Designing an Effective Global Citizenship Education Training for Elementary Teachers

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Empirical

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Abstract

Many K-12 students are not exposed to learning opportunities that develop the global competence necessary to thrive in today's interconnected world. Due to the rapid advancement of technology, students in the United States now have to be able to interpret a wealth of information to solve global problems that did not exist in previous generations. This qualitative case study of pre-experimental design examined a series of professional development (PD) sessions on Global Citizenship Education (GCE). The study employed semi-structured interviews to assess the impact of PD on grades 3-5 teachers' understanding of GCE and their classroom practice. The study specifically analyzed the extent to which teachers' knowledge of the GCE increased, along with their perception of their ability to integrate global competencies into their instruction. These competencies include recognizing perspectives, investigating the world, communicating ideas, and acting (Asia Society, 2015). Although numerous organizations call for GCE to be taught within all subject areas to prepare students for successful navigation in a global society, the United States remains behind other developed countries in this endeavor.

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Introduction

In September 2012, the United Nations Secretary-General instituted the five-year Global Education First Initiative (GEFI). Recognizing our collective need to prepare students for an increasingly interconnected world, this initiative set three main priorities: (1) putting every child in school, (2) improving the quality of learning, and (3) fostering global citizenship (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 2012). While these three priorities were not mutually exclusive, each required countries to reimagine the ways that students bridge classroom and experiential learning towards 21st-century competencies.

Despite a general excitement about and dedication to the GEFI, students in the United States were still found to lack critical knowledge in geography, demographics, the environment, recent international events, economics, and U.S. foreign policy (CFR & National Geographic Society, 2016). Only 29% of U.S. student participants earned a score above the proficiency cut score (which was set low at 66%) on an assessment of such knowledge (CFR & National Geographic Society, 2016). Despite the best efforts of the P-12 educational system, the infusion of global knowledge and skills remains necessary if the United States is to prepare students for global citizenship.

This trend of limited global citizenship knowledge continues in the United States, driven in part by policy initiatives that de-prioritize global citizenship education. Global Education Network Europe (GENE) published a report in 2018 summarizing key information on "current policy, trends, thematic issues and also looks at the important question of levels of funding for Global Education in Europe," as well as assessment and examples of good practice related to global education in participating European countries (p. 9). This report demonstrated the high level of commitment to global education in dozens of countries in Europe. Unfortunately, the United States has not made GCE a priority, leaving our students at a disadvantage on a global level.

The U.S. government acknowledged the need to prepare our students for today's global economy but has not created a comprehensive national plan to do so. In 2017, the United States Department of Education (USDOE) International Affairs Office created a framework for developing global and cultural competencies from early childhood through postsecondary education. The *Framework for Developing Global and Cultural Competencies to Advance Equity, Excellence and Economic Competitiveness* contains four competencies. These included collaboration and communication, world and heritage languages, diverse perspectives, and civic and global engagement (USDOE, 2017). The framework, however, did not include a plan for how states and/or school districts should implement these competencies, nor was it a requirement to do so. Therefore, due to a lack of specific direction from the USDOE and most state departments of education, it has become the responsibility of each school district to determine if they will prioritize GCE and to what extent they will integrate activities into all curricular areas that develop global competence in our students.

Defining Global Citizenship Education

One issue with developing a comprehensive framework for Global Competency Education (GCE) is a lack of clarity around what terms and practices are included in GCE. In part, this is a problem of integrating initiatives into existing curricular programs; in part, it is a problem of politically viable terminology; and, in part, an issue of emerging research into the field of global education research. Authors have used a variety of terms, such as *global education*, *global competence*, and *global literacy,* to describe a similar belief: that all students need certain knowledge, skills, and understandings to be successful in the global age. Alger and Harf (1985) defined global education as "education that enables people to make decisions by taking into account the ways in which they are affected by a diversity of economic, social, political, military, and natural phenomena that link together peoples of the world" (p. 3). Kniep (1986) argued that global education should include four components: the study of human and universal values, the study of global systems, the study of global issues and problems, and the study of global history. Hendrix (1998) took this a step further and stated that if schools were to effectively implement global education, they must create a global education philosophy, specific goals and objectives, and an assessment of student progress.

As the term *global citizenship* began to emerge in the new millennium, Davies (2006) explained the main difference between the terms *global education* and *global citizenship*:

> What seems to happen with global citizenship education is a confirmation of the direct concern with social justice and not just the more minimalist interpretations of global education which are about "international awareness" or being a more rounded person. Citizenship clearly has implications both of rights and responsibilities, of duties and entitlements, concepts which are not necessarily explicit in global education. One can have the emotions and identities without having to do much about them. Citizenship implies a more active role. (p. 6)

UNESCO's definition of GCE supported Davies' explanation. It stated that GCE "aims to empower learners of all ages to assume active roles, both locally and globally, in building more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure societies" (UNESCO, 2019). In 2015, the Asia Society further dissected the skills and characteristics necessary to call oneself a *global citizen*. It stated that a global citizen possesses *global competence*:

> Global competence includes skills in communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity, which collectively are known as 21st century skills. Globally, efforts to advance peace education, human rights education, and education for sustainable development have grown substantially over the years and also contribute to global citizenship education (Asia Society, 2015).

Theoretical Frameworks Guiding Global Citizenship Education

This research is grounded in two theoretical frameworks: UNESCO's Global Citizenship Conceptual Framework (UNESCO, 2012) and the Asia Society's Four Domain Global Competence Framework (Asia Society, 2015) both mentioned above. While UNESCO's framework provides a values-driven, normative structure deeply rooted in human rights, the Asia Society furthers it with practical skills-based, performance-oriented system that offers clear rubrics and classroom strategies. Together, these theoretical frameworks converge to offer a holistic approach to global education by combining ethical foundations (global citizenship) with practical competencies (global competence).

UNESCO's framework is based on three dimensions including cognitive, social-emotional and behavioral (UNESCO 2012, 2019). The cognitive dimension centers around developing critical knowledge and understanding of global issues and systems such as interdependence and global challenges. The social-emotional dimension is one that is focused on cultivating respect, solidarity, sense of belonging to a global community, and empathy. Finally, the behavioral dimension looks at how to empower learners with civic practice and engagement for peace and sustainability. This framework can be used to inform curricula, policy planning, and the professional development of teacher education programs globally (UNESCO 2019). For the purpose of this study, UNESCO's framework provides the ethical foundations, while the Asia Society's Global Competence Framework provides the structure to move to practice.

The Asia Society's Four Domain Global Competence Framework includes the following interrelated competencies: investigate the world, recognize perspectives, communicate ideas, and take action (Asia Society, 2015). By investigating the world, students can use multilingual sources to frame significant questions, gather credible and reliable dates, and analyze the data to draw logical and rational conclusions. The second domain pushes learners to recognize perspectives and different viewpoints that lead to an understanding of influences such as culture, history, and access to variable resources. Once perspectives are recognized, learners can have effective, respectful communication across cultures using a plethora of mediums across diverse audiences. These domains culminate into responsible action where advocacy, problem solving and civic engagement at local and global levels exist (Asia Society, 2015).

The UNESCO Global Citizenship Education (GCE) framework and the Asia Society's Global Competence framework are both critical to advancing global citizenship because they offer complementary approaches that together foster holistic development in learners. When paired, these frameworks bridge values-based education with skills-based practices that allow for both the intellectual understanding of GCE, along with empathetic and responsible action.

Literature Review

Global Citizenship Education in the U.S.

According to the Longview Foundation (2019), "Global knowledge and skills are now included in state standards or graduation requirements in more than 11 states." Some of these states, including North Carolina, Massachusetts, and California, have designed robust GCE programs aimed at both educator professional development and student learning (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2013; Primary Source, 2018; California Global Education Project, 2019).

Connecticut also showed its commitment to GCE by developing a Connecticut Certificate of Global Engagement for high school graduates. This certificate recognizes graduates who have "successfully completed a global education curriculum and engaged in co-curricular activities and experiences that fostered the development of global competencies and global citizenship" (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2018). Illinois, Georgia, and Wisconsin all have similar certificates for high school students (Georgia Department of Education, 2019; Global Illinois, 2017; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019). These state departments of education, however, have not developed official strategies or programs to train teachers in supporting students on these paths to global citizenship.

The vast majority of school districts in the U.S., however, have no official programs or accountability systems in place to ensure students are learning the skills required to become global citizens. In addition, Professional Development (PD) opportunities on this topic have been limited. Therefore, K–12 teachers lack a true understanding of GCE and how it should be implemented regularly in all curricular areas to better prepare students for the future (Longview Foundation, 2019).

Elements of a Successful Global Citizenship Education Initiative

While some states have shown progress in implementing GCE initiatives, a deeper analysis reveals that some of these attempts are lacking important elements that would ensure an initiative's positive impact on students. One such element is a common definition and vision for GCE (Myers, 2016). A Massachusetts study of a select group of school administrators leading a GCE initiative revealed that there was no common definition of global education among the group. There were also differences in the extent to which global education language was used in various schools' documents, as well as how school leaders were advocating for global education in their districts. (Shea, 2013). Just like any district or schoolwide initiative, if there is not a shared understanding and vision, it is unlikely that an initiative will succeed.

Another crucial element of a successful GCE initiative is its inclusion in multiple subject areas. A 2014 study examined the Global Studies Initiative in a small, public high school in Pennsylvania. The study revealed that the initiative was not providing a thorough global education experience for a significant number of students in the high school. Due to competing priorities, global

education opportunities were not effectively being implemented in all curricular areas. For programs like this to have a meaningful impact on students, they must be integrated in a "comprehensive, systematic, sustainable, and equitable way" (Cozzolino, 2014, p.71). While a study on a postsecondary course yielded more positive results, the author also concluded that global citizenship should be a "program-wide mission" and integrated into all areas of the program (An, 2014, p. 32). These studies supported the belief that GCE should be integrated into all curricular areas for it to have a transformative impact on students (Asia Society & OECD, 2018).

Additional elements that have been shown to be effective in increasing the success of global citizenship initiatives in schools include educators' social networks, school leadership, and certain pedagogical practices. Henderson (2015) found that school administrators who self-identified as global education leaders in their schools had diverse social networks. These networks enabled them to access and benefit from new information shared in a variety of ways. Henderson also concluded that effective leadership is crucial to any GCE initiative because leaders "communicate vision and support but also create structures and policies that allow for the collaboration necessary to enact networks in the service of global education" (p. 219). In addition, researchers in North Carolina found that teachers from a variety of subject areas and grade levels who successfully incorporated GCE shared "signature pedagogies." These included:

1. Intentional integration of global topics and multiple perspectives into and across the standard curriculum
2. Ongoing authentic engagement with global issues
3. Connecting teachers' global experiences, students' global experiences, and the curriculum. (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016, p. 12)

While none of the reviewed literature directly relates to the impact of GCE PD on the perception and knowledge of practicing elementary educators, it provides evidence of strategies that may be useful when planning a GCE initiative.

Professional Development to Promote Global Citizenship Education

The first step in beginning any new initiative in a school is to ensure that teachers have sufficient effective training to successfully implement the changes in their classrooms. This training is also known as professional development (PD). The National Education Association (NEA) stated that PD plays a crucial role in a teacher's career. To improve student learning, teachers should be open to improving their practice and actively seek out opportunities for growth. The NEA posited that for schools to have high standards for students, there must also be high standards for the teachers who work with them (NEA, 2019). Mizell (2010) explained that because teachers face so many challenges in their profession and because of the continually changing nature of education, teachers need ongoing support to improve skills and learn new strategies. This, in turn, can have a positive impact on student achievement.

According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), effective PD is "structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices and improvements in student learning outcomes" (p. v). In

their review of 35 studies over the previous 30 years on the topic of effective PD, the authors identified seven characteristics of effective PD. They stated that PD should be content-focused, incorporate active learning, support collaboration, use models of effective practice, provide coaching and expert support, offer feedback and reflection, and have a sustained duration (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The authors concluded that PD is more likely to improve instructional practices and student outcomes if it includes the seven characteristics (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

In terms of a successful GCE PD initiative, it must not only include all seven of the characteristics, but it should also be personalized and cyclical. According to Martin (2018), teachers who engage in the personalized professional learning cycle will experience more positive outcomes. This learning cycle includes the following elements: vision, goal setting, professional learning design, lesson design and models of practice, safe practice, coaching and feedback, reflection and revision, analyzing the impact and developing next steps, and sharing and celebrating growth (Martin, 2018). This process is especially important to global citizenship educators because how and when they implement GCE will vary depending on their curriculum and the grade level of their students.

Because GCE is a relatively new concept for educators, it is logical to conclude that PD that includes information, resources, and teaching strategies on the topic would be a necessary step in successfully implementing a global citizenship initiative. In addition, global competencies can easily align with many different standards and are not content-specific. This means that PD on GCE would be relevant and meaningful to most, if not all, educators. Therefore, analyzing the impact of such training would reveal important information that could help guide schools in planning PD on this topic.

Methodology

This case study aimed to examine how a series of PD sessions on global citizenship education impacted teachers of grades 3-5 in a suburban New Jersey School. Specifically, the study analyzed how the PD sessions affected their knowledge and ability to integrate activities in their classrooms to foster students' global competence. This study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1) How does professional development focused on global citizenship education impact teachers' understanding of global citizenship education?
2) How does professional development focused on global citizenship education impact teachers' abilities to implement activities that foster students' global competence in their classrooms?

A qualitative approach was employed through the use of semi-structured interviews. These interviews allowed the researcher to address specific topics while providing flexibility to participants to provide new meanings (Galletta, 2013).

Participants

The PD initiative included grades 3-5 teachers of social studies, literacy, and/or world language who submitted applications via a posting originated by the Human Resources department of the school district. From the posting responses, fifteen teachers were chosen by a panel of district administrators to serve on this Global Citizenship Committee. The selection of the participants was based on their ability to engage in PD during two days in August 2019, along with three follow-up sessions from September through December during their contracted PD time or the school day. Ultimately, the teachers were required to commit to implementing GCE activities within the existing curricula and turnkey the training to their colleagues from the following January through June.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for this case study. Before the first PD session, the Global Citizenship Committee was sent an email asking for volunteers to engage in semi-structured interviews. Six teachers agreed to participate in these interviews.

Teachers who agreed to participate in this case study were interviewed within one month after the last PD session. All six teachers were White females. The researcher asked each participant several identifying questions to gauge her level of experience, as well as the grade level(s) and content area(s) taught. Table 1 illustrates the results of these identifying questions.

Table 1

Interview Participants

Interview Participant	Years of Experience (current year incl.)	Grade Level Taught	Subject Area(s) Taught
Teacher A	3	3	Social studies, science, math, reading, writing
Teacher B	16	4	Social studies, science, math
Teacher C	11	4	Social studies, science, math
Teacher D	8	5	Social studies, science, math
Teacher E	5	5	Social studies, science, math, reading, writing
Teacher F	2	3, 4, 5	Reading (Special Education)

Setting

The study was conducted in a central New Jersey pre-K-12 public school district that encompassed 12 elementary schools, three middle schools, and two high schools. The New Jersey Department of Education reported that the 2018–2019 pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 student enrollment was 9,490. Approximately 85.5% of the student population was White, 1.4% was Black, 8.2% was Hispanic, and 2.4% was Asian. Approximately 12% of students qualified for free or reduced lunch (NJDOE, 2019). In the 2018–2019 school year, the district employed 960.4 certificated staff, including 792.5 teachers. The teaching staff was predominantly female (80%). Of the female teachers, 98% were White, and 98.7% of the male teachers were White (NJDOE, 2019). The schools represented in this study varied in size, with approximately 234 enrolled students at the smallest school and 583 enrolled students at the largest school (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016–2017).

GCE PD Pilot

This PD pilot included 15 Grade 3–5 classroom teachers who identified themselves as teaching language arts (reading and/or writing), social studies, and/or world language in the 2019–2020 school year. The school district identified GCE as a goal for the 2019–2020 school year. The purpose of the PD pilot was to form a cohort of teachers who would be willing to turnkey the information and resources to their colleagues after completing the training. The PD sessions began in August and continued during the school year from September through December 2019. School year sessions occurred during mandatory after-school district PD days.

To form this pilot committee, a curriculum committee posting was sent out via the Office of Human Resources in June 2019. Teachers were paid the curriculum rate for the summer sessions. The two full-day summer sessions occurred in late August between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. The training was led by the district Director of Social Studies and Technology K–12 who is a fellow of the Teachers for Global Classrooms (TGC) program. This program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and administered by IREX. The TGC program, which is now called the Fulbright Teacher for Global Classrooms Program (IREX, 2018). The trainer participated in this program from 2015–2016 and used many of the program's resources and strategies in this training. Some of these resources came from organizations such as the Asia Society, the OECD, the United Nations, Oxfam, and the Longview Foundation.

During the first two days of the pilot, teachers learned about the research that supports the need to integrate GCE into their classrooms. They received an overview of Asia Society's Four Domains of Global Competence and explored the *Global Leadership GPS Performance Outcomes, Rubrics, and I Can Statements* for Grades 3–5 (Asia Society, 2019). The teachers also worked in grade-level groups to explore and discuss additional curated resources shared by the trainer via the Google Classroom created for this committee. They also enrolled in and completed the free Global Education 101 online course sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and administered by IREX (2019).

After the two-day summer session, teachers were asked to implement at least one GCE activity in their classroom from September through December 2019. During this time, teachers engaged in three follow-up sessions where they had the opportunity to continue exploring resources and collaborate with their colleagues on designing lesson plans that integrated GCE into Grades 3–5 language arts, social studies, and/or world language. Teachers also shared resources, ideas, and experiences virtually through the committee's Google Classroom and on X.

The data for this case study were collected through conducting one-on-one semi-structured interviews with participants within 30 days of the last session of PD. All participants in the study were identified through their submission of an electronic consent form.

Interview Protocol

The qualitative protocol consisted of a seven-question semi-structured retrospective interview aimed at assessing the impact of the GCE professional development on teachers' understanding of GCE and their ability to effectively implement classroom activities that foster students' global competence. Each interview took approximately 20-25 minutes face-to-face and was recorded and transcribed. Each transcription was reviewed to ensure the accuracy of the response. A semi-structured approach was used to allow for follow-up questions to focus participants on specific ideas that may not have been captured through their initial open-ended questions. The following are the seven "anchor" questions that were used for all participants:

1. Please describe your experience as a global educator prior to this professional development.

2. Please describe your experience in the GCE PD initiative. Walk me through your experience from the beginning of the training until now.

3. How has your understanding of global citizenship education changed since beginning this PD?

4. What impact did the GCE PD have on you as a teacher? Can you give examples?

5. What impact did the GCE PD have on the students in your classroom? Can you give examples?

6. How effective was the GCE PD in developing your knowledge of GCE? Can you give an example of what you learned?

7. Describe how you have implemented GCE activities in your classroom. Can you provide examples?

Data Analysis

The retrospective semi-structured interviews were analyzed using the grounded theory constant comparative method to determine themes. Charmaz (2006) purports that grounded theory methodology consists of "systematic, yet flexible, guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves" (p. 2). Specifically, open

coding was used to identify themes. The constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) allowed for the organization of data into categories. The categories were also compared across grade levels to determine any differences in teaching practices of Grades 3, 4, and 5 teachers. To accomplish this thorough analysis, transcripts of participant responses were read several times to identify common themes. The frequency of the themes that emerged from the data was calculated, and direct quotations were identified to provide greater depth to the study. This allowed for the determination of participants' change in understanding of GCE as a result of the training, as well as the impact the training had on their classroom practice.

Findings

The qualitative data were organized into three main themes. The first overarching theme relates to teachers' understanding of GCE (Research Question 1). Three subthemes—definitions, misconceptions, and collaboration—emerged as important elements of teacher understanding. The second overarching theme relates to teachers' ability to implement GCE in their classrooms (Research Question 2). Two subthemes, instructional strategies and technology integration, revealed how teachers successfully implemented GCE in their classrooms. Finally, the third overarching theme, additional findings, explores two subthemes: (a) teacher empowerment and (b) student engagement, empowerment, and global competence. (See Table 2 for a summary of the three overarching themes and subthemes.)

Table 2

Qualitative Themes and Subthemes

Overarching Themes	Subthemes
Understanding of Global Citizenship Education (Research Question 1)	• Definitions • Misconceptions • Collaboration
Ability to Implement GCE in the Classroom (Research Question 2)	• Instructional Strategies • Technology Integration
Additional Findings	• Teacher Empowerment • Student Engagement, Empowerment, and Global Competence

Teachers' Understanding of Global Citizenship Education

Definitions

When asked to identify global citizenship education in their own words, all teachers were able to do so. In their definitions, some common themes that emerged included developing a greater understanding and awareness of people and events on a local and global level, recognizing others' cultures and perspectives, developing empathy, and identifying how one can make a difference. Overall, teachers had a more difficult time articulating their definitions of global competence. Some repeated many of the same words they had used to define GCE, demonstrating their belief that GCE and global competence were closely related terms. While teachers' definitions varied slightly, there were clear commonalities in their responses. All teachers were able to clearly articulate what GCE and/or global competence meant to them using phrases and terms they had been exposed to during the training.

Misconceptions

Teachers also demonstrated how their understanding changed as a result of the training when they identified misconceptions related to GCE. Several teachers shared that the training made them realize that implementing GCE activities in their classrooms was not as daunting of a task as they thought it would be. Teacher A explained how GCE can easily be woven into things teachers are already doing in their classrooms:

> For example, if we're reading a mentor text and whatever the setting is, like let's explore this setting, let's do a Google tour of it. Simple things like that, where it's either just adding in an extra layer or extending it. That's probably the biggest thing, it doesn't have to be a big to do. You could just tie it into everything you're already doing.

Teacher E also shared that GCE ties easily into a variety of curricular areas and is not overly time-consuming. Teacher E explained:

> I found that there were a lot more ways that you could bring global education into your classroom and tie it into your curriculum that you're already using. So it's not going to make it more difficult on you. I was expecting I needed to find new programs, and I was going to have to carve out time in the day. And you don't have to do that.

Collaboration

Another important theme that emerged through the interviews was the importance of collaboration in gaining a deeper understanding of GCE. Teachers shared that the collaborative nature of the PD initiative itself, as well as the new collaborations initiated as a result of the initiative, helped them to gain new knowledge and feel more comfortable implementing GCE activities in their classrooms. Teacher A stated, "As part of the PD, one of the best things was just meeting as a committee and seeing what everybody else is doing."

In addition, teachers shared how they used digital platforms to connect and collaborate with educators both within the district and on a global level. Teacher C explained how some members of the committee started a cell phone group chat to share ideas and resources related to GCE. Several teachers mentioned online platforms like Facebook and Padlet, created for various GCE activities, were extremely helpful in increasing their knowledge.

It was apparent that teachers perceived that their understanding of GCE increased as a result of this initiative. They demonstrated this understanding through their common definitions of GCE, as well as their explanations of how their preconceived notions of GCE were incorrect. In addition, teachers' reliance on collaboration demonstrated how both in-person meetings and digital platforms allowed them to connect with peers as a means of increasing their knowledge of GCE.

Teachers' Ability to Implement GCE in Their Classrooms

The interview data revealed the methods teachers used to implement GCE in their classrooms. Two sub-themes emerged related to implementation: instructional strategies and technology integration. Instructional strategies included the various ways teachers were able to weave GCE into existing curricular areas and/or into regular routines. Technology integration included the ways teachers used online tools and platforms to introduce GCE activities that they could not have done without technology. This information revealed that teachers perceived that they were able to successfully implement GCE activities in their classrooms as a result of this PD initiative.

Instructional Strategies

Teachers used a variety of strategies to infuse GCE into their classrooms. Most of the teachers engaged their students in *Global Read Aloud*, an annual free project that entails teachers selecting a book with a global focus and partnering with a class, or multiple classes, from a different area of the country or world to foster discussion among their students. Other teachers shared that they had engaged or were about to engage their students in a postcard exchange with a partner class. Several teachers mentioned how "morning meetings" were an ideal time to seamlessly weave in GCE lessons. Teachers explained how they used this 10- to 15-minute daily meeting to introduce students to words in a different language, discuss different cultures and customs, and practice geography skills.

Teachers also shared how they have woven GCE into specific subject areas such as reading, language arts, social studies, science, and math, demonstrating that GCE should not just be seen as a social studies initiative. For example, Teacher E described a science project her students completed that addressed the global issue of access to clean drinking water. Several teachers also described how they used the United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDGs) as a framework for students' cross-curricular personalized learning projects. In these cases, students researched the global goals, selected one that was most meaningful to them, and explored ways to raise awareness or even help resolve the issue.

Regardless of which strategy they chose all teachers were able to identify multiple ways they have implemented or plan to implement GCE in their classrooms. Because of this, it was apparent that they perceived themselves as capable of implementing GCE in a variety of curricular areas using different resources introduced to them during the training, or ones discovered through their research and experience.

Technology Integration

While many of the strategies detailed in the previous sections included the use of technology, there were other GCE activities teachers discussed that would not have been possible without their access to particular tools and platforms. Google tools such as Google Meet for video conferencing with partner classes, Google Expeditions for engaging students in virtual field trips, and Google Maps for showing students 360-degree images of different places in the world were all mentioned as technology that enabled teachers to bring the world into their classrooms.

Several teachers also mentioned platforms such as FlipGrid, Padlet, and Seesaw, which allowed students to post content, such as videos, that students from partner classes could respond to. For example, Teacher B explained how her third-grade students enjoyed using Padlet to share their favorite foods with partner classes in Illinois and Canada. Teacher C and Teacher D also shared how they used social media to find resources and connections for their students.

Additional Findings

While the researcher's interview questions sought to uncover how teachers perceived their own GCE understanding and ability to implement GCE in their classrooms as a result of this PD initiative, other unexpected trends emerged from the data. First, it was apparent from the responses that teachers felt a greater sense of empowerment as a result of the training, and that students were more engaged and empowered as a result of being exposed to GCE activities.

Teacher Empowerment

According to Curtis (2013), an important component of teacher leadership is providing teachers with PD that provides them with the knowledge to work collaboratively with and/or train their colleagues to improve student learning. In this case, the goal of this PD initiative was to train teachers on GCE so they would be able to turn-key the training to their colleagues, thereby building capacity more organically, as opposed to utilizing a traditional "top-down" PD approach.

To determine if teachers felt empowered by their understanding and experience related to GCE, the researcher asked interview participants how comfortable they would be with sharing their GCE knowledge, strategies, and lessons with their colleagues. Of the six participants, all stated that they have at least some level of comfort sharing with colleagues. Several teachers also discussed how

the PD initiative granted them the permission they needed to take instructional risks in their classrooms, including engaging students in discussions on contemporary global issues.

Student Engagement, Empowerment, and Global Competence

A final subtheme that emerged from the interview data related to teachers' perceptions of how GCE implementation affected their students. First, teachers described the high level of engagement students demonstrated when participating in GCE activities. Secondly, many teachers shared that their students felt much more empowered to act on local and global issues as a result of being exposed to GCE activities. Teacher E explained that as her students engage in GCE activities, they no longer felt that they were too young to make change. "They're understanding that little small steps can make a difference . . . . They know that just because they're 10 or 11 doesn't mean that their ideas, the things that they want to do are not possible."

Finally, all the study participants felt that their students' global competence increased as a result of engaging in GCE activities. Teacher B described how her third-grade students' global competence had evolved in just a few months:

> They're learning compassion for not just their friends, but other people . . . They've learned that it's important to listen and understand that there are different perspectives . . . They've even learned how to interact with each other better . . . they've learned some basic communication skills as far as it's okay to have different ideas . . . they've learned that it's not only important to just learn about things, the basic skills of how to communicate, but that sharing out the information that they learned could actually benefit and help others.

Discussion

The qualitative results revealed that the PD initiative impacted teachers' understanding of GCE, as well as their ability to implement GCE activities in their classrooms. Teachers' responses to interview questions demonstrated their understanding of GCE through their ability to define GCE and/or global competence, their descriptions of how their misconceptions of GCE changed throughout this process, and their appreciation for collaboration as a means to increase their knowledge of GCE.

In addition, the qualitative data showed that teachers perceived that they had successfully implemented GCE in their classrooms. Teachers articulated this by describing strategies and technology they used in their instruction. These data also demonstrated that teachers felt empowered to try new things in their classrooms and share knowledge and experiences with colleagues as a result of this PD initiative. Finally, the qualitative data revealed that teachers perceived that the GCE activities they had implemented as a result of this initiative increased their students' engagement, feelings of empowerment, and global competence.

Conclusion

The purpose of this case study was to examine the impact of a GCE PD initiative on a group of teachers of grades 3–5 in one New Jersey school district. The researcher sought to determine if

this training affected teachers' perceptions of their understanding and teaching abilities related to GCE. This information can be used to help districts design and implement their GCE initiative with the goal of better preparing educators to infuse GCE in their classrooms. The Asia Society, OECD, UNESCO, and many other world-renowned organizations have called for a greater focus on developing students' skills that will prepare them for today's global society and empower them to solve global challenges. To mold students into active global citizens, educators must be equipped with the knowledge, resources, and motivation to effectively teach for global competence.

The first research question in this study was designed to discover how teachers perceived their change in understanding of GCE as a result of this initiative. The data revealed several themes related to teacher understanding. First, teachers were able to define GCE and/or global competence in their own words using many of the phrases and terms they were introduced to during the training. In addition, teachers described how their beliefs and misconceptions about GCE changed as they learned more about the topic. Teachers explained how their new understanding helped them to overcome their hesitations and begin to take educational risks in their classrooms. Finally, teachers discussed how collaboration was a key factor in becoming global educators. Connecting with colleagues both within and beyond the district allowed them to learn more about available resources and opportunities they could use in their classrooms. The themes that emerged from the data suggest that teachers perceived an increase in their understanding of GCE as a result of the initiative. Because of this, it is evident that they felt better equipped to implement GCE activities in their classrooms.

The second research question in this study was designed to investigate how teachers perceived their ability to implement activities that foster students' global competence in their classrooms after participating in the GCE initiative. The interview responses revealed two main themes that addressed this implementation: instructional strategies and technology integration. Teachers shared that they were able to implement GCE by identifying topics in their curriculum into which they could most easily weave GCE activities. They also engaged their students in global classroom collaborations, personalized learning projects with a global focus, and/or discussions/lessons during morning meetings. The interview data suggest that teachers perceived that they were better able to implement activities that foster their students' global competence as a result of the initiative. All participants stated that they believed their students' global competence increased as a result of these activities.

The research and data included in this case study support the need for school districts to provide guidance and training for teachers that will better prepare them to infuse GCE in their classrooms. For the first time, the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) measured the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students around the world in the area of global competence. This fact, along with the reprioritization of GCE by select countries and states, demonstrates that educating for global competence will soon be an expectation in our K–12 schools. This expectation cannot be realized unless educators develop their global competence and learn about the resources, strategies, and opportunities available to them.

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