, denial, and defense (which represent a more ethnocentric orientation) and the higher two stages of acceptance and adaptation (which represent a more ethno-relativist orientation), however, resulted in more reliable scales (see Appendix A). (Also, Holm found a positive correlation between denial and defense in her research, $r = 0.69$, as well as between acceptance and adaptation, $r = 0.31$ [34].)

The results of the analysis showed no significant interactions for both denial and defense, $F < 1$, and acceptance and adaptation, $F < 1$. In line with this result, simple effect analysis showed no changes in denial and defense, or acceptance and adaptation due to participation in the course, Fs < 1. Simple effect analysis did, however, show a difference between the control group and the participant group at the end of the course, with respect to acceptance and adaptation, $F(1,35) = 2.95$, $p = 0.092$, $\eta^2_p = 0.08$, such that the participant group scored slightly higher on the more ethno-relativist orientation. Next to this, there was already a difference between the participant and control group at the start of the course, with respect to denial and defense, $F(1,35) = 5.35$, $p = 0.027$, $\eta^2_p = 0.13$. Specifically, the control group scored higher on the more ethnocentric orientation than the participant group. Means are reported in Table 8.

Social-justice-related action. Social-justice-related action deals with seeing possibilities and developing motivation for taking action. We used the part of the SFS on citizenship and democracy to measure whether the course affected the extent to which students value social action and whether it affected their activities to contribute to making the world better (See Appendix A for internal consistency values). Due to a low internal reliability value at the posttest, it was decided to exclude the 'valuing social action' subscale from the analysis.

With respect to *civic engagement* and s*peaking up and acting out* the analyses did not show that the course had an impact on these forms of motivation to contribute to a more just world. There were no interaction effects Fs < 1, nor did simple effect analysis indicate an increase in civic engagement or political actions, all Fs < 1. Moreover, the scores on *civic engagement* and s*peaking up and acting out* seem to be rather low. Means are reported in Table 8.

4.3. Significance of the Course for Participating Students

4.3.1. Knowledge

Knowledge provides the basis for insight into global justice issues and their root causes. Deep knowledge plays an important role in effective action [5]. In the open-ended evaluation ($N = 18$) students were asked what the *most important [thing] that they learned was* and *how they were challenged in this course*. For both questions, three answers were associated with knowledge and insight, although not deep knowledge. Students mentioned the complexity of globalization, the different views, and the influence of globalization on people.

Further, when asked which of their *values, beliefs, or opinions had possibly changed,* four students mentioned gaining new insights explicitly related to immigration, the theme of the second module, during which students interviewed migrants. These students started to realize more about the difficult situation of migrants in their country They, for instance, wrote, "I used to believe that my nation and county were more accepting than they seemed based on one of my interviews"; "I always was of the opinion that integration was possible if one only puts enough effort in integration, but now I also consider the fact that the culture or society that one wants to integrate in needs to be open to strangers"; and, "I always believed globalization is merely a good thing for everybody, but maybe that is not always the case."

4.3.2. Attitude and Values

Attitudes and values in our curriculum guidelines for GJCE relate to moral and intercultural learning, and include expanding horizons: Gaining another perspective on one's own values and habits, accessing other perspectives and a broader perspective on the world, and looking beyond one's own 'privileged live' [31–34].

In response to the question of what the *most important* thing they learned was, four of the 18 answers were related to being open towards others and valuing other cultures. For instance, one said, "tolerance is not enough; be aware of differences and accept them." Another three students mentioned that they communicate or collaborate better with people interculturally or internationally. When asked how students were *challenged* in this course, 12 of the 18 answers were related to international and intercultural cooperation. Again, looking at things from other perspectives and actually challenging one's own long-held beliefs was mentioned. Further, students mentioned differences in working methods next to more practical matters, like differences in time zone and virtual communication.

When asked what students *learned about themselves*, six of the 18 answers concerned being open to and valuing other cultures: For instance, one student stated, "I like to work with different kinds of people from different cultures." Five referred to globalization or, more specifically, to migration, for instance, "I have never given the concept of immigration serious thought before" and, "the way we see and treat refugees in the Netherlands." Another seven answers were related to critical self-reflection, mostly on attitude; For instance, "the more I find out, the less I know" and, "I am not as flexible as I thought."

When asked which of their *values, beliefs, or opinions had possibly changed*, six of the 18 students reported a positive change in the way they look at or value other cultures or other people's cultural backgrounds. Two of them mentioned the difference between tolerance and acceptance, for instance noticing, "total acceptance of others rather than just tolerance." Another student said, "I am more open to interacting positively with those from other cultures"; and yet another stated that, "My idea of what it means to be born in a country has changed…" Also, one answer was related to sustainable consumption: "Once I have graduated I will buy more organic food and be more aware of the choices I make. What will it mean for somebody else?" Four students mentioned changed opinions based on acquired insights in the course about the situation of migrant people in their country (see Section 4.3.1).

4.3.3. Social Justice Action

To see possibilities and develop motivation for social justice-related action is the overall goal of the curriculum guidelines for GJCE. When asked what possibilities students see for themselves *to contribute to a more just society* in the future, none said they did not see such possibilities. Of the 18 answers, 11 concerned attitudes and behavior towards other people, such as, "I don't want to have any assumptions about people anymore. Next to that, I want to influence other people in a positive way about globalization." Four students referred to their future profession: For instance, "Because I want to go into humanitarian work, I think I can incorporate this aspect into anything I do" and, "learn more about cultures and what binds us. Put those learnings into practice in international business communications." Three answers were activity or volunteering-related, for instance, "Getting more involved in my neighborhood." Finally, two answers dealt with sustainable consumption, one regarding clothes and the other regarding food.

4.3.4. Pedagogical Approach

A pedagogical approach in which students are active and emotionally engaged is important for achieving moral and civic learning [5]. Two open-ended questions related to students' perspective on how they learned in the course, SIS. First, students were asked what they *valued most in how they learned* in the course (N = 18). Seven mentioned learning by experience, citing the practical work, the field research, or the interview. For example, they recalled, "…when we had to interview someone from

the community and listen to their stories" and, "going out in the community." Another six students mentioned cooperation with students overseas: For example, "The fact that we formed friendship with the X students" and, "Skype sessions with our American counterparts." Four students gave answers related to the teacher or class, such as, "the teacher's critical feedback during the class discussions" and, "the class discussion—hearing different smart points of view." Second, when asked to name the *most powerful learning moment*, six mentioned the community interview; another six answers were related to the intercultural aspect of the teamwork.

5. Discussion

5.1. Presence of the Curriculum Guidelines for Global Justice Citizenship Education (GJCE) in the Course

In this study, we inquired how the course, SIS, could enhance social commitment and moral development. The curriculum guidelines for GJCE were used to analyze the course and focus our study. Comparison of the course with our guidelines revealed some divergence in the aims and focus. The course has a broad theme of globalization, with a focus on learning about its complexity and what it means to be a member of the global community. Curriculum guidelines, in contrast, target in-depth knowledge of one specific global issue. Insight into the root causes of injustice, inequality, or environmental issues, which is one of the curriculum guidelines, was not a goal for this course and is, thus, not visible in its program. Finally, there was attention to the local–global connection, but this was not specifically aimed at gaining deeper insights into the nature of those connections. Indeed, we did find that students hardly mentioned knowledge as an important outcome of the SIS.

We also found several similarities between the curriculum guidelines and the course program. Three guidelines are clearly or strongly visible in the course: Contact with people from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, attention to intercultural sensitivity, and attention to experiential learning, partly in civic contexts. Other curriculum guidelines were covered in the course, but not extensively: Attention to one global justice issue, historical insights, insight into local global connections, recognition of and critical reflection on values, and community research.

Overall, in terms of Andreotti, the course could be characterized more as soft global citizenship as opposed to the critical approach underlying the curriculum guidelines for GJCE [27]. Consequently, in this study we could not fully assess the possible value that these curriculum guidelines might have in preparing students for global justice citizenship. Specifically, deep knowledge of one global issue, historical insights into the root causes of injustice, and critical reflection on mainstream values were not represented. For this reason, research is needed on courses that do incorporate these aspects. Furthermore, the evaluation of the course, SIS, in terms of its own goals, could lead to valuable insights other than those generated in this study.

5.2. Effects on the Students in Terms of GJCE

Our second question was about what and how students learned from the course. This query covered both the intended learning outcomes as specified in the curriculum guidelines—regarding knowledge, attitude and values, and insights and motivation to contribute to a more just world—and the pedagogical approach of experiential learning.

As the social awareness scale from the Shared Future Survey indicated, the course did produce more awareness of social justice, meaning that students see the importance of social awareness more after participating in the course. Students do not consider knowledge as an important learning outcome. Regarding the course theme migration, however, students do mention gaining more insights, which also led to a change in opinion towards more understanding about the difficult situation of migrants.

Further, the students who participated in the course showed an increase in *ethical sensitivity* on one of the seven subscales, namely, "generating interpretations and options", while the control group did not. This dimension requires the use of creative skills in both interpreting a situation and in dealing with it. Indeed, people often repeat the same mistakes because they react automatically without

considering another way to behave [44]. The ability to respond creatively also implies that the students are more aware of ethical aspects. Only one subscale improved as a result of the course, but the ability to properly generate interpretations and options is conditional on two other dimensions: How to connect to others and how to take others' perspectives [44]. Accordingly, some importance may be imputed to the improvement on that one subscale. Growth in ethical sensitivity is also indicated by the positive change reported by six students (30%) in the way they look at and value other cultures.

The results of the survey on *intercultural sensitivity*, the ICSSQ, indicate a slight increase in intercultural sensitivity among participants of the course. Furthermore, they had already scored lower on the ethnocentric-oriented stages of denial and defense compared to the control group at the start of the course. Apparently, students who decided to take the SIS were already more interculturally sensitive. In the open-ended evaluation, they did offer several responses that signal an increase in intercultural sensitivity. For instance, some noted having learned that there is an important difference between mere tolerance and acceptance. Furthermore, insights into the complexity of intercultural cooperation were also reported.

The results of the Shared Futures Survey, for the part on civic engagement and speaking up and acting out, do not show an increase in civic or political actions among the participants. Also, the score in the pre- and posttest on both subscales seems rather low, meaning that the students do not often take part in civic or political action. However, all participants were firm about the contributions they want to make to create a more just world. Participants' answers were related to various roles: Their future profession; activity or volunteer work, like becoming more active in one's neighborhood; or being a sustainable consumer. The answers were, however, not explicitly related to justice. Most answers concerned attitude and being more open towards others. This trend may explain why no effect was found with the SFS, the reason being that the subscales used, do not contain attitude-related items. Further, the SFS asks about activities in the past year, whereas the open-ended question on students' contributions to a more just society concerns the future.

It was further found that some participants gained insight into global justice. Three of them reported the insight that the difficult position of migrants is related to the culture or attitude of their society. Another student mentioned that globalization might not be a good thing for everybody.

Regarding the pedagogical approach of *experiential learning*, students said in the open-ended evaluation that they value learning-by-experience most with regard to how they learned, both in the community and by means of the intercultural teamwork. When asked to identify the most powerful learning moment, students again mentioned experiential learning. This finding aligns with the theory of Colby: Experiential learning, especially in civic contexts, is highly valuable for civic and moral learning in higher education [5].

The quantitative measures that were used indicated the effects of the course on only a minority of the scales used, namely, on one aspect of ethical sensitivity and on social awareness. This result could be related to the small group size and the short duration of the course. When a study uses quantitative measures in small groups, significant differences are less easily found. It is even more difficult when measuring the effects of a course lasting just one semester (112 h). Ref [47] drew similar conclusions about administering the SFS in American colleges. To better appreciate what a course like this evokes in the participants, the use of qualitative methods could be expanded to include, for instance, systematic content analyses of student work. Class observations could also provide useful information on how students' experiences in civic contexts are being discussed and reflected upon in class. Such information would enhance the understanding of what students learn from those experiences.

It is also possible that the instrument we used is inappropriate for a specific group of undergraduate students or for the context. There might be such a mismatch with the instrument used to measure intercultural sensitivity, the ICSSQ; the test showed only marginal change. Yet, students did give special emphasis to upbringing, which would suggest the acquisition of intercultural insight and awareness. For instance, when asked about a changed attitude towards people who

differ from them in cultural background, some answered that, "tolerance is not enough; make active contact." In the Dutch context, "tolerance is not enough" does not relate to, "everything should be tolerated", but to one's attitude towards unknown others, which could include people with different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. We consider this important as contact with other groups decreases prejudice [52]. Furthermore, it has been discussed that tolerance sometimes hides inequality and dominance, while people should rather have a right to be included without assimilation or privatisation of their 'difference' [53].

The limited effects measured may also be related to the limits of the course itself, especially regarding the gaining of knowledge and insights. In-depth knowledge on one specific global issue and insight into the root causes of injustice, inequality, or environmental issues were not aimed for in this course and were, thus, not visible in its program. Nor did students discuss mainstream perspectives. However, to be able to understand global issues, a complex web of cultural and material, local and global processes and contexts needs to be investigated and unraveled [27]. Moreover, although students examined what it means to be a member of the global community depending on the group to which one belongs and where one lives in the world, explicit attention to their own privilege and their own implicatedness in global inequality was hardly visible in the course.

Further research is needed on the longer-term effects of short undergraduate courses: Does the process continue and under which conditions? Especially, because the results of civic and moral learning can fade away when students leave college and enter new contexts [5]. Also, the effects may be invisible just after a course, but surface later in life.

The curriculum guidelines for GJCE offer principles for education aimed at developing motivation and identifying possibilities to take action for social justice. Based on this case study, what can be said about these guidelines? It should be noted that an important element, namely, looking for root causes of global justice issues, was hardly present in the course. The little attention to the historical roots of inequality entails the risk that participants fail to develop insights into how colonialism influences the present. In terms of Andreotti, the course could be characterized more as soft global citizenship as opposed to the critical approach [27]. Nonetheless, other guidelines were covered, and their effects could be appraised.

For the most part, students in the global North are relatively well off. Given the above-average educational level of their parents and guardians, this is presumably true of the participating students too. Basically, they can broaden their world through new encounters and knowledge on one specific issue of global justice. In relation to the curriculum guidelines, the course, SIS, broadened students' world views. Not only did it offer encounters with people varying in cultural background, but it also entailed experiencing international collaboration and interviewing migrants or people who work with migrants in their community. The added value of increasing intercultural collaboration in this course has been treated in a chapter of a book [54].

Students' perspectives on what and how they learned clearly indicate not only the value of these elements, but also the power of experiential learning. As this study demonstrates, these experiences brought about new insights, changes in opinions, and, especially, intercultural awareness. This result is important in the light of the public discussions on integration in the Netherlands, where interest in 'the other' is often superficial, and couched in generalizations and moral convictions [55]. In other words, the guidelines for GJCE that are present in the course, SIS, do seem to be important.

Final remark: A more open and active attitude towards others is valuable in itself, but could also begin a process of growing global justice awareness. If this effect can be achieved through the SIS course, the initiative could represent a bright spot in the discussion within the critical global citizenship approach: How to enhance critical attitudes in a situation where the dominant neoliberal ideology permeates all aspects of education [56]. Maintaining direct contacts outside of one's own social network, while keeping an open mind and sustaining an active attitude, could lead to new insights into how people are affected by society and politics because it is in such contacts that the primacy of the economy is not likely to play a major role.

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Appendix

Internal consistency values of the Ethical Sensitivity Scale Questionnaire (ESSQ); Intercultural Sensitivity Scale Questionnaire (ICSSQ), the combined subscales, 'denial and defense' and 'acceptance and adaptation'; and the Shared Futures Survey (SFS) subscales: Social awareness, valuing social action, civic engagement, and speaking up and acting out.

Table A1. Internal consistency values of the of the Ethical Sensitivity Scale Questionnaire (ESSQ), two combined subscales of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale Questionnaire (ICSSQ), and the tree subscales of the Shared Futures Society (SFS).

ESSQ Dimension (*N* = 35)	**α Pretest**	**α Posttest**
(1) Reading and expressing emotions	0.57	0.69
(2) Taking the perspectives of others	0.50	0.61
(3) Caring by connecting to others	0.68	0.78
(4) Working with interpersonal and group differences	0.69	0.67
(5) Preventing social bias	0.61	0.47
(6) Generating interpretations and options	0.69	0.69
(7) Identifying the consequences of actions and options	0.72	0.65
ICSSQ combined subscales (*N* = 37)		
(1) Denial & (2) defense	0.52	0.70
(4) Acceptance & (5) adaptation	0.68	0.63
SFS subscale (*N* = 35)		
(1) Social awareness	0.65	0.62
(2) Valuing social action	0.56	0.14
(3) Civic engagement	0.89	0.79
(4) Speaking up and acting out	0.52	0.66

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