

The English Language Teacher in Global Civil Society (Birch, B., Routledge, 2009) situates English language teachers within a network of global civil organizations (global civil society), which share a global civic culture. The global civic culture defines what global citizenship is, and its clearest articulation is the Earth Charter. For instance, Dower (2009:178) sees the Earth Charter and global citizenship as complementary. The Earth Charter is the ‘what’ of global civic culture, and global civil society is ‘how’ global civic culture moves from latency to actuality. Global civic culture rests on the moral content of the Earth Charter and defines the form as the sum of global civilian activities in global civil society, the UN, green corporations, sympathetic national governments and the like.

For instance, Chapter 3 describes the EC as follows:

The Earth Charter

The Earth Charter is a vision of a sustainable world that can be traced back to the UN charter in 1945. The UN charter originally set three major goals for itself, to ensure peace and world security, to secure human rights, and to foster cooperation for social and economic development. In 1972, environmental protection was added as a fourth goal. The UN charter created the United Nations; the Earth Charter is creating a new planetary culture. There isn’t the space here for a lengthy critical analysis of the Earth Charter; I would like to focus attention on two main areas of contrast between the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Earth Charter.

First, the provenance could not be more different. The UNUDHR was drafted, approved, and proclaimed by representatives of nations belonging to the UN in 1948. The Earth Charter was drafted by consensus between 1987 and 2000 in the most intentionally collaborative and consultative dialogue in history (Vilela and Corcoran 2005). The dialogue involved numerous meetings among thousands of men, women, and organizations from all continents, faith groups, and ethnicities. Since its writing, the Earth Charter has been endorsed by over 2000 organizations and millions of people around the world.

Second, there is no power inherent in the UNUDHR. Instead, the values it legitimizes are to be extended by education and by international and national legislation enacted nations and the territories under the jurisdiction of those nations. Thus, the UNUDHR assumes a hierarchical world of nation-states and colonies and people under the control of national and colonialist governments. In contrast, the language of the PREAMBLE to the Earth Charter legitimizes a ‘we’ as the unified voice of a species, an imagined community locating ourselves at a transitional time in history, a crossroads that will determine our common destiny. ‘We’ recognize our relationships of family, community, humanity, nature and our home planet. To move together towards the promise of the future, ‘we’ must join together to create a sustainable society with principles

based on right relationships with each other and with the Earth.

The power of the Earth Charter is located in human agency that moves around and between national governments and settles in relationships; it assumes a global civil society and a global culture of environmental protection, human rights, justice, and peace. The power of the Earth Charter comes from our reciprocal sense of responsibility to each other and to humans of the future. The Earth Charter is an ethic of morality for the world that balances the interests of the individual and the collective. The phrases contained in the section 'The Way Forward' could not be more different from the legalese of the UNUDHR.

The Earth Charter is a holistic vision of local and global partnerships of individuals, families, organizations, and communities from the arts, sciences, religions, educational institutions, media, businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and governments, committed to the United Nations and to obligations under existing and newly formed peace, economic, and environmental agreements. It ends with a plea: "Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life."

Chapter 8 calls on English language teachers to focus specifically on Principle 16 of the Earth Charter, which sets a new goal for education: to promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace. This goal has three objectives. First, education is to encourage and support mutual understanding, solidarity, and cooperation among all peoples and within and among nations. Second, education is to prevent violent conflict through collaboration and conflict transformation, to transition from offensive military security systems to defensive or peaceful purposes, to eliminate weapons, and to ensure that 'outer space' remains a place of environmental protection and peace. Third, education is to legitimize peace as 'the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole'. I believe that this goal is where English language teachers can exert influence and create transitions. This is where their pedagogy has the power to change relationships.

English language teachers are strategically placed to use their pedagogical power for global citizenship by helping students imagine a global community of civilians with a global civic culture based on the Earth Charter. Chapter 9 is about post-method conflict transformation and Chapter 10 is about increasing post-racist tolerance. Chapter 11 is about remembering the past to let go of it. Chapter 12 is about the potential for reconciliation in divided societies. Chapter 13 is the riskiest topic of all: forgiveness. In each chapter, classroom participants are invited to explore the creative and chaotic tension involved with learning about, in, and through conflict.