

Bridging the KAP-gap in global education

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Summary

This article reflects on the workshop Bridging the KAP-gap in global education, which was part of the DEEEP-conference Global Justice through Global Citizenship. The objective of the workshop was, to learn about strategies to bridge the KAP (Knowledge, Attitude, Practice) -gap and to gain ideas how to apply these strategies to participants' own practices. The workshop turned into a slightly different direction and raised some fundamental questions: What could one expect of global education? Which others factors influence learners' behaviour? To which manner does global education aim to change behaviour? Should global education aim to change behaviour?

This article summarizes the outcomes of an evaluation which was done amongst alumni-students of the minor programme Global Development Issues of Fontys University of Applied Sciences and the main issues that were discussed during the workshop, also based on the integrated model of behavioural prediction. The article ends with some lessons learned, especially for the curriculum-owners of the minor programme, who organised this workshop.

Key words: global education, sustainable behaviour, citizenship, KAP-gap

Defining the KAP-gap

The KAP-gap represents the presence of awareness relating to a subject, a supportive attitude, but a failure to translate it into behaviour (Naidoo, 2010). This concept is mainly applied to health programmes in developing countries (e.g. World Bank, 2010), but also used in educational fields like environmental education (e.g. OECD, 1999; Naidoo, 2010). And it would be no surprise that the KAP-gap exists in global education too, where learners construct knowledge about global issues, develop an attitude towards these issues, but lack the translation of this attitude into a practice of a global citizen.

Fontys Minor Global Development Issues

One exemplary situation where there appears to be a KAP-gap in global education, is the minor programme Global Development Issues (GDI) of Fontys University of Applied Sciences.

Approximately 100 bachelor-students per year (from educational, economic, technical and social study programmes) chose to follow this minor programme. The main objective of the programme is to learn how to notice and analyse global development issues and how to contribute to a potential solution from students' own profession, bearing in mind the following aspects of society: economical, ecological, political and cultural dimensions. One can say that it aims to guide students to be global citizens, who are willing to act to make the world a more sustainable place (Oxfam, 2006). This objective is strongly related to the general objective of Education for Sustainable Development, which: a) is about the balance between all four dimensions of sustainability – environment, society, culture and economy; b) focuses on content, taking into account different levels of analysis; c) builds capacity for decision-making and a good quality of life; d) is interdisciplinary (UNESCO, n.d.).

The minor GDI exists of three theoretical courses and a project in practice. The courses provide a theoretical basis about global development, global justice, inequality and crosscultural communication.

An example of the KAP-gap

In 2011, Marli van Doorn, a student of the Bachelor Applied Psychology wrote her thesis about the sustainable behaviour of students, after they did the minor GDI. After a survey and many interviews, she came to the conclusion, that students learned a lot about global issues, which influenced their attitude too. But it hardly didn't change their behaviour. Students explained that they didn't see many

possibilities how to contribute to global change. The curriculum-owner of the minor was given two important recommendations: a) give more insights in possible solutions, instead of mainly causes and consequences of global issues; b) create possibilities to put possible solutions in practice. These recommendations were translated into the curriculum of the minor, where students now meet possible solutions every time when they analyse certain cases. And they are challenged to put sustainable behaviour into practice through a new assignment (replacing another one), called 'doing sustainable': students define and analyse a certain situation in their own life that is not sustainable. Then they formulate clear criteria and an action plan to improve the situation in a more sustainable way. Finally, they need to conduct the plan and evaluate the outcomes.

In 2013, an evaluation amongst alumni-students took place, based on five competences: knowledge, systems thinking, values and ethics, emotions and action. These five together, can be considered as a set of competences that are needed to enable students to learn for sustainable development (Sleurs et al, 2008). The results of this evaluation show a similar result as it was the case in the bachelor-thesis of Marli (table 1). The following can be concluded, based on the evaluation:

- Students say they've learned about relevant issues and that they are able to analyse different kinds of issues.
- A majority of the students say that developed their empathic abilities during the minor and that they feel more concerned about development issues in the world, because of the minor.
- Students also say they've learned to mention possible solutions for development issues (mainly the most recent cohort, probably because they learned more about possible solutions than the previous cohorts).
- Just 61% of the students say they increasingly behaved as an aware consumer, after they did the minor. And only 20% of the students say, the minor influenced their political behaviour. Finally, about half of the respondents say they were able to apply learning outcomes of the minor to their own study or during internships.

This raises questions too: are these outcomes good results or not? What could one expect? Which others factors influenced the students' behaviour? To which manner did the minor programme aim to change behaviour? Should a bachelor-programme aim to change consumer or political behaviour? During a workshop, called 'Bridging the KAP-gap in global education' at the DEEEP-conference Global Justice through Global Citizenship, some of these questions were in the core of the discussion amongst participants.

Shared practices and discussion

During the first part of the workshop, some participants shared their experiences with the KAP-gap. One British colleague described how her daughter learned about global issues, but still wants to buy the cheapest fashionable clothes, of which you know that they'll be made in so-called sweatshops. Another colleague pointed at the complexity of this issue. What's best: buying cheap clothes or nothing, with no income for garment-workers in Bangladesh as a consequence.

A Belgium Global Educationalist came with the example of her students, who visit a developing country for six months. She questioned if this visit changed the students into global citizens, but she doubted that the answer would be 'no'.

A Dutch participant described an example of good practice, which was the success of a national marketing campaign for slavery-free chocolate. Since then, every chocolate bar in the Netherlands has a label to prove it's 'good' chocolate. This marketing campaign shows the possible success of providing information and stimulating consumers and producers to behave differently.

But there were doubts amongst the participants of this workshop, if global education could be that successful in bridging a KAP-gap. There were a few reasons mentioned:

- A colleague from Germany made the division between behaviour or change of behaviour as the main objective of global education. It would be hardly impossible to aim at certain sustainable

behaviour. Learners should be made more aware of global issues, with the possible effect that there could be a change in behaviour.

- Educationalists from the Netherlands questioned if global education should aim at behaviour at all? Their opinion was, that global education should lead to awareness and critical thinking, to be able to argue and make your own choices. And true critical thinking doesn't mean that a teacher says 'you should think this and that'. So sustainable behaviour could only be a side-effect.
- Some other participants considered the contra-effect of learning more about global issues. If students think more critically, also about possible sustainable solutions, they could perhaps be more sceptical too, resulting in doing nothing.

Table 1: Results of an evaluation amongst alumni-students of the minor Global Development Issues (cohort 2005-2011: N = 28 [14%], cohort 2012-2013: N = 18 [41%]; K = Knowledge; A = Attitude; P = Practice).

		Total	Cohorts 2005-2011	Cohort 2012-2013
K	1. The minor offered relevant development issues.	100%	100%	100%
	2. I've learned to describe and explain causes and consequences of development issues.	98%	96%	100%
	3. I've learned to mention possible solutions for development issues.	85%	75%	100%
	4. I'm able to apply knowledge of this minor, to different kinds of development issues.	100%	100%	100%
	5. I've learned to analyse issues from different perspectives.	98%	100%	94%
	6. I've learned to apply the principles of systems thinking to different kinds of issues.	74%	61%	94%
A	7. During this minor, I developed my empathic abilities.	89%	86%	94%
	8. Because of this minor, I feel myself more concerned about development issues in the world.	96%	96%	94%
	9. I've learned to relate opinions about discussed issues to norms and values.	91%	89%	94%
P	10. After I did this minor, I increasingly behaved as an aware consumer.	61%	68%	50%
	11. The minor was of influence on my voting behavior during political elections.	20%	21%	17%
	12. I apply what I've learned during the minor, to assignments for my study or during internships.	52%	46%	61%

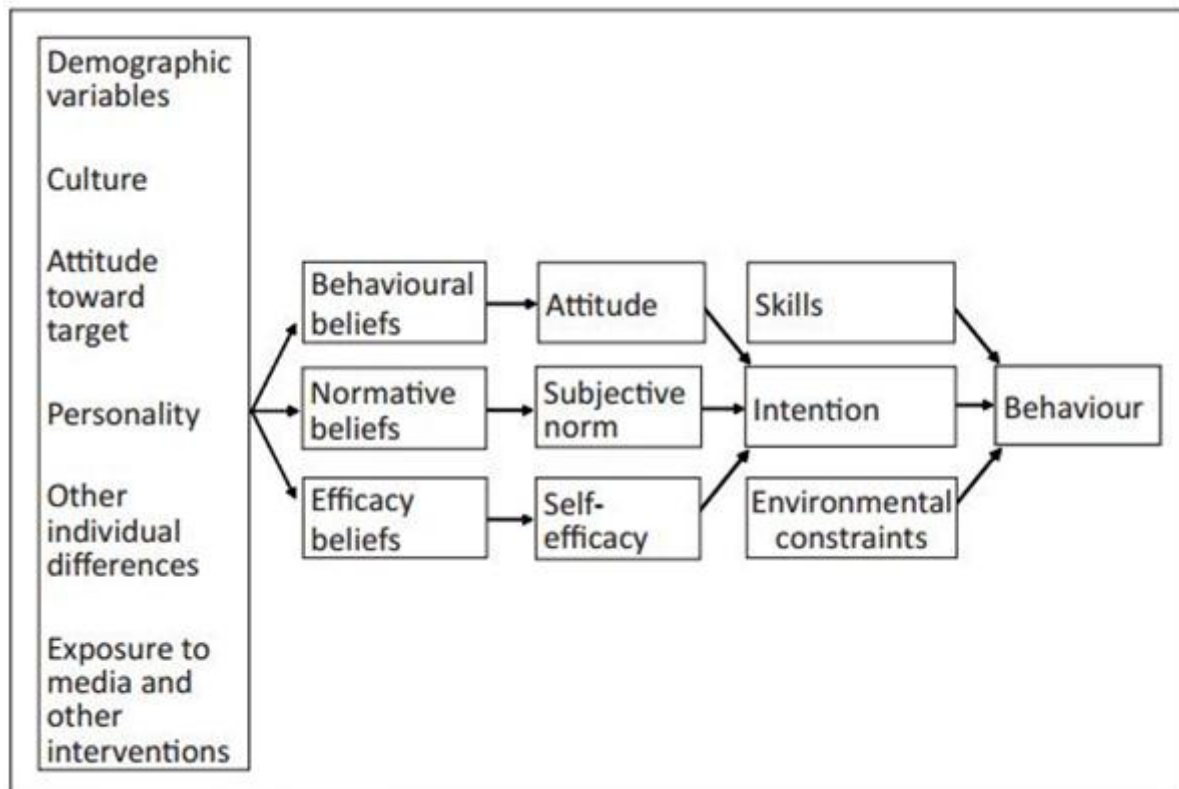
The integrated model of behavioural prediction

During the second half of the workshop, the integrated model of behavioural prediction of Fishbein & Yzer (in: Diteweg et al, 2013) was presented, shortly explained and discussed. The model (figure 1) consists of the idea that:

- behaviour is based on someone's skills and intentions, but also influenced by environmental constraints;
- intentions are the consequence of:
 - ✓ attitude, based on behavioural beliefs;
 - ✓ subjective norms, based on normative beliefs;
 - ✓ self-efficacy, based on efficacy beliefs.
- beliefs are influenced by a range of factors, like demographic variables and personality.

Van der Hulst & Janssen (2006) describe that the variance in intention is for 40-70% influenced by beliefs (mainly efficacy), while the variance in behaviour is for 30-38% influenced by intention. This puts the impact of education in perspective, where learners gain knowledge, skills and consciousness, which influences beliefs. But the chance that a change of beliefs also means a change in behaviour will be less than 30%. This could immediately be an explanation for the existence of the so-called KAP-gap. Participants of the workshop mentioned the fact that education is just one area where beliefs are influenced. The complete social environment of a learner has, of course, more actors than only teachers. And there's a big chance that the influence of parents or friends, has more impact than education.

Figure 1: the integrated model of behavioural prediction



Source: Fishbein & Yzer 2003

Derived from: Diteweg et al (2013)

Implications for global educators

Is it all that negative? No, Bandura (1977) formulated some concrete conditions to create possibilities for behavioural change in education:

- behaviour should be concretely and explicitly described;
- targetted behaviour should be demonstrated effectively and ineffectively;
- there are possibilities to put behaviour into practice;
- one is given feedback on practiced behaviour;
- practices are as realistic as possible.

Some of these conditions are closely related to the recommendations, given by Marli, the applied-psychology student, who evaluated the impact of the minor GDI on sustainable behaviour. When learners don't see concrete possibilities to contribute to solutions, they won't change behaviour. And if there's only a theoretical focus on these solutions, but no possibility to put them into practice, students won't apply them to their own life.

One of the Dutch experts on global education, who was participant of this workshop too, stated the importance of gaining knowledge and awareness. She said that, at the end, behaviour will change

when learners know more and are more aware of global issues. But she added (in line with practical experiences of the integrated model of behavioural prediction) that more knowledge can never be linear related to behavioural change.

At the end, one global-education-colleague suggested that we should ask students to make a plan with behavioural targets, to assess them on these aspects afterwards. It fits with the idea of Bandura, that behaviour should be concretely and explicitly described.

Lessons learned

As a result of this workshop, we can formulate the following lessons learned for the minor Global Development Issues:

- Perhaps, we should be very happy. The results of the evaluation which was done in 2013, can be very satisfactory, as participants of the workshop made clear. Students showed in this evaluation that they learned a lot about global issues and it influenced their world view, as well as their attitude towards these issues. And if more than 60% says it also influences their consumer behaviour, you can also say, that is a high percentage!?
- The question is: what's the aim of this minor? Is it sustainable behaviour? Yes, but not as consumers or citizens per se. The minor aims that students are able to contribute to sustainable solutions from their *professional* background, as applied economists, social workers or technical engineers. But then we learn from the evaluation (table 1) that there's a serious KAP-gap, because 48% of the respondents are *not* able to apply learning outcomes of the minor to their own study. So, following the discussion of the workshop and recommendations given by participants, the minor GDI should make the objectives more concrete and explicitly, in which way students *could* contribute to sustainable solutions from their professional background. Which means that there should be a clear description of behavioural indicators that enables students to see how they can contribute to sustainable solutions. These enabling indicators could be derived from the competencies for sustainable development, which were also mentioned in the first part of this article.

This workshop appeared to be a bit confusing. The main question was: *how* can we bridge the KAP-gap. Finally, we discussed questions like: *should* we bridge a KAP-gap and *can* we do that? Education has its limitations. But as global educators, we can clearly describe indicators that enables students to contribute to sustainable development and create conditions to put these in practice. We just shouldn't suppose that only we can bridge a KAP-gap, but at least, we're part of that bridge.

Literature

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